The Tonson Editions of Paradise Lost and the Pioneers of Vernacular Scholarship: From Patrick Hume to Richard Bentley

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Abstract

This thesis offers a new and comprehensive study of the critical methodologies that underpin the most popular Tonson editions of John Milton's (1608-1674) *Paradise Lost* (1667), a work that went from relative obscurity to becoming one of the nation's most prized pieces of literature at the close of the seventeenth-century. It asks three key questions to explore the reception history of Milton and his epic. 1) What was the role of the Tonsons – and the book trade more widely – in shaping the reception of Milton and *Paradise Lost* at the turn of the eighteenth-century, and the development of vernacular literary criticism more broadly? 2) How were the Tonson editions of *Paradise Lost* defined by the political and religious contexts of the time, and what interventions were they designed to make in order to shape those contexts themselves? and 3) What were the continuities and discontinuities between Richard Bentley's (1662-1742) controversial edition and those that came before? This thesis contributes fresh insight into the relationships between publishers and their authors, demonstrates how new forms of vernacular scholarship were implemented to tackle Milton's radicalism, and explores how *Paradise Lost* became a catalyst for debates around vernacular literary criticism and textual editing.

The dissertation analyses the contributions of four key critics who sought to sanitise Milton for a Post-Restoration readership. It begins with an exploration of Patrick Hume's (fl. 1695) ground-breaking vernacular commentary, before assessing how Joseph Addison (1672-1719) links Milton to Whig discussions around national morality and politeness. It then demonstrates how Elijah Fenton (1683-1730) used the genre of biography to redeem Milton's character, before finally offering a re-evaluation of Richard Bentley's extreme interventionist edition. Throughout the thesis, I draw attention to the hitherto understudied role of the Tonson publishing dynasty.

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Introduction

In 1732, England's leading philologist and classical scholar, Richard Bentley (1662-1742), was subjected to ubiquitous scorn for his first critical edition of a vernacular text. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (*PL*) had by this time achieved universal admiration and was widely viewed as the greatest poem ever written in the English language, but Bentley's edition went against the grain and asserted that it was monumentally flawed. Shortly after its publication, a scathing review appeared in *The Grub-street Journal*:

> [F]or a person, who, tho' allowed to be a very learned Critic, was never imagined to be a Poet, to pour out in extemporary effusions, crude and indigested criticisms, upon the compleatest Poem in the English language; to pretend to alter and correct it in every page; to strike out great number of verses; and to put in many of his own; this justly raises the wonder, scorn, and indignation of all that hear it. This is to act more like a Pedagogue than a Critic; and to treat the Heroic Poem of the Great MILTON, like the exercise of a School-boy.[1]

Written by Richard Russell and John Martyn (editors of the *Journal*), these words reflect the principal grievances that were associated with Bentley's latest project. The infamous pedant had attacked the finest English poem ever written, altering and removing a multitude of apparent mistakes on almost every page. Bentley had even veered from the field of literary criticism in order to try his hand at being a poet, seeing fit to include some of his own verses as suitable replacements for those of the 'Great MILTON'.[2] Russell and Martyn confidently assert that *PL* is 'the compleatest Poem in the English language', bringing credence to the endeavours of those who came before Bentley to show that *PL* is on par with, and even exceeds, its classical forefathers. Comments like Russell and Martyn's demonstrate that

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[1] *The Grub-street Journal* (6 April 1732), no. 118, in *The Grub-Street Journal 1730-33: Volume 3 1732*, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2002).

[2] The theory that Bentley was playing the part of poet manqué was originally proposed by Robert E. Bourdette in his essay '"To *Milton* lending sense": Richard Bentley and *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Quarterly*, 14.2 (1980), 37-49 (41-42).

Milton's epic had secured the prized status of English classic and as such had become a text that was vehemently defended by its readers.

And defend Milton was precisely what Bentley claimed he was doing. Bentley was, by his own admission, shocked

> that for above 60 Years time this Poem with such miserable Deformity by the Press, and not seldom flat Nonsense, could pass upon the whole Nation for a perfect, absolute, faultless Composition: The best Pens in the Kingdom contending in its praises, as eclipsing all modern Essays whatever; and rivaling, if not excelling, both Homer and Virgil.[3]

According to the Dr, much of the poem had been corrupted, a crime that he continuously attributed to a mysterious 'editor' or less frequently 'the printer' in the preface and footnotes of his edition. This editor, the viler of the two culprits, is presented as being a close and yet unidentified associate of Milton's, who brazenly took advantage of the poet's poor state of health in order to 'foist into the Book Several of his own Verses, without the blind Poet's Discovery.'[4] When Bentley is not accusing this mysterious editor of interpolation or the printer of error, his grievances fall directly at the feet of Milton, but these complaints are comparatively scarce and are treated with a degree of mercy due to the poet's blindness, 'though he may fairly plead Not Guilty; and had he had his Eye-Sight, he would have prevented all complaints.'[5] No early reader was willing to believe Bentley's theory and this kind of incensed Grub-street criticism has proceeded to repeat throughout the centuries as scholars have attempted to uncover the rationale behind Bentley's theory concerning the editor, in an honest effort to redeem the work of an eighteenth-century scholar who can be viewed as pioneering the greatest advancements in modern philology.

A major claim that this thesis makes is that the best way to understand Bentley's motives and methods for intervention is to view his edition as a final product of a wider publishing project that spanned over forty years. As such, Bentley's edition only constitutes

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[3] Richard Bentley, 'Preface', *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley (London, 1732).

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

one chapter of this thesis and he follows the study of a handful of monumental contributions to the field of early Milton studies that were facilitated, to a large extent, by the most successful publishers of the early eighteenth-century, Jacob Tonson the elder (1655-1736), and his nephew and business partner, Jacob Tonson the younger (1682-1735). Between them the Tonsons published a succession of luxury editions of *PL* between 1688-1732. The older Tonson was responsible for the illustrious 1688 folio edition and the 1695 collected poetry that was accompanied by Patrick Hume's (fl. 1695) *Annotations on Milton's 'Paradise Lost'*. Following this, the younger Tonson, after taking over the running of the business in 1718, proceeded to publish the 1720 folio edition which was accompanied by Joseph Addison's (1672-1719) incredibly popular 1712 series of *Spectator* essays on *PL*, the 1725 edition which was prefaced by Elijah Fenton's (1683-1730) account of the life of Milton, and finally Bentley's controversial 1732 edition with its gung-ho conjectural emendations. Having analysed and drawn together these major interventions of early critics and editors in the field of Milton studies, it has become apparent that there are many cross-cutting themes that culminate and reach their crazed conclusion in Bentley's edition. It is, therefore, not so much an anomaly within Bentley's own oeuvre and within the early reception of *PL* more broadly, as it was part of a critical tradition gone wrong.

While this thesis does not aim to provide a comprehensive study of the Tonsons, it does hone in on this specific area of their publications in order to shed new light on the following key areas of early modern research: the early reception of Milton and *PL*, the role that literature played in bolstering religious and political debate, the emergence of English literary criticism and textual editing during the first half of the eighteenth-century, and the history of the book trade and the role of publishers. These areas have long been of interest to scholars, but my thesis asks three research questions that address some unresolved issues concerning the editorial reception of Milton, and in particular, *PL*. 1) What was the role of the Tonsons – and the book trade more widely – in shaping the reception of Milton and *PL* at the turn of the eighteenth century, and the development of vernacular literary criticism more broadly? 2) How were the Tonson editions of *PL* defined by the political and religious contexts of the time, and what interventions were they designed to make in order to shape those contexts themselves? and 3) What were the continuities and discontinuities between Bentley's controversial edition and those that came before? The remainder of this

introduction will outline how I contribute towards these different areas of knowledge and how I will endeavour to answer the research questions.

The Tonson Publishing House and the Beginning of Milton's Redemption

Neither the Tonsons, nor the older Tonson's 1688 edition of *PL*, have their own designated chapter in this thesis, but they are nonetheless important threads that appear throughout. The 1688 edition is particularly relevant to the early parts of this study, and so will benefit from some initial elucidation. The state of knowledge surrounding the Tonsons is somewhat speculative due to the lack of primary evidence. There were a series of biographical accounts published in the twentieth-century, but these focus predominantly on the older Tonson and either demote or do not acknowledge his nephew's publishing achievements. They also cover a broad range of topics, of which *PL* is given but a cursory glance.[6] More recently, the work of Stephen Bernard has been integral in reshaping how we view the younger Tonson and the innovative role that he played in the continued publication of *PL*.[7] Bernard has also been key in helping establish the facts about the immense wealth that the Tonson publishing enterprise had accumulated through *PL*,[8] as well as partaking in re-

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[6] G. F. Papali, *Jacob Tonson, Publisher* (New Zealand: Tonson Publishing House, 1968); Harry M. Geduld, *Prince of Publishers, A Study of the Work and Career of Jacob Tonson* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969); Kathleen M. Lynch, *Jacob Tonson, Kit-Cat Publisher* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1971). See also Keith Walker, 'Publishing: Jacob Tonson, Bookseller', *The American Scholar*, 61.3 (1992), 424-430.

[7] Stephen Bernard, 'The Other Jacob Tonson, Why the nephew of the publisher of *Paradise Lost* deserves to be remembered', *TLS*, (2015), 14-15; Bernard, 'Introduction', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). See also 'Jacob Tonson the Elder (London: 1677-1718) Jacob Tonson (London: 1718-1735)' in *The British Literary Book Trade, 1475-1700*, eds. by James K. Bracken and Joel Silver, vol. 170 (Gale: 1996), 292-307.

[8] Bernard, 'Establishing a Publishing Dynasty: The Last Wills and Testaments of Jacob Tonson the Elder and Jacob Tonson the Younger', *The Library*, 17.2 (2016), 157-166. Kathleen M. Lynch also states that 'The works of Milton were to bring Tonson more recognition and greater financial returns than any other publishing ventures.' See Lynch, *Jacob Tonson, Kit-Cat Publisher*, 126. Moreover, John T. Shawcross shows how the rise of pirate copies of *PL* was a marker of the poem's financial viability and demonstrates how the Tonson publishing house responded to this occurrence in order to protect their financial monopoly. See John T. Shawcross, 'Commercialism: Early Editors of Milton and Their Publishers', *Milton Quarterly*, 33.3 (1999), 61-66.

imagining the role of publisher as someone who was deeply invested in the public image of their authors because it was intrinsically linked to the revenue that could be accrued from their works.[9] This latter point was of course integral when it came to Milton because, as the field of research that is concerned with his radicalism has repeatedly shown, for a long time after his death he was largely thought of as a heterodoxical and treasonous Republican who, along with his literary works, should be forgotten rather than celebrated.[10] Throughout their shared tenure as the publishers of *PL*, the Tonsons continuously responded to this popular and nefarious image of Milton, and their efforts to manage his public persona bordered on re-invention.

What this thesis terms as a process of sanitisation began a few years after the older Tonson had purchased half of the rights to *PL* in 1683, with the publication of the 1688 edition.[11] Emma Depledge has most recently acknowledged the monumental impact that the 1688 edition had on Milton's reputation and the canonization of *PL*. She strongly emphasises the financial return of this project as Tonson's primary goal, something that is stressed in relation to all the Tonson editions of *PL*.[12] While this thesis acknowledges the prospect of financial gain as a driving factor, it is more concerned with exploring the critical processes of sanitisation that enabled a successful return. Unlike Depledge, who views the 1688 edition of *PL* as a jealous reaction to the financial success that the printed works of

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[9] Bernard, 'Henry Herringman, Jacob Tonson, and John Dryden: The Creation of the English Literary Publisher', *Notes and Queries*, (2015), 274-277.

[10] For studies on Milton's Republicanism see *Milton and Republicanism*, eds. David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); *Early Modern Nationalism and Milton's England*, eds. David Loewenstein and Paul Stevens (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2008). For studies on Milton's Anti-Trinitarianism see Sarah Mortimer, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution: The Challenge of Socinianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Martin Dzelzainis, "Milton and Antitrinitarianism" in *Milton and Toleration*, eds. Sharon Achinstein and Elizabeth Sauer (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2015). William Poole, 'Milton's Theology', in *John Milton in Context*, ed. Stephen B. Dobranski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[11] Tonson purchased the first half of the rights to *PL* from fellow bookseller Barbazon Ailmer (1670-1709), before purchasing the other half from his partner, Richard Bentley (1645-1697), in 1690.

[12] Emma Depledge, '4. Repackaging Milton for the Late Seventeenth-Century Book Trade', in *Making Milton: Print, Authorship, Afterlives*, eds. Emma Depledge, John S. Garrison, and Marissa Nicosia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

John Dryden (1631-1700) were receiving at the backend of the seventeenth-century, this thesis proposes that the older Tonson was more politically motivated.

One of the ways that a publisher took responsibility for an author's reputation was to exploit a specific cultural moment and make the relevant text appeal to a large demographic of potential readers.[13] As such, Tonson's efforts began with the rather ingenious move to connect *PL* to the major religio-political event of the late seventeenth-century, the Glorious Revolution (1688). The 1688 edition was one of the greatest early modern marketing campaigns that strived to present Milton's masterpiece as politically safe, and more than that, supportive of the majority who pledged allegiance to William III. Critics of this view vary in their reprovals, with some believing it unlikely that Tonson had the Williamite regime in mind,[14] while others deny the possibility altogether.[15] This thesis maintains the year of the initial publication was no coincidence. Under the control of Tonson, *PL* shed its humble format and was repackaged as an illustrious folio, adorned with new and resplendent illustrations, which included a rendition of Satan that looked strikingly like James II.[16] It also boasted a comprehensive subscribers list, which included the names of influential Whigs like John Somers (1651-1716) and Charles Sackville (1638-1706). At a point when all things were engulfed by the idea of revolution, these two chief revolutionary Whigs became Tonson's most illustrious subscribers of the 1688 edition. It would seem that, like all forms of print that had come before, the seventeenth-century innovation of luxury books was quite inseparable from politics.[17] The same goals and outcomes that were associated with pamphleteering never dissipated, they simply transferred into the book

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[13] John Barnard, 'Creating an English Literary Canon, 1679-1720. Jacob Tonson, Dryden and Congreve' in *Literary Cultures and the Material Book*, ed. Simon Eliot (London: British Library, 2007), 307-321 (307).

[14] Geduld, 117.

[15] Walker, 428.

[16] The illustration in question prefaces Book I.

[17] This was not the first point in history where the popularity of books were central to print culture. Books were also important to political and religious discourse and processes during the Reformation and were popular both locally and nationally. See David M. Loades, 'Books and the English Reformation Prior to 1558', in *The Reformation and the Book*, ed. Jean-François Gilmont (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 264-291; Ian M. Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie, *The Beginnings of English Protestantism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

trade, and in relation to this thesis, the educational forms of literature that would soon accompany the later editions of *PL*. Milton had previously used the printing press to disseminate his views, which had subsequently contributed towards his identification as a radical, but rather than lean into Milton's characteristic divisiveness, Tonson repackaged and promoted *PL* in a way that facilitated political and religious unity between Whigs and Tories who supported William. The phenomenon, then, was that a politically suspect poet and his masterpiece were transformed into viable propaganda. Although there is broad agreement that the 1688 edition was the older Tonson's supreme triumph, the publisher's vision was by no means complete. While the popularity of *PL* dramatically increased because the public began to imagine it as a poem that endorsed the Williamite cause, there still remained work to be done with the text itself and the reputation of its author, both of which were still being hounded by lingering and fresh accusations of radicalism.

There is unanimous agreement that the Tonson dynasty was integral to the new explosion of creativity in the book trade that occurred at the closing of the seventeenth-century, a phenomenon that began with the aesthetic innovations of the 1688 edition of *PL*, but went on to incorporate other significant and unique paratextual contributions. There is, however, no study that traces the evolution of these paratextual innovations through the major editions of *PL*, showing how the Tonson publishing house over a period of more than forty years worked closely with several leading thinkers, scholars, and editors of the time in order to sanitise Milton's reputation and greatest work. One of the most interesting ways that the Tonsons' editions achieved this was by bridging the gap between religio-political discourse and a new category of literature, vernacular textual criticism. By championing vernacular commentaries and critical editions, the Tonsons played a decisive role in facilitating the debate about important issues concerning the nature of critiquing and editing English texts, while simultaneously utilising the educational genre for political purposes.

It is not possible, due to limited textual evidence, to ascertain the Tonsons' exact motives in relation to their continued and diverse publication of *PL*, but by viewing their editions alongside one another and highlighting the similarities and differences, a picture emerges of what they were likely trying to achieve through their work with Milton's epic. Characterised by ideological concerns meeting with debates about how best to popularise,

analyse, and edit vernacular texts, the Tonsons' dealings with *PL* would become a monumental undertaking fitting for the monumental figure who was John Milton.

Hume's *Annotations*: Aligning Milton with the Glorious Revolution

My opening chapter will explore the first scholarly contribution to accompany a Tonson edition of *PL*. In the first half of the 1690s, the older Tonson employed the services of *PL*'s most enigmatic commentator, Patrick Hume, to produce the first and largest commentary on the poem. In general, *Annotations* was designed to help the reader navigate the complexities of *PL* by interpreting its difficult language and highlighting classical comparisons, but its size militated against profitable engagement and proved to be more problematic than useful for its readers.[18] Marcus Walsh has defended Hume's contribution by comparing it to seventeenth-century Biblical commentaries, which were equally thorough feats of erudition. This, however, leads Walsh to conclude that Hume was intentionally imbuing *PL* with a similar sacredness that was afforded the Bible, and in doing so, he renders its content above reproach. Somewhat conversely, I argue that Hume's pioneering English criticism was not uniquely tied to Biblical hermeneutics, but it emerged from the wider tradition of erudition that was prevalent at the end of the seventeenth-century. Moreover, according to Walsh's diagnosis, *PL* does undergo a process of sanitisation, but this does not happen by Hume addressing the shades of Milton's radicalism that appear throughout the poem, rather, it happens through the action of skimming over the problematic passages, or pretending that they are not there.[19] This thesis contends against such a notion and suggests that Hume was very much interested in engaging with

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[18] A later commentator of *PL*, Thomas Newton (1704-1782), encapsulates the reading publics primary grievances with Hume's mammoth feat of erudition. See Thomas Newton, 'Preface', in *Paradise Lost*, ed. Thomas Newton (London, 1749).

[19] Marcus Walsh, 'Literary Annotation and Biblical Commentary: The Case of Patrick Hume's "Annotations" on "Paradise Lost"', *Milton Quarterly*, 22.4 (1988), 109-114. See also, Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton & Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing, The Beginnings of Interpretative Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Walsh, '31. Biblical scholarship and literary criticism', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 4 The Eighteenth Century*, eds. H.B Nisbet and Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Milton's radicalism. In this regard, I build on the position of Howard Erskine-Hill and David A. Harper, both of whom view Hume's approach as obscuring Milton's politics, albeit for very different reasons.[20] Harper, in particular, makes some radical revisionist claims about who Hume was and what he was attempting to do with *Annotations*.[21] Unlike Erskine-Hill's view that Hume was an orthodox reader who accommodated Milton to a post-restoration readership by presenting him as being in support of monarchy, Harper argues that Hume was in fact a nonconformist who likely agreed with Milton's infamous anti-monarchical claims as conveyed in his earlier tracts.

This chapter concludes by taking into consideration the relatedness between the 1688 edition and the 1695 collected poetic works, and in doing so provides a fresh perspective about what Hume was trying to achieve with *Annotations*, as well as challenging Harper's claims about his identity. While there has yet to be evidence discovered that reveals the specifics of Hume and the older Tonson's personal or professional interactions, their individual projects support each other in ways that at least hint at the possibility of collaboration on *Annotations*. In part, I agree with Walsh's observation that the aesthetic upgrade of the 1688 edition bestowed upon *PL* the protection of classical status. This was an initial elevation of status that was intended to encourage the reader to view *PL* as an English classic, and if a classic, then it was a monument of literary excellence that could not be completely undermined by the problematic ideologies it allegedly espoused. *Annotations* would complement the 1688 edition by applying the same critical process that was associated with Biblical hermeneutics and other ancient texts, and in doing so, would ratify the position of *PL* as literary classic. If the poem was a classic than it needed to be treated as other classics, which largely involved citing parallels and offering a basic interpretation of the text's meaning. This was a continuation of Tonson's beautifying efforts, except Hume's attention was focussed solely on the text. And building upon Erskine-Hill's contribution, I

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[20] Howard Erskine-Hill, 'On historical commentary: the example of Milton and Dryden', in *Presenting Poetry: Composition, Publication, Reception*, eds. Howard Erskine-Hill and Richard A. McCabe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 52-75; David A. Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 59.3 (2019), 507-530.

[21] Harper released a new book at the end of 2023 where he elaborates on this theory. It was published as I was submitting my research, which is why it is not included. Harper, *Paradise Lost and the Making of English Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge, 2023).

will argue that bombarding the reader with countless comments on Milton's poetic beauties served to deviate the reader's attention away from the more problematic passages of *PL*. More than this, Hume did sanitise the text by addressing the infamous passages that whiffed of regicide, and he did this by burying them in explanatory commentary that functioned to obscure any detrimental interpretation.

While my thesis expands upon the major interventions in Humeian scholarship, it also treads new ground by suggesting that Hume's erudition involved illuminating where *PL* touched upon present societal issues. I will situate *Annotations* amidst the Whig and Tory debates that were taking place before and after the Glorious Revolution and focussed in part on Milton's religious affiliation and political convictions. I will show how Hume's analysis of *PL* helped to transform Milton's reputation as a contentious figure into someone who, through their poetry, could achieve unity across the political spectrum. Hume highlighted, more than any other early reader, Milton's staunch anti-Catholicism as conveyed in *PL*, which united those from both Tory and Whig persuasions who supported William's usurpation of James on religious grounds. Although *Annotations* framed Milton as someone who would have supported the Glorious Revolution, it was not partisan. It is important to note that Tonson published as much Tory literature as he did Whig, but he was not interested in propagating radicalism. In fact, a clear picture of desired societal unity emerges from a number of the Tonson editions of *PL*. Following suit, Hume transformed *PL* into a moderate Whig text, freeing it from the radical Whigs who would revel in the republicanism of its author, and the Jacobites who viewed it as a dangerous text that supported regicidal ideas and challenged entrenched monarchical concepts, such as, the divine right of kings. In short, if the 1688 edition can be viewed as the beginning of Tonson presenting *PL* as a text that supported the Glorious Revolution, then *Annotations* solidified the notion.

Addison's *Spectator* Essays: A Repository of Christian Moralism

The second chapter will discuss the first major contribution that the younger Tonson oversaw: the 1720 'Tickell's' edition, named after the edition's editor, Thomas Tickell (1685-1740). I will begin by comparing the 1720 edition with its most appropriate counterparts,

the 1688 edition and the 1695 edition. This process will build upon Bernard's re-evaluation of the younger Tonson and challenge the narrative that he was an inferior publisher to his uncle. I will argue that the younger Tonson was just as innovative. It will also shed new light on the particulars of what the younger Tonson was trying to achieve through this specific re-publication of *PL*, and in doing so, will convey the equality, if not superiority, of the 1720 edition over the rightfully treasured 1688 edition.

Although not embroiled in the excitement of the Glorious Revolution, this edition was just as important as its predecessors, and far from being mollycoddled by his uncle, the younger Tonson demonstrated agency and a unique vision for the poem. The edition was to be as aesthetically captivating as the 1688 edition, but it was also to include a new paratextual analysis of the poem that was provided by the beloved poet and essayist, Joseph Addison. Addison had produced a series of twelve *Spectator* essays in 1712, which proved to be the most popular criticism of *PL* that had been produced thus far, and as such, would function as a unique selling point for the latest Tonson edition. Thomas N. Corns has most recently compared the 1720 edition to the 1695 edition, showing how Addison's essays are far more successful in helping the reader to understand *PL*. But Corns' largely unflattering view of Addison's methodology seems to suggest a belief that he sacrificed expert scholarship for the sake of accessibility. Accordingly, he views Addison as a Protestant reader of *PL*, but not a close reader. His conclusion is that Addison's desire to make *PL* accessible causes him to neglect the weighty theological issues that are present within the poem, and instead he only emphasises the elements of rudimentary orthodoxy. This, Corns acknowledges, certainly had a domesticating effect on the poem, as it diverted the reader away from the more problematic elements.[22] Moving away from the religious domain, Nicholas von Maltzahn and Abigail Williams argue that Addison's streamlined neo-classical approach divorces Milton's theology from issues of poetic decorum. In a culture that was wary of prophetic enthusiasm, Addison's commitment to Longinus and Aristotle allowed him primarily to define *PL* as a work of poetic excellence, to which the ideological

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[22] Thomas N. Corns, 'Joseph Addison and the Domestication of Paradise Lost', in *Making Milton: Print, Authorship, Afterlives*, eds. Emma Depledge, John S. Garrison, and Marissa Nicosia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

was subordinate.[23] Again, the above scholars interpret the actions of this early reader as functioning to nullify Milton's radicalism by focussing solely on the theologically simple, or the excellence of *PL*'s classical features.

This thesis does not necessarily disagree with these conclusions, but it does show them to be somewhat of an oversimplification. Drawing on studies from Charles A. Knight, Laurence E. Klein, and Karl Axelsson that highlight the *Spectator*'s moral economy and portray Addison as one of England's chief moralists who desired to educate the masses in the ways of politeness, I will argue that the 'Tickell's' edition of *PL* was the most practical edition to date in that it overtly showed how a text could serve society through its propagation of moral imperatives.[24] This emphasis was all part of the broader efforts of England's leading eighteenth-century Whig literary society, the Kit-Kat Club, of which Addison was a valued member, and it was his literary journals, *The Spectator* and *The Tatler*, that became the most effective attempts at moralising the nation.[25] Addison's mission to propagate politeness was impartial in terms of desired audience, but particular in its essence. In accordance with Stephen Miller's definition, this thesis maintains that 'A polite person was someone who controlled his anti-social passions so that other people would enjoy his company.'[26] Addison was passionate about providing the guidance that would facilitate this kind of moral growth, and his mission was inseparable from Christianity, as well as the popular forms of art that inspired and underpinned his vision. It could be said

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[23] Nicholas von Maltzahn, 'The Whig Milton, 1667-1700', in *Milton and Republicanism*, eds. David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 229-253; Maltzahn, 'The War in Heaven and the Miltonic Sublime', in *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration*, eds. Steven Pincus and Alan Houston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 154-179; Abigail Williams, *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[24] Charles A. Knight, 'The Spectator's Moral Economy', *Modern Philology*, 91.2 (1993); Lawrence E. Klein, 'Joseph Addison's Whiggism', in *"Cultures of Whiggism", New Essays on English Literature and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. David Womersley, Paddy Bullard and Abigail Williams (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005); Karl Axelsson, 'Joseph Addison and General Education: Moral Didactics in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Estetika*, 46.2 (2009).

[25] For a study that covers the mission of the Kit-Kat Club, as well as the popularity and influence of the *Spectator* see Ophelia Field, *The Kit-Cat Club* (London: Harper Press, 2009).

[26] Stephen Miller, 'The Strange Career of Joseph Addison', *The Sewanee Review*, 122.4 (2014), 650-660 (656).

that Addison's goal was to reconcile the church with the arts, and show how the latter illuminates and gives fresh expression to the former.

John Walter Good suggested over a century ago, 'Almost every turn of thought in Addison's mind seems to have found some illustration in Paradise Lost; and he had the ability to make others feel this vital connection between Milton and all that was most worth thinking about in life.'[27] In spite of this observation, there has been surprisingly little work undertaken on the relationship between Addison's interest in morality and his work on *PL*. In a similar vein to the work of Michelle Syba that focusses on Addison's interest in the authorial intention underpinning Milton's poetic beauties, this thesis will show how Addison's obsession with locating Miltonic beauties was driven by the relationship they shared with moral imperatives.[28] It was never Addison's chief mission to offer deep theological insight, or grapple with the complexities of Milton's unorthodoxy, instead, the point was to show how *PL* could provide moral reformation through poetic beauties that reflected simple orthodox imperatives. Accordingly, Addison followed in the footsteps of Hume and recognised that Milton had created a poem filled with beauty and sublimity, but he more acutely connected these elements of style to the moral lessons that he argued underpinned the poem. Addison previously asked in his series of *Spectator* papers called 'Pleasures of the Imagination', 'What do we feel when we read a sublime work of literature or see "greatness" in nature?'[29] For Addison, such encounters were akin to spiritual experiences. The feelings of awe and wonder that resulted from art, Addison argued, energised the moral imperatives that permeated the art. This unique connection between the aesthetic and the moral would become most prevalent in his analysis of *PL*. As such, it will become clear that Addison's neo-classical framework did not actually de-sacralise the poem, but it unlocked *PL*'s ability to excite a reader's imagination into visualising a world characterised by Christian morality, and moreover, it sanctified and transformed the individual into an exemplar of that politeness.

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[27] John Walter Good, *Studies in the Milton Tradition* (Illinois: University of Illinois, 1915), 153.

[28] Michelle Syba, 'After Design: Joseph Addison Discovers Beauties', Studies in English Literature, 49.3 (2009), 615-635.

[29] Miller, 656.

The younger Jacob had certainly made a very pleasing offering, one that enhanced the Tonson tradition of popularising and sanitising *PL* through the inclusion of Addison's *Spectator* essays. In the hands of Addison, *PL* became the opposite of an ideologically troublesome text and was elevated to the position of an esteemed moral guide. Although Addison certainly engaged with Hume when formulating his own thoughts on the poem, the marked difference in format and style between *Annotations* and the *Spectator* essays was, however, an initial indicator that there was more at stake than the sanitisation of *PL*. Addison's strict adherence to a neoclassical framework might well have been a reaction to Hume's thorough explanatory commentary. Not only was it more accessible, but it championed an altogether different critical approach. By strictly focusing on the poem's beauties and morality, Addison provided a relatively streamlined method for opening up the text, one that would serve his wider mission to build a better society through the rearing of a polite readership. The popularity of Addison's essays reliably indicates that this was an approach to criticism that was preferred by the populace.

Helping a polite readership navigate *PL* by making scholarship accessible was a noble and unique selling point that always remained an important aspect of the Tonsons' dealings with *PL*. Hume was somewhat limited with regard to his critical methodology, extensive erudition being the style of criticism that was most familiar and readily available to him at the time. However, when Addison entered the conversation about how to best approach the analysis of English literature, he not only innovated by rigidly applying a neoclassical framework, but he made that framework serve society's need and desire for moral guidance.

Fenton's *Life of John Milton*: Maturing into Orthodoxy

The third chapter will focus on the poet and biographer, Elijah Fenton, who was next to contribute towards the Tonsons' catalogue of editions in 1725. This thesis will show how Fenton moves away from long-form commentary on the text and instead focusses on presenting a positive portrait of Milton in his *Life*. This was the first ever biographical account to preface Milton's poetry and it presented a clear distinction between the younger and more pugnacious Milton of the early prose tracts and the matured author of *PL*, which

in turn encouraged the reader to re-imagine Milton not as radical, but moderate and orthodox. In order to demonstrate how *Life* functions in this manner, I will focus specifically on Fenton's interest in Milton's views on divorce. Central to this issue were the seventeenth-century Puritan debates surrounding the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. Polly Ha has been integral to this thesis' understanding of how prominent proto-Anglican and Puritan theologians conceptualised the continuation of certain elements of the Old Testament covenant into the post-ascension church.[30] The central question was, did Christ's teaching on divorce undermine or replace the Deuteronomic law? The former taught that there was no permissible reason for a man to divorce his wife, whereas the latter seemingly made certain allowances for the practice. In his divorce tracts, Milton argued vehemently that Moses and Christ were of one mind, which meant that an interpretation of New Testament teaching that strictly prohibited divorce must be wrong. There was little tolerance for such a view, and rather than convince the church and government that legislative change was required, Milton's arguments only contributed towards his infamy. With regard to this matter, Fenton's reading of the relations between Adam and Eve in *PL*, as well as Milton's personal reconciliation with his wife, indicates a shift from Milton's earlier fringe views to a less contentious and more orthodox standpoint. As such, Fenton's trailblazing *Life* presents an early version of Milton who undergoes a process of ideological transformation, before framing *PL* as the creative culmination of this growth and the truest representation of Milton's beliefs.

Compared to Hume, Addison, Bentley, and even the Tonsons, Fenton has received far less attention from scholars. This is likely because he offers very little in terms of textual analysis, and his *Life*, while being incredibly popular, is not considered as interesting as an examination of *PL*.[31] However, most recently Peter Lindenbaum has provided a study that endeavours to understand the motives that underpin Fenton's unique contribution to the Tonson catalogue of editions. When discussing the different early treatments of Milton's

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[30] Polly Ha, 'Who Owns the Hebrew Doctors? Oriental Scholarship, Historical Proportionality, and the Puritan "Invention" of Avant-Garde Conformity', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 53.1 (2023), 55-85.

[31] John T. Shawcross maintains that Fenton's biography was incredibly popular and was 'constantly reprinted (and pirated) or revised without acknowledgment, even after 1749 when Thomas Newton's life is printed'. See John T. Shawcross, 'Commercialism: Early Editors of Milton and Their Publishers', 64.

poetry and prose, Lindenbaum suggests that 'The poetry started, and for a long period in the eighteenth-century remained, in the hands of figures affecting high aesthetic taste, while the prose stayed with those wishing to promote rather different values or causes, overtly Whig and republican ones.'[32] But this thesis will show that Lindenbaum's view is somewhat of an oversimplification. As has already been suggested, the 1688 edition, *Annotations*, and the *Spectator* essays on *PL* all engaged in the political sphere and dealt with Milton's radicalism as it manifested in his epic, and Fenton was not different in this regard. This thesis will show that Fenton's motives become clearer when viewed as a response to an earlier account of Milton's life that prefaces his collected prose works. Fenton seemingly engages head on with the infamous freethinker, John Toland's (1670-1722), unorthodox portrayal of Milton in an attempt to wrestle him from the clutches of radical Whiggism, the affiliates of which were attracted to Milton's earlier republican ideas and broad religious toleration. Toland, in particular, attempted to argue that Milton's republicanism and dissenting religious convictions were still very much present in *PL* and should be embraced rather than ignored.

Again, the process of sanitisation is upheld with Fenton's edition as Milton's character and religio-political tenets undergo an overhaul, but Fenton was not only a biographer, he was also an editor. Under the supervision of the younger Tonson, Fenton made editorial moves that encouraged the debate about how to best comment on and criticise a vernacular text to expand its borders and encompass the volatile question of how best to amend a text. The discussion surrounding Fenton's amendments has not significantly progressed beyond R.G. Moyles' statement that Fenton was the first to militate against the textual fidelity of *PL*.[33] And Shawcross encapsulates the main grievance that every reader has with Fenton's edition, that is the revisions seem to be based solely on his preferred reading of the text.[34] It was this reliance on one's personal taste, as well as Fenton's use of the footnotes to draw the reader's attention to a handful of his amendments, that has led David Harper to conclude that he was a major inspiration behind Bentley's extremely

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[32] Peter Lindenbaum, 'Rematerializing Milton', *Publishing History*, 41 (1997), 5-22 (7).

[33] R. G. Moyles, *The Text of Paradise Lost: A Study in Editorial Procedure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 56.

[34] Shawcross, 'Commercialism: Early Editors of Milton and Their Publishers', 64.

interventionist 1732 edition.[35] While paying attention to some shades of nuance, this thesis supports the above positions. However, by situating Fenton's edition among the other major editions of English texts that the younger Tonson published throughout the 1720s until his death in 1735, it will become clear that the implementation of conjectural emendation was not an anomaly, but a recurring characteristic. Not only Milton, but Shakespeare as well, became the vernacular test subjects that hosted the debate about the editing of English texts, and what began as minimal intervention with Fenton's edition of *PL* very quickly erupted with a series of other critical editions that were far more invasive.

Bentley's 1732 Edition of *PL*: Restoration or Rewriting?

The final chapter of this thesis will endeavour to understand the motives and methodologies that underpin Bentley's edition of *PL*. Out of all the Tonson editions, Bentley's has come to be viewed as the most confusing and peculiar. From its conception through to the present day, a large proportion of scholarship has remained baffled by Bentley's fundamental reason for intervention. John K. Hale is likely the harshest of Bentley's contemporary critics, believing that his edition is utterly indefensible.[36] After dismissing Bentley's spurious editor as the reason for intervention, Joseph Levine had also struggled to find the logic of the edition,[37] that is before he reached the opinion that it was embroiled in the famous Battle of the Books.[38] Sophie Read argues that Bentley fails to grasp Milton's rhetorical style, resulting in an erroneous interpretation.[39]

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[35] David A. Harper, 'Critical Mass, Contextualising Bentley's *Paradise Lost*', in *Milton in the Long Restoration*, eds. Blair Hoxby and Ann Baynes Coiro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 22-40.

[36] John K. Hale, 'Notes on Richards Bentley's Edition of "Paradise Lost" (1732)', *Milton Quarterly*, 18.2 (1984), 46-50; Hale, 'Paradise Purified, Dr Bentley's Marginalia for his 1732 Edition of "Paradise Lost"', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 10.1 (1991), 58-74.

[37] Joseph Levine, 'Bentley's Milton: Philology and Criticism in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50.4 (1989).

[38] Levine, *The Battle of the Books, History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

[39] Sophie Read, 'Rhetoric and Rethinking in Bentley's "Paradise Lost"', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 41.2 (2012), 209-228.

Other prominent scholarship can broadly be divided into two camps. Ants Oras, John T. Shawcross, Esther Yu, and John Leonard are among those who constitute the first camp. These scholars broadly view Bentley's efforts as enforcing a process of classicisation on the poem, which involves amending the text so that it aligns with Bentley's rigid sense of classical decorum.[40] The other camp is characterised by individuals who view Bentley's conception of a spurious editor as a device that enables him to directly challenge some of the troubling religio-political ideas that pervade the poem. Robert E. Bourdette, William Kolbrener, and Sarah Ellenzweig all interpret the editor as a manifestation of radical metaphysical ideologies, and Bentley's brutal reaction proceeds from his staunch orthodoxy.[41] I do not necessarily disagree with any of the above, but rather than pigeonhole Bentley, this thesis will show that his edition of *PL* encapsulates a great many of his professional interests. For Bentley, the classical and the theological were spheres that often overlapped. Kristine Haugen's monograph provides a more holistic view of Bentley, but even she leans more towards framing him as a Latinate scholar.[42] Nonetheless, it is the arguments of Levine and Haugen that this chapter engages with most rigorously and, in particular, their view that Bentley's edition was a response to the early editors of Shakespeare. However, I will argue that situating Bentley within the rich tradition of Tonson

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[40] Ants Oras, *Milton's Editors and Commentators From Patrick Hume to Henry Todd (1695-1801), A Study in Critical Views and Methods* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1967), 50-74; John T. Shawcross, 'Introduction', in *John Milton Volume 2, 1732-1801. The Critical Heritage*, ed. John T. Shawcross (London: Routledge, 1999), 20-21; Esther Yu, 'From Judgement to Interpretation: Eighteenth Century Critics of Milton's Paradise Lost', *Milton Studies*, 53 (2012). 181-202, 297-302 (185-187); John Leonard, *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost, 1667-1970: Volume I: Style and Genre; Volume II: Interpretative Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), I, II.

[41] Robert E. Bourdette, 'A Sense of the Sacred: Richard Bentley's Reading of *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Studies*, 24 (1988), 73-106; William Kolbrener, '6. Those Grand Whigs, Bentley and Fish' in *Milton's Warring Angels: A Study of Critical Engagements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 107-132; Kolbrener, 'The poverty of context: Cambridge School History and the New Milton Criticism' in *The New Milton Criticism*, edited by Peter C. Herman and Elizabeth Sauer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 212-230; Sarah Ellenzweig, '11 Richard Bentley's *Paradise Lost* and the Ghost of Spinoza', in *God in the Enlightenment*, eds. William J. Bulman and Robert G. Ingram (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 257-277.

[42] Kristine Haugen, *Richard Bentley: Poetry and Enlightenment* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011).

editions of *PL* is the best way to interpret his logic, while also investing the existing ideas surrounding his vision with fresh clarity and certainty. This will involve re-evaluating the evidence, including Bentley's annotated 1720 'Tickell's' edition and the more recently discovered annotated 1674 second edition, in order to offer fresh perspective on Bentley's critical methodologies.[43] It might not have been popular, but when one traces the methodological advances that accompany each of the Tonson editions then Bentley's contribution begins to appear a more logical, if not less crazed, outcome.

It is clear that textual editing is the key issue when it comes to Bentley's edition. In reality, this is a recurring issue that touches almost everything Bentley turned his hand to. The debate concerning the amending of texts was a long-standing and contentious, though exciting, topic. While there was nuance in any given position, scholars usually fell into one of two camps concerning their views on how to best produce new editions of popular texts. Some scholars championed the process of gathering and collating manuscripts, while others distrusted the authority of manuscripts and instead believed that the most accurate version of a text could be reached through the implementation of conjectural emendation. The example and influence of the eminent Dutch scholar, Joseph Scaliger (1540-1609), was extensive in seventeenth and eighteenth-century England.[44] Scaliger was a fierce advocate for conjecture and worked tirelessly to restore textual fidelity to numerous ancient works of literature. In 1578, for example, Scaliger had judged the Hippocratic Corpus as being riddled with interpolations:

> How did the infinite number of excrescences that so terribly distort this little book escape the notice of those learned men? Many men have studied it with close attention, and some have published commentaries on it in Latin or French... All, to

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[43] Bentley's annotated 1674 second edition is held by Trinity Library Cambridge and the shelf mark is Adv.c.2.13; Bentley's annotated 1720 edition containing Paradise Lost and Addison's *Spectator* essays, also known as the 'Tickell's' edition is held by Cambridge University Library and the shelf mark is Adv.b.52.12.

[44] For a study on the influence of Scaliger's brand of scholarship, see Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship. I: Textual Criticism and Exegesis*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), I; Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship. II: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), II.

put it in a nutshell, have wasted their time. For they failed to notice all the spurious

material which complete incompetents have stuffed in there.[45]

It seemed inevitable that this perspective concerning hundreds of textual deformities escaping the attention of every learned reader who had not only studied, but written extensively on the Hippocratic text would become a position that would be eagerly applied to many other monuments of literature.

It is common knowledge that at the closing of the seventeenth-century in England, Scaliger's mantle was taken up by Bentley, who ardently defended the use of conjecture as the foremost device for achieving textual restoration. At the beginning of the eighteenth-century, Bentley's classical editions of Horace (1712) and Terence (1726) closely followed Scaliger's editorial methods, as well as upholding his assumptions that manuscripts were corruptible, and therefore, unreliable tools. Like his Dutch predecessor, Bentley was convinced that if a text had undergone a process of transmission, or if an amanuensis was involved from the outset, then it was a given that corruption would have occurred. This meant that the true or genuine reading of a text was something that needed to be found, restored, and defended, and there was a tool available that trumped the unreliability of the manuscript tradition. Bentley became the inheritor of conjectural emendation and practiced this unremittingly throughout his career, supposedly, in the name of restoration.

Bentley was as influential as he was controversial, and his work on famous Latin texts had a sizeable impact on others who would eventually turn their hand to producing critical editions of English texts. While this thesis does not aim to offer an in-depth comparison of Shakespeare's earliest editors and Milton's most contentious editors, it does acknowledge the methodological similarities and differences between these two fields in order to show that the conception and implementation of textual editing was evolving more rapidly than it ever had throughout the 1720s and 1730s, and Bentley was integral to this process. Even before Fenton's edition, the younger Tonson had approached the poet and translator, Alexander Pope (1688-1744), in 1721 with the idea of producing a new edition of

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[45] Quoted in Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship. I: Textual Criticism and Exegesis*, 181. See also Joseph Scaliger, 'Castigationum in Hippocratis labellum se vulneribus capitis explicatio', in *Hippocratis Coi de capitis vulneribus liber* (Paris: 1578), 29-30.

Shakespeare. Pope was not only a longstanding friend of the Tonsons, but he had also amassed popularity during the early eighteenth-century with his translation of Homer and *Essay on Criticism* (1711), which established him as a good candidate to edit the works of Shakespeare. The results of Pope's efforts were surprising, if not shocking. In the preface to his edition, he had declared his 'abhorrence of all Innovation', that is his aversion to conjectural emendation, and insisted that he had carefully collated multiple manuscripts.[46] The reason given for his intervention was that he believed the current text had been subjected to the tampering of players, and was therefore largely compromised. There is unanimous agreement in the literature that Pope was being dishonest about his methods. Most recently, Carly Watson has written that 'Pope silently made thousands of emendations and omissions in his text of Shakespeare that had no precedent in the Quartos or Folios, most of them serving to regularize Shakespeare's metre or correct his grammar.'[47]

Pope's dishonesty would not go unchecked, and almost immediately after the publication of his edition, Lewis Theobald (1688-1744) called him to account in his *Shakespeare Restored* (1726). Not only had Pope neglected to notice numerous textual errors, but he had also silently amended the text by means of conjecture. Edmund G. C. King notes that unlike Pope, 'Theobald was content to restrict his opinions on the Shakespeare canon to the Preface and footnotes of his edition.' Instead of disturbing the text block, Theobald undermined it in his notes, 'sniping at the Folio canon with notes that questioned the authenticity of certain canonical plays, and vouching for the genuineness of others outside it.'[48] In *Shakespeare Restored*, Theobald ensured that he would not make the same mistakes as Pope. He would not contradict himself, nor would he deceive his readership. He

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[46] Alexander Pope, 'Preface', in *The Works of Shakespeare in Six Volumes*, ed. Alexander Pope (London, 1725).

[47] Carly Watson, 'From Restorer to Editor: The Evolution of Lewis Theobald's Textual Critical Practice', *The Library*, 7th series, 20.2 (2019), 147-170 (164). For more on Pope's editorial methods, see Simon Jarvis, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Shakespearian Textual Criticism and Representations of Scholarly Labour, 1725–1765* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 57-62; Thomas Raynesford Loundsbury, *The First Editors of Shakespeare (Pope and Theobald) the Story of the First Shakespearian Controversy and of the Earliest Attempt at Establishing a Critical Text of Shakespeare* (Hardpress Publishing, 2012), 525-528.

[48] Edmund G. C. King, '4. Cardenio and the Eighteenth-Century Shakespeare Canon', in *The Quest for Cardenio: Shakespeare, Fletcher, Cervantes, and the Lost Play*, eds. David Carnegie and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 81-94 (94).

might have preferred conjecture as a methodological approach, but as Brian Vickers has stated, Theobald presented himself as an 'all-round editor'. His approach would be defined by a respect for the oldest manuscripts, as well as conjectural emendations that were based on a deep knowledge of Shakespeare's style and sources.[49] The rivalry between Pope and Theobald was never resolved, and while the pair remained somewhat ill-tempered towards each other, Pope's second edition of his Shakespeare (1628) incorporated most of Theobald's readings, and recent scholarship has shown that Theobald's edition (1733), also published by the younger Jacob Tonson, allowed many of Pope's emendations to remain.[50]

The older Tonson did not take issue with Pope's and Theobald's editions of Shakespeare like he did with Fenton's and Bentley's editions of *PL*, which indicates that what the latter pair produced were of a different nature. While Pope and Theobald were hugely influenced by Bentley, their editions of Shakespeare more or less followed the standard line that conjectural emendation was fine as long as it was employed in the service of correcting a text, not making it better. Indeed, scholarship might fluctuate in opinion about the degree to which Pope and Theobald adhered to this rule, but it is broadly acknowledged that Fenton and Bentley disregarded it altogether. I will endeavour to show that while Bentley's primary reason for amending *PL* is relatively believable, it was the extent to which he claimed the spurious editor had inserted his forgeries that brought into question his editorial motives. Bentley threw the entirety of himself at the text, which often leaves the reader feeling as though he actually wanted to reshape Milton in his own image.

As has already been alluded to, Bentley was not only a classicist, but he was also an orthodox theologian, meaning that he would naturally gravitate towards some of the poem's more problematic ideas. Previous to Bentley, issues pertaining to decorum had been largely overshadowed by the power of Milton's beauties and sublimity, while the ideological problems had been explained away, ignored, or alleviated by an act of misdirection, which also entailed the almost exclusive championing of Milton's poetic genius. But the most

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[49] *William Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Brian Vickers, 6 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974-1981), I, II.

[50] When discussing Theobald's *King Lear*, Watson writes that 'Theobald allowed the majority of these changes to remain in his text.' And that 'he preserved 144 of the two hundred substantive emendations Pope had made without any support from the Quartos or Folios.' See Watson, 164.

extreme conception of Bentley's infamous editor provided an opportunity for *PL* to be altogether cleansed and restored to a desirable, and yet, imagined orthodox ideal. Bentley amended the poem to make it better reflect a Providentialist worldview, but he also tackled the Anti-Trinitarian elements that some critics had found troubling. In particular, the eternal nature of Christ and his superiority over the angelic hosts is repeatedly stressed by Bentley.[51] This outcome, at least in theory, resonated with the Tonsons' model of sanitisation, but there was something else that Bentley was striving for with his edition of *PL*, something that reached beyond the remit of a single poem. Bentley's edition was meant to be an authoritative example of a text that had undergone restoration solely via conjectural emendation. Bentley aimed to produce an edition of *PL* that would be inspiring for his readers, just as Pope and Theobald had followed in the footsteps of his Horace when working on Shakespeare. If the method and the results were accepted, then they could be replicated. Indeed, Bentley encouraged such a practice. Bentley went to extreme lengths in his effort to shape the course of editing vernacular texts, but unfortunately his desire to prove that a critic's sagacity was far more reliable than any manuscript was severely undermined by the layers of disingenuousness and dishonesty that characterised his edition.

Textual Fidelity and the Tonson Legacy

The degree to which the younger Tonson was involved in Bentley's edition is unknown, but its publication certainly gave rise to conflict and degrees of separation between him and his uncle. Geduld writes that 'The elder Tonson disclaimed all responsibility for the editorial battles that followed his retirement in 1720', before he goes onto frame the younger Tonson as a 'culprit' who 'virtually destroyed his uncle's policy of textual fidelity by permitting Elijah Fenton and Dr. Richard Bentley… to produce their own "amended" or "regularized" editions of Milton.'[52] This opinion has not much changed. Steven Bernard remains relatively isolated in his attempts to positively reshape our understanding of why the younger Tonson might have signed off on the series of contentious editions of

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[51] Bentley amends I:39, II:24-27, II:677-679, III:217-218, IX:166, IX:773-775 because they give off the impression that Christ was created and is equal to the angels.

[52] Geduld, 128.

vernacular texts. He has recently written that 'It was through these critical editions, through the novel renewal of critical attention, that Jacob Tonson the younger ensured his continuing monopoly in these works, and drew attention to them as objects of study and centrepieces in an emerging indigenous canon.'[53] While the contributions of this thesis cannot ratify this notion, they support the possibility that the younger Tonson, and the handful of scholars that he worked with, shared a unique vision for vernacular scholarship. By opening up *PL* and the works of Shakespeare to new critical approaches being implemented by some of England's greatest minds, the younger Tonson reiterated their worth rather than diminish it. Each reprint solidified *PL* as a canonical text, while the paratextual accompaniments served as exciting examples of editorial and critical innovation that were intended to sanitise, restore, and pioneer progressive methodologies. However, conjecture was a controversial tool, one that needed to be used sparingly and only when manuscripts were found wanting. Bentley's edition went too far, and while his methods and scathing analysis of manuscripts influenced many throughout his lifetime, no-one could support such an outlandish implementation of conjectural emendation.

It was after the publication of Bentley's edition that the differences between the two Tonsons became most apparent. The tensions mainly concentrated around differing views on what constituted acceptable editorial approaches to the texts they published. The Tonsons' surviving correspondence certainly support the notion that they were not simply businessmen who acquired texts for printing, nor were they booksellers who stood aloof from their projects waiting to reap a successful return on their investment. Moreover, they were not individuals who set their chosen critics and editors loose on a text, while they themselves had no creative input.[54] The older Tonson was often involved in correcting

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[53] Bernard, 'Introduction', in *The Letters of Jacob Tonson in Bodleian Ms. Eng. lett. c. 129*', ed. Stephen Bernard (Oxford: The Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2019), 37.

[54] The conception of publisher as businessman who only cared about making money has been a popular position held by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin. See Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450-1800* (London: Verso Books, 1985). See also Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of Encyclopédie, 1775-1800* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1979). Conversely, this thesis maintains that an eighteenth-century publisher is more akin to Elizabeth Eisenstein's conception, that is, a kind of intellectual activist. See Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing*

manuscripts,[55] and he clearly worked with his authors to ensure that new editions of their work were as accurate as possible.[56] He was a consistent and fierce advocate of the manuscript tradition, something that is evidenced by the classical editions that he published in the 1690s, all of which relied heavily on manuscript collation, and the effort he undertook to attain a manuscript of Shakespeare for Pope to use when he began working on his edition of the bard's collected works.[57] Moreover, his own attempts at textual criticism documented in his later correspondences portray him as an editor that relied on manuscript collation when arguing for a text's fidelity. In particular, his chief tirade against Bentley's edition of *PL*, which took the form of a letter addressed to his nephew, was the longest piece of literary criticism that he ever wrote, and the argumentation relied almost solely on a manuscript for Book I of *PL* that he owned. This he used to unravel Bentley's chief claim that the poem had been subjected to spurious action.[58] The younger Tonson also worked closely with his editors. For example, he offered textual suggestions to Pope in the period preceding the publishing of his Shakespeare. Pope not only entertained the younger Tonson,

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Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-modern Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

[55] John Dryden, 'Letter 6: John Dryden to Tonson, [August/September 1684]', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 88-89; George Stepney, 'Letter 18: George Stepney to Tonson, [Lipstadt, 24 February 1695], in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 109-111; Matthew Prior, 'Letter 23: Matthew Prior to Tonson, The Hague, 23/13 September [16]95', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 117-118; Dryden, 'Letter 34: John Dryden to Tonson, [London, November, 1697', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 129.

[56] Tonson, 'Letter 37: 'Tonson to Dr Martin Lister, [16 March 1698/9]', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 132-133.

[57] Tonson worked with Cambridge to publish the texts of Horace, Terence, Virgil, and Catullus, Tibullus, and Propertius. He also considered a new edition of Euclid at the end if the seventeenth-century. See Bernard, 'Jacob Tonson the Elder as the Publisher of Classical Editions: A Proposal for new Edition of Euclid', *Notes and Queries*, (2016), 66-69. For Tonson's purchasing of a Shakespeare manuscript for Pope, see 'Jacob Tonson the Elder (London: 1677-1718) Jacob Tonson (London: 1718-1735)', 304.

[58] Stuart Bennet, 'Jacob Tonson: An Early Editor of *Paradise Lost*', *Bibliographical Notes*, 10 (1988), 247-252. For the letter containing the older Tonson's criticism, see Tonson, 'Letter 148: 'Tonson to Jacob Tonson the Younger, [Ledbury, 7 February 1732[/33]]', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 269-272.

but he made the recommended changes.[59] Edmund G. C. King also suggests that it might have been the younger Tonson who originally questioned the authenticity of the 'seven 'apocryphal' plays added in 1664 from the canon', and encouraged Pope to omit them.[60] Apart from the minor suggestions offered to Pope, there is yet no evidence that provides a clear indication of the younger Tonson's views on whether conjectural emendation was superior to manuscript collation. However, his publication of Fenton's and Bentley's editions, both of which implemented conjecture that arguably relied largely on their personal taste, implies some alignment with controversial views. Whether intentional or not, the younger Tonson's publications of English texts during the 1720s and early 1730s not only spearheaded the debate about how to best approach the editing of vernacular texts, but facilitated a discussion about the specifics of conjectural emendation that had far-reaching consequences on the field of literary criticism. All this to say, the Tonsons were publishers who cared about the texts that they owned and worked alongside their authors and editors to produce new critical editions of both ancient and contemporary texts.

In spite of the differences between the two men, the literary world made the effort, following the death of the younger Tonson, to memorialise him as a publisher who was indistinguishable from his uncle, and not as a careless rogue. The following epitaph appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1736): '…Here lies a *noted Bookseller:* / This marble index here is plac'd / To tell, that when he found defac'd / His *Book of life*, he dy'd with grief: / Yet he by true and *genuine* b'lief, / A *new Edition* may expect, / Far more *enlarged*

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[59] Pope, 'Letter 124: Alexander Pope to Jacob Tonson the Younger, [January 1724/25]', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 240; Pope, 'Letter 125: Alexander Pope to Jacob Tonson the Younger, [1725]', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 241.

[60] Edmund G. C. King, '4. Cardenio and the Eighteenth-Century Shakespeare Canon', 86. Pope wrote, 'If I may judge from all the distinguishing marks of [Shakespeare's] style…I make no doubt to declare that those wretched plays...cannot be admitted as his'. See Pope, 'Preface', in *The Works of Shakespear in Six Volumes*, ed. Alexander Pope, xx. The seven apocryphal plays were: *Pericles*, *The London Prodigal*, *Thomas*, *Lord Cromwell*, *Sir John Oldcastle, Part 1*, *The Puritan*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, and *Locrine*. For more on the Shakespeare Apocrypha, see Richard Proudfoot, *Shakespeare: Text, Stage and Canon* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2001); Christa Jansohn, 'The Shakespeare Apocrypha: A Reconsideration', *English Studies*, 84 (2003), 318-29; John Jowett, 'Shakespeare Supplemented' in *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, ed. Douglas A. Brooks (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2007), 39-73; Peter Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

and more *correct*.'[61] The business with Bentley was to be forgotten and the younger Tonson was to be remembered as a publisher who prized, above all else, aesthetic beauty and textual correctness. This thesis will suggest that such a conclusion lacks nuance and that the younger Tonson can be implicated in some sizeable deceptions surrounding Bentley's edition. The likes of Bentley were perhaps not so interested in discovering what an author wrote, as they were with providing what they thought they should have written. The kind of literary criticism that judges a text's rightness by running it through any number of critical or ideological frameworks, while making judgements based on knowledge that was not available to the author, seemingly began at the beginning of the eighteenth-century. To a degree, Hume, Addison, Fenton, and Bentley wanted *PL* to speak into their cultural moment and specific interests, and they only differed in the lengths that they were willing to go to to achieve this goal. Throughout the years, this appropriation of Milton was facilitated by what would become the most successful publishing dynasty of the time, the house of Tonson.

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[61] Quoted in G. F. Papali, *Jacob Tonson, Publisher* (New Zealand: Tonson Publishing House, 1968), 84-85.

Chapter 1: Appropriation

The Glorious Revolution and Patrick Hume's *Annotations on Milton's* 'Paradise Lost'

Method and Function: What is *Annotations*?

Patrick Hume's systematic and exceptionally thorough *Annotations on Milton's* 'Paradise Lost' was published at a point when the criticism of English literary texts in the form of rigorous commentary was practically unheard of.[62] As such, Hume can be hailed as a forerunner in what became a rapidly expanding field of literary studies going into the eighteenth-century. Although he is rarely mentioned by those who followed, it is difficult to comprehend that the engagements of scholars such as Joseph Addison and the notorious Richard Bentley were not, even in the broadest sense, inspired by Hume's initial attempts to grapple with *PL*. The innovative nature of Hume's work begs certain questions about motive and methodology, and although there is no preface to *Annotations*, some of the project's objectives and critical procedures are clearly stated on the title page:

> ANNOTATIONS ON MILTON's Paradise Lost. Wherein The Texts of Sacred Writ, relating to the POEM, are Quoted; The Parallel Places and Imitations of the most Excellent *Homer* and *Virgil*, Cited and Compared; All the Obscure Parts render'd in Phrases more Familiar; The Old and Obsolete Words, with their Originals, Explain'd and made Easie to the *English* Reader.[63]

Although Hume includes much untranslated Latin, Greek, and even Hebrew throughout the commentary, his emphasis on the '*English* Reader' and the desire to ensure that the linguistic complexities of *PL* were easily accessible indicates, at least in part, that

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[62] There were very few commentaries on English works of literature that did exist before Hume's *Annotations*, and none were as extensive. The most relevant comparison was perhaps the several publications of Chaucer's works that were accompanied with a life of the poet and occasional observations on the language.

[63] Patrick Hume, 'Title Page', in *Annotations on Milton's* 'Paradise Lost' (London, 1695).

Annotations was aimed at a polite audience that might have struggled to ascertain the meaning of Milton's language, as well as the myriad of Biblical and classical references. Because there was no strict model to follow, Hume, technically, could approach *PL* in whatever way he saw fit, but because the epic drew so heavily on the storehouses of both biblical and classical texts, it is not surprising that his comments primarily centre around theological, classical, and philological issues. Hume does his reader the service of highlighting where Milton makes use of biblical and classical allusions, some of which are more obvious than others, and offers insight into the areas where Milton could be considered as exceeding his classical predecessors. One of Hume's earliest recorded critics, Thomas Newton, acknowledges Hume for being the first to annotate Milton, but remains highly critical about the unrestrained thoroughness of *Annotations*. In the preface to his edition of *PL* (1749), Newton lambasts Hume for saying what never needed to be said:

> P. H. or Patrick Hume, as he was the first, so is the most copious annotator. He laid the foundation, but he laid it among infinite heaps of rubbish. The greater part of his work is a dull dictionary of the most common words, a tedious fardel of the most trivial observations, explaining what requires no explanation: but take away what is superfluous, and there will still remain a great deal that is useful; there is gold among his dross, and I have been careful to separate the one from the other.[64]

The idea of Hume 'laying the foundation' not only corresponds to his position as the first commentator on Milton, but that he laid the basis of how to best approach the critical analysis of *PL*. As such, his methodology was good, but it was executed poorly. Newton had no qualms with the Biblical, classical, and philological focus of *Annotations*, his own notes on *PL* followed suit, but he found that its mammoth length and density overshadowed its capacity to be helpful. Any insightful comments, according to Newton, were shrouded 'among infinite heaps of rubbish', but fortunately for the readers of his own edition, he was able to distinguish between the 'useful' and 'superfluous', and incorporate the 'gold' while discarding the 'dross'. Newton's complaint is not unfounded, *Annotations* is 321 pages in length, and offers commentary on a vast amount of Milton's verses, but it is unfair to be so

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[64] Newton, 'Preface', in *Paradise Lost*, ed. Thomas Newton.

scathing about Hume's thoroughness, as though it was an atypical approach. In reality, what Newton labels as a 'dull dictionary' and 'tedious fardel' is characteristic of the mountainous approach that was common in late seventeenth-century erudition.

Marcus Walsh has most recently recognised Hume's debt to seventeenth-century biblical hermeneutics and commentaries, which are characterised by extensive interpretation, explication, and translation. Walsh argues that Hume's position as a pioneer of English literary criticism suggests that he had little to draw upon in terms of working secular models, meaning that he had to rely on what was available to him, that is, sacred English commentaries. This seems like an overly particular conclusion to draw, especially when scholars were also working on Latin commentaries that exhibited a similar methodological thoroughness when dealing with other ancient texts.[65] In part, Walsh's perception of a unique relationship between *Annotations* and English Biblical commentary emerges from the fact that they are both composed in English, but it is just as likely that Hume primarily writes in the vernacular because *PL* was written in the vernacular and he recognised that it engages with matters that concerned English people, something that this study will return to in due course. Nonetheless, Hume's verse by verse explanation of the text via paraphrase, his unfolding of its meaning for the benefit of the reader, which often entailed drawing upon a wide range of exegetical materials, and his endeavour to draw out the moralistic elements of *PL* are all, according to Walsh, characteristic of Biblical commentaries like Henry Hammond's *Paraphrase, and Annotations upon All the Books of the New Testament* (1653).[66] *Annotations* is therefore not a product of unchecked enthusiasm, but reflects the exhaustive detail of seventeenth-century Biblical commentary,

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[65] Thomas Roebuck, ''Great Expectations Among the Learned': Edward Bernard's Josephus in Restoration Oxford', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 23.3 (2016), 307-325 (316-325). This article focusses on one of the seventeenth-century's most eagerly anticipated editions of an ancient text, Edward Bernard's edition of Josephus. Roebuck outlines how Bernard, from 1680 onwards, dedicated himself to exploring issues relating to cultural contextualisation, chronology, Greek and oriental philology, and connections between Josephus and Rabbinic sources.

[66] Walsh, 'Literary Annotation and Biblical Commentary: The Case of Patrick Hume's "Annotations" on "Paradise Lost"', 109-114. See also, Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton & Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing, The Beginnings of Interpretative Scholarship*; Walsh, '31. Biblical scholarship and literary criticism', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 4 The Eighteenth Century*, eds. H.B Nisbet and Claude Rawson.

and, I would add, erudition more broadly. However, equating *Annotations* to Biblical commentary leads Walsh to frame *PL* as a national Scripture, another conclusion that is perhaps overstated. Just because *PL* shares in the Bible's critical treatment, meaning that it is a text that requires and is worthy of interpretation and explication, does not mean that it shares another of the Bible's enduring characteristics, that is its fundamental correctness and infallibility, a view that was typically associated with Protestantism. By focussing on the overarching methodology of *Annotations*, Walsh frees himself from tackling the more problematic passages within *PL*, and claims that, on the whole, Hume was also not concerned with Milton's radicalism.[67] Although this may be partly true, I and a number of other scholars have concluded that Hume does repeatedly engage with and attempt to sanitise the regicidal and theologically unorthodox Milton.

By moving away from general description of methodology towards those who have offered a more thorough analysis of Hume's annotations, it will become clear that Hume's motives were not merely explicatory excellence, but were often tinged with or sometimes overtly religio-political in nature. Hume's work is not only indicative of the seventeenth-century Biblical literary culture that he was clearly influenced by, but it was also inescapably shaped by the political and religious moment in which it was conceived. One of Hume's earliest modern critics, Ants Oras, broadly shares in Newton's contempt when he writes: 'Details are usually heaped on details without any close connection with the context in Milton. Hume seems to be pouring out the superabundance of his knowledge on the reader, and to be giving a course in general education.'[68] However, Oras does detect hints of intercession, which leads him to conclude that 'Hume no doubt was partly carried away by

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[67] To be fair to Walsh he is upfront about the purpose of his work: 'It is not my purpose in this paper either to describe or to defend Hume's enterprise at all points…Instead I intend to suggest that, among all the apparently disparate elements of his work, there are some clear generic characteristics, of some significance both for the critical history of Paradise Lost, and for the theoretical history of literary annotation.' See, Walsh, 'Literary Annotation and Biblical Commentary: The Case of Patrick Hume's "Annotations" on "Paradise Lost"', 109. Having said that, Walsh does repeatedly overlook minor details and paraphrases that invite deeper analysis. An example of this is when Walsh briefly discusses Hume's paraphrase of Milton's 'gay religions full of pomp and gold' (*PL* 1.372), and describes it as nothing more than 'daring'. See, Walsh, *Shakespeare, Milton & Eighteenth-Century Literary Editing, The Beginnings of Interpretative Scholarship*, 59.

[68] Oras, 23.

his enthusiasm, and could not resist the temptation to reshape Milton after his own fashion.'[69] The notion of re-shaping Milton seems to be particularly applicable to his infamous role in the regicide, and as such has had a large bearing on subsequent studies of *Annotations*. Howard Erskine-Hill has argued that *Annotations* functions to de-historicise *PL* by obscuring Milton's politics. After reviewing several textual examples, Erskine-Hill concludes that:

> Hume's strategy now seems clear. He is not unconcerned with Milton's life. He is very much concerned with political and historical matters, but not to the extent of featuring Milton's record or views on them…Hume's 'Annotations' is, perhaps, the first attempt to accommodate Milton to later times, and take the political sting out of his metaphysical epic…[70]

Erskine-Hill suggests that Milton, although not explicitly, did make his political views known in *PL*, and that Hume had every opportunity to highlight and explicate them, but he chose not to. This was intentional, an effort to sanitise the poem for a post-restoration readership, and when Hume's own political standpoint is subtly and intermittently presented throughout his commentary, it supports a reading of *PL* that acknowledges the institution of monarchy.

Most recently, David A. Harper has radically challenged the accepted identity of Patrick Hume, arguing that the author of the *Annotations* is more likely to be Peter Hume, an obscure nonconformist who was functioning within the Royal household. Historically, Patrick Hume has been identified as a Scottish Whig 'literary scholar and poet', who 'was possibly connected to the Polwarth branch of the family', and attested to have been a schoolmaster in London. There are two works attributed to him, *Annotations* and *A Poem Dedicated to the Immortal Memory of Her Late Majesty the Most Incomparable Q. Mary* (1695), the latter of these 'indicates a protestant standpoint, with a strong commitment to

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Erskine-Hill, 'On historical commentary: the example of Milton and Dryden', in *Presenting Poetry: Composition, Publication, Reception*, eds. Howard Erskine-Hill and Richard A. McCabe, 67.

the majesty of the sovereign.'[71] Harper agrees that the Hume who writes *Annotations* and *A Poem Dedicated* are the same person, but he does not entertain the possibility that this individual was a Scottish Whig schoolmaster called Patrick Hume. While the evidence that Harper utilises when building a profile of Peter Hume is ample, his theory that this nonconformist servant to Mary II has been misidentified as Patrick Hume is perhaps not as convincing as he would have us believe.[72]

After delivering a compelling comparative study of *A Poem Dedicated* and *Annotations*, which strongly supports the notion that they were produced by the same hand, Harper bases his reidentification of Patrick Hume on a rather minute and somewhat overstated textual detail. At the closing of Hume's eulogy to Mary, the narrator refers to himself as both 'Subject' and 'Servant' to the queen,[73] a 'specific claim' that Harper believes 'suggests a relationship with Mary beyond that of an ordinary subject.'[74] It is this supposed familiarity that Harper relies on in order to re-attribute *Annotations* and *A Poem Dedicated* to Peter Hume. However, I would contend that it was not particularly unique for Whig authors who were publishing works that discussed the king and queen to refer to themselves as servants. For example, in the Epistle Dedicatory of *An Heroick Poem Upon the King Humbly Presented to the Queen* (1694), the somewhat obscure politician and poet, William Culpeper (died 1726), signs off as Mary's 'Most Obedient Dutiful Subject, and most Devoted Humble Servant.' Moreover, John Dennis has his rendition of Mary in *The Court of Death. A Pindarique Poem, Dedicated to the Memory of Her Most Sacred Majesty, Queen Mary* (1695), refer to him as a 'faithful servant'. Finally, a young Colley Cibber (1671-1757) addresses William in the epistle dedicatory of what he claims to be his first attempt at poetry, *A Poem on the Death of Our Late Soveraign Lady Queen Mary* (1695), and signs off

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[71] Paul Baines, *Hume, Patrick (fl. 1695)*, (2004), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14149> [accessed 24 February 2022], 1.

[72] David A. Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', 511-518. Such evidence includes Jacob Tonson's original subscriber list from the 1688 folio editions of *PL*, baptismal records, school lists, various state documents, and marriage and death records.

[73] Patrick Hume, *A Poem Dedicated to the Immortal Memory of Her Late Majesty the Most Incomparable Q. Mary* (London, 1695), XIV, 16.

[74] Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', 514.

as 'Your Graces Most Devoted, and Most Humble Servant…'[75] To the best of my knowledge, none of these authors were personally acquainted with the monarchs that they confessed to serve at the point of the publication of these works. They were, however, part of a Whig literary culture that produced a plethora of texts congratulating William for his military victories, as well as countless birthday odes, songs, and eulogies, all of which served the cause of the new regime and defended the accession of William.[76] This was the resounding sentiment of many Whig texts that were published from 1688-9 onwards, and Hume's eulogy is no exception. In reality, the brand of Whiggishness of *A Poem Dedicated* is not particularly conducive to Harper's depiction of Peter Hume, 'a Nonconformist servant in the Royal Household, [who] welcomes strictly limited monarchy' and sympathises with Milton's views.[77] Thus, it seems just as likely that Hume's reference to being Mary's 'Servant' is a general and customary display of Whig loyalty, rather than a detail denoting personal acquaintance.

In relation to *Annotations*, Harper argues similarly to Erskine-Hill, except that his thesis concerning Hume's nonconformity leads to the view that any obscuring that is taking place was intended as an effort to render *PL* a suitable platform for radical politics to be discussed. According to Harper there are two ways, broadly speaking, that Hume's methods obscure Milton's politics. Firstly, Harper recognises that Hume is working within classical scholiums, which function to elevate *PL* to the status of epic, and by doing so, remove it from political controversy: '…Hume was the first to use the ancient affinity of *Paradise Lost*

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[75] William Culpeper, 'To the Queen', in *An Heroick Poem Upon the King Humbly Presented to the Queen* (London, 1694); John Dennis, *The Court of Death. A Pindarique Poem, Dedicated to the Memory of Her Most Sacred Majesty, Queen Mary* (London, 1695), IV, 3; Colley Cibber, 'To the Most Illustrious William', in *A Poem on the Death of Our Late Soveraign Lady Queen Mar'* (London, 1695). See also, Nahum Tate, *Mausolæum: A Funeral Poem On our late Gracious Sovereign Queen Mary, Of Blessed Memory* (London, 1695). The title page refers to Tate as 'Servant to His Majesty.'

[76] Williams, '3. Legitimacy and the warrior king 1688-1702', in *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture 1681-1714*, 93-134. In this chapter, Williams investigates numerous Whig texts that 'legitimate the unconstitutional and unprecedented events of 1688-9, and…celebrate William's military campaign on the Continent' (93).

[77] Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', 520.

as a critical method endeavouring to isolate the poem from political-religious controversy.'[78] The second method of concealment sees Harper aligning himself with Walsh when he notes that by applying Biblical hermeneutics to the poem, Hume is elevating *PL* to a place where it can be above reproach.[79] 'Precisely because *Paradise Lost* was a politically controversial work struggling for acceptance in a politically turbulent time, Hume's treatment of it in a manner commensurate with scripture was not a predictable response, but instead an intervention designed to make the poem more palatable.'[80] Although Harper makes the same overly particular assumption that Hume's hermeneutics are purely Biblical, rather than methods that would be applied to comment on any ancient text, he does go further than Walsh when he argues that *Annotation's* methodological inheritance is not simply an expected mode of criticism, but an intervention designed to distance Milton from his radicalism.

Considering the anxiety that surrounded Milton and his literary endeavours, it is difficult to comprehend a universal acknowledgement of *PL* as an English classic, let alone a national Scripture that was above reproach. In a broad sense, Walsh's work on *Annotations* highlights the Bible's immense and comprehensive influence; it was, after all, the main didactic and only infallible source that instructed the individual and guided the state in all manner of things.[81] *PL*, on the other hand, was far more akin to the classics, which in their humanistic capacity, followed behind the Bible in terms of wisdom and practical morality,

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[78] Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', 519. See also, Jack Lynch, 'Betwixt Two Ages Cast: Milton, Johnson, and the English Renaissance', *JHI*, 61.3 (2000), 397–413 (402). Lynch argues that *Annotations* is one of the first attempts to treat an early modern vernacular work like a text from antiquity.

[79] Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', 519. See also, Jonathan Brody Kramnick, 'Literary Criticism among the Disciplines', *ECS*, 35.3 (2002), 343-360 (352). Kramnick argues that Hume's particular exegetical approach sets him apart from subsequent commentators, such as Joseph Addison.

[80] Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', 519.

[81] *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, C. 1530-1700*, eds. Helen Smith and Kevin Killeen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). This collection of essays focusses on the centrality of the Bible in every area of the early modern era. Its studies cover wide ranging examples of biblical exegesis and translation.

but nonetheless maintained an enduring popularity.[82] In reality, *PL* was far from infallible, or even tolerable, in relation to the ideas that it advanced. While Walsh argues that it was already a literary classic by the time Hume published *Annotations*, I will contend that *Annotations* actually shows numerous signs that some intervention was required before it could be truly accepted as an English classic.[83] There were others before him, but Hume's *Annotations* was a major intervention in an attempt to gain widespread acceptance of *PL* as a safe, religiously edifying, and politically advantageous text. It is true that Hume provided the integral final requirement that enabled the poem to be viewed as a classic, that is a complete commentary on the text, but the motivations that comprise Hume's methodology are dualistic and reveal that both literary and religious matters were important to the process of *PL* achieving classical status in an English Christian setting.[84] Hume, the literary scholar, is concerned with the stylistic merits of *PL* and deals with the poem as a classical philologist, bringing to bear upon the text his extensive knowledge of multiple languages.[85] He identifies where Milton imitates the classics and provides the relevant Latin and Greek sources. Hume, the religious commentator, adopts similar tactics but for different purposes. This side of Hume's critical persona was more concerned with the elements of *PL* that were relevant to vindicating Milton's reputation and could be utilised in contemporary religio-political debates. The divisibility of Hume's dual persona is not always explicit, to the contrary, there are moments when a clear cross over is apparent. Most notably is the

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[82] *Classical Commentaries, Explorations in a Scholarly Genre*, eds. Christina S. Kraus and Christopher Stray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). This is a rich collective study of classical commentary spanning from the ancient world to the twentieth century. It includes individual studies of commentaries on both Greek and Latin texts, including Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Lucretius, &c. Each study highlights the important cultural role that the classics have played throughout history.

[83] Walsh, 'Literary Annotation and Biblical Commentary: The Case of Patrick Hume's "Annotations" on "Paradise Lost"', 113. Here, Walsh suggests that by 1695 *PL* had already attained the status of a classic. This status was marked and ratified by the folio fourth edition of 1688.

[84] Poole, *Milton and the Making of* 'Paradise Lost' (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 284. William Poole suggests that if a work of literature from Milton's period was to achieve classical status, then '…it tended to require four things: republication in deluxe folio format, commentary, translation, and imitation.'

[85] Leonard, 'Sound and Sense: 1667-1800', in *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost, 1667-1970: Volume I: Style and Genre; Volume II: Interpretive Issues*, I, 12.

occasional comment on the places where he believes that Milton exceeds the classics through the sublimity of his subject.[86] While I am sceptical of labelling *PL* a national Scripture because it was clearly a fallible text, many of Hume's notes are devoted to highlighting what he believed Milton got right.

In this regard, Hume's listing and explication of a great many Biblical allusions helps to support the poem's general orthodoxy, but what has remained largely neglected is Hume's specific illumination of Milton's Anti-Catholicism. Not only does Hume attempt to neutralise the more regicidal elements of *PL*, but he draws connections between Milton's polemical attacks and the popular Anti-Catholic narrative of the late seventeenth-century. This chapter will argue that this should be viewed as an attempt to accentuate and celebrate an element of religious commonality, which in turn helped to render Milton more tolerable and enabled *PL* to be co-opted for the Williamite cause. Having said that, it is important to acknowledge that Hume probably did not set out with the express motive of pinpointing Milton's Anti-Catholicism, and it is true that such observations are comparatively few, but that does not mean that they are not important to a comprehension of *Annotations*. There are numerous instances where Milton's Anti-Catholicism is so explicit that it leaves one wondering, similar to Thomas Newton, why Hume felt the need to point it out at all. This could just be the result of his meticulous hermeneutics, but the characteristically hostile delivery of his explications leads me to believe that this is a strategic choice, one that is underpinned by political expediency. This study will explore two separate points where Hume's analysis of Milton's prolonged Anti-Catholicism formulate, what amounts to, Whig Anti-Catholic tracts. The only other scholar who has paid any real attention to the Anti-Catholic nature of *Annotations*, John N. King, has noted that, on occasion, Hume's polemical interpretations are exaggerated, and it is perhaps incorrect to view Milton's religious attacks as being solely directed towards Catholicism.[87] If, however,

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[86] For an example of this see Hume's note on 1.16. This high opinion of Milton's sublimity is characteristic of later seventeenth and early eighteenth-century commentators, such as John Dennis. In the preface to *The Passion of Byblis* (1692), Dennis applauds Milton for his soaring imagination and daring images that elevate him above all authors belonging to Antiquity (C1r). In his later work, *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (1701), Dennis once again returns to Milton's soaring imagination, but makes it more explicit that *PL* exceeds the classics because of its author's superior religion. (201).

[87] John N. King, *Milton and Religious Controversy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 185, 187.

Hume is in part trying to accommodate Milton to a Whig readership by redefining *PL* as a text that supports the underlying rationale of the Glorious Revolution, then any polemical overemphasis is not surprising, but part of Hume's strategy. Although *Annotations* is generally able to dissociate itself from the crudeness of pamphlets, there are points when the educational genre appears to be at least subconsciously infected. In particular, this study will show how Hume's analysis of Satan and the Princes of Hell involves the utilisation of language, images, and themes that demonstrate close affiliation with popular Whig schools of thought and Anti-Catholic texts. Whether intentional or not, it suggests that Hume was immersed in this polemical culture, and that this immersion facilitates a more covert co-opting that, although not as explicit, would have still certainly resonated with his Whig readers and contributed towards the sanitisation of Milton.

The Political Backdrop to *Annotations* and The Besmirching of Milton's Character

Harper and others have stressed that early readers could not separate Milton's politics from his poetry, but there was a minority who concluded, if not somewhat begrudgingly, that the religious benefits of *PL* outweighed its faults and could, therefore, be of some service to Christianity.[88] Among these was the licenser of *Paradise Lost*, Thomas Tomkins (1637/8-1675), a religious authoritarian, who, as relayed by Nicholas von Maltzahn, '…insisted on a single national church, and urged a narrow uniformity.'[89] Tomkins' zealous orthodoxy made him deeply anxious about dissension and, what he perceived to be, an encroaching toleration that threatened the Anglican ideal of religious unity. Initially, *PL* was denied licensing because Tomkins detected hints of treason, particularly in the lines:

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[88] Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', 511. See also, Poole, 'The Early Reception of Paradise Lost', *Literature Compass*, 111 (2004), 1-13 (1). Here, Poole observes that 'the Milton most people remembered: [was] Milton the political disgrace, the pseudo-senator, the defender of divorce and regicide.'

[89] Maltzahn, 'The First Reception of Paradise Lost (1667)', *The Review of English Studies*, 47.188 (1996), 479-499 (485).

As when the Sun new ris'n

Looks through the Horizontal misty Air

Shorn of his Beams, or from behind the Moon

In dim Eclips disastrous twilight sheds

On half the Nations, and with fear of change

Perplexes Monarchs.[90]

<div align="center">(I:594-599)</div>

In his biographical account on Tomkins, E. I. Carlyle writes that this 'is Tomkins's main claim on the interest of posterity, and the cause of no little censure', before he acknowledges that Tomkins eventually 'overcame his misgivings and granted his imprimatur some time before 20 August 1667.'[91] Maltzahn's account of Tomkins' dealings with Milton's poem convey that although he did recognise dissenting elements, he also considered its elaborate poetic nature as being beyond the average reader's comprehension. Maltzahn writes that in 'the quest for uniformity within a single Church, there was reassurance in the apparent orthodoxy of much of the poem as also in its engrossing elaboration of its themes.'[92] Saved by its obscurity, *PL* went to print in 1667 and Tomkins continued to focus on what he believed were more immediate, and ostensible threats.[93] Another example is the Royalist, Anglican divine, and correspondent of the Royal Society, John Beale (1608-1683), whose correspondence with John Evelyn (1620-1706) in 1667/68 divulge a growing excitement over *PL*. In their compendious work, *Paradise Lost, 1668-1968, Three Centuries of Commentary*, Earl Miner, William Moeck, and Steven Jablonski state that Beale's letters to Evelyn 'show an enthusiastic desire to see Milton play a role as poet laureate and extoller of

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[90] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *John Milton, The Major Works*, eds. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 370.

[91] E. I. Carlyle, revised by Sean Kelsey, *Tomkins, Thomas (1637/8-1675)*, (2004), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27516> [accessed 22 February 2022], 1-2.

[92] Maltzahn, 'The First Reception of Paradise Lost (1667)', 487.

[93] Tomkins published a pamphlet in 1667 entitled, *Inconveniences of Toleration* (1667), wherein he outlines the principal dangers of a broad toleration. He states that if a person's liberty of conscience is 'Universal and Absolute, it layeth us open to all the folly and phrenzy imaginable, to all those Heresies which the Scripture calls Damnable, and is a public Invitation to all sorts of strong Delusions, and the believing of Lyes…' (B).

the Royal Society. This is in spite of Beale's considering him a Republican and sectarian...'[94] It must be stressed that these examples of toleration are the exception rather than the rule, and it did not stop both Beale and Tomkins vocalising their concerns about Milton. This was a matter of acquiescing for the greater good of the Protestant religion. For Tomkins, *PL* was mainly orthodox which meant that it could help rather than hinder the striving for uniformity, and for Beale, Milton's talent was unrivalled, which meant that he would be a fantastic 'extoller' and addition to the Royal Society, who dedicated its growing knowledge of the natural world to the service of the church and a number of its traditional doctrines. Most noteworthy was their ongoing defence and ratification of an orthodox view of God's providence.[95] There is, however, no shortage of examples that verify a hostile distrust of Milton, and although he might have been accepted as a masterful writer, his shameful status rendered his work forbidden fruit.

One of the most interesting besmirchments of Milton's character was instigated by the fanatical priest, Titus Oates (1649-1705), in *A True Narrative Of the Horrid Plot* (1679). This Popish Plot was a gruesome hoax that had a monumental impact on the Whig-Tory battles for power. From the Whig point of view, the terrifying perils of Catholicism that Oates's account outlined would inevitably come to pass if the Catholic James II was allowed to succeed his brother. Numerous Tories, on the other hand, seemed to overlook or broadly ignore this detail, and regardless of James' Catholicism, they favoured supporting the divine right of kings. This did not mean that they were Pro-Catholic, or dismissive of Oates entirely, only that they utilised the Popish Plot in different ways. What the Tories seemed to take

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[94] Earl Miner, William Moeck, and Steven Jablonski, 'Early Commentary', in *Paradise Lost, 1668-1968, Three Centuries of Commentary*, eds. Earl Miner, William Moeck, and Steven Jablonski (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2004), 32. See also, Maltzahn, 'The First Reception of Paradise Lost (1667)'.

[95] James E. Force, 'Hume and the Relation of Science to Religion among Certain Members of the Royal Society', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 45.4 (1984), 517-536 (517). Concerning the specific religious beliefs of some of the members of the early Society, Force writes: 'The early Society contained adherents to a variety of sects including Puritans ejected from ecclesiastical office, converts to Catholicism, Anglican courtiers and country gentlemen, Presbyterian Royalists, incipient Latitudinarians, and even two deists.' (517). This eclectic mix might have been why Beale thought Milton was a good fit, and explains his capacity to overlook Milton's politics. Force does, however, stress that the most prominent early and or founding members such as Robert Boyle, John Wilkins, and a young Isaac Newton were primarily dedicated to the orthodox and Providentialist goal of showing how God interacted with and governed his creation. (517).

particular interest in was Oates' spurious claim that Milton was a Catholic who undermined the constitution of monarchy and encouraged others to do so as well. Tory literature framed Milton as a dangerous influence on radical Whig schools of thought, and it did this by emphasising the connection between Puritan Anti-Monarchism and Catholicism. George F. Sensabaugh has argued that 'With the shrewd instinct of a political opportunist, he [Oates] exploited the complex of ideas that associated Presbyterians and Jesuits and that made them both common enemies to the hereditary English Crown.'[96] The central similarity was that both Jesuits and Presbyterians believed in the people's right to overthrow a tyrannical monarch, a belief that Milton had clearly expressed in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), shortly after the execution of Charles I.[97] Directly addressing Charles II, Oates argued that the Anti-Royalists who murdered his father were motivated by Jesuit ideas, and that 'the government of Cromwell, which denied to the House of Stuart the right to the Crown, had been contrived by agents from Rome.'[98] Oates places Milton and his pen at the centre of this political conspiracy:

> The Popish Lord is not forgotten, or unknown, who brought a Petition to the late Regicides and Ursurpers, signed by about Five hundred principal Papists in England; wherein was promised upon condition of a Toleration of the Popish Religion here by a Law, their joint resolution to abjure and exclude the Family of the Stuarts for ever, from their undoubted right to the Crown. Who more disheartned the Loyalty and patience of your best Subjects, than their confident Scriblers, White and others? And Milton was a known frequenter of a Popish Club. Who more forward to set up Cromwell, and to put the Crown of our Kings upon his head, than they? Give me

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[96] George F. Sensabaugh, 'Milton Bejesuited', *Studies in Philology*, 47.2 (1950), 224-242 (230). For other accounts concerning Milton's early Royalist critics see, Sensabaugh, 'That Vile Mercenary Milton', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 3 (1968), 5-15; and John Rumrich, 'Critical responses, early', in *Milton in Context*, ed. Stephen B. Dobranski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 119-128).

[97] Sensabaugh, 'Milton Bejusuited', 225. Although Milton was not a Presbyterian, Sensabaugh maintains that he did share in their beliefs concerning the principles of government during his pamphleteer years.

[98] Sensabaugh, 'Milton Bejusuited', 230.

> leave to tell Your Majesty, that his new-fangled Government was contrived by a Popish Priest, and Lambert, a Papist for above these Thirty years.[99]

This sly political move encourages a solid connection between the Republicans and Catholicism, which meant that Milton was not only a key player in the regicide, but he was also a potential Catholic.[100] Although this allegation seems absurd in light of Milton's sustained attacks on Popery, Sensabaugh argues that the Tories and High Churchmen gladfully accepted and further embellished such accounts in service of their ongoing wars on, what they feared to be, an ever-expanding Whig rebelliousness against the Stuart monarchy.[101] After the exclusion crisis of 1679, Tories such as Roger L'Estrange (1616-1704) and Edward Pelling (1640-1718) produced pamphlets that addressed 'the struggle over

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[99] Titus Oates, 'To His Sacred Majesty Charles the II…' in *A True Narrative of the Horrid Plot and Conspiracy of the Popish Party…* (London, 1679).

[100] Establishing connections between Puritanism more widely and Catholicism was a prevalent topic in mid-seventeenth-century literature. For example, *The puritan and the papist* (1643) was a satire written by the prominent Royalist poet Abraham Cowley, and exemplifies the perceived similarities between Puritanism and Catholicism, in that they both lie to accomplish their agendas: 'So two rude *Wave*, by Storms together thrown, / Roar at each other, Fight, and then grow *One*. / *Religion* is a *Circle*; men contend, / And Run the Round in dispute without end. / Now in a *Circle* who go contrary, / Must, at the last, *meet* of necessity. / The *Roman Cath'lique* to advance the *Cause* / Allows a *Lye*, and calls it *Pia Fraus*. / The *Puritan* approves and does the same, / Dislikes nought in it but he *Latin name* (A2).

[101] Milton's broad concept of toleration clearly had its limits and could not encompass Catholicism. This was a deceitful, idolatrous, and superstitious religion that could not be accepted as an admissible faction of Christianity, but needed repelling at all costs. See, John Milton, *Areopagitica*, in *John Milton, The Major Works including* 'Paradise Lost', eds. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 270; *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes: Shewing that it is not lawful for any power on earth to compel in matters of Religion* (London, 1659), 19-20. *Of True Religion* (London, 1671), 5-6. For a helpful overview of how Milton engaged with and admonished specific Catholic heresies throughout his lifetime, see Andrew Hadfield's 'Milton and Catholicism', in *Milton and Toleration*, eds. Sharon Achinstein and Elizabeth Sauer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). John N. King also provides an in-depth study of how *PL* can be viewed in the context of Milton's other religious and polemical tracts that criticise Catholic practices, King, *Milton and Religious Controversy*; King, 'Milton's Paradise of Fools: Ecclesiastical Satire in *Paradise Lost*', in *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. Arthur F. Marotti (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999).

succession' and attacked 'the seditious and antimonarchical doctrines of the day...'[102]
L'Estrange and Pelling embellished Oates' initial slanderous portrayal of Milton as a Jesuit
because they wanted to cast a regicidal shadow over the Whig Exclusion Bills, which they
saw as reflecting Milton's own theories about government by contract. It was one of
Milton's harshest critics, the church of England clergyman Thomas Long (1621-1707), who
continuously berated the poet in this fashion. In his work, *A Vindication Of the Primitive
Christians, In point of Obedience to their Prince, Against the Calumnies of a Book intituled
The Life of Julian, Written by Ecebolius the Sophist* (1683), Long writes that '...it hath been
creditably reported that *Milton* died a *Papist*',[103] before he goes onto to imply that Milton's
Popish politics that supported the deposing of kings not only played a part in the execution
of Charles I, but was inspiring other regicidal plans such as the Rye House Plot (1683):

> Now let the Reader judge how diligent an Advocate *Milton* is for the Pope; that
> notwithstanding his own words advising it, and the testimonie of his own creatures
> affirming it, and the matter of fact and the event demonstrating it, would yet excuse
> him from having a hand in deposing of that French King. And is this a fit *Guide* for our
> *Modern Writers?* Is it not possible (as our Author says) but to *take many things*
> Doleman *in the case of succession?* and many more from *Milton*, when you would
> irritate or *defend* the People of *England* in case of *Resistance* and *Regicide?*[104]

This passage follows Long's critique of Milton's *Defensio Prima* (1651), which he considers
exonerates Pope Zachary from deposing the Francian king, Childeric III, and replacing him
with Pepin the Short in the year 751. Milton's refusal to acknowledge that this usurpation
was entirely the doing of Pope Zachary is interpreted as a Pro-Catholic stance and conveys a
disregard for the rightful succession of kings. Sensabaugh suggests that Long's reading of

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[102] Sensabaugh, 'Milton Bejusuited', 230-234. See, Roger L'Estrange, *A Further Discovery Of the Plot: Dedicated
to Dr. Titus Oates* (London, 1680); Edward Pelling, *The Good Old Way. Or, A Discourse Offer'd to all the True
Hearted Protestants Concerning the Ancient Way of the Church, And the Conformity of the Church of England
Thereunto: As to its Government, Manner of Worship, Rites and Customes* (London, 1680).

[103] Thomas Long, *A Vindication Of the Primitive Christians, In point of Obedience to their Prince, Against the
Calumnies of a Book intituled The Life of Julian, Written by Ecebolius the Sophist* (London, 1683), 192.

[104] Long, *A Vindication Of the Primitive Christians*, 196.

Defensio Prima 'implies that Milton had become a mentor for current writers on the Stuart succession, a position of leadership which, if true, argues for Milton's political importance in events leading up to the Rye House fiasco.'[105] In essence, Milton had apparently become one of the main authorities for radical Whig movements. One year later, Long returned to the narrative, and by utilising Milton's self-professed hospitable experience in Italy as evidence for a more general sympathy towards the Roman Church, he once again presented a dubious link between Milton's political affiliation and Catholicism: '…that wretched *Milton, Cromwell's* Secretary, who had been at *Rome*, and in his writings speaks of great *kindness* received *there*…' Long then references Oates' dedicatory epistle to *A True Narrative Of The Horrid Plot And Conspiracy Of The Popish Party Against the Life of His Sacred Majesty*, in order to further enrich his depiction of Milton as Catholic partisan: 'He was by very many suspected to be a *Papist* and if Dr. *Oates* may be believed, was a known frequenter of the *Popish Club*…'[106]

After the succession of James II, the Tories adjusted their tactics and began to downplay the portrayal of Milton the Jesuit, while continuing to emphasise Milton the regicide. This is probably because James was Catholic and 'To identify Whig principles with the religion of the reigning King would be inimical to the Tory cause…'[107] But this did not mean that Milton's Republicanism could not still be usefully equated to the efforts of those who opposed the succession of James. For example, William Winstanley's (d. 1698), *Lives of the English Poets* (1687), expressed a begrudging acceptance of Milton's poetic abilities, before villainising and strongly condemning his past political actions:

> *John Milton* was one, whose natural parts might deservedly give him a place
> amongst the principal of our English poets, having written two Heroick Poems and a
> Tragedy… But his Fame is gone out like a Candle in a Snuff, and his Memory will
> always stink, which might have ever lived in honourable Repute, had he not been a

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[105] Sensabaugh, 'Milton Bejusuited', 239.

[106] Long, *A Compendious History of all the Popish and Fanatical Plots and Conspiracies Against the Established Government in Church & State*… (London, 1684), 93.

[107] Sensabaugh, 'Milton Bejusuited', 242.

notorious Traitor, and most impiously and villainously bely'd that blessed Martyr King *Charles* the First.[108]

Winstanley draws a parallel between Milton's work and personal reputation, concluding that the art cannot be separated from the artist. Therefore, the metaphor of Milton's fame being extinguished like a candle and his memory being forever odious, implies that not only is his character irredeemable, but so too is his work. Milton is cordoned off as a traitorous Republican who besmirched and supported the death of a monarch, and as such, this prohibition also functions to warn any admirer or supporter of Milton's work that they will be found guilty by association. After the Glorious Revolution, a Jacobite cry of treachery ripped through England and effectively split the Tory party. Jacobitism upheld the divine right of kings, a constitutional law that the Tory party had always defended, but when James' regime began to threaten another tenet of their ideology, that is the supremacy of the Church of England, many began to support the plans for his removal. However, when traces of Miltonic thought began to appear in Williamite propaganda, some recognisable Tory defenders could not stay quiet. It is true that Thomas Long was 'a staunch advocate of passive obedience' and 'argued that it was lawful to take the oaths of allegiance to William and Mary', but he did not view Milton as an appropriate authority to be utilised in support of the usurpation of James.[109] Milton was not the enemy of Catholic monarchy, but of every kind of monarchy, and because of this, his political influence was to be reviled. This is precisely the position that Long outlines in, *Dr. Walker's True, Modest, and Faithful Account of the Author of Eikōn basilike* (1693):

> …they [the Parliamentarians] found a fit Instrument to attempt their design, a Person that was a Compendium of all the Villanies and Impieties of the Age, who had been a profest Enemy to Monarchy, a Pleader for Divorces on Trivial Occasions, and against Tithes and the Clergy, which he hath left in several printed Tracts, as his

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[108] William Winstanley, *Lives of the English Poets* (London, 1687), 195.

[109] J. S. Chamberlain, 'Long, Thomas (*bap.* 1621, *d.* 1707)', (2004), < https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/16977> [accessed 26 April 2022], 2.

Portraicture Infamous Milton whom the Regicides hired by the Price of three

hundred Pounds to Deface the Royal Monument…[110]

This barrage of accusations was in response to the 1690 reprint of *Eikonoklastes*, and it reveals that although Long might not have been a supporter of James, he was a defender of Charles I, who was gratuitously 'Deface[d]' by a pen for hire during and after the English Civil War.

During the Exclusion Crisis, the Tories had doggedly attempted to connect Milton to Catholicism, and then this Jesuit formulation to Whiggism, in an attempt to discredit their political opponents, but both before and after the Glorious Revolution, it was more generally Milton's regicidal Republicanism and exaggerated hatred of monarchy that became their focus. This was in response to what they believed was a distinctive and dangerous Miltonic influence on Whig propaganda. Throughout the 1680s, and well into the 1690s, the Whigs seemed wary of explicitly claiming Milton for their own agendas. Instead, they covertly or anonymously adopted and adapted his politics in their pamphlets in an effort to support the usurpation of James.[111] This cautious approach was employed because Milton, although politically advantageous, was still a regicide, which meant that open discussion about him was characterised by negativity. For example, after describing the sublimity of Milton's verse in his poem, *An Account of the Greatest English Poets*, the prominent Whig, Joseph Addison, remarked, with an air of reluctance, that *PL* cannot be enjoyed or tolerated because of its author's political leanings:

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[110] Long, *Dr. Walker's True, Modest, and Faithful Account of the Author of Eikōn basilike…* (London, 1693), 2.

[111] Sensabaugh, 'Milton in the Revolution Settlement', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 9.2 (1946), 175-208. Sensabough investigates how Whig writers covertly engaged with and reflected the politics of *Areopagitica* and *Eikonoklastes*, and even anonymously adapted Milton's *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, in their efforts to defend the Glorious Revolution. Maltzahn also notes that 'The sacrilege of Milton's *Eikonoklastes* and *Defensio* – books proscribed and publicly burnt at the Restoration – made him so notorious that he often went unnamed by Whigs, even when his arguments and rhetoric were useful to them in late seventeenth-century controversy. They sometimes thrilled to his determined republicanism, but they were more often embarrassed by it.' Maltzahn, 'The Whig Milton, 1667-1700', in *Milton and Republicanism*, eds. David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner, 229.

Oh had the poet ne'er profan'd his pen,

To varnish o'er the guilt of faithless men;

His other works might have deserv'd applause!

But now the language can't support the cause,

While the clean current, though serene and bright,

Betrays a bottom odious to sight.[112]

(lines 80-85)

This bears a striking resemblance to Winstanley's critique of Milton in *Lives of the English Poets*, and demonstrates definite signs of unity between the Whig and Tory standpoint on Milton after the Glorious Revolution. Like many before him, Addison seems to have noticed that festering beneath the beauty of Milton's poetics was a disturbing ideology that was impermissible to both Whigs and Tories alike.

In reality, Milton played his part in trying to formulate and write into existence the idea of a Protestant nationhood that advocated for toleration and stood in fierce opposition to Catholicism, but his final word on the matter, *Of True Religion* (1673), received little attention compared to his poetry.[113] The years after his death in 1674 were not kind to Milton's reputation, and rather than treat him as what he evidently became post-Restoration, when his 'works reveal his departure from an incipient liberal nationalism', the intelligentsia and Tory opportunists continued to cast him as a monarch murderer and developed wild, but popular rumours of his supposed Popery.[114] Amidst this, there were shadows of Whig acceptance, especially within their more radical factions, but as Addison's critique shows, the more moderate minded continued to struggle with Milton. When Hume's commentary is placed against this tumultuous political backdrop, it becomes clear that he saw *Annotations* as an opportunity to sanitise Milton's reputation and begin a

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[112] Joseph Addison, 'An Account of the Greatest English Poets', in *The Annual Miscellany: for the year 1694.* (London, 1694), B-10 4946.

[113] Elizabeth Sauer, 'Milton's "Of True Religion", Protestant Nationhood, and the Negotiation of Liberty, *Milton Quarterly*, 40.1 (2006), 1-19 (3). Subsequent to her brief comment on *Samson Agonistes*, Sauer notes that, '…*Of True Religion* attracted comparatively little attention, either in Milton's time, when it was invoked only twice, or in our time.'

[114] Sauer, 3.

process of cleansing his most popular work so that it could, at least in part, be co-opted for the Williamite cause.

Hume's intercessions are often subtle, but nonetheless effective. For example, when commenting on the lines that Tomkins highlighted as so clearly treasonous (I:594-599), he opts for ignorance and refuses to offer any explicit political interpretation of Milton's implementation of contentious and dissenting sun symbolism. Joan S. Bennett has written about how Royalists who believed 'in the divine right of kings argued by analogy from the chain of being that, as one God rules absolutely over heaven, one father over a family, and one sun over the planets, so one king should rule absolutely over England.'[115] Milton, however, utilises the imagery of an eclipse to counter the idea that a single individual is comparable to the sun in its essential capacity as life-giver and sustainer: '…But no one man can create or has been created as essential to the life of all other men; and a king does not have the power to create his subjects.'[116] Hume's approach involves not mentioning that Milton's 'dim Eclips' could pertain to the downfall of a monarch, instead his notes are predominantly dedicated to describing the literal mechanics of eclipses:

> … the Sun is Eclips'd by the intervening of the Moon between him and the earth, robbing us of some part of his Light here described. The moon is said to be Eclips'd, when the Earth coming between her and the Sun, hinders her of that borrowed Brightness with which at other times she shines; both which, at certain times, according to the constant Motions of these three great Bodies, must inevitably come to pass, and therefore easie to be foreseen, though some greater, and others more partial, according to the Segment of the Sun or Moons Orb obscured.[117]

The substitution of metaphorical interpretation for a general knowledge of cosmology can be understood as a reluctance to offer any historical comment. It is not so much that Hume

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[115] Joan S. Bennett, 'God, Satan, and King Charles: Milton's Royal Portraits', *PMLA*, 92.3 (1977), 441-457 (442-443). Bennett cites Robert Weldon's, *The Doctrine of the Scriptures concerning the Originals of Dominion* (1648), as a representative of this view. See also, Bennett, *Reviving Liberty, Radical Christian Humanism in Milton's Great Poems* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[116] Bennett, 'God, Satan, and King Charles: Milton's Royal Portraits', 443.

[117] Hume, *Annotations*, 39.

did not recognise the dissenting connotations of these lines, but rather that he is acting to intentionally remove them from the realm of political controversy. This method becomes increasingly plausible after examining Hume's dealings with the other elements of these lines. Hume does not elaborate on 'Perplexes Monarchs' beyond suggesting that 'Perplexes' means 'Disturbs with doubtful thoughts', a conclusion that is bolstered by the provision of the Latin 'Perplexus', meaning 'intricate, doubtful.' He does provide another paraphrase that is included within his earlier note on verse 594, but it similarly does not invite any obvious political interpretation or suggest any specific relation to English monarchy: '…and with sad thoughts of change disturbs its Rulers.'[118] At the closing of seventeenth-century, the infamous free-thinker, John Toland, also defended Milton against Tomkins' initial censuring of these lines:

> I must not forget that we had like to be eternally depriv'd of this Treasure by the Ignorance or Malice of the Licenser; who, among other frivolous Exceptions, would needs suppress the whole Poem for imaginary Treason in the following lines. [Toland then cites I:594-599].[119]

By refusing to acknowledge any hint of treason in the lines, Toland follows in the footsteps of Hume and effectively removes *PL* from the political sphere of debate. However, for Toland, this was all part of his attempts to separate Milton from his irredeemable and regicidal views, so that he could be claimed as an appropriate authority in the quest for toleration of every kind of Protestant, an appropriation that William Kolbrener has thoroughly explored.[120]

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[118] Ibid.

[119] John Toland, *The Life of John Milton* (London, 1699), 129-130.

[120] Kolbrener, *Milton's Warring Angels, A Study of Critical Engagements*; Kolbrener, 'The poverty of context: Cambridge School History and the New Milton Criticism' in *The New Milton Criticism*, eds. Peter C. Herman and Elizabeth Sauer. See also, Bourdette, 'A Sense of the Sacred: Richard Bentley's Reading of *Paradise Lost*'. These studies explore how Toland utilised *PL* to support and champion his Hylozoick and deistic views, and how Richard Bentley's 1732 edition of *PL* can be seen as a response in the debate to establish the boundaries of Christianity.

Hume does not, however, always shy away from situating the poem within the context of seventeenth-century politics, or more specifically, the regicide. For example, he seems incapable of ignoring Milton's veiled attack on Presbyterians and their hypocritical stance on the regicide:

> Nor fail'd they to express how much they prais'd,
>
> That for the general safety he despis'd
>
> His own: for neither do the Spirits damn'd
>
> Loose all thir vertue; least bad men should boast
>
> Thir specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
>
> Or clos ambition varnisht o're with zeal.
>
> <div align="right">(II:480-485)</div>

Hume deems the final line 'A noble Verse, and highly expressive of those zealous Hypocrites our Author's Contemporaries, an Age so impiously Godly, and so zealously Wicked, that Prayer was the Prologue to the Murder of a Monarch at his own Gate...'[121] Erskine-Hill notes that 'Within a few days of its taking place Milton had defended this 'Murder' in print', a widely known act of sedition that leads him to describe this comment as 'extraordinary' because it conveys an attempt to 'slide over the part played by 'our Author' in historical events...'[122] This sliding over, according to Erskine-Hill, is part of Hume working to accommodate Milton to a post-Restoration readership, which at the very least seems to imply a leaning towards Royalism. Such a reading supports the enduring Whig portrait of Hume as London schoolmaster and author of *A Poem Dedicated*. Harper, on the other hand, does not view Hume's note as a sliding over of Milton's approval of the regicide, but rather as a deliberate act of effacement: '...Hume completely removes Milton from among the ranks of the regicides and has "our Author" portray them as hypocrites.'[123] Moreover, Peter Hume, whom Harper suspects was a political and religious non-conformist, concocts a

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[121] Hume, *Annotations*, 68.

[122] Erskine-Hill, 'On historical commentary: the example of Milton and Dryden', in *Presenting Poetry: Composition, Publication, Reception*, eds. Howard Erskine-Hill and Richard A. McCabe, 67.

[123] Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', 524.

sanitised version of Milton who speaks out against what he was infamously part of, camouflaging his true beliefs and suspected expressions of enthusiasm.[124] I agree that Hume seems intent on not addressing Milton's role in the execution of Charles I, but I am not convinced that there is anything overly 'extraordinary' or effacing about the nature of his note. This is exactly what he did with regard to the Presbyterians' shifting allegiances. Neither Erskine-Hill nor Harper pay specific attention to how Hume's comment bears semblance to sentiments found in Milton's *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. Here, Milton deplores…

> …the notorious hypocrisy and self-repugnance of our dancing Divines [Presbyterians], who have the conscience and the boldnesse, to come with Scripture in their mouths, gloss'd and fitted for thir turns with a double contradictory sense, transforming the sacred veritie of God, to an Idol with two faces… with the same quotations to charge others, which in the same case they made serve to justifie themselves.[125]

It seems that Hume is not so much removing Milton from the regicide, as he is drawing specific attention to his critique of the Presbyterians' religious hypocrisy in relation to the whole affair. The similarity of theme between 'zealous Hypocrites our Author's Contemporaries' and 'the notorious hypocrisy…of our dancing Divines' suggests that Hume is likely familiar with Milton's other works and is willing to consult them in order to offer an accurate interpretation of 'clos ambition varnisht o're with zeal'. In doing so, he faithfully captures the essence of what Milton was trying to communicate in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and *PL*, that is a scathing critique of the self-serving hypocrisy that he perceived to be within the English Church, before and after the death of Charles I. Erskine-Hill's notion of sliding over is perhaps more helpful to our understanding of this note, as Hume is not

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[124] Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', 524-525.

[125] Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, 5-6. See also, Matthew Neufeld, 'Doing Without Precedent: Applied Typology and the Execution of Charles I in Milton's "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates"', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 38.2 (2007), 329-344. Neufeld investigates Milton's critique of the Presbyterian stance on the Regicide.

denying Milton's involvement in the 'Murder of a Monarch', but actively shifts the focus onto the other parties who were involved. He offers an honest interpretation that portrays Milton as opposing religious hypocrisy, and as such separates him from the ranks of the Presbyterians, before holding them accountable for the part they played in the regicide.

In close relation, Hume also senses connotations of two parallel historical instances of civil war in Satan's claim that he and Beelzebub were in 'mutual league' (I:87) against God. In relation to 'league', Hume writes: 'A Confederacy or siding of Factious Subjects against their Sovereign, of which the Holy League in *France*, and its Spawn the Solemn League and Covenant in our Country, are two abominable Instances.'[126] Hume references The Holy League of France, which was founded in the late sixteenth-century and was led by Henry I who sought to eradicate Protestantism from a Catholic France, as well as usurp a more tolerant Henry III. He then offers the comparison of The Solemn League and Covenant, which was introduced in 1643 and facilitated an alliance between the Scottish Covenanters and the English Independents for the purpose of overthrowing Charles I. What these two leagues share most in common is that they eventually resulted in the death of a monarch, and, by labelling them as 'abominable Instances', Hume emphasises his strong disapproval at their regicidal outcomes. The description of a 'Confederacy' of 'Factious Subjects', that is those who are inclined to illicit dissent, is palpably polemical and undoubtedly directed at Catholics, Presbyterians, and Republicans. This also seems like another opportune moment to implicate Milton, but there is no acknowledgement that he would have been a supporter of The Solemn League and Covenant. Hume's motives are clear, he intentionally inserts a Royalist reading into *PL*, one that should implicate the poet, but instead ignores him. By providing these infamous historical examples of political dissent, which are aligned with Satan's failed attempt to usurp God, Hume is actively trying to make *PL* respond negatively to the events that led to the regicide of Charles I.

We have now seen how Hume engages with the more explicit Anti-Royalism that pervades *PL*. He does not shy away from the problematic passages, but employs strategies that create distance between Milton's political infamy and his most popular work. In this regard, Hume takes crucial steps towards making Milton more tolerable. After providing some required contextualisation, including an overview of some prominent Whig Anti-

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[126] Hume, *Annotations*, 9.

Catholic texts, the remainder of this chapter will suggest that Hume's attempts to sanitise Milton are part of a wider effort to co-opt *PL* for the Glorious Revolution. It is therefore important to recognise that Hume's attempts to create separation between Milton and the execution of Charles I does not mean that he is a supporter of all monarchies, or that he desires his readers to believe that Milton was either, as this would be antithetical to the Williamite cause. Rather, by emphasising the poem's Anti-Catholic themes, he transforms the text into a piece of propaganda, and enables *PL* to join the ranks of an exceedingly popular genre of Whig polemic that supported the usurpation of James II. Consequently, Hume moves towards absolving Milton and positively affecting public opinion by presenting a version of the poet that is more akin to a defender of Protestant monarchy, rather than a supporter of regicide.

Joining the Whig Anti-Catholic Fray

At the closing of the seventeenth-century, one needed only consider the tempestuous century that spanned from 1590-1690 to see the influence that Catholicism had on monarchs, Louis XIV of France being the most infamous, and the danger that it posed to those who did not subscribe to its edicts. When discussing this historical moment, J.F Bosher demonstrates the magnitude of persecution when he writes that 'the Protestant part of Europe had shrunk from about a half of the land mass to about one-fifth of it, and this mainly as a result of aggression by armed Catholic forces.'[127] Moreover, in relation to Catholic intolerance towards the Huguenots in France, the fallout of which was still very much being managed at the time of *Annotations'* publication, John Marshall notes that 'The 1680s constituted one of the most religiously repressive decades In European history.'[128] Even before the Huguenot crisis and the Popish Plot, Anti-Catholicism was rife in post-Restoration politics. Marshall writes that:

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[127] J. F. Bosher, 'The Franco-Catholic Danger, 1660-1715', *History*, 79.255 (1994), 5-30 (6-7).

[128] John Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 17.

After 1670, there were increasing worries that Charles II was a crypto-Catholic and that his true allegiances were to 'popery' and absolutism. He was alleged to have signed – and had indeed signed – a secret treaty with Louis XIV in 1670, and was alleged to intend to establish absolutism and Catholicism in England. His court was depicted as including a 'popish faction' around the Catholic James, Duke of York, which was conspiring to introduce Catholicism and absolutism in the person of James, if not Charles. After the public expression by James of his Catholicism, the fear of Catholics holding civic and military office led to a 1673 Test Act prohibiting all Catholics other than the monarch from holding any civic or military office, and this act was reinforced in 1678 by excluding Catholics from Parliament.[129]

In the literary world, influential works such as Andrew Marvell's *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Power* (1677), launched attacks on the relationship between Catholicism and absolutism that were evidenced by the actions of Louis XIV, and were feared to have infected England.[130] Hailed as a proto-Whig work, *An Account* 'was a potent prediction of the coming Exclusion Crisis (1679–81) in which the emergent Whig party would

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[129] Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture*, 29.

[130] Andrew Marvell, *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Power* (London, 1677). Marvell alleges that 'There has now for divers Years a design been carried on, to change the Lawfull Government of *England* into an Absolute Tyranny; and to convert the established Protestant Religion into downright Popery…' (A2). The links to France are then made clear when he declares that attempts have been made to introduce '*French* slavery, and instead of so pure a Religion, to establish *Roman* idolatry' (14). Louis XIV is then described as the 'the Master of *Absolute* Dominion, the *Presumptive Monarch of* Christendom, the declared *Champion of Popery*, and the hereditary, natured, inveterate *Enemy* of our *King* and *Nation*…' (16). See also, *Popery and Tyranny or the Present State of France* (London, 1679). Similar to Marvell, this work expresses concerns about the interrelations between Catholicism and absolutism that characterised Louis XIV's oppressive regime: 'As to the Government of *France*; It is an Absolute Monarchy, imposed upon the People by a standing, illegal, and oppressive Army. It is the Corruption of a Monarchy from the best tempered one…to the double Tyranny of Popery and Arbitrary Power' (1). The author goes onto express concerns of England being resigned to the same fate when he writes that '…*France*, whose great Hopes that *England* will be corrupted, a sit hath been hitherto with the Designs of changing the Government…' (18).

try to exclude Charles's Catholic brother…from the throne.'[131] Secret treaties with France, the prospect of a Catholic monarch, and Louis's encroaching aggression meant that anxieties continued to grow, and rightly so, because by the 1680s, Louis had established France as the leading European power and its military force, which was thoroughly reported in England as being employed most horrifically against the Huguenots, was closely linked to the violent proselytising associated with popery.[132] As one might expect, the beginning of the 1680s was accompanied by a resurgence of Anti-Catholic propaganda, much of which reiterated the concerns of Marvell's *An Account*, and as such complemented, if not supported, the narrative of the Popish Plot, while also fuelling the tensions surrounding the Exclusion Crisis. Whig works, such as *The Horrible Persecution of the French Protestants in the Province of Poitou* (1681) and Edmund Everard's *The Great Pressures and Grievances of the Protestants in France* (1681), reported the persecution of French Protestants, demonstrated an inability to separate popery from the results of Louis' arbitrary power, and presented the events in France as a distressing foreshadowing of what awaited England. Again, this was not unwarranted sensationalism, but mostly an accurate reflection of reality, as Bosher remarks: 'A careful study of French policy suggests… that Louis XIV and his Jacobite vassals did intend to conquer, subdue and catholicize England.'[133]

In the strictest sense, Louis' relationship with the papal office was exceedingly complex, but Pope Innocent XI was certainly supportive of the monarch's Huguenot policy and his zeal to proselytise.[134] Louis might not have been an Ultramontane, but to the Protestant onlooker, he most certainly seemed to be the arbitrator of the Pope's will. It is,

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[131] Nigel Smith, 'Andrew Marvell and politics', (2018), <https://www.bl.uk/restoration-18th-century-literature/articles/andrew-marvell-and-politics> [accessed 8 April 2022].

[132] As emphasised by a number of scholars, the Huguenot persecutions were rigorously reported in England. See Mark Goldie, 'The Huguenot Experience and the Problem of Toleration in England', in *The Huguenots and Ireland*, eds. C. E. J. Caldicott, Hugh Gough, Jean-Paul Pittion (Dublin: Glendale Press, 1987), 175-203 (175); John Miller, 'The Immediate Impact of the Revocation in England', in *Ibid*, 161-174; Tim Harris, 'The Parties and the People: The Press, the Crowd and Politics "Out-of-doors" in Restoration England', in *The Reign of Charles II and James VII and II*, ed. L. K. Glassey (London, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1997), 125-151 (130).

[133] Bosher, 23.

[134] Louis O'Brien, 'The Huguenot Policy of Louis XIV and Pope Innocent XI', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 17.1 (1931), 29-42 (29-31). O'Brien presents three papal briefs that were written during the 1680s and convey the Pope's gratification at Louis' attempts to convert heretics.

however, unlikely that the Pope was actually aware, let alone condoned Louis' violent methods. His opinions on forced conversion were certain and are well evidenced by a conversation he had with Queen Christina of Sweden in 1685, where he remarked, 'Heresy is of such a nature that if it be not extinguished, persecution augments rather than diminishes it.'[135] In relation to the level of violence, Marshall writes that the catholicizing of the Huguenots in France throughout the 1680s was the subject of embellishment, meaning 'that Protestants significantly exaggerated the scale of the violence', while 'Catholics minimised it.'[136] Nonetheless, the fear of an invading Catholicism 'was due in part to the increase of Catholic power and territory in Europe as that of Protestantism dwindled.'[137]

Appearing alongside the texts that focussed primarily on the Protestant persecutions in France, were those that provided a broader overview of Catholic heresy. The following examples were published and republished, largely as a response to the presumed and impending accession of James II. Underpinning their grim and sometimes sardonic rebukes was a sense of foreboding that the established church was under real threat from Catholicism, and there was no greater conceivable danger to the survival and flourishing of Protestantism than a Catholic ascending to the throne. *A Protestant's Resolution: Shewing His Reasons Why He Will Not Be A Papist* (1679) was one of the most popular polemics to be published in the seventeenth-century. It was reprinted in various forms and places throughout the 1680s, and was so popular that by 1719 it had reached its twenty-third edition. Robert Blackey describes it as 'an uncomplicated pamphlet of forty-seven pages designed to appeal to a wide audience.'[138] Accordingly, the simple question and answer format systematically addresses twenty-four errors that were commonly associated with the Catholic church. These include the censorship of the Bible, iconolatry, worship of saints, sacerdotalism, and endorsing the false doctrines of purgatory, merit, indulgences, celibacy,

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[135] *Correspondance de Rome*, (MS., Archives des Affaires Estrangères), vol. 297, fol. 225.

[136] Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture*, 26.

[137] Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture*, 28.

[138] Robert Blackey, 'A War of Words: The Significance of the Propaganda Conflict between English Catholics and Protestants, 1715-1745', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 58.4 (1973), 534-555 (548).

and transubstantiation. The author also addresses issues pertaining to the Pope, such as his infallibility, influence over monarchy, and position as universal head of the church.[139]

The highly influential and controversial Particular Baptist minister, Benjamin Keach (1640-1704), also addressed in print the dangers of an encroaching Catholicism. Among a number of poetic offerings, *Sion in Distress. Or, the Groans of the Protestant Church* (1681) was a lengthy work that provided one of the most scathing and prophetic criticisms. Keach contributes wholeheartedly to the narrative of the 'Popish Plot' when describing his fear of an imminent Catholic invasion. The poem opens with a series of questions that establish the recurring theme of popish darkness encroaching upon England's Protestant light: 'What interposing *Fog* obscures our *Sun?* / What dire *Eclipse* benights our *Horizon?*'[140] Terrifying images of darkness and secret plots are continuously attributed to Catholicism, which is '*England's* black *Catastrophe*', and its ministers are '*Evening Wolves*' that hide in '*black Caverns*' until nightfall when in the '*dark* do bite.'[141] At one point, Keach breaks from his foreboding metaphors to note many of the same Catholic errors that *A Protestant's Resolution* details. These errors are expressed as '*The Marks of the* Beast', of which there are eleven, and involve a comprehensive effort to convince the reader from Scripture that the Pope is the Antichrist and instigator of all Catholic heresy.[142]

All such efforts seemingly failed, as a Catholic monarch ascended to the throne in 1685. Steven Pincus has shown that James' contemporaries viewed him as a French puppet who supported the idea of a future England conformed to the image of France.[143] As has been discussed, the events in France did serve as a foreshadowing of what awaited England

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[139] [Anonymous], *A Protestant's Resolution, shewing his reasons why he will not be a Papist* (London, 1679), 2-35.

[140] Benjamin Keach, *Sion in Distress. Or, the Groans of the Protestant Church* (London, 1681), 1.

[141] Keach, *Sion in Distress. Or, the Groans of the Protestant Church*, 37.

[142] Keach, *Sion in Distress. Or, the Groans of the Protestant Church*, 45-61. For further examples of Whig Anti-Catholic propaganda in this period see, Thankful Owen, *A true and lively Representation of Popery* (London, 1679); John Sidway, *The Pope's Cabinet Unlocked Or, A Catalogue Of all the Popes Indulgences* (London, 1680); Mercurius Hibernicus, *A Pacquet of Popish Delusions, False Miracles, and Lying Wonders* (London, 1681).

[143] Steve Pincus, '"To protect English liberties": the English nationalist revolution of 1688–1689', in *Protestantism and national identity: Britain and Ireland c. 1650–c. 1850*, eds. Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 75–104.

under the rule of James, who was 'Authoritarian by nature' and was 'convinced that he had been singled out by God's Providence to return his subjects to the 'true' (i.e. Roman Catholic) faith.'[144] Popery was at the root of this wielding of absolute authority and it posed a great threat to Protestant liberties. This inevitably meant that James' reign was to be short-lived. His usurpation was accompanied by a bombardment of Whig support for William and Mary, all of which had a distinctly Anti-Catholic flavour. *Sion in Distress* was republished under the new title, *Distressed Sion Relieved, Or, The Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness* (1689). This new edition directly addressed William and Mary and was supplemented by *an Account of the late Admirable and Stupendious Providence which hath wrought such a sudden and Wonderful Deliverance for this Nation, and Gods Sion therein*.[145] In *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture 1681-1714*, Abigail Williams dedicates a whole chapter to exploring the Whig response to the rise of William and Mary. She notes that 'From the Revolution onwards Whig writers drew on the extensive body of anti-papist rhetoric that had developed over the previous century.' Williams claims that 'Four separate collections of the popular miscellany *A Collection of the Newest and most Ingenious Poems against Popery and Tyranny* were published in 1689 alone, containing many recycled anti-papist satires from the Exclusion Crisis.'[146] As Williams shows, this propaganda continued into the 1690s and was accompanied by many odes and panegyrics dedicated to William and Mary. It is no exaggeration to say that most texts published throughout the 1690s were trying to position themselves in relation to the Glorious Revolution, which suggests that while *Annotations* belongs to the educational genre, it also endeavours to offer a

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[144] Tim Harris, 'JAMES II, THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION, AND THE DESTINY OF BRITAIN', The Historical Journal, 51.3 (2008), < https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X08007012> [accessed 3 May 2022], 763-775.

[145] Benjamin Keach, 'Title Page', in *Distressed Sion Relieved, Or, The Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness* (London, 1689).

[146] Williams, 'Legitimacy and the warrior king 1688-1702', in *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture 1681-1714*, 108-109. Williams cites 'A Dialogue between father Petres and the Devil' and 'Popery Pickled, or the Jesuits Shoes made of *Running Leather*' as examples from *A Collection of the Newest and most Ingenious Poems against Popery and Tyranny*. In terms of panegyrics, Williams cites *To the Most Illustrious and Serene Prince…Protector of the Protestant Religion Throughout the World* (London,1688). For other studies on Anti-Catholicism in this period see, Raymond D. Tumbleson, *Catholicism in the English Protestant Imagination: Nationalism, Religion, and Literature, 1660-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

commentary on the religious and political setting of its publication. Unlike the obscuring techniques that Hume implements when engaging with the seemingly anti-monarchical passages within *PL*, his highlighting and fleshing out of the Anti-Catholic themes suggests that they are entirely welcome, appropriate, and timeless polemical attacks on the enduring and primary threat to the established church and the Williamite cause.

Limbo and Wolves: Illuminating the Anti-Catholicism in *PL*

There are two explicit instances where Hume's glossing over of sequential verses in *PL* amounts to a compact Anti-Catholic tract, much like the aforementioned examples of *A Protestant's Resolution* and *Distressed Sion Relieved*. The first of these is located in Book III where Satan is portrayed as traversing the planes of 'The Paradise of Fools' (III:440-497), and the second is near the closing of the poem where Michael prophetically informs Adam and Eve about the false teachers, or 'grievous wolves', that will infiltrate the future church (XII:508-535). Similar polemical themes appear in both of these sections, and while I have collated the examples that complement each other, attention is given to particular nuances.

Beginning with Book III, one sees that 'The Paradise of Fools' is a boundless limbo that Milton claims will be populated, postlapsarian, by those who transgress against God and the moral boundaries that he appoints through His commandments and laws.[147] Hume's note on 'Into a Limbo large and broad…' (III:495) is the largest annotation that he provides, and it is dedicated to investigating and denouncing the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. This limbo, Hume suggests, is 'by the School men supposed the place in the Neighbourhood of Hell, where the souls of the Just, who dyed before the Ascension of our Saviour, were detained, and into which they consign the Souls of the Infants dying unbaptized.' This is described as 'A daring and enterprizing Opinion', implying that the doctrine might be imagined, but it is nonetheless resourceful. Hume then proceeds to supply an extensive list and exegesis of the relevant Scriptural passages from the Old and New Testaments that 'these Prying Architects do most insist' support the existence of purgatory. None of these are particularly convincing to Hume, and in order to display his

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[147] Regina M. Schwartz, 'Redemption and *Paradise Regained*', *Milton Studies*, 42 (2003), 26-49. Schwartz notes the significance of Limbo's boundlessness as corresponding to man's rebellion against God's boundaries.

contempt, he offers a satirical reading of purgatory's location, which is 'o're the backside of the World farr off…' (494): 'Our Poet has more rationally assigned the back-side of the World for the large *Limbus* of Superstition and Folly, into which all useless, painful Fopperies, that disturb Mankind, deserve well to be thrown.'[148] As Hume suggests, Milton is not supporting the reality of purgatory by including it in *PL*, but instead, he satirises the doctrine by populating limbo with 'useless' and 'painful Fopperies'. Other than the Nephilim and the builders of Babel, Milton's 'Paradise of Fools' holds the main propagators of futile religious fiction, those false ministers whose prioritisation of temporal wealth and vain earthly reward gives rise to superstitious invention that will lead many astray.

Prior to introducing Limbo, Milton divulges a number of clues that assist the reader in identifying who its clerical inhabitants might be. Some are more explicitly Catholic than others, but Hume always stresses a staunch Anti-Catholic reading. Hume's note on 'Of painful Superstition and blind Zeal' (III:452), includes numerous religious practices characterised by 'a vain Esteem and Reverence of that which deserves none…' Although Milton did not believe that Catholics were the only propagators of religious fabrications and falsehoods,[149] Hume proceeds to list and criticise superstitions that were infamously Catholic. The first example is the 'Will-worship of Saints', something that is 'not required at our hands', but it exists because 'the easie Folly of some Men, and the cunning Knavery of others, have imposed [it] on [a] great part of the World…' The veneration of saints is rebuked, and any adherent is labelled as an unwitting victim, or an instigator of superstitions that lead those inclined to folly astray. Hume supports Milton's choice of 'painful Superstition', and opting for a literal translation of 'painful', he affirms that numerous religious inventions deserve to be called so, 'because the deluded Votaries take so much pains (in Fastings, Scourgings, Processions, Pilgrimages,) in vain, and to no purpose.' Scripture is then implemented, as it always is, to support the notion that while

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[148] Hume, *Annotations*, 120.

[149] For an example of this see Milton's poem 'On the new forcers of conscience under the Long Parliament' (1646/47), which concludes with the line: 'new *Presbyter* is but old *Priest* writ large'. This earlier instance of Milton conflating Presbyterianism with Catholicism would suggest that he likely had both in mind when offering critique of religious practices throughout *PL*.

these pointless and painful superstitions might be beguiling in their apparent piety, they are really nothing more than 'vain Devotions of fantastic Zealots':

> Our Author seems to have had the advice of St. *Paul* to the *Colossians* in his thoughts, *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of Angels, &c. Which things have indeed a shew of Wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting the Body, not in any honour to the satisfying the flesh,* Colloss. 2. V. 18, and 23.[150]

Hume's description of 'deluded Votaries' is clearly a reference to Catholic monks, who were well known for their various vows, as well as their 'Fastings, Scourgings, Processions, [and] Pilgrimages.' But these monks are also 'fantastic Zealots', a slight that bears resemblance to his gloss of 'Fanatic Egypt and her Priests' (I:480). The priests of Osiris, Isis, and Orus—pagan gods whom Milton suggests are actually demons—are dubbed 'Furious, Frantick, Fantastick…full of foolish Rites and Religions.' Accordingly, the Heathen world labelled these priests as '*Fanatici, Quoniam in fanis, i.e. Templis Sacra Curabant*', and therefore fanatic 'was used for a Mad-Man, because these Priests seem'd to rave, and be possest when they pronounced their Lying Oracles.' Hume concludes with an etymological study of the Latin '*Fanaticus*', someone who was 'a Mad Frantick Votary' and 'misguided Zelot, led out of the right way by the Light within him.'[151] By recycling this earlier language of fantastic zealousness in his note on (III:452), Hume establishes links between Catholic monks and pagan priests as those who are fanatical and whose authority is based in lies. The priests of the Egyptian pantheon are, however, described by Milton as being 'abus'd' by their demonic deities (I:479), which Hume interprets as possession, or being misguided by an inner light of prophetic enthusiasm. This is markedly different to the relationship that is drawn between popery and the residents of hell in the first two books of *PL*. As will be explored in due course, Hume's interpretation of Milton leads the reader to deduce that Catholics are not so much possessed by demons, as they are in league with them. Whereas the Egyptian priests misguide because they themselves are misguided by Milton's fallen angels, The Princes of

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[150] Hume, *Annotations*, 116.

[151] Hume, *Annotations*, 30-31.

Hell are presented by Hume as demonic representations that correspond to the Church of Rome and its ministers.

Hume's subsequent note on 'Fit Retribution' (III:454), that is the appropriate reward for those 'Naught seeking but the praise of men' (453), draws a parallel between the punishment of being assigned to an empty limbo and the worthlessness of the Catholics' outward and hypocritical displays of worship. Hume writes that this like-for-like punishment is 'The just reward, a Recompense as vain and empty as their idle Adorations, according to their Fopperies…'[152] Catholic fopperies and the excessive concern with one's outward appearance and action in relation to religious adoration is further criticised when Hume describes the exercises of 'Eremits and Friers / White, Black and Grey, with all thir trumperie' (474-475). Hume labels Eremits and Friers as those who 'pretend to more Sanctity of Life than ordinary, by retiring into Solitude in Caves and Desarts', which is nothing more than 'a cowardly retreating and faint-hearted flying from the difficult Duties, Temptations, Allurements, and Tryals, both of Human Life, and Christian Conversation and Virtues, often pursued by Pride, Arrogance, Vain glorious Austerities, presumptuous Sanctity, &c. which makes the melancholy Desarts as dangerous as the busie World.' This is a scathing criticism levelled at those Catholic divines who withdraw from society into the wilderness, and in doing so evade their responsibility of ministering and sharing the gospel. The relevance of the different coloured Eremits and Friers is then clarified, verifying Milton's contempt for Catholic orders and eremitic monasticism: they are 'named *White, Black,* and *Gray*; as of their Saints, Founders of their Orders, *Franciscans, Dominicans,* &c. of St. *Francis* and St. *Dominic*.'[153] Hume continues to bring greater clarity to Milton's satirical attack on Catholic devotion by relating the 'trumperie' of these orders to the Rosary, which he describes as 'Beads, Bawbles, Tricks, and Cheats…'[154] Milton's description of pilgrims who pointlessly roam to Golgotha, expecting to see Christ 'who lives in Heav'n' (476-477), also

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[152] Ibid.

[153] Hume, 118.

[154] Ibid. See also, Frank Leslie Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1427. Cross and Livingstone relay that This Marian devotion was exclusively controlled and administered by the Dominicans and certain privileged priests. As such, Milton and Hume undoubtedly viewed the Rosary's focus on Mary and the Dominican's arbitrary control over a believer's devotion as deceitful.

encourages Hume to provide comment on the futility of pilgrimages. With a degree of sarcasm, he maligns '…those that undertake long and painful Journeys to the Lady of *Loretto*, or the Tutelary Saint of distant Countries' and asserts that pilgrims who undergo such journeys will 'have in this wide windy Continent [Limbo] room enough to wander.' Because Milton does not explicitly assign the act of pilgrimage to the realms of Catholic superstition, the referencing of additional and specific Catholic pilgrimage sites, which culminates with Rome being labelled as 'the famous place of Pilgrimages', ensures a greater ratification of Anti-Catholicism. The reader can therefore assume that Milton's example of pilgrimage to Golgotha and Hume's accompanying note, which is also vague in its identification of those 'Who gave themselves the unnecessary trouble to go so far out of their way as *Golgotha* on Mount *Moria* at *Jerusalem*, to see the place where our Saviour died, who lives in Heaven,' must mainly pertain to Catholics.[155]

Milton's list of '…Reliques, Beads, / Indulgences, Dispenses, Pardons, Bulls', all of which are made 'The sport of [Limbo's] Winds' (491-493) is interpreted as a vicious critique of various Catholic doctrines. 'Reliques' are described as the 'the Remainders of Saints Bodies, Bones, Ashes, old Garments' that are 'supposed to work miraculous Cures by their credulous Admirers and Adorers.'[156] With a spirit of virulent Protestantism, Hume pokes fun at the gullible individuals who believe that these past objects and remains of saints are worthy of veneration and can actually impart miracles. Hume's subsequent note on 'Indulgences &c.' specifically names the Pope and implies his association with Antichrist as he encourages and permits men to oppose God.

> … Licenses, Dispensations, Proclamations, and Edicts of the Pope: *Indulgentia*, Lat. a Permission from the Pope to do something otherwise forbid: *Dispenses*, of *Dispentio*, Lat. Leave given to do things against the Laws of Men, and often those of God, as Murders, incestuous Marriages, breach of Faith, &c. *Bulls*, the Popes Letters Patents sealed with a piece of Lead hanging to 'em; of *Bulla*, Lat. for the Boss of a Bridle, and thence a Seal.[157]

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[155] Hume, 118.

[156] Hume, 119.

[157] Ibid.

The idea that the Pope granted Catholics the right to commit murder was so broadly accepted by Protestants that it does not need to be discussed here. And in the 'Documents' section of *Papacy, Monarchy and Marriage 860-1600*, David D'Avray thoroughly establishes the Pope's willingness to allow the marriage of couples who were closely related. The reasons for allowing incestuous matrimony were numerous and usually self-serving.[158] Hume seems acutely aware of how dangerous the Pope's indulgences could be. The dangers associated with indulgences ranged from the propagation of unnecessary and superstitious religious fancy to the more pressing concerns affiliated with arbitrary power, such as ordering murder and allowing incestuous marriages for political gain. Drawing on the Catechism from the Council of Trent, Michael S. Carter concludes that **'**An indulgence, then, was a way of making satisfaction before God for sins already freely forgiven through his mercy by ordinary sacramental confession to a Priest.'[159] He then goes on to suggest that 'The pope's power to grant indulgences, [was] seen by Protestants as a claim to dispensation over the entire moral law,' and as such it was 'a terrifying "arbitrary" tyranny that would, if allowed to infiltrate the monarchy or other positions of power, destroy all British liberties and even true Christianity itself.'[160] This seems to be precisely what Hume is concerned about. For both Milton and Hume, Catholicism was a religion that posed as Christianity, fabricated doctrines, and discharged irreligious permissions that not only led the individual believer astray, but could threaten national liberty and life itself.

Although touched upon here, this kind of Anti-Catholic thinking is supplemented by Hume's glossing of a collection of sequential verses from Book XII, where Milton writes:

> Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous Wolves,
> Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav'n
> To thir own vile advantages shall turne

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[158] David L. D'Avray, 'Documents', in *Papacy, Monarchy and Marriage 860-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[159] Michael S. Carter, 'A "Traiterous Religion": Indulgences and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Eighteenth-Century New England', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 99.1 (2013), 52-77 (60).

[160] Carter, 55.

Of lucre and ambition, and the truth

With superstitions and traditions taint,

Left onely in those written Records pure,

Though not but by the Spirit understood.

Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,

Places and titles, and with these to joine

Secular power, though feigning still to act

By spiritual, to themselves appropriating

The Spirit of God, promisd alike and giv'n

To all Beleevers; and from that pretense,

Spiritual Lawes by carnal power shall force

On every conscience; Laws which none shall finde

Left them inrould, or what the Spirit within

Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then

But force the Spirit of Grace it self, and binde

His consort Libertie; what, but unbuild

His living Temples, built by Faith to stand,

Thir own Faith not anothers: for on Earth

Who against Faith and Conscience can be heard

Infallible? yet many will presume:

Whence heavie persecution shall arise

On all who in the worship persevere

Of Spirit and Truth; the rest, farr greater part,

Well deem in outward Rites and specious formes

Religion satisfi'd; Truth shall retire

Bestuck with slandrous darts, and works of Faith

Rarely be found: so shall the World goe on,

To good malignant, to bad men benigne,

Under her own waight groaning till the day

Appeer of respiration to the just…

(XII:508-540)

With a persistent and at times inordinate singularity, Hume reads Anti-Catholicism into Milton's descriptions of the forces that intentionally afflict the people of God for ungodly gain. There appears to be little doubt in Hume's mind that the 'Wolves' who 'shall succeed for Teachers' in the latter days of the church relate to Catholicism and its practices. His note on this line identifies Acts (20:29) as Milton's source text: 'After my departure shall grievous Wolves enter in among you, not sparing the Flock.'[161] Hume describes this passage as Paul's warning to the church, but does not yet divulge the identity of said wolves. In a similar fashion, the subsequent note describes 'Of Lucre and Ambition' (XII:511) as 'Aiming at worldly Wealth and Honour, turning Godliness into gain' and references Titus (1:11) as biblical evidence against false teaching and lucrative schemes that prioritise the acquisition of worldly wealth: 'Teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.'[162] The Catholic association starts to become clear when Hume explains the tactics of these avaricious wolves, who 'With superstitions and traditions taint', as 'Corrupt[ing] the Truth with Mens vain Inventions, delivered down from one to another…' Hume discerns that Milton's usage of 'traditions' is an allusion to three interrelating Biblical source texts:

> *Laying aside the Commandments of God, and following the Traditions of Men*, as our *Saviour* observ'd of the *Pharisees*, Mark 7. 8. against which St. *Paul* cautioned the *Colossians*; *Beware least any Man spoil you through Philosophy, and vain Deceit, after Tradition of Men,* ch. 2. V. 8. such as St. *Paul* calls, *The Doctrines of Devils and old Wives Fables*, I Tim. 4. 2. 7.

In particular, 1 Timothy's 'Doctrines of Devils' was a popular Biblical phrase that appeared in most Whig Anti-Catholic polemics,[163] and is something that Hume implements on another occasion when addressing what he perceives to be Milton's attack on the doctrine of celibacy.[164] Moreover, Hume concludes his note on line 512 with a cross-reference relating

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[161] *The Bible. Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), Acts 20:29.

[162] Hume, *Annotations*, 319. See also, *The Bible*, Titus 1:11.

[163] See *A Protestant's Resolution, shewing his reasons why he will not be a Papist…*, 18; Keach, *Sion in Distress. Or, the Groans of the Protestant Church*, 55.

[164] Hume, Annotations, 161. See note on IV:748.

to the word 'superstition': '*Superstition*, Bo. 3. V. 452.',[165] which encourages the reader to return to Book 3's discussion of various Catholic fallacies. The parallel place is a minor detail, but its impact is substantial as it establishes a connection between the most explicit and extensive Anti-Catholic segments of *PL*. The reader is now able to flit between these two sections with ease and survey a mostly complete portrait of Milton's Anti-Catholicism.

Moreover, Hume interprets of 'names, / Places and titles' as relating to the clerical hierarchy within the Catholic church, and re-emphasises two of the most pertinent concerns that his gloss of III:492 alludes to, that is arbitrary power and papal infallibility: 'Of *Names*; *Christ Vicar General, Universal Bishop, Successor of St.* Peter; *Bishop of* Rome*; Titles*; *His Holiness, Infallibility,* assuming to themselves worldly Power, and human Authority…'[166] The Church of Rome is being portrayed as having a divine right to monopolise secular power, and because their notion of papal succession originates in Christ, the Pope is able to claim inherited infallibility and transcendent authority over all things, including monarchs. While John N. King rightly claims that Hume's gloss of 'names, / Places and titles' appears 'overly particular' because Milton's hostility towards absolute authority in both church and state was never exclusively attributed to Catholicism,[167] it seems that such a reductive interpretation may well have been intentional. Hume's linearity enables *PL* to be comfortably situated among Anti-Catholic propaganda of the time, and as such presents Milton as sharing some of the specific concerns that gave rise to the Glorious Revolution. The subsequent notes continue to present a bleak picture of Catholic authoritarianism that is easily applicable to the dreaded fate that awaited England under the rule of James II. Hume's gloss of 'Laws which none shall finde / Left them inrould' portrays submissive secular powers as supporting and helping enforce 'Spiritual Laws' that are not Scriptural. They seemingly do so because the church of Rome claims sole access to the ultimate source of infallible guidance, that is the Holy Spirit:

From the pretence of having God's Holy Spirit in their Possession, and at their

disposal; shall impose Spiritual Laws on Mens Consciences, backt and supported by

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[165] Hume, *Annotations*, 319.

[166] Hume, 319.

[167] King, *Milton and Religious Controversy*, 185.

Secular Power; Laws no where to be found in *Holy Writ*, nor by that Holy Spirit dictated within, and written on their Hearts…[168]

The 'Confining to themselves, seising and converting to their own use, the Free Gift of God's Spirit, promised to all Believers', deeply disturbs Hume.[169] To deny Christian's access to the Holy Spirit was 'to lay violent hands on God's Free Grace, and to shakle his Free Spirit, to controul its liberty of *breathing when and where he pleaseth*, Joh 3. 8.'[170] Denying access to the Holy Spirit contradicted Scripture's notion that a believer's body was the '*the Temple of the Holy Ghost that is in you*, I Cor. 6. 19.' and 'that these living Temples stand founded on their own Faith, (not that of the Church of *Rome*)…'[171] Hume then questions, 'Who can pretend to Infallibility over the Belief and Consciences of Christians?' Before he suggests that a believer is to work out their own faith, 'Independent of *Rome's Infallible Chair*.'[172] The emphasis on the individual's responsibility in regard to their faith implies that Hume sensed an attack on the intercessory capacity and sacerdotalism of Catholic hierarchy, and although 'Milton never confined attack on sacerdotalism solely to the Church of Rome',[173] Hume strategically emphasises an Anti-Catholic reading that would have, in all likelihood, reminded his Whig Protestant readers of the emancipation that William provided. Accordingly, the last three notes on this section of *PL* (XII:534, 536, 540) see Hume interpreting a final polemical attack on Catholic '*Ceremonies, Rituals,* gaudy *Processions*, and fair shews',[174] lamenting a reality where 'Truth shall be hardly to be found on Earth loaded with Lies and foul Aspersions',[175] before looking forward to 'The day of ease and comfort to Gods People, in which the Righteous shall take Breath, releast both from the Persecutions of Sin and Wicked Men…'[176] Clearly Milton is referring to the eschatological events of

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[168] Hume, *Annotations*, 319.

[169] Ibid. Note on XII:518.

[170] Ibid. Note on XII:526.

[171] Ibid. Note on XII:527.

[172] Ibid. Note on XII:530.

[173] King, *Milton and Religious Controversy*, 187.

[174] Hume, *Annotations*, Note on XII:534.

[175] Ibid. Note on XII:536.

[176] Ibid. Note on XII:540.

Revelation, but a sensitive reader might have thought that Hume was crafting a micro-narrative that equated James' rule to a period of religious hypocrisy and falsehood, before 'The day of ease and comfort', that is the Glorious Revolution, redeemed the Protestant people of God.

The Papal Conclaves of Pandaemonium

Aside from the more explicitly polemical annotations, Hume's paraphrasing and explicatory comments often consist of specific language and images that would have resonated with his readers Anti-Catholicism. As such, he is able to formulate familiar vitriolic narratives from Milton's often complex and ambiguous poetics. This is perhaps most noticeable in Hume's dealings with Satan, the Princes of Hell, and Pandaemonium's popish conclaves.

Hume's comment on 'At Pandaemonium, the high Capital' (I:756), begins as a philological study of 'Pandaemonium', a word that Milton coined from the Greek, meaning 'All-Devil-Hall', in order to describe Lucifer's palace. He then shifts his attention to 'the high capital', which is described as: '…Satan's chief place of Residence; of *Capitalis*, as this of *Caput*, the Head, and thence used for Chief: Thus *Rome* was styled, *Caput Orbis*, *& Rerum Maxima Roma*.'[177] Hume establishes a link between Rome, a city hailed as the capital and mistress of the world it has conquered by the poets from antiquity, and Pandaemonium where Satan resides and rules.[178] This connection implies that Rome's influence is both extensive and its occupants demonic, it is a place filled with devils. One of Hume's final comments on the first book of *PL* establishes that it is not so much ancient Rome that Milton is comparing Pandaemonium to, but rather the later birthplace of the Roman Catholic Church. When Hume turns to focus on the withdrawal of the chief Princes of hell into 'close recess and secret conclave' (I:795), he makes clear that Rome and its parallel Pandaemonium should be viewed through a Catholic lens:

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[177] Hume, *Annotations*, 49.

[178] For an example of this see Ovid's *Amores*: 'Tityrus et segetes Aeneiaque arma legentur, / Roma triumphati dum caput orbis erit…' [Tityrus and the harvest, and the arms of Aeneas, will be read as long as Rome shall be capital of the world she triumphs o'er…] (1.25-26).

> *In close recess*; In strictest privacy: *Recessus*, Lat. Retirement, a place to be in private.
> Ibid. *And secret Conclave*; Is a private place into which no Person can come without a
> Key, a place appointed and set apart for secret Counsels, of *Con* and *Claudo*, to be
> shut up together: Hence the place where the Election of the Pope is made at *Rome*,
> is called the Conclave.[179]

For Hume, this is a clear reference to a papal conclave. Accordingly, the Princes of Hell are
to be viewed as Catholic cardinals and Satan's plan to thwart God's new creation gains him
the favour of the inner counsel and the status of hell's 'Monarch' (II:467), 'matchless Chief'
(487), and accordingly, Pope. Although 'conclave' specifically alludes to Papal election, it
frequently appeared in Protestant pamphlets that theorised about the Gunpowder Plot and
other Catholic schemes.[180] Hume's inclusion of 'secret Counsels', a paraphrase of 'secret
Conclave', does encourage this broader interpretation of Catholic treason, especially as it
prefaces the debate of Book II when the Princes of Hell plot their revenge against Heaven.
The implications are damning for the Church of Rome, whose clergy and secret meetings are
being characterised as demonic. By emphasising its association with Pandaemonium, Hume
characterises Rome as a principality whose religious systems and practices of corporal
power originate and are inextricable from the ultimate source of invisible evil.

This demonic conception of principality that is associated with Rome begins to re-
shape how we read Milton's configuration of Hell and its occupants, something that Hume
seems acutely aware of as he continues to develop his Anti-Catholic narrative. In this sense,
the notes on Milton's Satan and the Princes of Hell would have called to mind the common
views satirically associated with Popery, such as religious hypocrisy, licentiousness, and the
coveting of material wealth. Satan is first introduced as the 'Th' infernal Serpent, whose
guile / Stird up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd / The Mother of Mankind' (I:34-36). Hume's
explication of 'whose guile' sheds light on Satan's capacity to ensnare and lead astray:
'Whose Craft and Cunning, an old word from the Fr. *Guille*, deceive, Originally from the Sax.

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[179] Hume, *Annotations*, 51-52.

[180] King, *Milton and Religious Controversy*, 60. King writes, 'Jesuitical locusts swarm…in the "conclave"
portrayed at the base of Richard Smith's *Powder Treason* (1621).' See also, Oates, *The Discovery of the Popish
Plot* (London, 1679)*,* 14-15. Oates blamed the Great Fire of London (1666) on the Catholics.

Galian, to bewitch or inchant.'[181] 'Guile' then reappears in Book II, when Satan asks the Princes of Hell which method, 'open Warr or covert guile' (II:41), would be the best way to seek revenge. Hume offers the paraphrase, 'Or secret Practices cunning Wiles and Stratagems...',[182] and in doing so re-emphasises the theme of secret plots and treasons associated with conclaves. Drawing from John 8:44, where Satan is described as the father of lies, Milton coins 'Artificer of fraud' and states that Satan 'was the first / That practisd falsehood under saintly shew...' (IV:121-122).[183] Hume's gloss stresses Satan's perfected deception and craftiness, 'Master of Deceit, the Arch-Cheat and Crafts-Master. *Artifex*, Lat. one perfect in his Trade, a Workman', before he references 2 Corinthians 11:14, '...for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light', insinuating that Satan is a false apostle who draws people away from God.[184] King rightly identifies a link between Satan's deceptive disguise as a saint and Hume's note on 'Hypocrisie, the onely evil that walks, / Invisible...' (III:683). Hume defines hypocrisy as 'a Counterfeiting Virtue, Religion and Piety, the better to gain an Opinion of Sanctity, and under that disguise covertly to commit all manner of Villany and Impiety; A Wickedness kept often so secret and so well varnisht over, that it may well be said *to walk invisible to all but God himself*...'[185] Hume works with Milton to depict Satan as the great hypocrite who was the first to appear outwardly pious in the Garden of Eden, and as such, he stands as the exemplar for 'dark and hidden Iniquity...'[186] It is of course not only Satan who has the capacity to deceive and masquerade as an angel of light, Mammon also asserts that every demonic deity possesses the ability, 'As he our darkness, cannot we his Light / Imitate when we please?' (II:269-270). On this occasion, Hume provides the words from 2 Corinthians 11:14 and an etymological study on 'imitate', '*Imitari*, to Counterfeit, to do any thing like another.'[187]

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[181] Hume, *Annotations*, 6.

[182] Hume, *Annotations*, 55.

[183] *The Bible*..., John 8:44. 'Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer at the beginning, and abode not in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.'

[184] Hume, *Annotations*, 132; *The Bible*..., 2 Corinthians 11:14.

[185] King, *Milton and Religious Controversy*, 103; Hume, *Annotations*, 129.

[186] Hume, *Annotations*, 129.

[187] Hume, *Annotations*, 61.

A more extensive confirmation of every demon's ability to excel in this area of imitation is established at the outset of the poem. When reflecting upon the idolatry of the Israelites, specifically their erecting of shrines in the temple of God, Milton writes:

> …often plac'd
> Within his Sanctuary it self thir Shrines,
> Abominations; and with cursed things
> His holy Rites, and solemn Feasts profan'd,
> And with thir darkness durst affront his light.
>
> (I:387-391)

Hume's paraphrase firmly establishes the dichotomy between God's light and demonic darkness: 'And with their Deeds of Darkness durst oppose and encounter his Holy Purity…' He then allows himself to wonder about the powerful influence of demonic deception and how the powers of darkness captivate the minds of worshipers, causing them to commit abominable deeds:

> … the Delusion must have been very strange, and this Darkness must have possest the misty Minds of their Adorers, before they could be prevailed upon to quit the Living GOD, (by so many miraculous Deliverances manifested to 'em) a GOD of infinite Mercy, appeaseable by the Sacrifice of a Pigeon, for this Grim Idols to whom they were to give up their Children (their own Bowels) to be burnt. *Affronter*, Fr. to encounter fawcily and impudently.[188]

The examples thus far present common themes of deceit, darkness, and secrecy, all of which regularly appeared in Restoration narratives that championed Tory Royalist views against the suspicious and obscure poetic style of known dissenters, but were also prevalent

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[188] Hume, *Annotations*, 23.

in popular Whig Anti-Catholic polemics.[189] In its explicatory capacity, Hume's *Annotations* establishes an affiliation with the texts that warned against the darkness of Popery.[190]

Hume leads his readers to believe that Satanic and Popish darkness is often worked out on the level of theology. Accordingly, Hume takes every opportunity to emphasise Satan's position as an iniquitous and hypocritical figurehead. The note on 'Whatever Hypocrites austerely talk' (IV:744) tentatively conveys an aversion to Catholic teaching about the sexual relations of Adam and Eve in Paradise: '…Notwithstanding all the grave and rigid Opinions sly Stoical Hypocrites broach, of the Purity, Innocence, and the sanctified seat and state of our first Parents in Paradise… *Hypocrites*, see Bo. 3. V. 683.'[191] This connection is confirmed by Hume's note on 'Our Maker bids increase, who bids abstain / But our Destroyer, foe to God and Man?' (IV:748-749):

> …God commands us to increase and multiply: who commands the contrary, but Satan, the Enemy both of God and Man? This command is grounded on the before-cited Text, *Gen.* I. 27, 28. Which the Catholic Encourages of the *Celibat* will by no means understand as a *Command*, but as a *Benediction*, approving thereby and fulfilling the Prophecy of St. *Paul* amply verified in them. *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, That in the latter times some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils, speaking Lies in Hypocrisie, having their*

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[189] Sharon Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent in Milton's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 169. In her study of seventeenth-century poetic enthusiasm, Achinstein observes that: 'In their various attacks on Dissenters, the Anglican Tories returned with vehemence to the central metaphor of light and darkness, comparing the Dissenters' spurious claims of true inspiration to a dark obscurity, an opposite not only to the royalist tropes of monarchy as sun-bringing, but also to their metaphor of the "light" of reason…'

[190] In a discussion about the sufficiency of Scripture in relation to salvation, the author *A Protestant's Resolution: Shewing His Reasons Why He Will Not Be A Papist* writes that the Bible: '…containeth all things that are necessary for Men to believe, and do in order to eternal Life, *Isa.* 8. 20. To the law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.' The Bible itself was filled with light and dark imagery that was readily utilised to attack Catholics who were portrayed as being void of God's light. See also, Keach, *Sion in Distress. Or, the Groans of the Protestant Church*, 37. As has been discussed, Keach implements terrifying images of darkness when describing his fear of Catholicism.

[191] Hume, *Annotations*, 160.

> *Consciences seared with a hot Iron, forbidding to marry*. 1 Tim. Ch. 4. V. 1, 2, 3. to
> which our Author seems to have great regard, from V. 744. to this place…[192]

Hume continuously exercises what Milton and others believed was the most efficient way of disproving the false teaching of Catholicism, that is every Protestant's right to access and interpret Scripture. The correct reading of the Genesis passage is presented before Hume goes on to argue from 1 Timothy that Catholic celibacy is nothing more than the Devil's doctrine. Satan is the one framed as the culprit who continually corrupts God's commands and defiles Scripture. At the closing of his note on IV:744, Hume utilises a cross-reference ('see Bo. 3. V. 683'), something that we have seen him do before in the service of constructing a definitive Anti-Catholic portrait, and in this instance, he leads the reader back to a more thorough examination of hypocrisy. Hume's original and general description of hypocrisy as 'a Counterfeiting Virtue, Religion and Piety, the better to gain an Opinion of Sanctity, and under that disguise covertly to commit all manner of Villany and Impiety…', has now been imbued with distinctly Catholic associations. By implementing textual parallels in this way, what might at first be perceived as Satan's commonly discernible evil qualities become firmly anchored in specific Catholic doctrines.

Evidently, Hume views Satan as the chief beguiler, the Pope of Pandaemonium, but he also takes advantage of Milton's hellish hierarchy to assign specific Catholic teachings and practices to the individual Princes of Hell. For example, Hume invites connections between the lascivious demon Belial and the notorious sexual behaviour of the Catholic clergy:

> Belial came last, then whom a Spirit more lewd
> Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
> Vice for it self: To him no Temple stood
> Or Altar smoak'd; yet who more oft then hee
> In Temples and at Altars, when the Priest
> Turns Atheist, as did Ely's Sons, who fill'd
> With lust and violence the house of God.

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[192] Hume, *Annotations*, 161.

In Courts and Palaces he also Reigns

And in luxurious Cities, where the noyse

Of riot ascends above thir loftiest Towrs,

And injury and outrage: And when Night

Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons

Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.

(I:490-502)

Hume notes that the Hebrew for Belial signifies 'Vice, Wickedness, as being without Yoke', before he references 'Sons of *Belial*' from Deuteronomy (13:13). Such individuals are those 'Who have broke through all the Restraints of Virtue and Religion, and thrown off God and all Goodness, therefore call'd in Scripture *the Sons of Disobedience*…' This emphasis on the shedding of religious restraint corresponds to his gloss of '…when the Priest / Turns Atheist', a transformation that occurs 'When he who is separated and set apart for the Service of God, does not believe there is one; or does not Worship him as he ought…' The corresponding Scripture reference (1 Samuel 2:12-18) for '…as did Ely's Sons' is provided, and functions as an example of the kind of iniquity attributed to the children of Belial, namely the disregard for correct ceremonial procedures relating to the meat sacrifices offered to Yahweh, and their 'lay[ing] with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation' (1 Samuel 2:22). Hume further expands the remit of Belial's influence into the realms of materiality and sensuality in his notes on '…luxurious Cities, where the noyse / Of Riot ascends'. His paraphrase of 'luxurious Cities' as 'Great Cities, abounding in all Excess of Pomp and Pleasure: *Luxurious*, Lat. riotous'[193] is arguably designed to encourage polemical connections with Catholicism and Rome, largely because Hume tends to associate 'pomp' with the flaunting of opulence and material excesses that characterised Catholic religious ceremonies. This is evidenced by his gloss of VII:222, where he states that 'a solemn Pomp and shew' is often affiliated with 'the Sacrament in Catholic Countries carried in *Procession*'.[194] However, Belial's parades of 'Pomp and Pleasure'

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[193] Hume, *Annotations*, 32.

[194] Hume, *Annotations*, 216.

accentuate the more sensuous hypocrisy of Catholicism. Building on the Latin root of 'luxurious', Hume stresses a sensual reading of Belial's noisy riots: 'Riot. In the most usual acceptation, and as here understood, signifies, the Excess of Luxury and Lasciviousness, which often occasion and end in those riots…' This excessive behaviour is fuelled by the consumption of wine, something that Hume utilises to further accentuate a carnal reading: 'Puft up with Drink and Pride, raised and heighten'd above the ordinary Pitch of Pride and Debauchery…'[195]

The connection between Belial and Catholicism is afforded greater license when Milton's poetics and Hume's annotations are viewed alongside other seventeenth-century Anti-Catholic literature. Citing examples such as Pierre du Moulin's, *The Monk's Hood Pull'd Off; Or, The Capucin Fryar Described* (1671), Sarah Toulalan argues that much of the English Anti-Catholic propaganda that was sexually satirical originated on the Continent, featured Catholic foreigners, and focussed mainly on sexual flagellation.[196] However, in and around the period of the 'Popish Plot', there appeared a number of plays that targeted the sexual deviancies associated with Catholic officials. A fitting example is *Romes follies, Or the Amorous Fryars*, a Whig comedy that according to its front page 'was lately Acted at a Person of Qualitie's HOUSE', before being printed in 1681.[197] Act V portrays the protagonist,

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[195] Hume, *Annotations*, 32.

[196] Sarah Toulalan, 'New From Battersy': Fantasies of Sexual Flagellation', in *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 92-94.

[197] *Romes follies, Or the Amorous Fryars* (London, 1681). The Dedication, 'To the Right Honourable, *Anthony Ashley Cooper*, Earl of *Shaftsbury*, Baron *Ashley* of *Wimborn* and St. *Giles*, and Lord *Cooper* of *Pawlet*; and to the Right Honourable *William*, Lord *Howard*, Baron of *Escrick*', states that 'the Subject being not a little Satyrical against the Romanists, would very much hinder its taking', revealing why it only received a private hearing. Nonetheless, its satirising of the rampant and hypocritical sexual antics of the Catholic church was common among Whig Protestants of the time, and would have been most pleasing to the Whig leader Shaftsbury. Another more prominent example of a Whig play that focussed on the sexual impropriety of the Catholic church is Nathaniel Lee's *Caesar Borgia, Son Of Pope Alexander The Sixth* (1679). See Susan J. Owen, 'Whig Plays: Vitality in Opposition', in *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 240. Owen writes the following about *Caesar Borgia*: 'The subtitle of the play, 'Son of Pope Alexander the Sixth', foregrounds that Pope's sexual impropriety. Lee further associates the Roman Church with lust and sexual perversion, and also with arbitrary cruelty and the violation of the family.' See also, Thomas Shadwell's, *The Lancashire Witches* (1680), which presents papists as lustful hypocrites.

Marforio, bringing a complaint of sexual misconduct committed by the priest Turbin to the Pope. Marforio describes Turbin as a: '…Devil in the Habit of a Priest', someone who 'is a greater lover of Pleasure than Religion' and has 'seduc'd, corrupted defil'd and abus'd the Body and Bosome of my own dear self [wife].'[198] The description of Turbin as devil masquerading as priest brings to mind the words of Mammon (II:269-270) and Hume's corresponding quotation of 2 Corinthians 11:14. This link re-emphasises the polemical trope that Catholic priests are actually demonic and, as such, are well-versed in presenting iniquitous actions as authentically pious. The substitution of right religion for pleasure and Turbin's wiles that lead to the abuse and corruption of Florimel are further elaborated upon by Marforio:

> my own dear Second-self, the Wife of my Body here, and please you, this painted, juggling, self-pleasing Epicurean Priest, hath seduc'd from the paths of Heaven and Vertue…[199]

Marforio's description of the hedonistic Epicurean priest that he assigns to Turbin, is strikingly similar to Milton's conception of 'the Priest turn[ed] Atheist', a religious figure 'who fill'd / With lust and violence the house of God.' Turbin, however, not only resembles the sons of Ely, who Hume presents as abusing their priestly power in the service of iniquity, but also the demon Belial. He is, after all, a 'Devil in the Habit of a Priest'. Similar to Belial's ability to incite misconduct of all kinds and lead many to cast off, as Hume says, 'the Restraints of Virtue and Religion', Turbin is able to seduce Marforio's wife away 'from the paths of Heaven and Vertue…' Hume's distinctive comprehension of Belial's pomp, pleasure, and luxury as relating to lasciviousness and debauchery aptly transfers onto Turbin's sexual hedonism. Although Hume makes no direct reference to Catholicism, the narrative of abusing power for licentious gain is suggestive of the sexual misconduct associated with the Catholic church by Protestant Whigs from the period of the Exclusion Crisis onwards. In subtle ways Hume's analysis and careful choice of language when paraphrasing the verses that describe Belial, facilitates an easy parallel between the devilish priest of *Romes follies,*

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[198] *Romes follies, Or the Amorous Fryars*, 48.

[199] *Romes follies, Or the Amorous Fryars*, 48-49.

Or the Amorous Fryars, and enables *PL* to be situated comfortably among texts that criticised Catholic acts of impropriety.

If Belial primarily corresponds to licentiousness, then Mammon represents greed and obsession with material wealth. When discussing Mammon, Robert C. Fox describes him as 'The angel who in heaven is rapt in contemplation of the golden pavement becomes in hell the active leader of those who seek out precious metals for the construction of Pandaemonium.'[200] He is also the first to encourage this rapacious behaviour in men, who

> …by his suggestion taught,
>
> Ransack'd the Center, and with impious hands
>
> Rifl'd the bowels of thir mother Earth
>
> For Treasures better hid.
>
> (I:685-688)

Hume is not ignorant of Mammon's material greed and his dangerous ability to inspire avarice. He interprets Mammon's name as 'Riches, Wealth', before citing Luke 16:13, where Christ states that '*Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*'.[201] Clearly the life and devotions of a Christian cannot be defined by excessive wealth or shows of opulence, but this behaviour is precisely what Hume associates with Catholicism. Accordingly, his note on 'adorn'd / With gay Religions full of Pomp and Gold' (I:371-372), can be interpreted as an attack on the lavish nature of Catholic worship and clerical attire: 'Decked and set out with Gawdy Rites and Shews, Solemn Processions and Copes wrought with Gold…'[202] King states that Hume 'asserts the presence of an antiprelatical stab' and suggests that 'The panoply of demons recalls attacks in his [Milton's] antiprelatical tracts on ritualism, processions, and elaborate clerical robes.'[203] I do not disagree with King, especially on his point concerning the array of demons corresponding to a number of religious issues that Milton highlighted in his political

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[200] Robert C. Fox, 'The Character of Mammon in Paradise Lost', *The Review of English Studies*, 13.49 (1962), 30-39 (30).

[201] Hume, Annotations, 43. Note on I:678.

[202] Hume, *Annotations*, 22.

[203] King, *Milton and Religious Controversy*, 52.

pamphlets, but as we have seen, there was a particular political motive underpinning Hume's *Annotations* that encourages a specific Anti-Catholic reading of this polemical attack. As such, this poke at Catholicism aptly parallels Mammon's obsession with gold and lavish aesthetics that Hume pinpoints in his rather poetic note on the demon's suggestion to transform hell into something that resembles heaven: 'This Wilderness of Woe wants not its conceal'd Wealth, Jewels and Gold; nor want we Power or Art to adorn even Hell it self, and make it imitate his Heaven…'[204] Mammon's attempts to dress-up hell as heaven with 'Jewels and Gold' mirrors the Catholic's 'Gawdy Rites and Shews, Solemn Processions and Copes wrought with Gold…', all of which exude an impression of piety, but are nothing more than empty displays of excess. This comparison becomes even more probable when the habits of Mammon are viewed alongside Hume's other comments on Catholic 'trumperie' and their striving after worldly wealth, which are located in Book XII and have already been discussed. Like Mammon, who admired 'The riches of Heav'ns pavement, trod'n Gold' (I:682) more than he did the 'vision beatific' (684), Catholics prioritise the temporal over the eternal. Again, the links between Mammon and Catholicism are not explicit, but it is hard to deny that they are present. In Hume's view, the church of Rome clearly embodies the avaricious demon and, as such, seeks the 'Riches [that] come from Hell, the Desires and Designs after which will send so many thither.'[205]

There are of course other examples that can be drawn from the scene in Pandaemonium, but the analysis of Satan, Belial and Mammon stand as good examples of Hume utilising particular language that parallels Anti-Catholic rhetoric and the more explicit polemical attacks that he postulates elsewhere in the poem. Perhaps this is unconscious on the part of Hume, but the result is nonetheless the same in that *Annotations* encourages *PL* to be read as an extensive and versatile portrait of Anti-Catholicism.

Supporting the Whig Cause: The Influence of Jacob Tonson

Harper writes that 'As the seemingly irreconcilable and bitter partisan divisions in the aftermath of the English Civil Wars spurred great works of literature and art, methodologies

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[204] Hume, Annotations, 61. Note on II:270.

[205] Hume, *Annotations*, 44. Note on I:692.

to explicate those literatures developed as well.'[206] This implies that while Hume's commentary is an example of thorough erudition that makes much of Milton's poetic capabilities, this cannot be all it is. *Annotations* also demonstrates how a work belonging to the educational genre can bridge the gap between scholarship and politics, and in doing so, achieve religio-political expediency. Throughout this chapter we have seen that Hume employs obscuring techniques to sanitise Milton's radicalism, rendering the poem safely accessible. Alongside this effort to cleanse *PL*, Hume also illuminates and elaborates upon the explicit and implicit instances of religious polemic. Opting for a consistent and mostly singular Anti-Catholic interpretation of Milton's religious attacks, Hume makes the poem speak into his contemporary political landscape.

While John N. King has dedicated the majority of his efforts to showing how Hume establishes links between Milton's poetry and earlier political works, I have suggested that Hume is not entirely interested in establishing robust links with Milton's past as he is with reading his own linear religious biases and motives into the work. As King states, it would be 'facetious' to assume Milton's poem foretold the Glorious Revolution, but I would argue that Hume's satirical and polemical singularity, something that troubles King, is the manifestation of him appropriating Milton for the Williamite cause.[207] In this sense, he might express some un-Miltonic views when endeavouring to conceal Milton's traitorous politics, but *Annotations* also champions the Miltonic views that Hume could confidently assume would not only be accepted, but applauded.[208] At a time when Whig literature was heavily dedicated to supporting the usurpation of Catholic James II, Hume seems to take advantage of every opportunity to read Anti-Catholicism into *PL*, and in doing so, appropriates Milton for the regime of William and Mary. It is not known when Hume began his work on *PL*, but there is no reason to think that he could not have at least begun to consider the project during the immediate aftermath of the Glorious Revolution. Such a momentous event would have undoubtedly shaped his interpretation of Milton's ideas concerning the suppression of Protestant liberties. Published just a year after the death of

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[206] Harper, 'The First Annotator of Paradise Lost and the Makings of English Literary Criticism', 510.

[207] King, *Milton and Religious Controversy*, 68.

[208] Erskine-Hill, 'On historical commentary: the example of Milton and Dryden', in *Presenting Poetry: Composition, Publication, Reception*, eds. Howard Erskine-Hill and Richard A. McCabe, 68.

Mary II, and in the midst of enduring Jacobite resistance, *Annotations* emphasises and elaborates the elements of *PL* that likely reminded his polite readership about the Catholic tyranny they had been delivered from. Furthermore, this chapter has shown that *PL*, assisted by Hume's *Annotations*, could be comfortably situated within the rich history of Whig Anti-Catholic polemic that stretched back to the Exclusion Crisis. By way of response to Addison's 1694 critique, Hume shows that with a little intervention, the language can support the cause, or more precisely, the Whig cause.

There is, however, another important and yet often overlooked figure who lies at the heart of Hume's endeavours, that is the publisher of *Annotations*, Jacob Tonson. Tonson, being a moderate Whig, was certainly invested in supporting the Williamite cause, something that is demonstrated through his consistent printing of literature, mainly poetry and plays, that either promoted Whig ideas or directly lavished adoration on William and Mary throughout the 1690s and beyond.[209] When Tonson's political affiliation and Hume's emphasis on Milton's Anti-Catholicism, as well as his dealings with the passages of *PL* that were viewed as regicidal, are taken into consideration, *Annotations* can arguably be seen as a joint effort to interpret *PL* as a work that supported the Glorious Revolution.[210] While there is no record of any correspondence between Tonson and Hume, the fact that the work was signed off and published causes one to at least question Harper's thesis regarding Peter Hume. Tonson was no extreme Whig, or non-conformist, the idea of extremism on either

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[209] William Congreve (1670-1729), William Walsh (1662-1708), Matthew Prior (1664-1721), and of course, Joseph Addison, are among the most famous Whigs that Tonson published.

[210] K. A Coleridge has also suggested that the older Tonson might have wanted to publish the 1695 edition of *Poetical Works* in order to make use of the unsold stock of Bentley's 1688 edition that he had purchased along with his partner's half of the copyright in March 1691. Coleridge presumes that the 1691-2 edition was prepared before the sale of the copyright and unsold stock, and that this less sumptuous edition was intended for the ordinary trade. Following this, the 1693 edition was an 'interim issue to keep the market supplied with an up-to-date issue of *PL*', while Tonson, 'stimulated by receiving Bentley's unsold stock', began organising the printings which make up the 1695 *Poetical Works*. The fact that the 1695 edition often contains the 1688 papers does not, therefore, challenge the well-established popularity of the Tonson 1688 edition. Moreover, since twice as many Tonson copies of the 1688 edition survive as Bentley copies, it is likely, claims Coleridge, that Tonson sold more subscriptions than Bentley. See K. A. Coleridge, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Milton Collection in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand*' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 132-134.

end of the political spectrum was something that he actively tried to avoid in his dealings with *PL*.[211] When discussing the Whig effort to re-cast Milton as a member of their party around the period of the Glorious Revolution, Maltzahn has noted that the 'The challenge was to transform Milton from a republican to a Whig moderate enough to applaud the Revolution Settlement.'[212] Being the holder of the copyright to Milton's most popular work, this challenge was primarily Tonson's to tackle. It began the very year of the Revolution with a sumptuous re-packaging of *PL*, which was backed by leading Whigs like Lord Somers, and as John Shawcross has observed, this caused Milton's reputation and admiration for his epic to rise sharply.[213] Before Tonson's 1688 folio edition, the poem had received only a fraction of the success that it went on to achieve. In this regard, Raymond N. MacKenzie suggests that 'Tonson was highly instrumental in creating and nurturing an audience and an appreciation for the poem and for Milton…'[214] It was arguably Tonson who mainly strove to keep Milton's reputation alive during the onslaught of abuse that it was frequently subjected to. The bookseller clearly believed that the poem had real potential to be politically expedient and achieve literary excellence, both of which would make him money.[215] Tonson was able to achieve two aims simultaneously, the required sanitisation of what he believed could be his most successful commodity and the turning of that commodity to support the Glorious Revolution. The results were quite extraordinary. In the wake of the 1688 edition, works like Nahum Tate's, *A Poem, Occasioned by His Majesty's Voyage to Holland*, imagined the idea of 'Milton posthumously abandoning his republicanism and instead praising William's royal government'.[216]

> Behold where MILTON Bow'rd in Lawrel Groves,
> A Task beyond his Warring Angels moves;

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[211] Tonson was friends with and published both Whig and Tory writers. Perhaps the most famous Tories that he repeatedly worked with was John Dryden and Alexander Pope.

[212] Maltzahn, 'The Whig Milton, 1667-1700', 242.

[213] John Shawcross, *John Milton and Influence* (Pittsburgh, 1991), 39-40.

[214] Raymond N. MacKenzie, 'Tonson, Jacob, the elder (1655/6-1736)', (2004), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27540> [accessed 5 May 2022], 2.

[215] Mackenzie, 3.

[216] Maltzahn, 'The Whig Milton, 1667-1700', 242.

Himself a Seraph now, with sacred flame

Draws Scheme proportion'd to great WILLIAM'S Fame;

(For Common-wealths no more his Harp he strings,

By NASSAU's Virtue Reconcil'd to Kings).[217]

What began as an aesthetic exercise with the 1688 edition, soon became more obviously ideological with Hume's *Annotations*. Geduld believes that Tonson had '…found [Hume] out, and either set him on the work, or accepted the work from him already done privately as a labour of love.'[218] One can imagine that when Tonson approached Hume, or vice versa, with the prospect of producing a commentary on *PL*, the pair likely discussed ways that the poet could best be promoted. Having printed *Annotations* as part of *The Poetical Works* and also as a stand-alone piece of criticism throughout 1695, Tonson was clearly satisfied with Hume's contribution.[219] *Annotations* not only hugely contributed towards the ongoing goal of securing a status for Milton's epic as an English classic, but also towards Tonson's efforts to cultivate a favourable portrait of the poet.

Elsewhere, Maltzahn has argued that

even Tories might fear the growth of popery and arbitrary government, as Whigs had done for a decade and more. Thus they might the sooner join with Whigs in supporting and subscribing to the sumptuous folio of *Paradise Lost*, in which Milton's English Protestant epic emerged as the great national poem, in that extraordinary year 1688.[220]

This chapter has shown that many Tories and Whigs remained sceptical of Milton in the years that followed the Glorious Revolution, which renders Maltzahn's statement somewhat overstated. However, it has also shown that what Hume drew out of the poem built on the

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[217] Nahum Tate, *A Poem, Occasioned by His Majesty's Voyage to Holland* (London, 1691), 5.

[218] Geduld, 126.

[219] For a full account of the three publications of Hume's *Annotations*, see John Shawcross, *A Milton Bibliography for the Years 1624-1700* (Binghamton, 1984).

[220] Maltzahn, 'The War in Heaven and the Miltonic sublime', in *A Nation Transformed, England After the Restoration*, eds. Alan Houston and Steve Pincus, 154-179.

foundation of the 1688 edition, and in doing so, further transcended partisanship and highlighted common ground between both Whigs and Tories. As such, Milton's re-casting as the nation's poet and *PL* as a poem that lent itself to promoting commonality rather than factionalism was cemented. *Annotations* marked the beginning of the Tonson publishing house working with commentators, critics, and editors to achieve the wholesale sanitisation of *PL*, transforming it into a poem that was not only safely accessible but politically and religiously useful in a number of ways.

Chapter 2: Moralisation

The Practical Politeness of Joseph Addison's 1712 *Spectator* Essays and the 1720 Edition of *PL*

The Ingenuity of the Younger Tonson: Aesthetic Enhancements and Critical Superiority

After Hume's *Annotations*, the next scholarly intervention that took up paratextual residence in a Tonson publication of *PL* was that of Joseph Addison's series of twelve *Spectator* essays on the poem. Originally written and published in 1712, the collated essays appeared at the back of the 1720 'Tickell's' edition of *PL* just a year after Addison's death. One scholar has suggested that the immensely popular 'Tickell's' edition was the work of Jacob Tonson the elder,[221] but it is now generally acknowledged that the project was overseen by Jacob Tonson II, the elder's nephew and longstanding protégé. The following chapter not only affirms this accreditation, but it begins by providing a survey of the similarities and, perhaps more interestingly, the differences between the most popular editions of *PL* that bore the name of Tonson. In this regard, it supplies fresh insight into why the younger Tonson might have made the paratextual choices that he did and how those choices helped to establish him as his uncle's coequal in the world of publishing, whilst facilitating the continuing popularisation and sanitisation of Milton.

The younger Tonson began working for his uncle in London around 1700, and over the period of about fifteen years he 'increasingly came to run the daily affairs of the Tonson business, until the elder Jacob retired about 1718, with [a] trip to France in 1718–20 effectively easing him out of it.'[222] Raymond Mackenzie has noted that 'The younger Tonson hoped he would be heir to his uncle's fortune, even conferring with his uncle's long-time servant about how best to stay on the old man's good side (the servant recommended gifts of food).'[223] The younger Tonson was clearly eager to please his uncle, and the somewhat

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[221] Papali, *Jacob Tonson. Publisher; His Life and Works (1656-1736)*.

[222] Mackenzie, 'Tonson, Jacob, the elder (1655/6-1736)', 6.

[223] Ibid.

jovial advice of food gifts was to be supplemented by a far greater contribution towards the continuing establishment and consolidation of the Tonson publishing dynasty. The younger Tonson proved to be just as shrewd as his uncle, and following closely in his footsteps he took every opportunity to demonstrate his equal talents at acquiring copyrights and producing editions of famous authors. The successes, however, were also accompanied by some considerable failings.

In addition to Milton, the elder Tonson had coveted the works of Shakespeare and Dryden, believing them to be of 'great literary and national value' as well as 'generators of profit for his firm.'[224] The dramatist, Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718) was hired by Tonson the elder to produce an edition of Shakespeare which was published in 1709. About Rowe and his edition, Mackenzie writes:

> Rowe was a responsible editor, if not the most scholarly one, and many of his textual emendations and stage directions remain accepted today. Moreover, his biographical essay was designed to interest the general reader in Shakespeare, and both it and the edition were highly successful in popularizing the plays. The edition was reprinted many times in the coming years.[225]

After the 1720 edition of *PL*, the younger Tonson continued to strive after his own publishing triumphs with the other authors that had been associated with his uncle. Most notably, he approached Alexander Pope with the idea of compiling a new edition of Shakespeare, which was subsequently published in 1723 (volumes 1-5) and 1725 (volume 6). The project had limited success because although Pope was a talented poet, he 'proved disastrous as an editor…' For example, he 'frequently made 'improvements' in Shakespeare's verse, going as far as dropping entire scenes and soliloquies that he felt violated the plays' unity.'[226] This poor reception of a Tonson publication would reach its ultimate fulfilment with Bentley's 1732 edition of *PL*, but none of this takes away from the accomplishment of the 1720 edition, which is arguably the younger Tonson's most

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[224] Ibid.

[225] Ibid.

[226] Ibid.

successful publication. Stephen Bernard has remarked that the younger Tonson has often been overlooked, or overshadowed by his uncle, with whom he shared the same name,[227] but I would argue that it is publications like the 1720 'Tickell's' edition of *PL* that complicate the somewhat overstated achievements of the older Tonson.

This is not to say that the older Tonson's achievements were not exceptional, he was, after all, responsible for the illustrious 1688 edition of *PL*. Emma Depledge has most recently shown how the 1688 edition 'had a profound impact both on Milton's authorial afterlife and on Tonson's career as a stationer.' Depledge contrasts the 1688 folio with earlier editions and suggests 'how the 1688 folio helped to revive interest in Milton's work and canonize him as a prestigious literary author.' Depledge also explores the timing of Tonson's edition, suggesting that his investment in *PL* might 'have had more to do with the success enjoyed by an operatic alteration, John Dryden's *The State of Innocence*, than it did with the perceived marketability of Milton's poem.'[228] The idea that Tonson was potentially reacting to the financial success of *The State of Innocence* reveals much about his hierarchy of values. Accordingly, the desire to make Milton marketable, which included the aesthetic refinement and the associated redemption of his character, was therefore chiefly motivated by professional competitiveness and the prospect of financial gain. Tonson's desire for wealth and his belief that *PL* could be a commercial success, if it was packaged properly, led him to call on a number of society's wealthy elites to help facilitate the process. As such, one should not mistake the grandeur of the 1688 edition as a marker of an already successful and affluent publisher, in many ways the plush aesthetic does not reflect Tonson's early financial situation and the struggles that he had with funding such an ambitious project. The subscription list shows 'that it was only by pre-selling copies of the folio' that 'Tonson could bring out a luxurious publication that was to transform both the reputation of Milton's Paradise Lost and his own career.'[229] In terms of materiality, Depledge notes that:

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[227] Bernard, 'The Other Jacob Tonson, Why the nephew of the publisher of *Paradise Lost* deserves to be remembered', 14.

[228] Depledge, 43.

[229] Depledge, 46. See also, Barnard, 'London Publishing, 1640-1660: Crisis, Continuity, and Innovation', *Book History*, 4 (2001), 1-16. Barnard notes that subscription publication enabled the publication of 'large, learned books that were commercially unviable'. (11).

The 1688 folio was furnished with wide margins that offered readers plenty of room to add their own annotations to Milton's poem. The type was clear, and the volume featured an engraved portrait of Milton over an epigram in which Dryden helped to canonize him as the national poet by depicting Milton as an English heir to the two most revered classical writers…The 1688 folio was also printed on quality paper to match the elite company in which Dryden's epigram placed Milton, and the volume even featured twelve detailed engravings—one for each book—by John Baptist Medina and others…'[230]

Besides the material quality, which in itself proclaimed the merits of this luxurious folio edition of *PL*, it is perhaps the subscription list 'that transformed Milton's reputation from that of a dissenting king killer to one appreciated by men across the political spectrum.'[231] Indeed, 'Some subscribers were Whigs and others were Tories; it was not a partisan list. Instead, the list suggests that Milton's poem was aimed at and approved by a great variety of readers.'[232] Tonson was trying to package Milton as the people's poet, one who could be universally enjoyed regardless of one's political affiliations. Somewhat paradoxically, he achieved this through the suggestion that Milton and *PL* could be viewed as supporting the Glorious Revolution. The year of publication helped with this, as did the subscriber's list, which was an instance of paratextuality that conveyed how a readership could influence the way in which a text was received and interpreted. In this way, the 1688 edition of *PL* was

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[230] Depledge, 46-47.

[231] Robert B. Hamm, Jr., 'Rowe's *Shakespear* (1709) and the Tonson House Style', *College Literature*, 31.3 (2004), 179-205. Hamm writes that the luxurious folio format that certain works appeared in suggests a level of aggrandisement regardless as to whether 'public opinion had yet deemed them worthy of such celebration.' (185).

[232] Depledge, 48. This does not mean that the older Tonson did not have his preferred political leanings. Abigail Williams surveys Tonson's Kit-Kat publications, all of which are Whiggish in nature. Whig publications were immensely popular, which means that there was a financial incentive to Tonson's publications, but his ongoing commitment also infers a sympathetic attitude, if not, loyalty to the Whig cause. See, Williams, 'Patronage and Whig Literary Culture in the Early Eighteenth Century', in *"Cultures of Whiggism", New Essays on English Literature and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. David Womersley, Paddy Bullard and Abigail Williams (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 149-172.

designed to, and seemingly did, maximise the return of Tonson's investment in Milton, making him the poet that catalysed one of the most successful publishing careers of that generation.[233] Hume's *Annotations* pushed the idea of readerly unification further as it endeavoured to find polemical common ground within *PL*, an Anti-Catholicism that both Whig and Tory parties could support. This particular focus of *Annotations* certainly strengthens the idea that Hume was, in part, interested in continuing to champion a connection that was initiated by the 1688 edition, that is, the reading of *PL* as a piece of Williamite propaganda. Similarly, it will become clear that Addison's *Spectator* essays attempted to transcend partisan thinking for the sake of establishing a unified and Christian morality. These successive processes of drawing together Miltonic poetry and its paratextual responses, therefore, serve to increasingly sanitise Milton's religious and political radicalism while simultaneously enlarging his monetary worth. This was indeed a succession of shrewd business moves undertaken by both the Tonsons, and while the 1688 edition of *PL* has always been viewed as the crown jewel of all the editions of the poem—mainly because it initiated a process of publishing that elevated both Milton's poetry and his reputation—the following study will show that the 1720 edition is at least coequal, and perhaps superior, in a number of ways.

John T. Shawcross provides a useful overview of the exceptional materiality, editorial details, and paratextual elements of the 1720 edition:

> …in 1720 the Tonson house had published a two-volume *Poetical Works* in a large
> quarto on large paper with beautiful illustrations: George Vertue's redrawing of
> Robert White's portrait from the 1688 edition, with Dryden's epigram beneath,
> appears as frontpiece to Volume 1, that is, *Paradise Lost*, the title page has an
> illustration, a decorated initial, and an endpiece, by Sir James Thornhill, engraved by
> vander Gucht, or by Louis Chéron, engraved by C. du Bosc or Samuel Gribelin. Also
> published in this volume is Joseph Addison's Critique, originally presented in
> eighteen issues of *The Spectator*. This is known as the Thomas Tickell's edition since

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[233] Lindenbaum, 'Rematerializing Milton'. Lindenbaum opens his article by stating that 'Jacob Tonson was the leading publisher and bookseller of literary works of his generation and it was John Milton who made him.' (5).

he apparently prepared the text…Most noteworthy for us is the fact that this was published by subscription, the names taking up five pages of this large quarto.[234]

Shawcross affirms that the inclusion of Addison's *Spectator* essays was a 'commercial ploy, the combining of related works to enhance sales', but says little more about what the younger Tonson's motivations might have been.[235] Most recently, Thomas N. Corns expands upon the financial incentive when he writes that 'The Tonson–Addison collaboration arguably made Milton more accessible—both financially and intellectually—than the expensive and cumbersome 1695 edition often credited with making him accessible.'[236] Corns also highlights the longstanding professional and personal relationship that the Tonsons' shared with Addison: 'Addison and Steele had long known Tonson. They were all members of the Kit-Cat Club, a gathering of leading Whig thinkers, activists, and apologists. Tonson had frequently published Addison in a professional relationship going back to the 1690s.'[237] It seems right, however, to briefly revisit what Tickell's role might have been in this aspect of the venture, especially considering his own links with Addison and his reverence for didactic English poetry.

Thomas Tickell (1685-1740) served as Addison's underling in the government of George I, but he was also a trusted friend who Addison, on his deathbed, tasked with the editing of his works. These were then published by Tonson in four quarto volumes in October 1721.[238] It seems likely that during this process of collation and editing, Tickell, who was also employed by the younger Tonson as the editor of the 1720 edition of *PL*, suggested that Addison's *Spectator* essays would be an appropriate addition to the latest deluxe edition. Not only were the essays accessible, but they also framed *PL* as a didactic masterpiece, something that James Sambrook notes was crucial to Tickell's conception of what constituted the grandest poetry: 'In 1711 he lectured in place of Joseph Trapp, professor of poetry: his one surviving lecture, *'De poesi didactica'*, expresses the hope that

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[234] Shawcross, 'Commercialism: Early Editors of Milton and Their Publishers', 63-64.

[235] Shawcross, 'Commercialism: Early Editors of Milton and Their Publishers', 64.

[236] Corns, 56.

[237] Corns, 55.

[238] James Sambrook, 'Tickell, Thomas (1685-1740)', (2004), < https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27432> [accessed 7 June 2022], 3.

poets of Britain will gird themselves up for the grandeur of writing didactic poetry.'[239] I will explore the didactic emphasis of Addison's *Spectator* essays in due course, but here it will suffice to say that Addison's polite and practical scholarship made his critique of *PL* wonderfully suited to be included in the Tickell's edition. The younger Tonson had already published a collated edition of Addison's *PL Spectator* essays for the first time in 1719 and was very aware, after witnessing his uncle invest heavily in obtaining the copyright to *The Spectator* from 1712-1715, just how valuable and popular the periodical was.[240] Accordingly, he likely needed little persuasion from Tickell to include some of the most popular *Spectator* essays in a new edition of what had by then become one of the Tonsons' most valuable commodities.

The 1720 edition arguably combines and even improves upon the most aesthetically beautiful and scholarly edifying elements of the most famous 1688 and 1695 editions. Hao Tianhu remarks that 'The Tonsons were well known for publishing deluxe books…' and, as such, 'The 1720 Milton is typically adorned with rich illustrations.'[241] However, unlike the previous nine Tonson editions, the 1720 edition introduces and concludes each book with a vignette. It is the first illustrated edition to part ways with the original artwork of John Baptist Medina, Henry Aldrich, and Bernard Lens in favour of a completely new set of designs attributed to Louis Chéron.[242] Furthermore, the 1719 edition might have been the first to include illuminated letters at the beginning of each book, but these are plain in

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[239] Sambrook, 1. In *De poesi didactica*, Tickell referred to didactic poetry as 'this more part of Poetry, which is second to Epic alone.' See, Thomas Tickell, 'De Poesi Didactica', in *Thomas Tickell and the Eighteenth Century Poets (1685-1740)*, ed. Richard Eustace Tickell (London: Constable, 1931), 199.

[240] Hazel Wilkinson, 'The Complete Spectator: A Bibliographical History', in *Joseph Addison: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. Paul Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 185.

[241] Hao Tianhu, 'Lines Per Page, Engravings, and Catchwords in Milton's 1720 *Poetical Works*', *Studies in Bibliography*, 59 (2015), 191-195 (191).

[242] In a discussion regarding the recorded signatures that accompanied the illustrations of the 1688 edition, John T. Shawcross states that 'Seven engravings cite Medina as their designer (III, V, VI, VII, IX, X, XI; one gives Bernard Lens (IV); and four have no designer indicated (I, II, VIII, XII).' See Shawcross, 'The First Illustrations for "Paradise Lost"', *Milton Quarterly*, 9.2 (1975), 43-46 (43). Suzanne Boorsch was the first to show that the illustrations accompanying Book II, XII, and potentially I in the 1688 Tonson edition of *PL* were designed by Henry Aldrich and not Medina. See, Boorsch, 'The 1688 *Paradise Lost* and Dr. Aldrich', *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 6 (1972), 133-150.

comparison to the 1720 edition's more ostentatious lettering. I would argue that fondness

for Medina's, Aldrich's, and Lens' imposing illustrations over that of Chéron's reduced

vignettes is a matter of preference rather than artistic skill. In terms of taste, Marcia R.

Pointon favours Medina over Chéron, but in terms of skill she remarks that 'Chéron's

illustrations are nearly always more skilfully composed than Medina's and [that] the

tailpieces and historiated initials make for a much richer general effect.'[243]

It is, however, clear that Chéron was influenced by the 1688 engravings as each of

his prefatory illustrations are exceedingly similar to those of his predecessors. Take the

illustration from Book II, for example, both Aldrich and Chéron elect Satan breaking through

the confines of hell's gates and confronting Sin and Death as the chief action to be depicted.

Both illustrations portray a skeletal Death, but Aldrich interprets Death's famous 'dreadful

Dart' (II:672) as an arrow, while Chéron opts for a scythe. Moreover, Aldrich's Sin is arguably

a more accurate representation of Milton's description, that is she is serpentine from the

waist down and the hounds that surround her resemble the mythical Scylla whose lower

half was transformed into an abundance of howling dogs. Chéron, on the other hand, opts

for a less fantastical depiction and presents a blind Sin entangled by, and struggling against,

a handful of snakes. This rather un-Miltonic representation of Sin resulted from, according

to Raymond B. Waddington, Chéron's 'turning to Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* for an established

visual formula.' Waddington notes that Chéron's deviation 'demonstrates the persistence of

the allegorical tradition of representation until well into the eighteenth century.' As such,

this was not a confused mistake on the part of Chéron, but a harmonising of Milton's poem

with popular moral allegory and iconography, something that Addison's polite scholarship

would aptly compliment.[244] Admittedly, Ripa did draw heavily on antiquity when compiling

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[243] Maria R. Pointon, '*Milton & English Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 26.

[244] Raymond B. Waddington, 'Louis Cheron's Illustration of Milton's "Sin"', *Milton Quarterly*, 19.3 (1985), 78-80 (79). Alternatively, when comparing Medina and Chéron's illustrations of Book II, C. H. Collins-Baker argues that Chéron's departure from the text is an attempt to satirise Greco-Roman paganism: 'While Medina in his first illustration kept close to Milton in portraying Satan as an archangel ruined, yet proudly eminent in shape and gesture, and Sin as half-woman and half-monster, Satan in the 1720 edition is a pagan satyr, and Sin is all woman—a classic figure of Greco-Roman ancestory.' See, C. H. Collins-Baker, 'Some Illustrators of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1688-1850)', *The Library*, 3.1 (1948), 1-21 (11).

his compendium of moral emblems, but his depiction and description of sin ('Peccato'), among others, is characteristically Christian:

> A Youth blind, black and naked, seems to walk through crooked Ways, and by Precipices; girt round with a Serpent, gnawing his Heart. His Youth denotes his *Imprudence* and *Blindness*, in committing *Sin*. His Wandering shews his *deviating* from, and *transgressing* the Law. Black and naked, shews that Sin deprives Men of *Grace*, and the *Whiteness* of Virtue. The Serpent is the *Devil*, continually seeking to delude with false Appearances.[245]

Except for a few changes that needed to be made in order to make 'Peccato' appropriate for *PL*, the similarities between Chéron and Ripa are striking and need not be described. Regarding the alterations Waddington states, 'Because the serpent gnawing at Peccato's breast symbolizes conscience, which Milton's Sin of course lacks, Cheron eliminates it'; he does, however, retain 'the larger serpent entwined about the waist, which very appropriately signifies the relationship of Sin and Satan…' A final change that Waddington notes is that 'Cheron replaces the bosom serpent with one that Sin's left hand holds up to her face, possibly to suggest the conventional image of Envy as an eater of snake's flesh (another appropriate touch, considering Satan's successful appeal to the envy of Sin and Death in Book II), adding several other snakes to the setting for emphasis.'[246] The Christianising affect that this has on Milton's depiction of Sin is clear, any trace of Scylla is removed and replaced with moral allegories that reflect a correct theology of sin.

This does not mean that Chéron was averse to painting classical and mythological scenes. Not only had he decorated the drawing-room of his sister's house in Paris with classical and Biblical themes at the closing of the seventeenth-century, but in 1695 he was also hired by Ralph Montagu to paint the ceilings of Boughton House with mythology. However, he does seem to maintain a distance between classical and Christian worlds, taking care not to conflate the two. This is apparent in his most notable contributions to the world of Christian book illustrations, which include a series of plates for a 1694 edition of

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[245] Cesare Ripa, 'Fig. 237. Peccato: *SIN*.' in *Iconologia: Or, Moral* Emblems (London: 1709), 59-60.

[246] Waddington, 79.

the Psalms, a set of designs made in collaboration with Sir James Thornhill for the Oxford Baskett *Bible* (1717), and his vignettes for *PL*.[247]

Moreover, Chéron's illustrations actually serve to rectify what Addison noted in *Spectator* No.297 as being one of Milton's flaws, that is the mingling of the pagan with the sacred:

> ANOTHER blemish that appears in some of his thoughts, is his frequent allusion to Heathen Fables, which are not certainly of a piece with the Divine subject of which he treats. I do not find fault with these allusions, where the Poet himself represents them as fabulous, as he does in some places, but where he mentions them as truths & matters of fact.[248]

Cleansing *PL* of its reliance on fables from antiquity was also important to Bentley, whose edition, as we will see, removed a great number of the classical and fictitious allusions. Not only does switching the popular 1688 illustrations with Chéron's new designs result in an edition of *PL* where the linguistic and pictorial paratextual elements were in closer discourse with one another, but it also signals the beginning of the most invasive Christianising of *PL*. When Chéron actively portrays what the text never provides, he seemingly passes judgement on, and changes, what he and others deem to be an undesirable fusion. Another example of Chéron refining the 1688's mythological depictions is his reluctance to include a unicorn within his portrayal of Raphael conversing with Adam about celestial matters at the opening of Book VIII. Moreover, Chéron's warring angels of Book VI are considerably less Greco-Roman in appearance then Medina's, as is his portrayal of Satan at the beginnings of the first two books, and his depiction of Raphael's wingless feet that accompanies Book V is far less Mercurial than Medina's.

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[247] David Cast, 'Chéron, Louis (1655-1725)', (2004), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5221> [accessed 11 July 2022], 1.

[248] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator' (London, 1719), 36. I use the 1719 collated Tonson edition of Addison's *Spectator* essays on *PL* throughout the entirety of this chapter.

Chéron might be more invasive than Addison, but the latter is no less forthright about the holistic superiority of Christianity over paganism. In this regard, Corns also supports the hints of separation between the classical and the Christian that Addison's *Spectator* essays exhibit, in that he occasionally 'observe[s] his Christian duty of asseverating the superiority of Milton's subject.'[249] An example of this can be found in *Spectator* No. 363, where Addison states the superiority of Adam's vision of the future above the prolepsis in *The Aeneid*: '*Adam*'s Vision is not confined to any particular Tribe of Mankind, but extends to the whole Species'.[250] It will become clear that this kind of universality complements and is befitting of Addison's mission to impart a comprehensive morality to a broad readership. And, earlier in *Spectator* No. 267, Addison encapsulates Milton's superiority more broadly when he writes: '…I think we may say, without derogating from those wonderful performances [alluding to the action of the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad*], that there is an indisputable and unquestioned Magnificence in every part of *Paradise Lost*, and indeed a much greater than could have been formed upon any Pagan System.'[251] Because Milton's chief characters are far greater than Homer and Virgil's, having the Messiah and the Almighty as part of his cast, the subject and action of *PL* is bound to be superior to that of the pagan poets. Indeed, 'it does not determine the fate of single Persons or Nations, but of a whole species. The united Powers of Hell are joined together for the destruction of Mankind, which they effected in part, and would have completed, had not Omnipotence it self interposed.'[252]

Accordingly, the superiority of *PL* also rests on the fact that it is truer than its classical predecessors, something that Addison alludes to when discussing the historic validity of Homer and Virgil's accounts and how they enjoyed a greater level of fictive freedom: '…it was easier for *Homer* & *Virgil* to dash the truth with fiction, as they were in no danger of offending the Religion of their country by it.' Milton, on the other hand, was 'obliged to proceed with the greatest caution in everything that he added out of his own invention.' But regardless of the restraints, Addison argues, 'he has filled his story with so

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[249] Corns, 59.

[250] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 135.

[251] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 7.

[252] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 6-7.

many surprising incidents, which bear so close analogy with what is delivered in holy writ, that it is capable of pleasing the most delicate Reader, without giving offence to the most scrupulous.'[253] Addison clearly believed that Milton's scheme and content outranked that of Homer and Virgil, and that his brilliance was in part characterised by an ability to create extra-scriptural incidences that did not compromise Biblical validity and offend his Christian audience, but for Mr. *Spectator*, as Addison came to be called, Milton's greatness also rested on his abundance of 'beauties'.

Addison's neoclassical approach to *PL* makes much of these facets, but he does not see them as merely aesthetically 'pleasing' or able to evoke strong passions and excite the imagination, instead, they have the ability to powerfully transform the reader in ways that the classics cannot, or should not. As such, the remainder of this chapter will endeavour to draw connection between what has largely been understood as two separate strands of Addison's critical motivations: his Longinian and Aristotelian treatment of *PL* that solidify the poem's classical status, and his attempts to re-present *PL* as a repository of Addisonian morality. In reality, these often facilitate one another, and Addison seems to believe that theoretical theology can produce a practical morality. Essentially, Addison's application of neoclassical methodology freshly invigorates the theology of the poem, or at least the orthodox theology that Addison wishes to be highlighted, and by encouraging his polite readers to view *PL* through the lens of poetic 'beauty', which so often generates readerly response, he suggests that we are not only being called to survey the magnificence of Milton's depictions of Christianity, but to be morally transformed by them. This is nothing more than an anglicanising of classical methodology. Accordingly, the younger Tonson does not only produce an edition that is as aesthetically impressive as the 1688 edition, or more accessible than the 1695 edition, but it might just be the most theologically practical edition of *PL* to date.

Addison's Influences, Methods, and Motives

In order to gain a fuller understanding of why the younger Tonson might have included Addison's essays in the 1720 edition, it will first be necessary to discuss what Addison was

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[253] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 7-8.

trying to accomplish by tackling *PL* in the fashion that he did. If Hume's commentary laid the critical groundwork, but was overwhelmingly erudite and therefore mostly inaccessible, then it is likely that Addison saw an opportunity to revisit the conversation about *PL* and approach the poem in what has come to be seen as a characteristically Addisonian manner. This does not mean that Addison provided something completely new and different from Hume, not when there is much similarity to be found. For example, both scholars are deeply interested in the beauties of Milton's poetry, which include its sublime and moral characteristics, as well as his imitation of the classics and the Bible, and both attempt to highlight where and how Milton exceeds his ancient predecessors. Like Hume, Addison was also interested in the politics and theology of *PL*, and there was some overlap in their methodologies.

In relation to his Longinian approach, Patrick Daly Jr. recognises Addison's indebtedness to Hume, suggesting that although Addison and John Dennis have been acknowledged as 'pioneering the aesthetic of the sublime in *Paradise Lost*, it was Hume who first conveyed aspects of the Miltonic sublime and other subjective notions in scattered glosses throughout his commentary.'[254] More recently Paul Davis has argued that although Hume's influence on Addison's *Spectator* essays has been host to much discussion, it is one of Addison's more obscure earlier works, *Milton's Stile Imitated, in a Translation of a Story out of the Third Aeneid* (1704), that 'puts it beyond doubt that Addison had already studied the *Annotations* closely almost a decade earlier.'[255] In relation to *PL* achieving classical status, John Leonard has defended Hume's contribution by suggesting that Addison's role in the process is overstated, since Hume was the first to give 'Milton the kind of attention hitherto reserved for Greek and Latin poets…' However, Addison does somewhat triumph over Hume in that he made greater steps towards making *PL* more widely accessible to a

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[254] Patrick Daly, Jr., 'Patrick Hume and the Making of Addison's Paradise Lost Papers', *Milton Studies*, 31 (1994), 179-195 (180).

[255] Paul Davis, 'Addison's Forgotten Poetic Response to Paradise Lost: "Milton's Stile Imitated, in a Translation of a Story out of the Third *Aeneid*" (1704): an Edited Text with Annotation and Commentary', *Milton Quarterly*, 49.4 (2015), 243-274 (265). Davis's observations show that 'twenty-six of the most overt Miltonic locutions in Addison's translation had been singled out for comment by Hume—moreover, in several cases, Addison not only imported the word or phrase but was demonstrably influenced by Hume's surrounding commentary.' (265).

non-specialist readership. Indeed, accessibility was, to a large extent, the appeal of Addison's *Spectator* essays.[256] Moreover, Leonard recognises that both Hume and Addison are equally awestruck by the construction of Milton's universe, but unlike Hume, Addison takes issue with 'the Lymbo of Vanity'. Addison is not interested in the Anti-Catholic sentiment that lies behind this instance of Miltonic satire. Instead, he remains faithful to the Aristotelian rules of epic and deems the existence of such a place as being too improbable for the genre, which leads him to list Milton's Limbo in his paper that highlights the 'Defects' of *PL* (*Spectator* No. 297).[257] The passing over of this glaring religio-political comment is somewhat surprising considering Addison's sustained Anti-Jacobitism, as demonstrated in works such as *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705) and *Of the Christian Religion* (1722). As Brian Cowan has recently stated:

> The Williamite regime encouraged the rise of a Whig faction within the church: this new brand of Whig churchmanship was broadly Erastian in its ecclesiology; it accepted and indeed promoted the legitimacy of the Toleration Act (1689), and it saw dissenters as fellow travellers in a common front opposed to popery and Jacobitism.[258]

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[256] Leonard, 'Sound and Sense; 1667-1800', in *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of 'Paradise Lost', 1667-1970: Volume I: Style and Genre; Volume II: Interpretative Issues*, I, 16.

[257] Leonard, '11. The Universe', in *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of 'Paradise Lost', 1667-1970: Volume I: Style and Genre; Volume II: Interpretative Issues*, II, 714-715. Corns also notes that 'The passage is, of course, unmistakably and fiercely anti-Catholic. Addison likes his poetry decorous and his religion cool. He finds the passage aesthetically awkward.' See Corns, 60.

[258] Brian Cowan, 'Mr Spectator and the Doctor: Addison and Henry Sacherverell', in Joseph Addison: Tercentenary Essays, ed. Paul Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 49. For further studies on Addison's Anti-Jacobitism see, Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom, 'Joseph Addison and Eighteenth-Century "Liberalism"', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 12.4 (1951), 560-583; Howard Erskine-Hill, 'Twofold Vision in Eighteenth-Century Writing', *ELH*, 64.4 (1997), 903-924; Morgan Strawn, 'Pagans, Papists, and Joseph Addison's Use of Classical Quotations in the Remarks on Several Parts of Italy', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 75.4 (2012), 561-575. *Of the Christian Religion* was entrusted to Thomas Tickell on Addison's deathbed who saw it into print as part of his friend's collected works.

Addison was certainly part of the 'Whig faction' that Cowan speaks of here. In a passing comment, Christine Gerrard remarks that 'Addison and Steele used the pages of the *Spectator* to rescue for "polite" Whigs of Anne's reign the sublime poetry of the republican regicide Milton', but unlike Hume who made much of Milton's Anti-Catholicism in service of the Williamite cause, Addison's approach was a less polemically-fuelled means of sanitisation.[259]

It is probably the case, at least in part, that this kind of religio-political disinterest is what has led Nicolas von Maltzahn to conclude that 'Longinian criticism tended to divorce Milton's poetic technique from his theological or moral teaching', and that 'Milton's theology, which we may think of as central to his sublimity, never much engages the later critic, and we are closer to Addison's preoccupations where he advises us to read Longinus on Homer in order to find glories that are paralleled in *Paradise Lost*.'[260] Maltzahn is right that Milton's theology is 'central to his sublimity', but I will endeavour to show that he is wrong to assume that this does not engage Addison. Maltzahn's study of 'the Battel of the Angels' in Book VI of *PL* suggests that Addison's Longinian approach indicates that he was more interested in identifying the sublimity of Milton's poetics over engaging with his theological and moral claims. This indeed seems to be the case as Addison 'decides on the propriety even of the second day's engagement – that is the Satanic artillery and the angelic counterattack with mountains.'[261] Elsewhere Maltzahn's argues that Addison's choice to focus heavily on the pleasures that Milton's sublime poetics impart to a reader's imagination can be understood as something like a method of misdirection, which amounts

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[259] Christine Gerrard, 'Pope, Peri Bathous, and the Whig Sublime', in *"Cultures of Whiggism", New Essays on English Literature and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. David Womersley, Paddy Bullard and Abigail Williams (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 200-215 (203). See also, Maltzahn, 'The Whig Milton, 1667-1700', in *Milton and Republicanism*, eds. David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner, 229-253. Similar to Gerrard, Maltzahn notes that: '…the Whig Milton, in the reign of Queen Anne and after, could become a more professional man of letters, a commercial property of special value to Addison's associate the publisher Jacob Tonson.' (253).

[260] Maltzahn, 'The War in Heaven and the Miltonic Sublime', in *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration*, eds. Steven Pincus and Alan Houston, 165, 172.

[261] Maltzahn, 'The War in Heaven and the Miltonic sublime', in *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration*, eds. Steven Pincus and Alan Houston, 172.

to a reverential aestheticization or a reductive nationalisation of a work that had been associated with, among other things, dangerous prophetic enthusiasm, millenarianism, and apocalypticism. By doing this, Addison effectively nullifies Milton's more problematic prophetic claims, which Maltzahn sees as having devastating effects to a true understanding of the poem: 'His apparent kindness to Milton's epic should not conceal how devastating of its 'great argument' his Longinian commendations of it proved or how influential his celebration of its classical features rather than its prophetic claims.'[262]

Although Addison had been happy to exploit the expression of Milton's War in Heaven when writing his own heroic poem, *The Campaign* (1705), which celebrated 'episodes in the War of the Spanish Succession, especially Marlborough's triumphs in the continental campaigns', he was wary of any unmediated political potential that Miltonic enthusiasm might bestow upon the reader.[263] This led him to diminish 'the claims of revelation in his reading of Milton's epic.'[264] Addison might have copied Milton's stile, but Paul Davis is sure to differentiate between poetic and political influence, stating that Mr. *Spectator* was horrified 'at Milton's political and religious convictions, which [he] took to be a recipe for chaos in the state…'[265] Like Hume, Addison was eager to find ways that he could apply Milton's poetry to his current political landscape, and the result was that 'the Platonism and apocalypticism that had so animated Milton's godly poetics were increasingly overtaken by more mimetic and secular readings of the heroic.'[266] And somewhat similar to Hume's sliding over techniques, Addison's *Spectator* essays, through their Longinian emphasis, were able to exercise control over the poem's more radical elements. Abigail Williams speaks about how Addison was able to celebrate Milton's sublimity and the liberty of poetry by measuring *PL* against Longinus and Homer:

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[262] Maltzahn, '14. Milton: Nation and Reception', in *Early Modern Nationalism and Milton's England*, eds. David Loewenstein and Paul Stevens (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 401-442 (427).

[263] Maltzahn, 'The War in Heaven and the Miltonic sublime', in *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration*, eds. Steven Pincus and Alan Houston, 155.

[264] Maltzahn, 'The War in Heaven and the Miltonic sublime', in *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration*, eds. Steven Pincus and Alan Houston, 159.

[265] Davis, 'Addison's Forgotten Poetic Response to Paradise Lost: "Milton's Stile Imitated, in a Translation of a Story out of the Third *Aeneid*" (1704): an Edited Text with Annotation and Commentary', 269.

[266] Maltzahn, '14. Milton: Nation and Reception', in *Early Modern Nationalism and Milton's England*, 402.

Whig writers wrote of 'breaking the ice' and asserting the liberty of poetry, yet they continued to measure the standards of sublime verse by the poetry and rhetorical theory of an earlier age: in his famous series of essays on *Paradise Lost* Addison justified his defence of the sublimity of the epic with reference to Longinus and Homer.[267]

As such, Longinus and Homer enabled Addison to render the sublime and enthusiastic elements of *PL* safely accessible. In this sense, Addison's *Spectator* essays 'demoted questions of doctrine, shunned controversy, and defined even the epic poem primarily as a literary undertaking, the truth claims of which were subordinated to his narrower vision of poetic excellence.'[268]

Regardless as to the degree of Hume's influence, Daly Jr. argues that 'the commercial barrage of Milton's epic by Tonson between 1705 and 1711 prepared the public for a discussion of *Paradise Lost* by Mr. *Spectator* in 1712, after some forty years of sporadic, incidental, and somewhat tempered praise of the poem.'[269] Apart from the handful of defects that Addison points out, it is very difficult to conclude *The Spectator* essays on *PL* feeling anything but positivity towards, and admiration for, the poem. It will become clear that Addison is keen to develop a culture of repeated reading, not just so the reader can bask in the beauty of Milton's poetics, but so that they can learn and become better members of the polite society that Addison envisioned. And although Maltzahn would view the didactic and moral elements of Addison's essays on *PL* as being subordinate to, or even separate from the poem's more enticing sublime dimensions that enliven a reader's imagination and direct their attention away from Milton's radicalism, they are nonetheless equally prevalent and, in many cases, linked to Milton's moral beauties. The

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[267] Williams, *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture*, 17.

[268] Maltzahn, 'The Whig Milton, 1667-1700', 253. Leopold Damrosch also emphasises Addison's ability to exercise control over *PL* when he measures it by the standards of Aristotle and Le Bossu. See Leopold Damrosch, Jr., 'The Significance of Addison's Criticism', *Studies in English Literature*, 1500-1900, 19.3 (1979), 421-430. Here, Damrosch states that Addison wanted 'to emphasize control and order rather than anarchic license.' (427).

[269] Daly, Jr., 189.

instances that Maltzahn views as Addison foisting his 'bland theology' onto *PL*, actually serve to redeem the poem, making it fit for an orthodox and polite readership.[270] This was, for Addison, as much of a moral undertaking as it was a classical one, and it would seem that one could not have the pleasures of imagination that *PL* imparts without being sanctified by those said pleasures.

Addison's Moral Machine

In his discussion on *The Spectator'*s moral economy, Charles A. Knight states that 'Addison and Steele proposed a countermodel of the gentleman based on behaviour rather than birth…'[271] This kind of motivation has broadly been understood, perhaps reductively, as characteristically Whiggish. Such an interpretation plays into a strictly dualistic elucidation of the political landscape from the Glorious Revolution onwards. But the idea that Whigs and Tories were absolutely dissimilar and that no common ground could be found, or that the concept of 'politeness' was intrinsically Whiggish has been challenged by some scholars.[272] Conversely, the popularity of *The Spectator* has led one scholar to describe Addison as 'The most sophisticated and successful publicist of his age', whose writing had a

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[270] Maltzahn, 'The Whig Milton, 1667-1700', in *Milton and Republicanism*, 253; Maltzahn, '14. Milton: Nation and Reception', in *Early Modern Nationalism and Milton's England*, 426-427. Corns also argues that Addison's polite approach to *PL* seemingly ignores the poet's polemical enthusiasm and casts Milton as an Anglican who is seemingly 'too polite' for radical thought. However, 'Just a glance at the title pages of Milton's anti-prelatical tracts of 1641–2 would have disclosed that here we have an enthusiast, not an Addisonian Anglican.' See Corns, 60-61.

[271] Knight, 163.

[272] For a discussion on how Addison's play, *Cato, a Tragedy* (1712), seemed to transcend specific partisanship and was well received by both Whigs and Tories, see Jorge Bastos da Silva, 'Cato's Ghosts: Pope, Addison, And Opposition Cultural Politics', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 38.1 (2005), 95-115. Markku Peltonen examines the conceptions of 'politeness' among Whig culture and how 'politeness' is not intrinsically Whiggish. See Peltonen, 'Politeness and Whiggism, 1688-1732', *The Historical Journal*, 48.2 (2005), 391-414. Abigail Williams also shows that the partisan divide between Whigs and Tories was not so straightforward. See Williams, *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture*.

distinctively religious quality and was motivated by partisan politics.[273] This same scholar argues that Addison's Anglican roots often seem at odds with his more libertarian political outlook:

> He defends freedom of conscience, but thinks that all Englishmen should join the established church; he is a strong supporter of freedom of inquiry, but discourages anything like a Miltonic quest for spiritual truth; he believes sincerely in his religion, but his defense of the church is fundamentally Erastian; he counseled moral rectitude in private men, but was silent about the corruption brought to the church by his "friends" who politicized its hierarchy; he contributed his voice to the secularization of religion and of the church, but was almost as appalled by atheists as he was by Roman Catholics.[274]

All this to say, defining Addison's political and religious convictions might not be as straightforward as has been generally believed. This does not mean that Addison was not a Whig,[275] or that the periodicals that he had a hand in could not be defined as Whig journals, only that their Whiggishness was more moderate and subtle:

> Although the politics of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* were ostensibly neutral, they could nonetheless demonstrate quietly that Whiggism was the natural consequence of the public values and attitudes that they articulated, while at the same time diverting attention from private and privileged matters of politics to public matters of social behaviour.[276]

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[273] Lee Andrew Elioseff, 'Joseph Addison's Political Animal Middle-Class Idealism in Crisis', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 6.3 (1973), 372-381 (372).

[274] Elioseff, 379-380.

[275] Addison's Whig affiliations can be seen clearly in his ministerial works, such as *The Campaign* (1704). For a study of the Whig nature of *The Campaign*, see Andreas K. E. Mueller, 'Politics, Politeness, and Panegyrics: Defoe, Addison, and Philips on Blenheim', *Philological Quarterly*, 94.1-2 (2015), 121-147.

[276] Williams, *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture*, 160.

Moreover, the hitherto unparalleled success of *The Spectator* could therefore be, at least in part, accounted for by 'the novelty effect of the periodical project, encapsulated in its promise to give the reader one essay a day, therapeutically as it were, and its refusal to engage frontally in the more obvious (and lucrative) fields of political controversy or newsmongering.'[277] *The Spectator* and Addison's 'politeness' was for everyone, which meant that it was mainly politically neutral, and as Karl Axelsson has written, it advocated for a 'general education' of the populace. Addison recognised that the arts could satisfy a plethora of needs, and 'One such need was edification and culture', as well as 'meeting an essential demand for social and moral markers.'[278] In one of Addison's early essays he makes his intentions of developing a moral system clear: 'I shall endeavour to enliven Morality with Wit, and to temper Wit with Morality.' Addison will do this in order to recover his readers 'out of that desperate State of Vice and Folly, into which the Age is fallen' (*Spectator* no. 10, 12 March 1711). This moral undertaking was not to be understood as separate from Addison's interest in the arts and the pleasures that poetry could impart to the imagination, instead the imagination was to play a key role in facilitating moral growth: 'One way Addison promotes his project of general education is…by encouraging the introspective practice of imagining, thus enabling the reader to achieve his or her full potential as a moral subject, separating him or her from an objectionable way of life.'[279] Addison was eager for his readers to cultivate a moral imagination that could produce utilitarian ideas and differentiate between what was right and wrong, this would then

[277] Frédéric Ogée, 'Nature and Imagination: The Posterity of Addison's 'Pleasures' in *British Enlightenment Culture'*, in *Joseph Addison: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. Paul Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 272.

[278] Axelsson, 'Joseph Addison and General Education: Moral Didactics in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain', 146. See also, Lawrence E. Klein, 'Joseph Addison's Whiggism', in *"Cultures of Whiggism", New Essays on English Literature and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. David Womersley, Paddy Bullard and Abigail Williams, 108-126. Klein argues that 'When Addison abandoned partisanship, or tried to transcend it, he did so in the name of a moralist project.' (109). And when discussing Addison's periodicals, Klein writes that '…Addison wrote as a moralist: his writing centred on moral improvement. One signature of Addisonian moralism was moderation. Excess and extremity were bad things, dangerous to moral and soteriological health but also often pernicious in politics.' (109-110).

[279] Axelsson, 147.

translate into serving society and helping others. Poetry was a model of this practice that could help facilitate the personal process in a reader's life.

It seems, therefore, that integral to Addison's mission to facilitate moral growth through poetry was the reader's ability to locate poetic beauties, as , to a large extent, these were what fuelled one's imagination. According to Denise Gigante, 'Addison considered Milton to have more beauties than any other poet in English, and his commonplace books were bursting with quotations from Paradise Lost.'[280] In *Spectator* No. 369, Addison provides a summary of what characterises poetic beauty in *PL*:

> I have endeavoured to shew how some Passages are beautiful by being Sublime; others by being Soft; others by being Natural; which of them are recommended by the Passion; which by the Moral; which by the Sentiment, and which by the Expression. I have likewise endeavoured to shew how the Genius of the Poet shines by a happy Invention; a distant Allusion; or a judicious Imitation: how he has copied or improved *Homer* or *Virgil*, and raised his own Imaginations by the Use which he has made of several Poetical Passages in Scripture.[281]

Although Addison allots morality its own place in his list of what constitutes a Miltonic beauty, I will argue that this particular beauty often permeates the others. For Addison, *PL* was a storehouse of morality. In particular, it was filled with beauties that re-oriented its reader back towards their creator.[282] Michelle Syba has been key to my thinking concerning the moral imperatives that underpin Milton's beauties. She argues that Addison's focus on Milton's 'Greatness of Plan, Regularity of Design, and masterly Beauties' (*Spectator* no. 297), but specifically the 'masterly Beauties', in *PL* was not only about locating subjective examples of readerly pleasure, but was also linked to authorial 'hints' and intention. For

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[280] Denise Gigante, 'Milton's Spots, Addison on Paradise Lost', in *Milton in the Long Restoration*, eds. Blair Hoxby and Ann Baynes Coiro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 7.

[281] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 147-148.

[282] Lisa Zeitz argues that Addison's aesthetics and his three aesthetic categories: the great, the beautiful, and the new, are 'linked to the benevolent intentions of the Creator, and is ultimately directed towards further knowledge and worship of him'. See, Zeitz, 'Addison's "Imagination" Papers and the Design Argument', *English Studies*, 6 (1992), 493–502 (496, 497–8).

Syba, the fact that the beauties are 'masterly' means that they 'seem to be affiliated with the authoritative schemes of "Plan" and "Design."'[283] Accordingly, for Addison, they play a prominent role in Milton's attempts to justify God's ways to man, the greatest plan and design of all. For Addison, 'beauties take the form of hints, fragmentary formations that promise a degree of contact with an intending authorial mind.'[284] Milton's beauties can therefore, in many cases, be comprehended as intentional sites of moralistic didacticism, so wherever beauty is there also likely exists an intended lesson.

More broadly, *The Spectator*'s influence on societal betterment was certainly substantiated by Addison's readers who gladly received the suave and practical morality that was presented to them. In terms of *PL*, however, some seemed to miss the point and instead fixated on the simplicity of Addison's observations, deeming them unoriginal and below the standards of acceptable scholarship. In line with *The Spectator's* values to render philosophy and scholarship affable and their practices understandable and even attainable, Addison's series of essays on *PL*, broadly speaking, were designed to make the poem and the methods of its criticism accessible to a burgeoning bourgeoisie readership. Addison confirms these progressive motives in *Spectator* No. 10, where he remarked that he had 'brought philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables and in Coffee-Houses.' Following the closure of *The Tatler*, *The Spectator* ran for less than two years, but Addison and his Whig contemporaries achieved much in this short period of time, so much so that Pat Rogers describes it as 'one of the most triumphant literary projects of the age.' Rogers asserts that 'Before the paper closed on 6 December 1712, it had gone through 555 issues, had regularly sold up to 4000 copies…and had transformed periodical writing in English.'[285]

The popularity and position of influence that *The Spectator* periodical held in the eighteenth-century cannot be overstated, and this popularity is not only due to the theoretical understanding of theology, philosophy, and poetry, but also their moral

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[283] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 33. Syba, 616.

[284] Syba, 617.

[285] Pat Rogers, 'Addison, Joseph (1672-1719)', (2004), < https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/156> [accessed 7 June 2022], 8. For a study on the print history and popularity of *The Spectator* see, Wilkinson, 'The Complete Spectator: A Bibliographical History'.

applicability. Addison was eager to move out of the realms of theory to application. Lawrence E. Klein's article, 'Addisonian Afterlives: Joseph Addison in Eighteenth-Century', investigates the immediate legacy of Addison's politeness and the effect of *The Spectator*. While being careful not to assume that readers confused *The Spectator* with the Bible, Klein argues that the periodical's capacity to shape its reader's morality was viewed as being similar to that of Scripture. Among others, Klein presents the Scottish preacher and rhetorician, Hugh Blair (1718-1800) as being a chief admirer of Addisonian morality. Blair writes that:

> …the *Spectator*, of which [Addison's] papers are the chief ornament, is a book which is in the hands of every one, and which cannot be praised too highly. The good sense, and the good writing, the useful morality, and the admirable vein of humour which abound in it, render it one of those standard books which have done the greatest honour to the English nation.[286]

A fine example of what Blair commends as *The Spectator*'s 'chief ornament' was Addison's essays on *PL*, which stood out as some of the most popular issues that the periodical offered.[287] Addison makes much of Milton's veneration of deity and, as such, presents *PL* as a text that was worthy of repeated study. This re-presentation of Milton's God seems to have had a profound effect on Addison's eighteenth-century readership, who became convinced that *PL* reliably communicated the benevolent character of God, and if studied thoroughly, would subsequently shape their personal morality.[288] In a number of ways, Klein

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[286] Hugh Blair, 'Lecture XX. Critical Examination of the Style of Mr Addison, in no. 411. of the Spectator', in *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, 3 vols (London, 1783), II, 58-59. See also, Lawrence E. Klein, 'Addisonian Afterlives: Joseph Addison in Eighteenth-Century Culture', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 35.1 (2012), 101-118.

[287] John Leonard states that Addison's '*Spectator* papers on *Paradise Lost* have had more influence, and been reprinted more often, than any other work of Milton criticism.' See, Leonard, 'Sound and Sense; 1667-1800', in *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of 'Paradise Lost', 1667-1970: Volume I: Style and Genre; Volume II: Interpretative Issues*, I, 16.

[288] Klein cites the abolitionist Ignatius Sancho (1729-1780) and his correspondents with a young Jack Wingrave (1757-1797) who had been posted to India, as evidence of Addison's *PL* essays encouraging moral reformation.

and the early readers of Addisonian writings see them as 'quasi-scriptural', not only because they 'were recognised as ubiquitous and enduring', but because they 'operated forcefully as models of writing and as sources of moral instruction.'[289]

There were, of course, other early readers of Addison's contributions to *The Spectator* who were not as convinced by what they perceived to be his un-scholarly methods. In his *Life of Addison*, Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) seemed to be in two minds when it came to judging Addison's polite scholarship on *PL*:

> An instructor like Addison was now wanting, whose remarks being superficial, might be easily understood, and being just might prepare the mind for more attainments. Had he presented *Paradise Lost* to the publick with all the pomp of system and severity of science, the criticism would perhaps have been admired, and the poem still have been neglected; but by the blandishments of gentleness and facility he has made Milton an universal favourite, with whom readers of every class think it necessary to be pleased.[290]

I agree with Stephen Fix's interpretation of this passage. For Johnson, 'Addison's criticism was popular and useful because it made what is on the surface of the poem…available to general readers.' Johnson clearly states that Addison 'prepared the mind for more attainments', which means that he 'cleared away obstacles to a more profound

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In response to Wingrave's derogatory comments about Indians, Sancho responds with a reading list that would facilitate a refinement of manners. After assuming that Wingrave has copies of *The Spectator* and other such periodicals, Sancho recommends Milton, Edward Young, and James Thomson. These writers, Sancho writes, 'were my summer companions for near twenty years—they mended my heart—they improved my veneration to the Deity—and increased my love to my neighbours.' See, Ignatius Sancho, *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, An African*, 2 vols (London, 1783/4), II, 153. Daniel Defoe (1684-1731) was another early reader who recognised the benefits of Addison's essays on *PL*. The same day (29 March 1712) that *Spectator* No. 339 was published, Defoe wrote in the *Review*, ''If anything could heighten the imagination or move the passions and affections in the subject which Milton wrote upon, more than reading Milton himself, I should think the world beholden to the Spectator for his extraordinary notes upon that sublime work.' Quoted in John Walter Good, *Studies in the Milton Tradition*, 153.

[289] Klein, 'Addisonian Afterlives: Joseph Addison in Eighteenth-Century Culture', 114.

[290] Samuel Johnson, *Life of Addison, with Introduction and Notes by F. Ryland* (London, 1893), 53.

understanding of the poem.' Johnson appreciates Addison's preparatory work, but he maintains that Addison places too much emphasis on *PL*'s conformity to the epic tradition, and that 'a truly sophisticated treatment of the poem would take its religious purposes and effects more fully into account.'[291] In a similar, and yet more scathing fashion, the English divine and writer, Richard Hurd (1720-1808), complained that Addison was overly dependent on Aristotle and Le Bossu:

> For what concerns his [Addison's] *criticism on Milton* in particular, there was this accidental benefit arising from it, that it occasioned an admirable poet to be read, and his excellencies to be observed. But for the merit of the work itself, if there be anything just in the *plan*, it was, because Aristotle and Bossu had taken the same route before him. And as to his *own* proper observations, they are for the most part, so general and indeterminate, as to afford but little instruction to the reader, and are, not unfrequently, altogether frivolous.[292]

This is reminiscent of Thomas Newton's criticism of Hume's erudite approach to *PL*, but as has already been argued, there is nothing 'frivolous' about Addison's observations. Both Johnson and Hurd recognise Addison's triumph in raising Milton's popularity, but they are disgruntled at the perceived shallowness and unoriginality of his notes. Johnson and Hurd, however, seem to neglect one of Addison's chief interests, that is his desire to foster a sense of readerly responsibility. This is why Addison tasks the reader with returning to the poem and to reconsider what he has already highlighted. A fine example of this can be found in *Spectator* No. 345, which discusses the events of Book VIII. In relation to Adam relaying his

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[291] Stephen Fix, '7. Prayer, Poetry, and *Paradise Lost:* Samuel Johnson as Reader of Milton's Christian Epic, in *Seeing Into the Life of Things: Essays on Literature and Religious Experience*, ed. John L. Mahoney (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 128-150 (133). Fix compares several instances where Addison and Johnson (in his whole critique of *PL*) treat the same subjects, but reach different conclusions. For example, 'When Addison writes about Books XI and XII, he praises them for completing the epic design, and for conveniently solving the old problem of finding a happy ending,' whereas Johnson 'praises them for representing the completion of the cycle of life, death and rebirth that Christian history comprehends' (133-134).

[292] Richard Hurd, *Q. Horatii Flacci epistolae ad Pisones, et Augustum*, 2 vols (London, 1753), II, 106.

conversation with God to Raphael, which entailed him asking for a partner to rule and reign with, Addison writes:

> *Adam* urges, in this divine Colloquy, the impossibility of his being happy, tho' he was the Inhabitant of *Paradise*, and Lord of the whole Creation, without the Conversation and Society of some rational Creature, who should partake those Blessings with him. This Dialogue, which is supported chiefly by the Beauty of Thoughts, without other poetical Ornaments, is as fine a Part as any in the whole Poem: The more the Reader examines the Justness and Delicacy of its Sentiments, the more he will find himself pleased with it. The Poet has wonderfully preserved the Character of Majesty and Condescension in the Creator, and at the same Time that of Humility and Adoration in the Creature…[293]

Addison's observations about Adam's happiness relying on 'Conversation and Society of some rational Creature' are uncannily reflective of his own polite motivations. In essence, he wanted his own society to reflect Adam's Edenic desire for good and wholesome conversation. This passage also reflects Addison's admiration of Milton's rendition of the benevolent relationship between man and his maker. This theological lesson that underpins Milton's 'Beauty of Thoughts' is prefaced by Addison encouraging the reader to return to this moment in Book VIII and further search for other benefits that the 'Justness and Delicacy of its Sentiments' undoubtedly supply. The effects on the reader's sensibilities will surely be edifying as well as pleasing. Addison did not want to provide all the answers, but rather, in his role as teacher, he aimed to give concise samples of areas that could be given further consideration by a reader. Leopold Damrosch has even argued that Addison 'is not really measuring Paradise Lost by the standards of Aristotle or Le Bossu, but is using their categories as a convenient means of opening up the poem.'[294] It seems that the aim was to 'open up' and show readers, by whatever means were available, that *PL* was a repository of varied beauties that conferred theological truths that would positively shape one's morality.

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[293] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 106.

[294] Damrosch, 427.

This is why in *Spectator* No. 369 Addison emphasises the moral superiority of *PL* above all other heroic poems:

> …no just Heroic Poem ever was, or can be made, from whence one great Moral may not be deduced. That which reigns in *Milton* is the most universal and most useful that can be imagined; it is in short this, *that Obedience to the Will of God makes Men happy, and that Disobedience makes them miserable.*[295]

Seemingly, many of the poetic beauties that Addison highlights actually serve to magnify this central and great moral. Hence, by measuring *PL* against classical standards in a way that maintains a strong Christian orthodoxy and moralistic emphasis, Addison not only shows that the poem can be deemed a classic, but an English classic. Although Johnson and Hurd were somewhat frustrated by Addison's approach, it does not change the fact that he laid the groundwork for *PL* to be read as a beautiful work capable of powerfully imparting to its readers a Christian morality.

Johnson's desire for Addison to further consider the religious purposes of *PL* seem strangely misguided in light of the importance he places on the poem's moral landscape. Obedience to the will of God being the source of man's happiness, while disobedience leading to their misery, is not only the 'most universal and most useful' moral that underpins *PL*, but Addison encourages his readers to look upon it 'as the Soul of the Fable…' Just as a soul is integral to life, so too is this grand and Christian moral key to the vitality and usefulness of *PL*. But Addison does not stop there, 'there are an Infinity of Under Morals which are to be drawn from the several Parts of the Poem, and which makes this Work more useful and instructive than any other Poem in any Language.'[296] And these are often accompanied by other poetic beauties that help inspire the reader's practical application. To date, there has been no thorough examination of the moral markers that characterise Addison's *Spectator* essays on *PL*. As such, the remainder of this study will aim to present a number of examples that both overtly and subtly demonstrate Addison's belief in the moral wealth and didactic capacity of *PL*. Related to this is the idea that Milton's unrivalled poetic

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[295] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 146.

[296] Ibid.

beauty and sublimity is key to enacting readerly transformation. We will now turn to see how a Christian moralism consistently filters through Addison's observations. In this regard, there is much evidence to support the idea that a major goal of the *Spectator* essays was to apply the tools of classical scholarship in a way that facilitated the dissemination of Addisonian 'politeness'.

The Moral Landscape of *PL*

Not all critics acknowledge a positive correlation between what Addison characterises as poetic beauty and the Christian moralism of *PL*. According to John Leonard, Addison believed 'the critic's task is to credit Paradise Lost with 'Beauties' so as to secure its status as a classic', but this often problematises any Christian moral undertone. For Leonard, Milton's poetic beauties are primarily linked with his imitation of the classics, which to a certain extent means 'that many of his [Addison's] 'Beauties' militate against the poem's orthodox morality.' Leonard cites an example where Addison identifies Milton's imitation of Homer in relation to Adam and Eve's postlapsarian lust, and concludes that it is strange for Addison to include 'even fallen Adam and Eve's lust in the category of 'Beauties'.'[297] Here, Leonard is describing the events of Book IX, which Addison addresses in *Spectator* No. 351. However, Leonard's understanding of what constitutes an Addisonian 'Beauty' is perhaps limited. I will now proceed to offer a more thorough analysis of Addison's thoughts.

In accordance with Addison's list concerning what constitutes a poetic beauty, imitation of the classics legitimises why Addison views this episode of lust as a beauty. As he states, it 'is an exact Copy of that between *Jupiter* and *Juno* in the Fourteenth *Iliad*.'[298] But it is important to consider that classical imitation is not the only marker of poetic beauty. In fact, Addison highlights, when discussing classical 'Hints' in relation to the discourse

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[297] Leonard, '9. The Fall', in *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of 'Paradise Lost', 1667-1970: Volume I: Style and Genre; Volume II: Interpretative Issues*, II, 603.

[298] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 117. At a later point in *Spectator* No. 351 Addison adds: 'As no Poet seems ever to have studied *Homer* more, or to have resembled him in the Greatness of Genius than *Milton*, I think I should have given but a very imperfect Account of his Beauties, if I had not observed the most remarkable Passages which look like Parallels in these two great Authors.' (118).

between Gabriel and Satan in *Spectator* No. 321, that such practices often overcomplicate what the *Spectator* papers are trying to impart to his polite 'English' readership and are mainly beneficial to the learned reader:

> I must here take notice, that *Milton* is every where full of Hints, and sometimes literal Translations, taken from the greatest of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets. But this I may reserve for a Discourse by it self, because I would not break the Thread of these Speculations, that are designed for *English* Readers, with such Reflections as would be of no Use but to the Learned.[299]

It would seem that throughout Addison's *Spectator* essays on *PL*, classical imitation is subordinate to the more useful beauties that serve the broadest readership. Although it goes largely unstated, Addison's other dealings with the episodes of Adam and Eve's fallen behaviour seem to somewhat nullify the prospect of the beauty of classical imitation subverting the poem's Christian orthodoxy. It goes unnoted by Leonard, but the beauty of Adam and Eve's postlapsarian relations and actions are certainly imbued with morality.

Central to Addison's moral and didactic scheme of reading the episodes that heavily feature the postlapsarian Adam and Eve was the fact that the pair were not only relatable, but were related to the reader. Addison writes in *Spectator* No. 273 that:

> …it is impossible for any of its Readers, whatever Nation, Country or People he may belong to, not to be related to the Persons who are the principal Actors in it. But what is still infinitely more to its advantage, the principal Actors in this Poem are not only our Progenitors, but our Representatives: We have an actual interest in every thing they do, and no less than our utmost happiness is concerned, and lies at stake in all their behaviour.[300]

According to Addison, Milton was greatly advantaged to have the parents of mankind as his protagonists, mainly because the shared ancestry maximises the reader's investment in the

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[299] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 70.

[300] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 12.

narrative. However, it is important to note the distinction that Addison makes between Adam and Eve being our 'Progenitors' and our 'Representatives'. Both further readerly interest, but the former emphasises a biological connection, whereas the latter frames Adam and Eve as exemplars and distinguishes their actions as being vital to our happiness and current state of fallenness. As representatives, they stand as common representations of human behaviour. This implies a belief that the sins of Adam and Eve will be recognisable to the reader, or, perhaps more accurately, inherited. Any reader can easily see themselves in Adam and Eve, and as we will see, the reality of this interconnectedness goes a long way in unlocking the fulness of the poem's didactic capacity.

Perhaps most importantly, the orthodoxy of Milton's beauties that relate to the fallen Adam and Eve are supported by Addison's repeated observations concerning the poet's faithful upholding of Scripture. In relation to God visiting and conversing with a postlapsarian Adam and Eve in Book X, Addison notes in *Spectator* No. 357 that Milton adheres closely to Scriptural phraseology and even chooses to sacrifice the 'Numerousness of his Verse' for the sake of maintaining exactness when including Biblical speeches:

> The cool of the Evening, being a Circumstance with which Holy Writ introduces this great Scene, it is Poetically described by our Author, who has also kept religiously to the Form of Words, in which the three several Sentences were passed upon *Adam*, *Eve*, and the Serpent. He has rather chosen to neglect the Numerousness of his Verse, than to deviate from those Speeches which are recorded on this great Occasion.[301]

Again, Addison notes that 'THOUGH the Author in the whole Course of his Poem, and particularly in the Book we are now examining, had infinite Allusions to Places of Scripture, I have only taken notice in my Remarks of such as are of a Poetical Nature, and which are woven with great Beauty into the Body of this Fable.'[302] This suggests that the specific instances of beauty, which Addison draws the reader's attention to, are technically elaborative inventions, but are nonetheless firmly and safely based in Scripture. Of course,

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[301] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 120.

[302] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 121.

this does not exclude the representations of Adam and Eve, in fact, '*Milton*'s Art', that is his ability to mingle Scriptural truth with poetic beauty, 'is no where more shewn than in his conducting the Parts of these our first Parents.'[303] Addison claims that the beauty of the pair's fall lies, at least in part, in its ability to evoke pathos and empathy that does not compromise the Biblical narrative: 'The Representation he [Milton] gives of them, without falsifying the Story, is wonderfully contrived to influence the Reader with Pity and Compassion towards them.' The reader is implicated in the narrative of Adam's fall because 'his [Adam's] Crime proceeds from a weakness which every Man is inclined to pardon commiserate, as it seems rather the Frailty of Humane Nature, than of the Person who offended.' We are encouraged to forgive Adam, and that forgiveness is to proceed from the realisation that given the opportunity none of us would have acted to the contrary: 'Every one is apt to excuse a Fault which he himself might have fallen into. It was Excess of Love for *Eve* that ruin'd *Adam* and his Posterity.'[304] This conclusion is not only 'Justify'd' by Scripture, but, according to Addison, 'by many of the Fathers, and the most Orthodox Writers.'[305]

Returning to *Spectator* No. 351, we can see that for Addison, Milton draws Adam and Eve's postlapsarian experience 'with such Sentiments as do not only interest the Reader in their Afflictions, but raise in him the most melting Passions of Humanity and Commiseration.'[306] This example shows Addison moving the reader from highlighting the theoretical excellence of Milton's sentiments to the practical and Christian response they evoke. As we have already seen, this sometimes entails an encouragement to forgive, or as this most recent example demonstrates, to mourn and pity humanity's fallenness. On other occasions, the reader's established interconnectedness with Adam and Eve allows for an impartation of horror at sin, which is made all the more potent through the greatness of Milton's beauty. An example of this can be found in *Spectator* No. 363, where Addison explores Adam's reaction to being shown the death of his son, Abel, by Archangel Michael:

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[303] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 123.

[304] Ibid.

[305] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 124.

[306] Ibid.

IN this great Review which *Adam* takes of all his Sons and Daughters, the first Objects he is presented with exhibit to him the Story of *Cain* and *Abel*, which is drawn together with much Closeness and Propriety of Expression. That Curiosity and natural Horror which arises in *Adam* at the Sight of the first Dying Man, is touched with great Beauty.[307]

Similarly, Addison's summary of Adam and Eve's actions in response to the breaking of God's commandment can be seen as a pattern to be followed. Addison writes that:

MILTON has shewn a wonderful Art in describing that Variety of Passions which arise in our first Parents upon the Breach of the Commandment that had been given them. We see them gradually passing from the Triumph of their Guilt thro' Remorse, Shame, Despair, Contrition, Prayer, and Hope, to a perfect and compleat Repentance.[308]

The Christian's mode of existence is succinctly summarised: acknowledge one's sinfulness and repent of it. Again, due to the reader's connection to Adam and Eve, Addison's focus on Milton's descriptions of the sinful passions and actions of the pair in *Spectator* No. 351 serve to highlight the reader's own proclivity for sensual sin, the pangs of a guilty conscience, and the shunning of responsibility:

THAT secret Intoxication of Pleasure, with all those transient Flashings of Guilt and Joy which the Poet represents in our first Parents upon their eating the forbidden Fruit, to those Flaggings of Spirit, Damps of Sorrow, and mutual Accusations which succeed it, are conceiv'd with a wonderful Imagination, and described in very natural Sentiments.[309]

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[307] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 135.

[308] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 130.

[309] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 116-117.

At play here is the idea that the process of moral rectitude begins with being shown and then acknowledging one's own susceptibilities, and Milton describing in 'natural Sentiments', so as to be agreeable and relatable to the reader, what his imagination conceives, is foundational to achieving a moral outcome. For Addison, there is a close partnership between the unity, both biological and behavioural, that the reader shares with Adam and Eve and the beauty of Milton's sentiments. These poetic devices also function to develop readerly connections and maximise the effectiveness of any didactic outcome.

In *Spectator* No. 279 Addison writes that there are 'two Kinds of Sentiments, the Natural and the Sublime, which are always to be pursued in an heroic Poem…' In regard to the sublime, Addison maintains that '*MILTON*'s chief Talent, and indeed his distinguishing Excellence lies in the Sublimity of his Thoughts.'[310] I shall explore in due course Addison's belief that Milton's sublimity affected his reader's morality, but at present I will focus on his views concerning the function of Milton's natural sentiments, and how they draw the reader into the narrative of Adam and Eve. The OED describes 'sentiments' as follows: 'What one feels with regard to something; mental attitude (of approval or disapproval, etc.); an opinion or view as to what is right or agreeable. Often plural with collective sense.'[311] In this way, the beauty of natural sentiments lies in the administering of universal truth and the accurate reflection of reality. Addison points towards Virgil as his classical marker of what constitutes excellent natural sentiments. Virgil's 'sentiments' are 'just and natural' and divulge 'that he had a perfect Insight into humane Nature, and that he knew every thing which was the most proper to affect it.'[312] Addison implies that Virgil's goal was collective agreeableness, to present the natural way of things, to accurately explore the mechanics of human nature, and in these areas, avoid the 'trifling Points and Puerilities that are so often to be met with in *Ovid*, none of the Epigrammatick Turns of *Lucan*, none of those swelling

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[310] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 17.

[311] "sentiment, n.", OED Online, (2022), <https://www-oed-com.uea.idm.oclc.org/view/Entry/176056?redirectedFrom=sentiments> [accessed July 12, 2022].

[312] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 18. Walsh highlights Addison's interest in Milton's renditions of Adam and Eve functioning as our representatives, and the effect that that has on the reader. He understands this through the paradigm of Aristotle's account of the pleasures associated with mimesis. See, Marcus Walsh, 'Addison as Critic and Critical Theorist', in *Joseph Addison: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. Paul Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 108.

Sentiments which are so frequently in *Statius* and *Claudian*, [and] none of those mixed Embellishments of *Tasso*.'[313] Although on occasion Milton might fall short in this regard, the allegorical, improbable, and unnatural representations of Sin and Death being the most problematic examples, his depictions of the postlapsarian Adam and Eve are very natural. For Addison, the holistic unity that the reader experiences with Adam and Eve is further enhanced by Milton's natural sentiments, poetic beauties that not only disseminate truth, but through their poetic nature and artful delivery facilitate a strong sense of relatability and shared experience.

Virgil cannot compete with Milton in terms of relatability. Virgil's poetry might have been able to faithfully represent and affect the reader's nature, but Milton's natural sentiments achieve this to a greater level because they show every reader where they have come from, how they ended up the way they are, and how they are to respond to the very same temptations that their ancestors faced. Addison touches on the monumental impact of Adam and Eve's sin in *Spectator* No. 357. Here, he notes that the angels have been sent by God to bring about a form of uncreation: 'Accordingly they are represented as infecting the stars and Planets with malignant Influences, weakning the Light of the Sun, bringing down the Winter into the milder Regions of Nature, planting Winds and Storms in several Quarters of the Sky, storing the Clouds with Thunder, and in short, perverting the whole Frame of the Universe to the Condition of its Criminal Inhabitants.'[314] Additionally, in *Spectator* No. 363 Addison suggests that Adam and Eve's witnessing of the effects that their transgression had on the entirety of creation is prophetic:

> THE Conference of *Adam* and *Eve* is full of moving Sentiments. Upon their going abroad after the melancholy Night which they had passed together, they discover the Lion and the Eagle pursuing each of them their Prey towards the Eastern Gates of *Paradise*. There is a double Beauty in this Incident, not only as it presents great and just Omens, which are always agreeable in Poetry, but as it expresses that Enmity which was now produced in the Animal Creation.[315]

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[313] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 18.

[314] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 122.

[315] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 132.

The fact that Milton's imagination is able to conceive and then describe in 'natural Sentiments' the struggles that Adam and Eve face demonstrates a shared and felt understanding. But more than this, Milton's 'natural Sentiments' are akin to an ability to accurately describe collective emotions, reactions, and views evoked and formulated as a result of certain events, namely the Fall, which has universal and timeless implications. In this regard, Milton's poetic ability greatly supports the process of the reader identifying with the narrative. Perhaps then, when Addison frames Milton's rendition of the original pair's lust as a poetic beauty, it is not only because it imitates an example from antiquity, but because it also speaks into Milton's ability to powerfully capture the reality of sin. Moreover, Addison seems to believe that he has the weight of orthodoxy on his side when he includes Adam and Eve's postlapsarian symptoms in the category of poetic beauty, and his subtle illumination of the virtuous effects that Milton's representations have on the reader strongly suggest that beauty is not only a poetic device that is pleasing to the reader, but that it is also a strong moral agent. In this sense, Milton's epic becomes an ideal resource that Addison encourages his readers to repeatedly engage with in order to be schooled in the ways of politeness.

Having paid attention to the moralistic subtleties of Milton's beauties, namely his natural sentiments, I will now turn to examine the more overt examples of didacticism. On a number of occasions Addison very clearly provides the moral that lies at the foundation of various episodes throughout *PL*, at least one of which not only has implications for the individual, but for the nation as well. For example, when discussing Adam's reconcilement to Eve after the fall in *Spectator* No. 357, Addison finds a great moral in Adam's resolve to bear their punishment and submit to the providence of God instead of approving Eve's proposal to live childless or commit suicide (X:966-1096):

> *ADAM*'s Reconcilement to her [Eve] is work'd up in the same Spirit of Tenderness.
> *Eve* afterwards proposes to her Husband, in the Blindness of her Despair, that to
> prevent their Guilt from descending upon Posterity they should resolve to live
> Childless; or, if that could not be done, they should seek their own Deaths by violent
> Methods. As those Sentiments naturally engage the Reader to regard the Mother of
> Mankind with more than ordinary Commiseration, they likewise contain a very fine

Moral. The Resolution of Dying, to end our Miseries, does not shew such a degree of Magnanimity as a Resolution to bear them, and submit to the Dispensations of Providence. Our Author has therefore, with great Delicacy, represented *Eve* as entertaining this Thought, and *Adam* as disapproving it.[316]

The reader can sympathise with Eve and understand how her sorrow has driven her to such a destructive conclusion, but Addison clearly maintains that Adam is the example to be followed. Again, in *Spectator* No. 327 Addison draws the notion of religious exclusivity out of Abdiel's refusal to follow Satan, which evokes a sense of loyalty in the reader and quietly resonates with Addison's desire for one unified church:

The Part of *Abdiel*, who was the only Spirit that in this infinite Host of Angels preserved his allegiance to his Maker, exhibits to us a noble Moral of religious Singularity. The Zeal of the Seraph breaks forth in a becoming Warmth of Sentiments and Expressions, as the Character which is given us of him denotes that generous Scorn and Intrepidity which attends heroic Virtue. The Author doubtless designed it as a Pattern to those who live among Mankind in their present State of Degeneracy and Corruption.[317]

This is as close as Addison gets to religious polemic. He seemingly admires religious singularity, and although toleration is something that Addison does support, the mention of unnamed individuals 'who live among Mankind in their present State of Degeneracy and Corruption' feels like a slight against those who threaten the established order with all manner of disobedience. Addison likely had the ever present and troublesome menace of Jacobitism in mind when exegeting this moral, a polemic that Milton would have gladly endorsed. Similarly, in *Spectator* No. 315 the argument for religious singularity can be made from Addison's belief that 'the Christian Idea of the Supream Being is more Rational and Sublime than that of the Heathens.'[318] Addison compares the omniscience and creative

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[316] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 127.

[317] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 82-83.

[318] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 58-59.

methods of Virgil's Jupiter to Milton's God and finds Virgil wanting. It follows that if happy obedience to the one true God is the great moral of *PL*, then according to Addison, Milton's depiction of deity functioning in his creative capacity facilitates such an outcome.[319]

Moreover, Addison also notes in *Spectator* No. 321 that '*ZEPHON*'s Rebuke, with the Influence it had on *Satan*, is exquisitely graceful and moral.'[320] This is an example of Addison highlighting a moral principle without clearly stating what it might be, undoubtedly an intentional incompleteness designed to encourage the reader to revisit the poem and undergo the critical labour themselves. Accordingly, the moral seems to centre around the devil's pride hampering his ability to fully realise his diminished glory following his expulsion from heaven, that is until he hears the rebuke of the beautiful and graceful Zephon which leaves him pining for what he has lost (IV:827-851). Hence, Satan's situation serves to warn the reader that disobedience towards God leads to a dreadful sense of loss and a reality of fallenness, whilst Zephon's response to Satan's pride sets an example to be followed. After Zephon's rebuke '*Satan* is afterwards led away to *Gabriel*' and Addison notes that 'His disdainful Behaviour on this Occasion is so remarkable a Beauty, that the most ordinary Reader cannot but take Notice of it.'[321] One might ask why Addison interprets Milton's depiction of Satan and his disdainful behaviour as a beauty that unquestionably captivates the reader's attention. Similar to Leonard's reservations about Addison framing Adam and Eve's lust as a beauty, surely referring to Satan's behaviour in the same manner runs the risk of militating against the poem's orthodoxy. This is not the case, as the beauty of Milton's depiction functions to powerfully illuminate Satan's depravity for the purpose of shocking the reader. This conclusion is supported by another of Addison's earlier remarks that he

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[319] In *Spectator* No. 339 Addison also cites Lord Richard Blackmore's epic poem, *A Philosophical Poem* (1712), as an example of a useful contemporary work that celebrates the reasonableness of the Christian creation account. Addison writes that 'The work was undertaken with so good an intention, and is executed with so great a mastery, that it deserves to be looked upon as one of the most useful and noble productions in our *English* verse. The Reader cannot but be pleased to find the depths of Philosophy enlivened with all the charms of Poetry, & to see so great a strength of reason, amidst so beautiful a redundancy of the imagination. The author has shewn us that design in all the works of Nature, which necessarily leads us to the knowledge of its first Cause.' (100).

[320] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 69.

[321] Ibid.

makes in *Spectator* No. 303. Here, Addison notes the unsubstantiated and prideful nature of Satan's remarks about God, and claims that 'AMIDST those impieties which this enraged Spirit utters in other places of the Poem, the Author has taken care to introduce none that is not big with absurdity & incapable of shocking a religious Reader…'[322] Satan's behaviour is presented as immoral and Milton's beauty when describing said behaviour has an important role to play in shocking the reader. With great art, Milton illuminates and maximises Satan's depravity, which causes the reader to pause, survey, and be appropriately shocked by his perversity and foolishness of pride.

Again, when passing comment on Adam's conversation with Raphael in *Spectator* No. 345, Addison states that 'our Ancestor [Adam] gives an Account of the Pleasure he took in conversing with him, which contains a very noble Moral.'[323] There is no mention of what the moral is, but after an examination of the passage in question (VIII:210-216) the reader will notice that the conversation with Raphael is described as being better than food. This is clearly reflective of the recurring Biblical theme that man does not live on bread alone, and subsequently encourages the reader to regularly meditate on Scripture for their spiritual sustenance. A final example can be found in *Spectator* No. 369, where Addison notes the plurality of morals that characterise the dialogue between Adam and Michael. Once again, Addison does not provide the morals because he imbues his readers with responsibility and autonomy, but they are certainly present and the notion that Milton's sentiments are ideas that instruct the reader is plainly stated: '*MILTON*'s Poem ends very nobly. The last Speeches of *Adam* and the Arch-Angel are full of Moral and Instructive Sentiments.'[324]

PL is indeed a repository of morality, but for Addison the beauty of Milton's sublimity often seems to compliment the moral underpinnings and theology of certain episodes. In this sense, it is not dissimilar from Milton's natural sentiments that are pleasing to the reader's mind largely because of their mimetic capacity; however, the sublime functions to powerfully affect the mind of the reader with terrible images, which in turn gives greater weight to the moral and theological lesson, ensuring maximal impact. Take the instance

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[322] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 42.

[323] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 103.

[324] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 143.

when Addison is discussing the morals that can be gleaned from the perpetual mutilation of Sin, and Death's desire to kill her in *Spectator* No. 309:

> The incestuous Mixture between *Sin* and *Death* produces those Monsters and Hellhounds which from Time to Time enter into their Mother, and tear the Bowels of her who gave them Birth. These are the Terrors of an evil Conscience, and the proper Fruits of *Sin*, which naturally rise from the Apprehensions of *Death*. This last beautiful Moral is, I think, clearly intimated in the Speech of *Sin*, where complaining this her dreadful Issue, she adds,

> > Before mine Eyes in Opposition sits,
> > Grim *Death* thy Son and Foe who sets them on.
> > *And me his Parent would full soon devour*
> > *For want of other Prey, but that he knows*
> > *His End with mine involv'd------*[325]

Addison highlights the close relationship between Sin and Death and the destructive results of sinning, namely the production of the 'Terrors of an evil Conscience'. But he is also drawing attention to the fact that if Sin dies then Death dies also. This is described by Addison as a 'beautiful Circumstance', something that likely evoked thoughts concerning the sacrifice of Christ on the cross where sin and death were defeated.[326] The whole allegory of Sin and Death is described as being 'full of sublime ideas' and something that repeatedly terrifies the mind. In this regard, Addison pays particular attention to the person of Death: 'The Figure of *Death*, the Regal Crown upon his Head, his Menace of *Satan*, his advancing to the Combat, the Outcry at his Birth, are Circumstances too noble to be past over in Silence, and extreamly suitable to this *King of Terrors*.'[327] Although it is unnatural and improbable,

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[325] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 55.

[326] *The Bible*, Isaiah 25:8: 'He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke if his people shall he take away from all the earth: for the LORD hath Spoken *it*.' And Romans 6:23, 'For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

[327] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 55-56.

Addison seems to greatly appreciate Milton's sublime portrayal of Death and the terror he inflicts because it deeply impresses upon the reader a sense of healthy trepidation and, at least in part, seems to make the 'beautiful Circumstance' of Sin and Death's inevitable defeat at the hands of Christ all the more glorious.

Returning to the idea that Addison makes much of Milton's veneration of deity, we can see how links can be made between the sublime depictions of God, his power as displayed in the formation of creation, and the great moral of obedience. In *Spectator* No. 339, which focusses on Raphael's creation account, Addison writes that 'THE Beauties of Description lie so very thick, that it is impossible to enumerate them in this Paper.'[328] However, after presenting several scenes from Milton's creation narrative, he turns his attention to the sixth day which concludes with the creation of man. Here, Addison notes that Raphael 'takes Occasion, as he did after the Battel in Heaven, to remind *Adam* of his Obedience, which was the principal Design of this his Visit.'[329] It is no coincidence that following the beautiful descriptions of creation, which so clearly demonstrate God's power, comes a reemphasis of the central moral imperative: obedience to God facilitates the greatest happiness. It is equally no coincidence that Addison draws the reader's attention to it. In part, this manifests Raphael's hopes that his creation account will strengthen Adam's obedience to God. The same expectation can be said to apply to the reader who has also witnessed 'The several great Scenes of the Creation rise up to view one after another, in such a Manner, that [they seem] present at this wonderful Work…'[330] In order to better encourage obedience, Addison makes much of Milton's subsequent depiction of Christ returning to heaven post creation:

> The Poet afterwards represents the Messiah returning into Heaven, and taking a Survey of his great Work. There is something inexpressibly sublime in this Part of the Poem, where the Author describes that great Period of Time, filled with so many glorious Circumstances; when the Heavens and Earth were finished; when the Messiah ascended up in Triumph through the Everlasting Gates; when he looked

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[328] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 97.

[329] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 99.

[330] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 97-98.

down with Pleasure upon his new Creation; when every Part of Nature seem'd to rejoice in its Existence; when the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy…

Such a sublime view of deity and his worshipful creation enlivens the reader's mind to do the same. The reader is to survey and take their rightful place in the worship of God, the universe's first cause. In addition to this, Addison's note in *Spectator* No. 339 on Milton's description of Christ striking Satan and his crew in Book VI presents the idea of Christ's boundless glory transcending the limits of language. Addison writes that although 'the *Messiah* appears cloathed with so much terrour and Majesty, the Poet has still found Means to make his Readers conceive an Idea of him beyond what he himself was able to describe.'[331] It is Milton's majestic and terrifying presentation of Christ withholding the full force of his strength when entering the battle against Satan that leaves the reader doubly awestruck.[332] Milton's sublimity evokes a veneration marked by fear and trembling, but also leaves the reader pondering what language cannot describe, the Son of God's ineffable might. As such, its encouragement to imagine the indescribable leads to an adulation that is inexhaustible.

Although Addison esteems Milton's portrayal of God and its ability to inspire admiration and fearful wonder, he does state in *Spectator* No. 315 that 'Milton's Majesty forsakes him…in those Parts of the Poem, where the Divine Persons are introduced as Speakers'. However, this does not mean that these speeches are incapable of inspiring a devotional response, they simply function in a different way. Milton 'proceeds with a Kind of Fear and Trembling, whilst he describes the Sentiments of the Almighty', which itself demonstrates an aspect of Christian reverence to be mimicked.[333] Leonard states that this kind of cautious approach to God's dialogue is symptomatic of a high view of deity, and a belief that poetry will naturally struggle to capture the divine.[334] Milton might be a great

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[331] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 92.

[332] Milton writes: 'Yet half his strength he put not forth, but check'd / His Thunder in mid Volie, for he meant / Not to destroy, but root them out of Heav'n…' (VI:853-855).

[333] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 58.

[334] Leonard, 'God', in *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of 'Paradise Lost', 1667-1970: Volume I: Style and Genre; Volume II: Interpretative Issues*, II, 482.

poet, but God is greater and should therefore not be wholly limited to the confines of poetry. As such, 'He [Milton] dares not give his Imagination its full Play, but chuses to confine himself to such Thoughts as are drawn from the Books of the most Orthodox Divines, and to such Expressions as may be met with in Scripture.'[335] This again ratifies the orthodoxy of *PL* and demonstrates an unwavering respect and adoration for its God. Addison continues, 'The Beauties, therefore, which we are to look for in these Speeches, are not of a poetical Nature, nor so proper to fill the Mind with Sentiments of Grandeur, as with Thoughts of Devotion. The Passions, which they are designed to raise, are a Divine Love and Religious Fear.' The speeches of Book III in particular teach the reader, in a simple style, about 'the greatest Mysteries of Christianity', that is 'the whole Dispensation of Providence with respect to Man', 'the abstruse Doctrines of Predestination, Free-Will and Grace, as also the great Points of Incarnation and Redemption…' Milton applies 'all those Graces of Poetry, which the Subject was capable of receiving',[336] in an attempt to provide a wholesome experience for the reader. The theological lessons abound and, as Addison states, they are apt to inspire 'Thoughts of Devotion' and evoke feelings of 'Divine Love and Religious Fear.'

It is not only the sublimity of Christ and the theologically rich dialogue between the Son and Father that inspires devotion from the reader, but it also issues from the immense sense of worth that is lavished upon them even before their creation. This is what Addison hints at in *Spectator* No. 309 where he discusses the prophecy concerning mankind's creation. He writes:

> …I think, [there is] something wonderfully beautiful, and very apt to affect the Reader's imagination, in this antient prophecy or report in Heaven, concerning the creation of Man. Nothing could shew more the dignity of the Species, than this tradition which ran of them before their existence. They are represented to have been the talk of Heaven before they were created. *Virgil*, in compliment to the *Roman* Common wealth, makes the Heroes of it appear in their state of pre-

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[335] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 58.

[336] Ibid.

existence; but *Milton* does a far greater honour to Mankind in general, as he gives us a glimpse of them even before they are in being.[337]

By emphasising that Milton is speaking of 'Mankind in general' he implicates the reader in the narrative, and in doing so, once again affirms Milton's superiority over Virgil, whose pre-existent apparitions comprise solely of heroes. The idea that mankind, including the reader, were held in high esteem even before their creation not only inspires a reciprocal honouring of the God who created them, but it also inspires a love for one's fellow man. The reality that man is made in the image of God and that they are the crown of creation imbues every individual with inherent worth. This honour that Milton imparts to mankind reflects the notion that every man is valued by God, which, in turn, means that mankind should strive to reflect the same attitude.

Identifying Orthodox Morals: Addison's Commission to the English Reader

In *Spectator* No. 321, Addison suggests that '*The Paradise Lost* is looked upon, by the best Judges, as the greatest Production, or at least the noblest Work of Genius, in our Language, and therefore deserves to be set before an *English* Reader in its full Beauty.'[338] In *Spectator* No. 261, he affords Milton 'the first place among our English Poets' and admits that he has 'drawn more quotations out of him than from any other.'[339] It seems that in order to show how poetry could assist with the formation of a polite society, Addison required a poet like Milton. What I have argued is that the realisation and presentation of the poem's 'full Beauty' is often characterised by illuminating its moralistic and didactic capacity. Sometimes this is overt, and Addison clearly states what he believes to be the moral that underpins certain episodes. On other occasions, he suggests that there is a moral that can be interpreted and, in his role as teacher, encourages the reader to return to the text and locate it themselves. There are also more subtle instances where Addison's noting of the natural and sublime sentiments serve to enhance what he claims is the 'great Moral', or

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[337] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 53.

[338] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 65.

[339] Quoted in Kathleen M. Lynch, *Jacob Tonson, Kit-Cat Publisher*, 177.

'Soul of the Fable', '*that Obedience to the Will of God makes men happy, and that Disobedience makes them miserable*', as well as the numerous 'Infinity of Under Morals'. Addison recognises that Milton's sentiments have a sanctifying effect that is marked by the enlivening of the reader's imagination and passions. The more a reader dwells on said sentiments the more they will be transformed by them. This is not surprising, especially when one considers that Milton believed himself to be a conduit for the Holy Spirit, the person of the Trinity who ratified truth and was key in the process of conforming people to the image of Christ. It was not Milton who sang, but the 'Heav'nly Muse' (I:6) who sang through him, which means that the beauty of *PL* lies, at least in part, in its ability to sanctify the reader.

Addison recognises the power of *PL* and moves to weaponise it in the building of his 'polite' society, a society that is based on character rather than social status and believes that interaction with art facilitates individual and collective betterment. Addison's vision, when applied to *PL*, crucially involves making the Longinian and Aristotelian methods of scholarship understandable and accessible to an unschooled readership, for these are the tools that open up the poem and help the reader recognise its various beauties. But Addison Christianises these critical methodologies, that is he consistently uses them in the service of promoting orthodoxy. He takes every opportunity to show how Milton's religion surpasses that of Homer and Virgil, and demonstrates how this filters down into the superiority of many of Milton's beauties. Maltzahn's belief that Addison's orthodoxy is bland, and Corns' view that Addison is not a 'close reader, or at least a close critic, of theological nuance', but rather his approach 'is to incorporate Milton into the mainstream of Protestant thinking', seem to bypass the crux of Addison's motives.[340] Yes, Addison's somewhat simplistic readings and his reluctance to engage with Milton's more radical conceptions does function to domesticate *PL*, but it also serves to facilitate and encourage growth in the most foundational beliefs and practices of Christian devotion. Most important to Addison was teaching an unschooled readership how to effectively mine *PL* for practical lessons and morals. As Rogers states when discussing the influence of the *Spectator*: 'The papers were liked for their mildly whiggish, progressive tone, but even more for their humour, warmth,

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[340] Corns, 'Joseph Addison and the Domestication of Paradise Lost', 59.

and empirical good sense.'[341] The *Spectator*'s demonstration of 'empirical good sense' does not dissipate in Addison's dealings with *PL*, it remains a priority and goes a long way in helping us understand why his engagement with Milton was so popular. At best, complex theological discussion would have complicated, or at worst, jeopardised the desired didactic outcome.

As I have already suggested, this does not mean that Addison does not engage with some of the more problematic theological issues, only that his engagement is characterised by wilful ignorance or misdirection. For example, Corns remarks that the discussion between the Father and Son in Book III is the 'most doctrinally rich section of the poem', but 'implicit within that discourse a vision of the relationship between the Father and the Son and of the marginalization of the Holy Spirit that could cause at least some disquiet among Trinitarians.' Corns then suggests that Addison leads the reader away from making such an observation by focussing solely on how Milton leans on the works of the best orthodox writers and Scriptural expressions when discussing such complex doctrines as predestination and free-will. Addison boldly insinuates that to find fault with Milton's theology and soteriology is to find fault with the most trusted Christian thinkers and sources. Addison then bolsters his claim with flattery, declaring that no poet has ever written with such clarity about such complex issues.[342] In his whole discussion on Book III, Addison never once mentions the Trinity, or the absence of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, as part of his discussion on Addison's problem with the ending of *PL*, mainly due to its unhappy nature disqualifying it from the epic genre, Leonard also suggests that Addison's gripe with Adam and Eve's sad expulsion is that it undermines the providence of God, which is, moments before, reported to have been their guide.[343] Here, Addison offers the one alteration that he would make to Milton's work, and it seemingly stems from his high view of God's providence and the happy effects that the promise of salvation impart. Addison views Milton as contradicting himself, and in doing so, he diminishes the providence of God, something that Richard Bentley takes particular issue with and, as we will see, enforces

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[341] Rogers, 13.

[342] Corns, 'Joseph Addison and the Domestication of Paradise Lost', 59-60.

[343] Leonard, 'God', in *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of 'Paradise Lost', 1667-1970: Volume I: Style and Genre; Volume II: Interpretative Issues*, II, 482-483.

drastic measures in order to rectify. There is also one final moral inference that can be gleaned from Addison's note on the closing of *PL*, and it comes when he summarises the postlapsarian states of Satan and Adam and Eve in the form of a chiasmus: 'In short, Satan is represented miserable in the Height of his Triumphs, and Adam Triumphant in the Height of Misery.'[344] If we set aside the theological questions relating to the doctrine of 'felix culpa' that Addison's chiasmus raises, then this instance of paradox communicates the idea of receiving a greater happiness through the salvation of Christ then what was experienced by the prelapsarian Adam and Eve. There are hints of the apostle Paul in Addison's thinking. For example, in 2 Corinthians 1:5 he writes: 'For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' And again, Romans 8:18 states: 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' Accordingly, the believer cannot only suffer well, but they can celebrate in their suffering, a lesson that Christ himself is reported to have demonstrated: '…let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross…' (Hebrews 12:1-2).

This chapter has also suggested a fresh connection between the moral landscape of Addison's *Spectator* essays on *PL* and the reason for their inclusion in the 1720 'Tickell's' edition of the poem. In *The Text of* 'Paradise Lost'*: A Study in Editorial Procedure*, R. G. Moyles confines the discussion as to why Tonson might have included Addison's contribution to a footnote located at the back of his study:

> It may be argued that Addison's contribution to the list of Tonson's opportunities was in no way 'fortuitous'; Tonson was publisher of the *Tatler*, would become that of the *Spectator*, and was a friend to both Addison and Steele. There is, however, nothing in Addison's *Critique* suggestive of propaganda or promotion. If Tonson approved of it (as he surely did), he did so not because it would help sell books but because it would make Milton's poetry better known and loved.[345]

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[344] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 143.

[345] Moyles, 159.

Moyles acknowledges that Addison's incorporation was no accident. He refuses to accept that there were any monetary motivations that encouraged inclusion, and instead suggests that the decision was made solely because it would help Milton's poetry become 'better known and loved.' Undoubtedly, Addison's *Spectator* essays did contribute towards the ever-growing popularity of *PL*, but Moyles offers no explanation as to why Tonson thought that Addison's *Spectator* essays would necessitate this growth. It is also difficult to fathom that an affluent printing company like the Tonsons's would not have been driven by the large scale marketing of their products. The substantial subscribers list in the 1720 edition, at least in part, testifies to this.

I have suggested that Addison's presentation of Milton's epic as a practical poem that could impart good sense and useful morals was arguably a major factor that encouraged Tonson and Tickell to include it in the 1720 edition. The shadow of the older Tonson stood looming over his nephew, and in an effort to avoid producing more of the same, the younger Tonson began to explore how he could create an edition of *PL* that would not only rival, but supersede the grand 1688 edition and the scholarly 1695 edition. This would largely be achieved through the incorporation of Addison's contribution, an example of polite scholarship that was not only far more accessible than Hume's erudition, but was also more useful in a very practical sense. Indeed, the crown jewel of the younger Tonson's legacy is the production of the most useful and polite edition of *PL*. This was an edition that encouraged re-reading, for the continual mining of unnoted hidden beauties, and as we have seen, many of which would undoubtedly function to impart and intensify valuable lessons and morals. This is the idea that lies behind Addison's remark in *Spectator* No. 321 concerning those would write on *PL* after him: '…I question not, but any Writer, who shall treat on this Subject after me, may find several Beauties in *Milton*, which I have not taken notice of.'[346] *PL* was a poem that would keep on giving, a poem that would continually reinforce, through its many beauties, a polite moral system that encouraged obedience to God, devotion and veneration, a sense of what constitutes a healthy and flawed society, and a mutual respect for one's fellow man. Moreover, this Addisonian vision of what comprises a person of manners was for anyone and everyone.

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[346] Addison, *Notes Upon the Twelve Books of* 'Paradise Lost' *Collected from the* 'Spectator', 66.

The next notable Tonson edition of *PL* arrives in 1725 and is decidedly different from the 1695 and 1720 editions. Elijah Fenton (1683-1730) is mostly known for his biographical account of Milton's life that prefaces his edition and, unlike Hume and Addison, this example of paratextuality seems primarily interested in addressing lingering issues pertaining to Milton's character rather than addressing the specifics of *PL*. If Addison showed his audience that *PL* was worthy of adoration, then Fenton endeavoured to show that its author was also worthy of the same treatment. Contrary to his historical characterisation, Milton was in fact someone who upheld the morality promoted in *PL*.

Chapter 3: Recharacterisation

The Redemption of Milton's Character in

Elijah Fenton's *Life of Milton*

A Change of Genre: From Erudition and Essays to Biographical Account

There is general agreement that the Tonson editions of *PL*, specifically those that include the critical responses of Hume, Addison, and even the infamous Richard Bentley, share a number of methodological similarities. Hume, Addison, and Bentley systematically work through the text of *PL*, pinpointing classical and Biblical allusions, offering commentary on the many poetic beauties of Milton's verse, showing where *PL* rivals and even exceeds its classical forefathers, and explicating numerous complex ideas that Milton includes from his encyclopaedic wealth of knowledge. Broadly speaking, these examples of paratextuality endeavour to treat *PL* like a classical text with the express interest of establishing and then maintaining the poem's own classical status. However, Hume, Addison, and Bentley all recognise that it is not simply Milton's capability as a poet that needs ratifying in order to substantiate and maintain *PL*'s position as English classic, but the author's political and religious radicalism also needs to be resolved. Beautiful as it might be, Milton's epic was not free of problems that bred a culture of wariness surrounding the text. This culture was consistently challenged by the Tonsons who were forever seeking to increase the popularity of *PL*, while simultaneously managing the eccentricities that proceeded from Milton's unorthodox bent. Whereas Hume, Addison, and Bentley focus precisely on the text, ensuring that any comment offered about Milton and his convictions is chiefly grounded in and deduced from the language of *PL*, there is another early editor whose paratextual offering is decidedly different.

This chapter will focus on the poet and translator, Elijah Fenton, who somewhat distanced himself from an in-depth study of the poem, previously characterised by the erudite approach of Hume and the more essayistic form of Addison, to provide a biographic study of the life of Milton. In the most direct engagement with Milton's radicalism that had yet to appear in any Tonson edition, Fenton's prefatory biography to the 1725 edition

acknowledged and accepted Milton's faults, whilst never allowing them to completely disparage his character or the supremacy of his most famous work. Compared to other early readers of *PL*, little attention has been given to Fenton, but his distinct contribution to the Tonson franchise is no less valuable and must be considered. This is partly because of its unique contribution towards sanitising Milton and *PL*, and partly because of its impact on Bentley's subsequent edition. More than any edition that preceded it, Fenton's received opposition because, aside from providing an account of Milton's life, he took it upon himself to amend minor details of the text, but this minor backlash was nothing compared to the barrage of criticism that awaited Bentley after the publishing of his far more invasive 1732 edition. The level of negative remarks levelled at the text of *PL* remains minimal with Hume and Addison, who recurringly cast it as the most complete poem ever to grace mankind, but this changes with Fenton as he begins to challenge the text's fundamental correctness. Fenton is nominal with his corrections, but the same cannot be said for Bentley, whose alterations and comments reach dizzying heights and are for the most part universally acknowledged as outlandish and false.

Although the sanitisation of Milton was always a shared goal, this chapter will show that Fenton's edition signalled the beginning of a division between the two Tonsons and their approaches to *PL*. The younger Tonson's liberal attitude towards allowing the text to be amended, something that his uncle bemoaned, meant that from 1725 onwards, the overwhelmingly positive reception of Tonson editions began to decline and terminated, rather tragically, with Bentley. A growing number of individuals took to defending the genius of Milton and what they perceived to be the near perfection of *PL*, showing that the Tonsons had largely achieved their goal of elevating the position of their chosen poet and poem, but it ironically cost them the longstanding run of successful editions. Aside from Fenton's minor tampering, something that was likely influenced by the Bentleian style of scholarship that was becoming increasingly prevalent at the beginning of the eighteenth-century, and yet seemed to partly inspire Bentley's later intervention, his biography of Milton was enduringly valuable and well received long after its initial outing. Unlike Bentley, there seems to be no overtly political or religious motives behind Fenton's corrections of the text, he instead confines his sanitising efforts within the bounds of his biography on Milton. What I endeavour to establish here is that, unlike his predecessors, Fenton does not shy away from Milton's past mistakes, but instead maintains that a work of inestimable beauty

like *PL* can only proceed from a flawed life. Fenton succinctly tracks Milton's evolution from young radical to mature and well-rounded poet, always pointing the reader to *PL*, which is the culmination of Milton's genius as well as his best and final say on ideological matters. In this he could not be more different to Bentley.

'may I presume to observe in his favor…': A Defence of Milton's Character

Out of the six editions of *PL* that the younger Tonson supervised after taking over the running of the Tonson publishing enterprise in 1718, the first five were a huge success. The 1719 quarto tenth edition included all the usual paratextual elements, including the original Medina sculptures, Dryden's 'Epigram of Milton', the epistle dedicatory to John Lord Sommers, 'In Paradisum Amissam Summi Poetae Johannis Miltoni' by Samuel Barrow, and 'On Paradise Lost' by Andrew Marvell, as well as an Index and a list of 'Books Printed for Jacob Tonson, at Shakespeare's Head over-against Katharine-Street in the Strand.' This was followed by the immensely popular 1720 eleventh edition, which, as has been previously discussed, can be viewed as the younger Tonson's attempt to produce an edition that draws together and improves upon the older Tonson's aesthetically impressive editions and their various paratextual elements. The illustrious 1688 edition as well as Hume's erudite critical treatment of the poem that appeared alongside the 1695 edition were designed to, in various ways, sanitise Milton's political reputation and elevate his greatness as England's very own classical and national poet. Decades later the 1720 edition achieves the same goals primarily through its new set of highly Christianised illustrations and the inclusion of Addison's *Spectator* essays. Like never before the younger Tonson endeavoured to precisely illuminate the poem's orthodoxy and practical Christian morality.

After the impressive 1720 edition the following three editions, which were printed in 1725, 1727, and 1730, were all accompanied by Fenton's 'The Life of John Milton'. A biography of Milton was a unique instance of paratextuality that undoubtedly functioned as a fresh new selling point, and it was made all the more exciting by the fact that Fenton was the first to write a biographical account that prefaced any edition of Milton's poetry. But like all biographies, Fenton's was characterised by a specific and recognisable agenda. Albeit, far less indirectly, Fenton continues in the footsteps of Hume and Addison, using his account of

Milton's life to depoliticise the author. With regard to his own politics, Fenton's allegiances were unsurprisingly Whiggish, something that was clearly reflected in his earliest writing. His first publication, *An Ode to the Sun, for the New Year* (1707), was written in praise of Queen Anne and the Duke of Marlborough. Like so many other panegyrics written at the beginning of the eighteenth-century, Fenton focusses on strong monarchical leadership and Marlborough's military prowess. Although Anne's relationship with Whiggism and its primary advocates would become increasingly tempestuous, eventually leading to the dismissal of the Whig Junto from 1710 onwards, at the beginning of the seventeenth-century she was praised alongside the duke of Marlborough for early victories won in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1715).[347] In the final lines of *An Ode to the Sun…*, Fenton contrasts the historical battles of Ramillia (the Battle of Ramillies (1706)) with that of Poitiers (1356), and compares Edward The Black Prince to Lord Marlborough:

> And *Woodstock*, let his Dome exalt thy Fame,
>
> Great o'er thy *Norman* Ruins be restor'd;
>
> Thou that with Pride dost *EDWARD'*s Cradle claim,
>
> Receive an Equal Heroe for thy Lord.
>
> Whilst ev'ry Column to Record their Toils
>
> Eternal Monuments of Conquest wears,
>
> And all thy Walls are Dress'd with mingled Spoils,
>
> Gather'd on Fam'd *Ramillia*, and *Poietiers*,
>
> High on thy Pow'r the grateful flag display,
>
> Due to thy QUEEN's Reward, and *Blenheim's* Glorious Day.[348]

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[347] The first of the Junto Whigs to be dismissed was Lord Sunderland in June 1710. Lord Godolphin, the Whigs moderate Tory ally, was also dismissed in August of the same year. The remainder of the leading Whigs, namely Lord Somers, Halifax, Wharton, Orford, and Sunderland, were all subsequently removed from office. From 1710-1714 the Tories, led by Robert Harley, acquired political hegemony. For more information on the political landscape during the reign of Queen Anne see, David Green, *Queen Anne* (London: Harper Collins, 1970); Gila Curtis, *The Life and Times of Queen Anne* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1972); Anne Somerset, *Queen Anne: The Politics of Passion* (London: Harper Collins, 2012).

[348] Elijah Fenton, *An Ode to the Sun, for the New Year* (London, 1707), 13.

This kind of panegyric can be positioned comfortably alongside the likes of Addison's 'Campaign', situating Fenton among the Whigs who supported the War of the Spanish Succession. It is not surprising that when approaching Milton and *PL* many years later, Fenton would embrace a similar tact to Hume and Addison who endeavoured to show how Milton could be aligned with the political causes and religious principles of Whiggism. Fenton's *Life*, however, does not deny or ignore Milton's Republican radicalism in an endeavour to find common ground, but rather, he acknowledges its existence before outwardly refusing to engage with such political debates:

> 'Tis in vain to dissemble, and far be it from me to defend, his engaging with a Party combin'd in the destruction of our Church and Monarchy. Yet, leaving the justification of a mis-guided sincerity to be debated in the Schools…[349]

Fenton makes clear that although Milton's wayward religious and political views cannot be concealed, it is not his primary intention to engage with or mount a defence for the divisive aspects of his life and ideologies. Fenton then concludes his thought by asserting that the justification of such ideas, if any justification can be found, is a matter 'to be debated in the Schools', freeing himself and the reader from having to engage with the radicalism of Milton's younger years. The mention of 'Schools', likely referring to college settings, confirms the persistent existence of a wider academic discussion about Milton's early entanglement with the Republican party and whether his position can be justified, but Fenton's refusal to engage in the matter, specifically within the context of a biography that prefaces *PL*, suggests a desire to separate the poem from the overwhelmingly negative political discourse associated with Milton. It seems that, for Fenton, Milton's problematic views must not be prevalent or indeed present at all within *PL*, which is why they are broadly not explored within his *Life*.

 However, as we will see, Fenton is necessarily obliged to enter into the ideological fray when he perceives it affecting the reception of the masterful poem. Fenton, therefore,

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[349] Elijah Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost* (London, 1725), xiv. Fenton's 'Life' is the shortest and most reprinted biographical account of Milton in the eighteenth century. According to Peter Lindenbaum it appeared in at least fifty-four different editions or reprintings from 1725-97.

moves to present a defence of Milton's character, recognising that the response to *PL* will be, rightly or wrongly, and in varying degrees, influenced by its author's temperament, convictions, and actions. As such, Fenton tentatively questions whether something positive can be gleaned from the parliamentarian regicide that Milton supported: '…may I presume to observe in his favor, that his Zeal, distemper'd and furious as it was, does not appear to have been inspirited by self-interested Views?'[350] His evidence in answer to this question is that the poet's lack of material gain that proceeded from the whole misguided affair is in fact a marker of Milton's integrity, genuineness, and altruistic character.[351] Milton was no opportunist, he was essentially a good man whose political and religious judgements, incorrect as they were, should not be allowed to wholly taint the reputation of the individual that upholds them.

Throughout Fenton's *Life*, Milton's great learning, genius, and tireless efforts with regard to his studies are also recounted,[352] and by the end of the account it is not only the praiseworthy attributes of Milton's character that Fenton is eager to redeem from being entirely besmirched by his radicalism, but also his learning:

Many had a very just esteem of his admirable parts and learning, who detested his principles; by whose intercession his Pardon pass'd the Seals and I wish the Laws of

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[350] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xiv.

[351] Fenton affirms Milton's selfless and honourable character, as well as his disinterest in the material wealth that he could have accumulated from his various posts and career. 'For it is affirm'd, that though He liv'd always in a frugal retirement, and before his death had dispos'd of his Library… He left no more than fifteen hundred pounds behind him for the support of his family: and whoever considers the Posts to which He was advanc'd, and the times in which He enjoy'd them, will I believe confess that He might have accumulated a much more plentiful fortune: in a dispassionate mind it will not require any extraordinary measure of candor to conclude, that though He abode in *the heritage of Oppressors*, and the Spoils of his Country lay at his feet, neither his conscience, not his honor, cou'd stoop to gather them' (xiv-xv).

[352] When discussing Milton's childhood, Fenton reports that in order 'to cultivate the great Genius which early display'd itself', Milton's father hired a tutor. Milton is also described as applying 'himself to Letters with such indefatigable industry, that He rarely was prevail'd with to quit his studies before mid-night…' (vii). Moreover, Milton's time at Christ's College Cambridge saw him distinguish 'himself in all kinds of learning.' And after his time at college had concluded Milton returned to his father in Horton where, as Fenton relays, he continued to pursue 'his studies with unparallel'd assiduity, and success' (viii).

Civil History cou'd have extended the benefit of that Oblivion to the memory of his guilt, which was indulg'd to his Person…[353]

Fenton enforces the authority of unnamed individuals to support the notion that it is entirely possible and acceptable to acknowledge the 'admirable parts' of Milton's character and appreciate his intellect, as well as the products it produced, whilst remaining hostile towards his political principles. This stance was what a young Addison initially found impossible to endorse and actively discouraged in his poem 'An Account of the Greatest English Poets', that is before he eventually concluded that the greatness of *PL* excused its author's radicalism. Although it is somewhat vague, Fenton frames a real-life example of ministerial powers coming to the aid of Milton, at least in part because they esteemed 'his admirable parts and learning…' The influence of these individuals is reported as being integral to the passing of the Act of Oblivion (1660), a piece of legislation that pardoned Milton, among others, for crimes perpetrated during the civil war and subsequently saw him released from prison. It was by their 'intercession his Pardon pass'd the Seals', an instance of official intervention that lends much credence to the desired separation that Fenton champions between Milton's praiseworthy attributes and his controversial principles.

The advocating for Milton's positive qualities—even in relation to the regicide—is a reaction to the knowledge that a great number of people felt unable to receive Milton with much charity. This was especially true during the seventeenth-century when the anxieties provoked by his views and the polemics they produced often extended to encompass the entirety of his literary output, but it also lingered well into the eighteenth-century. It is no overstatement to say that the entirety of the man and his work were, for the most part, seen as irredeemable. In particular, Fenton sees this injustice playing out in the publishing process and the trouble that Milton had with the licensing of *PL*. With frustration, Fenton scolds the unnamed licenser (Thomas Tomkins) for 'So unreasonably…' allowing 'personal prejudice [to] affect the most excellent performances!'[354] This defence succinctly conveys Fenton's primary goal, to convey to his readers that a degree of separation and nuance is called for when engaging with Milton, and that *PL* is a testament to the idea that a flawed

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[353] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xvii-xviii.

[354] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xxiii.

individual is capable of creating a largely flawless work of beauty. And *PL* was beautiful, an epic worthy of Fenton's fierce approval which he relentlessly lavishes upon the poem:

> …in the Year 1669 He publish'd his PARADISE LOST; the noblest Poem, next to those of *Homer* and *Virgil*, that ever the wit of man produc'd in any age or nation. Nor need I mention any other evidence of its inestimable worth, than that the finest Geniuses who have succeeded him have ever esteem'd it a merit to relish, and illustrate, its beauties…[355]

The mention of 'beauties' reminds us of Addison's primary focus when analysing the poem, that is to illustrate the beauties that pervade *PL*. Fenton's comment establishes interconnectivity when he indirectly encourages the reader to return to the 1720 edition that was accompanied by the work of a fine genius who 'esteem'd it [*PL*] a merit to relish, and illustrate, its beauties…' In Fenton's esteem, *PL* was a poem that had enjoyed much scholarly approval, it was a masterpiece of 'inestimable worth', set apart as the greatest feat of poetry and wit 'produc'd in any age or nation.' Such descriptions frame the poem as a work that is above ideological reproach, but also largely uninterested in engaging in troublesome politics. To not recognise this is to run the risk of depriving the world of the crown jewel of Milton's literary accomplishments. One scholar not only views this kind of intervention as a deliberate act of defusing Milton's politics, but as a complete removal of the poet from 'his everyday worldly context.'[356] Of course, *PL* is riddled with political undertones, but by the closing of Fenton's *Life*, the reader is indeed left with the distinct impression that the masterful poem that they are about to engage with stands outside of its author's infamous parliamentarian and religious radicalism.

If it were not already explicit, this effort to cordon off certain areas of Milton's life, as though his politics did not impact all that he turned his hand to, is undeniably affirmed by one of Fenton's closing suggestions that the creative outpouring of Milton's judgement and imagination were superior when divorced from his more radical theories: '[Milton's] Judgement, when dis-engag'd from Religious and Political Speculations, was just and

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[355] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xxi.

[356] Lindenbaum, 10.

penetrating… and his Imagination… when it was wholly abstracted from material Objects, was more at liberty to make such amazing excursions into the Ideal World…'[357] But it was not only Fenton's 'Life' that demonstrated his belief that the radical prose and the sublime poetry were incompatible and the prospect of bringing them together was unwise. In perhaps his most successful work, the *Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany Poems* (1709), Fenton includes Thomas Yalden's (1670-1736), 'On the Reprinting Mr. MILTON's Prose-Works, with his Poems written in his *Paradise Lost* (1698)', the opening lines of which describe the danger of *PL* being sullied by Milton's prose:

> These Sacred Lines with Wonder peruse,
> And praise the Flights of a seraphick Muse:
> Till thy seditious Prose provokes our Rage,
> And soils the Beauties of thy brightest Page.[358]

One of Fenton's chief concerns was precisely what Yalden communicates, the beauties of *PL* being overshadowed by the spectre of nefarious politics. Accordingly, Fenton's *Life* sets out to convey *PL* as existing 'dis-engag'd' from Milton's radicalism, a product of the imagination that transcended worldly spheres and systems in order to glimpse the divine. As Robert C. Holub recognises, this was all wrapped up in the eighteenth-century debate concerning how the artist was perceived as having a unique link to the divine and how the art they produced related to man, which many theorists saw as being supremely practical and moral. This did, of course, involve all areas of society, including politics as well as the personal ethics and morality of a rising middle-class that flowed from a humanitarian understanding of religion.[359] As such, Fenton firmly believed that *PL* was no mere engagement with Milton's political realm, its purpose and potential was greater than that. Through its sublimity, the poem imparted a deep sense of pleasure by revealing what was good, true, and profitable

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[357] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xxvii-xxviii.

[358] Thomas Yalden, 'On the Reprinting Mr. MILTON's Prose-Works, with his Poems written in his *Paradise Lost*', in *Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany Poems*, ed. Elijah Fenton (London, 1709), 177.

[359] Robert C. Holub, 'The Rise of Aesthetics in the Eighteenth Century', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 15.3 (1978), 271-283.

for the sake of unity rather than division. Similar to Addison's moralistic reading, Fenton sees *PL* as presenting an ideal world to be pursued, the beauties of which cannot be thwarted or obscured by divisive politics.

A Response to John Toland's *Life*

Fenton's depoliticising efforts become much sharper when compared to an earlier and very different biographical account of Milton, that is, John Toland's *Life of Milton* (1698). Spanning from the closing of the seventeenth-century through to the mid eighteenth-century, the biographical accounts of Milton's life and career, like many of England's literary heroes, accompanied the printed miscellanies of his prose or poetry. Not much is known about the first collection of Milton's prose that was published in 1698, but the more openly radical nature of the collated tracts meant that the project attracted a more Republican-minded biographer, one who instead of sanitising Milton, took every opportunity to embrace his radical political and religious ideas.[360] John Toland (1670-1722), a free-thinking Whig, seemed to view the writing of Milton's biography as an opportunity to appropriate the Christian bard for the purpose of obtaining both political and ideological hegemony. We have already seen the diversity within Whiggism when discussing Hume, and how the more radical and Republican leaning Whigs were not against adopting Milton's views, as outlined in his polemical tracts, to not only support the Glorious Revolution, but much more radical ideas as well. As will become clear, Toland was among those who believed that Milton's poetry could be utilised to support revolution, especially in regard to his position concerning tyranny, but when Toland and other similar Whigs began to go too far in relation to their free-thinking values, particularly in the case of religion and an idealised Republicanism, a

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[360] Lindenbaum, 'Rematerializing Milton'. Lindenbaum writes that it is unclear who published the Prose Works as 'the title-page provides no publisher's name and its place of publication is given as Amsterdam' (6). Lindenbaum speculates that it could have been put out by Awnsham Churchill (1658-1728), a radical Whig and bookseller who 'took out the copyright in the Stationers' Company Register for Milton's Collected Prose Works… on 30 January 1688/9, that is, on the anniversary of the date of King Charles I's execution, an event that Milton had sought to justify in several of his tracts' (5). Another viable option for publisher could be John Darby (1625-1704), 'who was the work's printer and who advertised it along with other related items in the *Bibliotheca Annua* for 1699…' (6).

clear split within the party became evident.[361] Although it is essentially true, Stephen H. Daniel removes the sting of Toland's more radical ideologies when he describes him as championing traditional Whiggism, the 'supporting [of] religious toleration for dissenters and the protestant succession.'[362] This kind of moderate Whig standpoint was certainly held by the Tonsons and other prominent eighteenth-century Whigs, like Joseph Addison, who fully supported the Glorious Revolution, but unlike Toland, they remained religiously orthodox and essentially Anglican with regard to their theology. Addison's writing often advocated for societal change and individual betterment, but he never drifted into the realms of heterodoxy or Republicanism, on the contrary, he saw the upholding of traditional religious values as vital to his polite pursuits and he always remained a monarchical panegyrist. As such, he presented an image of Milton and his epic that could facilitate his moral mission to develop a society of manners. Toland, on the other hand, was an outspoken and prominent voice for the Whig faction of freethinkers and Republicans, his fondness for religious toleration ultimately led him to adopt deistic views, while his Republicanism led him to view the institution of monarchy as a lawless tyranny that was to be resisted. A fair and equitable commonwealth that best served the interests of the people was a supreme good that defied the servile yolk of centralised power. Such religious and political views shocked the majority of Christians, both Whig and Tory alike, but Toland's beliefs meant that he also found a kindred spirit in Milton.

In his account of Milton's life, Toland begins by declaring the integrity of his work and that he is '*publishing the true history of his* [Milton's] *actions, works, and opinions*.'[363] He asserts that many similar biographical works were tainted by the author's desire 'to make their hero what they would have him to be', instead Toland 'shall produce his [Milton's] own words, as I find 'em in his works' and therefore 'escape the blame of such as

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[361] J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 215, 231, 219, 220, 233. Here, Pocock gives an account of a diverse and nuanced Whiggism that continued into the eighteenth-century.

[362] Stephen H. Daniel, 'Toland, John (1670-1722)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2008), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27497> [accessed 12 December 2020], 2.

[363] John Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton…* (Amsterdam, 1698), 5.

may dislike what he says.'[364] From the outset, Toland prepares his reader for an encounter with a radical Milton, one that stands in opposition to Fenton's much later, sanitised version. He intuits the potential claims of spuriousness that might be levelled at him and promises that his account is genuine, as such, any offense that could be gleaned should be directed at Milton and not Toland. And although Toland claims to play the role of an unbiased historian, the reader realises, after engaging with a number of Toland's enthusiastic and often defensive appraisals, that Milton's political and religious views felicitously align with his own. Indeed, by the end of the work the reader is left with an image of almost boundless religious tolerance resulting from Toland's analysis of Milton's final publication: *Treatise of true Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the best means that may be us'd to prevent the growth of popery* (1673)*.* Toland quotes and offers explication of a section from Milton where the poet appears to be advocating unity between Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Socinians, and Arminians:

> As for schism, or the division of congregations from their difference in opinions, he shews it may happen in the true church as well as in the false; but that in the first it need not break communion or brotherly love, no more than among the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces*, who amicably met at their common worship in *Jerusalem*.[365]

Of course, the only sect that Protestant Christianity cannot make allowances for is Catholicism,[366] and 'the best method of keeping it from ever increasing in this nation, is by the toleration of all kinds of *protestants*, or any others whose Principles do not necessarily

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[364] Ibid.

[365] Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton…*, 44.

[366] Similar to Hume, Toland is eager to convey Milton's severe aversion to Catholicism. Accordingly, at an earlier point in his account he discusses Milton's trip to Rome, which is described as 'the chief Seat of the most exquisite Tyranny exercis'd by effeminate Priests, not reigning in the World thro any conceiv'd opinion of their Justice, or dread of their Courage; for to these Qualities they are known and sworn Enemys: but deluding men with unaccountable Fables, and disarming 'em by imaginary Fears, they fill their heads first with Superstition, and their own Pockets with their Mony.' (9).

lead 'em to Sedition or Vice.'[367] This standpoint was not only a constant irritant to the adherents of Post-Restoration Anglicanism who were still vying for the strictest vision of a unified church, but the supporters of moderate toleration would have also been deeply concerned by the notion that Socinians and Arminians (infamous for their Anti-Trinitarian doctrines) should be welcomed into the fold of Protestantism.

Although the majority of Toland's attention is dedicated to Milton's prose, he seems unable to allow his poetry to pass by without comment. Out of the selection that he briefly surveys at various points throughout his *Life*, it comes as no surprise that *PL* receives the greatest praise and contemplation. Quite the opposite to Fenton, Toland views the finer details that constitute the story of *PL* as proudly displaying Milton's political and religious ideologies; although, as he vitriolically contends, these ideas should not be characterised as radical or unorthodox as some would brand them: 'As to the choice of his Subject, or the Particulars of his Story, I shall say nothing in defence of them against those People who brand 'em with Heresy and Impiety…'[368] Ignoring the possibility of any legitimate concerns, Toland describes the individuals that find fault with *PL* as nothing more than 'ignorant and supercilious Critics', who are unworthy of his time or attention.[369] However, we have already seen in chapter one, that Toland did not remain entirely silent when it came to lambasting those who opposed what they perceived to be dangerous ideologies concealed within *PL*. In this regard, both Toland and Fenton agree that the poem's licenser was misguided in trying to impede its publication.

Having confronted the 'Ignorance and Malice of the Licenser' with regard to the 'imaginary Treason' that he purported to find within the poem,[370] Toland then proceeds to offer a very particular interpretation of the moral and chief instruction of *PL*: 'Nor was *Milton* behind any body in the choice or dignity of his Instruction; for to display the different

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[367] Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*…, 45.

[368] Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*…, 40.

[369] Ibid.

[370] Ibid.

Effects of Liberty and Tyranny, is the chief design of his *Paradise Lost*.[371] At this point, the reader is left questioning whether there is a specific type of tyranny that Toland had in mind? The answer can be gleaned in an instance of intertextuality, where Toland links the moral of *PL* to a prayer located at the conclusion of the second book of *Reformation in England, and the Causes that hitherto have hinder'd it* (1641). A whiff of Republicanism and anti-prelatism characterises Milton's description of the second coming of Christ and his subsequent judgement of all forms of tyranny, as well as his blessing of equitable commonwealths:

> …the eternal and shortly expected King, shalt open the Clouds to judg the several Kingdoms of the World; and, distributing national Honors and Rewards to religious and just *Commonwealths*, shalt put an end to all earthly *Tyrannies*, proclaiming thy universal and mild Monarchy thro Heaven and Earth.[372]

The irony seems to be lost on Toland, how he chastises Tomkins for mistakenly reading treason into *PL*, before immediately encouraging the reader to interpret the poem through the lens of one of Milton's earlier and contentious polemical tracts. Nevertheless, Toland states that this 'Prayer to God, deserve[s] serious consideration', essentially meaning that the reader is to follow Milton's lead in praying along the same lines.[373] As such, the reader is to acknowledge that there is but one heavenly king, whose 'divine Mercies' and 'marvellous Judgments' are always good and never resemble tyrannical misuse of power; they are also being asked to carefully consider the idea that Christ favours self-governing, democratic republics over institutions that monopolise arbitrary power.[374] By introducing this example of textual interrelatedness, Toland instils within the reader the notion that *PL* is not

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[371] Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton…*, 42.

[372] Ibid. See also Milton, 'Reformation in England, and the Causes that hitherto have hinder'd it', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton…*, 274.

[373] Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton…*, 42.

[374] Milton, 'Reformation in England, and the Causes that hitherto have hinder'd it', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton…*, 274.

separate from Milton's prose texts, but connected. This diametrically opposes Fenton's view. Whereas Fenton shies away from engaging with Milton's political ideologies, claiming that they have little to no bearing on *PL*, the aforementioned moralistic parallel that Toland notes feasibly contributes towards instituting a practice of reading that acknowledges and searches for instances of connectivity within the author's wider oeuvre. Toland cannot ignore the prominent theme of overthrowing tyrannical forces that runs throughout Milton's literary works, it is a binding thread that actively conflates Milton's prose and poetry. The difference in genre, as Toland leads us to believe, does not necessarily mean that there is a difference in the nature of the intellectual content. For Fenton, however, actively searching for this type of intertextuality is a dangerous practice to encourage because it actively opposes the depoliticisation of Milton's epic. It could indeed become particularly problematic if one takes into consideration the prose in which Milton's revolutionary spirit reaches the heights of its potency. Take for example, the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), which Toland summarises as follows:

> …it is not only in it self a most equitable thing, but that it has also bin so esteem'd by the free and considering part of Mankind in all ages, that such as had the Power might call a Tyrant to account for his Maladministration, and after due Conviction to depose or put him death, according to the nature of his Crimes: And further shews, that if the ordinary Magistrats of any Nation refuse to do 'em Justice, that then the duty of self-preservation, and the good of the whole (which is the supreme Law) impowers the People to deliver themselves from Slavery by the fastest and most effectual methods they can.[375]

If the reader were to view *PL* through the lens of the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, or simply pay careful attention to other instances of textual interrelatedness between Milton's prose and poetry, then their conception of the poem would plausibly lean towards the political. Perhaps they would even be led to view the poem as a poetic manifesto that sews the seeds of political revolution and calls for the overthrowing of all tyrants, an

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[375] Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton…*, 24.

interpretation that Toland would have undoubtedly agreed with and been keen to see realised.

In short, what Fenton is primarily trying to achieve with his brief evaluation of *PL* is to re-establish that it is a work rich with poetic beauties that evoked a sense of deep pleasure in its readers and excited the mind with moral truths that are both good and useful. And although Toland would not disagree with this sentiment, his comments indicate that he was far more interested in the radical ideas that underpin the poetry. By Toland's estimation, *PL* is a political manifesto that supports an enduring commitment to Republican principles and elucidates a defining aspect of Milton's character: his love of liberty and aversion to authority. It was these aspects that seemingly attracted him to Cromwell's cause and gave shape to his Republicanism. Toland's view was not well received or reciprocated with any success throughout the eighteenth-century, and although Fenton makes attempts to salvage Milton's character, he still admitted that the misplaced logic that led Milton to partake in the regicide could not be defended. What Toland saw as one of Milton's chief attributes would continue to be viewed, by the majority, as his greatest flaw throughout the eighteenth-century. If anything, there was a shift away from Fenton's generous estimation of Milton's character in later biographical accounts of his life. By the closing of the eighteenth-century, Samuel Johnson would write in his account that Milton '…hated monarchs in the state, and prelates in the church; for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It is to be suspected, that his predominant desire was to destroy rather than establish, and that he not so much felt the love of liberty as repugnance to authority.'[376] Johnson's characteristically combative tone casts Milton and his standpoint concerning institutional authority in a wholly negative light; it was not the notion of state and ecclesiastical reformation that possessed Milton, but his desire to destroy order itself because the very idea of obedience was abhorrent to him. Johnson's stance strongly opposes Fenton's proposal that Milton's character can be salvaged from the dictates of his chosen political party, and instead suggests that it was Milton's already flawed character that shaped his Republicanism: 'Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of

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[376] Johnson, 'Johnson's Life of Milton', ed. F. Ryland, 52.

greatness, and a sullen desire to independence; in petulance impatient of controul, and pride disdainful of superiority.'[377]

However, like all the earlier Tonson editors of *PL*, and those whose commentaries appeared in or alongside the Tonson editions, Johnson's critical engagement refused to note the traces of Milton's aversion to obedience that sometimes clearly, and other times subtly, appear throughout *PL*, and instead followed the well-trodden path of commenting on issues mainly relating to decorum. One critic seems somewhat surprised at how Johnson's disgust for Milton's political standpoint did not seep into his criticism of *PL*. Johnson apparently had many opportunities to pass political judgement on the poem, but instead decided to restrain himself.[378] Another critic argues that a number of commentators and editors who followed Bentley failed to come close to the admiration that Johnson affords *PL* in the second half of his *Life*.[379] As a much earlier engagement with the poem would suggest, Johnson had always been aware of the tradition that he was contributing towards, one that depoliticises *PL* through a shared recognition that the benefit of the poem's unassailable beauties and sublimity outweighs any underpinnings of problematic ideologies. In his preface to William Lauder's (1680-1771) fraudulent and plagiaristic work, *An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in His Paradise Lost* (1749),[380] Johnson writes:

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[377] Ibid.

[378] Stephen Fix, 'Johnson and the "Duty" of Reading *Paradise* Lost', *English Literary* History, 52.3 (1985), 649-671 (649-651). As part of his discussion of Milton's Satan, Fix muses that '…what seems to Johnson most to distinguish *Paradise Lost* from Milton's other poems ("Lycidas," most notably) is the stability of its language and sentiments to tis speakers and occasions, Johnson had an easy opportunity here to suggest that Satan's insolence, his language of insubordination and rebellion, could have been the creative product only of a man well acquainted with such qualities. This issue presented him with the opportunity to score and easy *ad hominem* point in guise of a legitimate critical remark, but again he declines it.' (651).

[379] Michael Payne, 'Johnson vs. Milton: Criticism as Inquisition', *College* Literature, 19.1 (1992), 60-74 (70).

[380] Lauder claimed that Milton was a plagiarist and that *PL* was largely made up of a collection of obscure Latin poets who would only be recognisable to the most expert classical scholars. Lauder's argument was decisively disproven in 1750 by John Douglas (1721-1807) in his pamphlet, *Milton Vindicated from the Charge of Plagiarism Brought Against Him by Mr. Lauder and Lauder Himself Convicted of Several Forgeries and Gross Impositions on the Public*. See, Michael J. Marcuse, '"The Scourge of Impostors, The Terror of Quacks": John Douglas and the Exposé of William Lauder', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 142.3 (1979), 231-261.

> IT is now more than half a century, since the PARADISE LOST, having broke through the cloud, with which the unpopularity of its author for a time obscured it, has attracted the general admiration of mankind; who have endeavoured to compensate the error of their first neglect, by lavish praises and boundless veneration. There seems to have arisen a contest, among men of genius and literature, who should most advance its honour, or best distinguish its beauties.[381]

Even when prefacing a work that was designed to destroy the authenticity of *PL* and frame Milton as a fraud, Johnson could not bring himself to assert that the political convictions that caused Milton's 'unpopularity' appear in *PL*. Instead, Johnson sees Milton's reputation as shrouding the affirmation of *PL*, that is until its beauties began to be more fully recognised, at which point, like the sun breaking through obscuring cloud, they gained prominence over the negative perception of Milton. In his *Life*, Johnson seemingly joins the 'contest' that he speaks of above, and in doing so, ratifies Fenton's point that a reader can remain disgusted by Milton's political convictions while simultaneously revering *PL*. Like Addison before him, Johnson values *PL*'s capacity to instruct its readers and positively affect them by means of its beauties and instances of sublimity. It will become clear that Fenton too saw *PL* functioning in this way. For Fenton, the beauties not only sanitise the poem's radical political messaging, but illuminate political and religious standpoints that are conducive to a more moderate and orthodox position. Conversely, it is Milton's extreme distrust of authority and inability to unquestioningly obey the dictates of government and church that Toland admires most and sees as a defining feature of *PL*. Johnson's much later biography, however, largely demonstrates that the Tonsons' more wholesome portrayal of Milton and *PL* remained the victorious position throughout the eighteenth-century, and it is arguably the work of Addison and Fenton that enshrined *PL* as an orthodox moral force empowered by the poem's beauties, sublimity, and Milton's imagination.

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[381] Samuel Johnson, 'The Preface', in *An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in His Paradise Lost*, by William Lauder (London, 1749).

From Prose Tracts to Epic Poetry: Tracing the Evolution of Milton's Morality

I have thus far suggested that Fenton endeavoured to create separation between *PL* and Milton's prose, and although this is largely the case, there are instances where the biographer infers that fruitful comparisons can be made. Unlike Toland, Fenton's engagement with some of Milton's tracts suggests an evolution from inflammatory schools of thought to moderation. Rather than suggesting that *PL* continues to propagate radicalism, he maintains that Milton's problematic teachings and tumultuous seasons of life had a more favourable impact on his epic. The most prominent example of this can be seen in Fenton's discussion of Milton's first marriage to Mary Powell. Fenton holds fast to the common claim that the circumstance of Mary's abandonment is what led Milton '…to write several treatises concerning the doctrine, and discipline, of Divorce; and to also make his addresses to a young Lady of great wit and beauty'.[382] Although Milton made bold attempts to argue from Scripture when supporting divorce, citing Mosaic texts, Christ's words, and Paul's epistles as Scriptural support, the belief that the views underpinning his tract were religiously unorthodox remained widespread.[383] Marriage, according to Christ, could only be broken if a spouse committed adultery, and not even Milton's exegetical prowess could convince the powers that be to disregard the traditional understanding of what constituted valid grounds for divorce.[384] No attempt is made to address the two-year controversy and the numerous other publications that followed the publishing of the initial tract in 1643. It

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[382] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xii. Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* was first published in 1643. In February 1644 Milton published a revised edition of the *doctrine and discipline of divorce*; in August 1644 he published his second divorce called, *The Judgement of Martin Bucer Concerning Divorce*; and in March 1645 Milton published his final two divorce tracts, *Tetrachordon* and *Colasterion*. Little is known about who this 'young Lady of great wit and beauty' was, Gordon Campbell believes her to be '…the daughter of one Dr Davies.' See Gordon Campbell, 'Milton, John (1608-1674)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/18800> [accessed 2 December 2022], 12.

[383] In 'The doctrine and discipline of divorce' Milton moves from employing personal arguments to providing Scriptural foundations for his doctrine, combining ideas from both the Old and New Testament.

[384] For an insight into divorce in England from 1700-1857, including the gradually shifting mindset as to what constituted a valid reason for divorce, see Sybil Wolfram, 'Divorce in England 1700-1857', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 5.2 (1985), 155-186.

seems that the doctrinal divisiveness and culture of rumours that circulated about Milton's penchant for polygamous relations with the mysterious 'young lady' are of no interest, instead, Fenton bypasses issues of content and reception and focusses on the more important issue of Milton's eventual reconciliation to Mary in the summer of 1645.[385] This, he speculates, is what likely inspired the post-fall relations between his rendition of Adam and Eve in Book IX of *PL*:

> …perhaps the impressions it made on his imagination contributed much to the painting of that pathetic Scene in PARADISE LOST, in which *Eve* addresseth herself to *Adam* for pardon, and peace. At the intercession of his friends who were present, after a short reluctance He generously sacrific'd all his resentment to her tears.[386]

For Fenton, this is a beautiful scene within *PL*, one that reflects the happy resolution of Milton's marital problems, and in doing so, champions a more wholesome and reconciliatory standpoint that is comparatively alien to the vitriolic divorce tracts. Fenton re-establishes the uncompromising integrity of Milton's character shining bright in the midst of a difficult situation, portraying him as self-sacrificial and generous towards his repentant wife. Consequently, Milton is separated from the characterisation of vile polygamist that

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[385] Suffice to say, Milton's tracts were not received well and encountered much opposition. 'Colasterion' was written specifically as a response to an anonymous pamphlet, 'An Answer to a Book, Intituled, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644), that berated Milton's views. Milton's response begins by acknowledging the growing opposition that his views were receiving: 'AFTER many rumors of confutations and convictions forth comming against *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, and now and then a by-blow from the Pulpit, featherd with a censure strict indeed…' See, John Milton, 'Colasterion: A Reply to a nameless Answer against the *Doctrine of and Discipline of Divorce*' (London, 1645), B. A number of other early responses to Milton's doctrines on divorce cast him as a polygamist. In a sermon titled, 'The glasse of Gods providence towards his fatihfull ones' (1644), the puritan preacher Herbert Palmer descried Milton's 'booke' before parliament: 'If any plead Conscience for the lawfulnesse of polygamy; (or for divorce for other causes then Christ and his Apostles mention; of which a wicked booke is abroad and uncensured, though deserving to be burnt, whose Author has been so Impudent as to set his Name to it, and dedicate it to yourselves), or for Liberty to marry incestuously, will you grant a Toleration for all this?' For a detailed account of Milton and polygamy see, Leo Miller, *John Milton among the Polygamophiles* (New York: Loewenthal Press, 1974).

[386] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xiii.

was associated with his divorce tracts and the person who is depicted more closely resembles a figure who typifies the kind of Addisonian politeness that was associated with acceptable moral belief and behaviour. Fenton continues to endorse Milton's merciful actions towards his wife, claiming that they also extended to her Royalist father at the beginning of the Civil War:

> …after this re-union, so far was he from retaining an unkind memory of the provocations which He had receiv'd from her ill conduct, that when the King's cause was entirely oppress'd, and her Father who had been active in his Loyalty was expos'd to Sequestration; MILTON receiv'd both him and his family to protection, and free entertainment, in his own house, till their affairs were accomadated by his interest in the victorious Faction.[387]

After such praise, the reader is left with the distinct impression that Milton's tracts on divorce were a tumultuous beginning in his contemplation of the matter, provoked by distressing personal circumstances, but the representation of reconciliation within *PL* is where he eventually arrived after experiencing his own reunification. Although it would be extremely generous to assume that Milton's views on the matter of divorce were subjected to a complete overhaul, Fenton's *Life* impresses upon the reader that they perhaps underwent considerable degrees of alteration. There certainly exists a strong impression that Fenton sensed a growing disjointedness between Milton's reality and his tracts, a discrepancy that *PL* seemingly addressed and rectified. As such, Fenton saw the greatest harmony between *PL* and Milton's life. As we will see, when writing his divorce tracts, Milton had to employ an exceedingly nuanced interpretation of Scripture in order to circumnavigate the plain understanding of Moses' and Christ's commands relating to divorce. However, in the wake of Milton's epic, his earlier prose became like a shadow of the past and a work like *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* seems reactionary, resentful, and unorthodox in its dealings with divorce, rather than the more repentant, forgiving, and theologically simple message propagated by *PL*.

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[387] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xiii-xiv.

Toland, on the other hand, when addressing the very same issue opts to actively defend the divorce tracts, claiming that they are examples of Milton's desire for domestic, as well as state liberty during the period of the Civil War. Milton, he writes, dedicates *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* to parliament and the divines…

> …that as they were busy then about the general Reformation of the Kingdom, they might also take this particular case of domestic Liberty in to their consideration: for he thought all the boasted Freedom of public Judicatures signify'd little, if in the mean while one must be oblig'd to induce a kind of Servitude at home below the Dignity of a Man.[388]

Toland then provides a lengthy quotation from Milton's original tract that attributes the inconsistency between state and marital liberty to the misinterpretation of the Scriptures, chiefly those handed down by Moses. According to Milton's exegesis of both the Old and New Testament, Marriage is a covenant designed and given by God to satiate loneliness and provide social delight for both men and women. To remain bound by said covenant after it ceases to produce mutual delight not only defies reason, but also the clear purpose and effect of marriage as outlined by Scripture.[389] It follows that adultery is not the only legitimate reason for divorce, and more than that, it is not even presented by Milton as the greatest reason. As paraphrased by Toland, 'The grand Position he [Milton] maintains is, That *Indisposition, Unfitness, or contrary Humors, proceding from any unchangeable cause in Nature, hindring and always likely to hinder the main ends and benefits of conjugal Society (that is to say, Peace and Delight) are greater Reasons of Divorce than ADULTERY or FRIGIDITY, provided there be a mutual Consent for Separation.'*[390] The passage of Scripture that Milton sees as being most foundational to his argument is Deuteronomy 24:

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[388] Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*…, 18-19.

[389] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*', 280.

[390] Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*…, 'The Life of John Milton', 19.

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.[391]

Drawing on the Hebrew text, Milton interprets 'uncleanness' as 'nakedness of thought, or any real nakedness', which he argues refers 'to the Mind as well as to the Body'. It is, therefore, not just the physical act of adultery, or the nakedness of the body that warrants divorce, but the nakedness of the mind, defined as thoughts and mindsets that sabotage the mutual delight of marriage. Accordingly, Milton asks, '…what greater nakedness or unfitness of mind than that which hinders ever the solace and peaceful society of the married couple, and what hinders that more than the unfitness and defectiveness of an unconjugal mind?' This incorporation of the condition of a spouse's thought life into Moses' conception of 'uncleanness' leads Milton to conclude that his more inclusive position on what is a right cause for divorce '…cannot but agree with that decrib'd in the best and equallest sence of *Moses's* Law.'[392] At a later point in the tract, Milton communicates his position more succinctly:

The intent of which Law [Deuteronomy 24] undoubtedly was this, that if any good and peaceable Man should discover some helpless disagreement or dislike either of mind or body, whereby he could not cheerfully perform the duty of a Husband without the perpetual dissembling of offence and disturbance to his spirit; rather than to live uncomfortably and unhappily both to himself and to his Wife, rather than to continue undertaking a duty which he could not possibly discharge, he might dismiss her whom he could not tolerably and so not conscionably retain.[393]

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[391] *The Bible*, Deuteronomy 24:1.

[392] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*', 282.

[393] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*', 306.

The main problem with this interpretation is that it seems to contradict the clear commands of Christ:

> It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say to you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and who soever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.[394]

And on another occasion,

> The Pharisees also same unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.[395]

If Milton's case was going to rely so heavily on Deuteronomic law then he would need to show how Moses' edict was enshrined by Christ and not, as it would appear in the case of divorce, overturned by him. Establishing that the Old Testament precedent regarding divorce continued on into the New Testament was no easy task, and it would seemingly implicate Milton in a rich and complex debate about the relationship between the Old and

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[394] *The Bible*, Matthew 5:31-32.

[395] *The Bible*, Matthew 19:3-9.

New Testament that was taking place within Puritanism from the closing of the sixteenth-, throughout the seventeenth-, and into the eighteenth-century.

No-one contested that 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works', but a glaring and ancient question continued to confuse the matter: if a seeming discrepancy arose between Old and New Testament teaching, which possessed the greater authority with respect to shaping a Christian's personal life and the laws that governed wider society?[396] It was not as simple as assuming that the New Testament took automatic precedent in every matter, not when Christ demonstrated the highest regard for the Mosaic law: 'For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.'[397] Clearly Jesus believed that his teachings were contingent on the Old Testament, he did not, after all, come to abolish the law but to fulfil it, and yet there is also a deep sense that he and his apostles were instituting new and transcendent moral statutes. Christ's ministry was defined as new wine that could not be held in old bottles.[398]

Most recently, Polly Ha has endeavoured to show the diverse landscape of late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Puritan thought surrounding the appropriate 'uses of and historical nature of rabbinic literature.'[399] Although Ha is mainly interested in how certain early-modern theologians engaged with the wisdom of Hebrew doctors, specifically Ibn Ezra and Maimonides, as part of their efforts '…to model the church in relation to the instabilities of its current state and turbulent past,' her observations concerning the Puritan disputes 'over how to proportion the New Testament church in relation to layered Jewish tradition' are still relevant to this study.[400] When discussing the 'continuity and change in the church as an institution across the Old and New Testaments', Ha writes that, 'Despite the abolition of ceremonial law, Deuteronomic prescriptions established the principle of a

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[396] *The bible*, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

[397] *The Bible*, Matthew 5:18.

[398] *The Bible*, Matthew 9:17. 'Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.'

[399] Ha, 56.

[400] Ha, 58, 56.

divinely ordained church order.'[401] The argument, therefore, was not whether the Old Testament should influence the ecclesiastical structure and practices of the Christian church, but to what extent should the Mosaic law impede on the process. Some tended towards limiting the authority of the Old Testament, viewing its commands as often only applicable to Jewish culture and not the post New Testament church, while others saw the New Testament as a continuation of the Old and were eager to incorporate versions of its moral and ceremonial practices into the church. Unsurprisingly, the perceived Catholic culture of pomp, vestments, and institutional hierarchy were judged as Romanisations of abolished Jewish ceremonies, and were condemned as affronts to the simplicity of the gospel. In relation to this, Ha focusses on the debate that raged in the last decade of the sixteenth-century between the proto-Anglican, Richard Hooker (1554-1600), and Puritan theologian, Walter Travers (1548-1635), and shows how their longstanding '…controversy, which initially began with questions over styles of worship and church order, was connected to broader theological questions of antiquity.'[402] Central to the theological disagreements over predestination and the pair's pulpit battles that were 'chiefly fought over the nature of grace, saving faith, and the relationship between the Church of England and forefathers in the Roman catholic tradition', was the question that had largely sparked the Reformation and was now being linked to Judaism and its ancient practices: was 'the doctrine of justification… jeopardized by adding works or other ceremonies as necessary for salvation in addition to faith in Christ[?]'[403]

In *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Authority* (1593-1597), Hooker defended the re-appropriating of Jewish practices by arguing that 'The Church of Rome's ceremonies had only become offensive by the gradual corruption and abuse of their use rather than original design,' and that 'If such ceremonies were abused over time, so could they become dissociated from such abuses.' Clear to differentiate between the necessarily abolished laws, such as sacrifice, Hooker believed that 'other ceremonies were indifferent in their nature,' like those that the apostles allowed on a temporary and conditional basis

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[401] Ha, 61.

[402] Ha, 66.

[403] Ha, 67.

specifically for Jewish Christians.[404] Ha goes onto note that 'Hooker moved beyond the legitimacy of a limited and conditional use of indifferent Jewish rites in worship to recover their general utility,' an argument that relied heavily on the immutability of God.[405] Hooker, therefore, '…sought to reclaim certain Jewish practices that had been corrupted by Catholic custom, such as confession and penance,' and '…while arguing for the circumstantial relativity of Jewish ceremony, Hooker was able to argue for its continued legitimacy as a norm for stabilizing the church and bolstering ecclesiastical authority.' Like the Restoration Anglicans that would follow him in the sixteenth-century, Hooker longed for church uniformity, something that he believed Old Testament precedents could facilitate in the New Testament church setting. That is, as long as their retainment remained a sinless exercise.[406]

Neither Hooker nor Travers were Catholic, but Travers was highly sceptical and 'accused Hooker of nothing less than introducing a new divinity…which smacked of a Romanism that had been unseen since the days of Mary I.'[407] Essentially, Travers thought that Hooker was too lenient towards the Catholics and his soft touch was allowing space for superstition to breed. He perceived that the upholding of particular instances of abolished ceremonial law led to a failure to acknowledge the unique and progressive nature of the New Testament church. In his earlier work, *Ecclesiasticae Disciplinae* (1574), Travers maintained that Christian interpretation was not subordinate to Jewish interpretation, but this did not equate to a negation of the continuity between the Old and New Testament conception of the church. As Ha writes, 'At the heart of his appeal for further reform was his emphasis on divine prescriptions for the ordering of the church and their stress on the continuity of divinely ordained ecclesiastical polity.'[408] Similar to Hooker's later observation, Travers saw the Old Testament disciplines as coming from God and were therefore immutable and inherently good. The Old Testament, however, was not just a precedent but a foreshadowing of something better, and the main goal of comparing the New Testament

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[404] Ha, 69.

[405] Ha, 69-70. This included the retention of Jewish names, such as 'priest.'

[406] Ha, 71.

[407] Ha, 66.

[408] Ha, 61.

church to the Jewish church was to illuminate '…an even greater degree of perfection and completion.'[409] There were a number of 'philological and spiritual continuities in ecclesiastical censure between the Old and New Testaments', including the many aspects relating to moral law and spiritual disciplines. However, according to the superior covenant of grace, the Old Testament's ceremonial practices, most notably pertaining to sacrifice, were strictly fulfilled in Christ.[410] The perpetual progression of the New Testament church rested upon the tension between being saved by faith alone and that saving faith enabling the upholding and evolution of moral laws that were derived from the Old Testament. As such, Travers argued that the relationship between the Old and New Testament had to remain flexible so as not to threaten the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and as Ha concludes in regard to the controversial issue of retaining and appropriating Jewish ceremonies, 'At stake was whether they undermined the very foundations of the Christian church.'[411]

It was these kinds of debates that, as Ha recognises, 'continued to inspire English divines during the English Revolution as they intensified their study and use of oriental sources to reimagine civil and ecclesiastical society.'[412] And as we have seen, a big part of the reimagining entailed attempts to recognise instances of continuation between the Old and New Testament for the sake of establishing ecclesiastical and societal order, all the while being wary not to place new wine into old bottles. It is this debate that Milton is engaged in as he presents a defence for divorce that spans across both the Old and New Testament. Similar to Travers and Hooker, Milton acknowledges that the spirit of the moral law and the ceremonial practices established in the Old Testament that were not subsequently abolished by the covenant of grace must logically be carried over into the New Testament church. For Milton, this clearly encompasses both marriage and divorce. There are many examples of Milton asserting the continuity and coherence between the Old and New Testament, but one of the most striking can be found near the closing of the tract, where he states that Moses and Christ are undeniably of one mind:

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[409] Ha, 62.

[410] Ibid.

[411] Ha, 65.

[412] Ha, 80.

How much more coherent is it to Scripture, that the Law as a strict Schoolmaster should have punish'd every trespass without indulgence so baneful to Youth, and that the Gospel should now correct that by admonition and reproof only, in free and mature Age, which was punish'd with stripes in the childhood and bondage of the Law. What therefore it allow'd then so fairly, much less is to be whipp'd now, especially in Penal Courts: and if it ought now to trouble the Conscience, why did that angry accuser and condemner Law reprieve it? So then, neither from *Moses* nor from Christ hath the Magistrate any authority to proceed against it.[413]

Milton's reason dictates that both Testaments agree, and even more than this, he views the superior covenant of grace as affording, by token of its supremacy, greater freedom and relief from disagreeable marriages:

For if under the Law such was God's gracious Indulgence, as not to suffer the Ordinance of his goodness and favour through any error to be fear'd and stigmatiz'd upon his Servants to their misery and thraldom; much less will he suffer it now under the Covenant of Grace, by abrogating his former grant of remedy and relief.[414]

At other points, the superiority of the gospel receives a greater sharpness, as Milton parallels Travers' argument about how the New Testament not only reflects the moral landscape of the Mosaic law, but progresses it towards a greater perfection, which partly involves the allocation of pre-eminent levels of tolerance for man's weaknesses: 'The Gospel indeed exhorts to highest perfection, but bears with weakest infirmity more than the Law.'[415] This is indeed similar to Travers' understanding about God's immutability mapping onto his moral law, and as Milton remarks elsewhere, the gospel does not impart new

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[413] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*, 325.

[414] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*, 282.

[415] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*, 305.

morality except in the case of the enlargement of charity.[416] The New Testament picture of amplified charity is mainly linked to the action of loving one's neighbour, but here it also suggests greater liberty in decision making with regard to the application of the moral law. This understanding of charity is clearly communicated in Milton's discussion regarding dispensations: 'But a Dispensation most properly is some particular accident rarely hapning, and therefore not specified in the Law, but left to the decision of Charity, even under the bondage of Jewish Rites, much more under the liberty of the Gospel.'[417] Milton's argument can be summarised as follows, firstly, not only does Christ agree with Moses, but he also insists that the New Testament church must strive to uphold the law's moral requisites. Secondly, the covenant of grace allows for greater liberty to decide, based on Milton's interpretation of Deuteronomy 24, what constitutes a valid reason for divorce. However, after suggesting what he believes to be a logical continuation between the Old and New Testament, Milton must still reckon with the clear sense of Christ's remarks concerning divorce, which seem to stand in opposition to his own.

He does this first of all by claiming that Christ regarded his words as only applicable to those who share the same faith: 'As for what Christ spake concerning divorce, 'tis confest by all knowing men, he meant only between them of the same faith.'[418] This, however, seems to contradict the teachings of Paul, who in his first letter to the Corinthians encouraged a believing spouse to remain with their unbelieving partner,[419] but Milton deals with the contradiction by stating that Paul's remarks only applied if 'the Body of an unbeliever was not defiling, [and] if his desire to live in Christian Wedlock shew'd any likelihood that his heart was opening to the faith...'[420] As such, a believer is not obligated to

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[416] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*, 316.

[417] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*, 303.

[418] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*, 290-291.

[419] *The Bible*, 1 Corinthians 7:13: 'And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.'

[420] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*, 291.

stay married if they have done everything within their power to help facilitate conversion, and yet their spouse remains an unbeliever. Milton's argument then moves to encompass the possibility that Christ was specifically addressing the hypocritical religious leaders who were abusing Moses' divorce edicts. Christ gives his 'rigid sentence against Divorce, not to cut off all remedy from a good man who finds himself consuming away in a disconsolate and uninjoy'd Matrimony, but to lay a bridle upon the bold abuses of those over-weening *Rabbies*'.[421] Milton was well aware that Christ had elsewhere warned against hypocrisy, 'For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again', and here he perceives Christ's rebuke as appropriately demonstrating a measure of harshness equivalent to the hypocrisy and abuses of the Pharisees.[422] This was a specific admonishment levelled at a specific group, an interpretation that the church had rejected for centuries to the detriment of suffering spouses. Christ never meant for his words to be applied to every Christian, but only to those who were abusing their positions of power as a just censure tantamount to their guilt.

Milton views the same pervasive problem in his setting, only now it is old superstition and corrupt clergy that are seen to be the central problem. And this point is precisely what Toland is keen to emphasise. Milton, he writes, '…largely shews all the unjust Sanctions concerning Marriage to be owing to the Superstition of som antient Fathers, and to the design of promoting the Gain or Authority of the Clergy, as they make a part of the Canon Law…' In typical fashion, Toland eagerly reiterates what he perceives to be the common motif within Milton's writing, that is the highlighting and confronting of tyranny, 'And indeed it seems a perfect Tyranny to oblige a Man or Woman beyond the design of their Covenant…' For Toland, this comprehension of divorce is not only contrary to a correct reading of Scripture, but it is also repugnant to the ancient pagans as well: 'For the *Greecs*, the *Romans*, and all civiliz'd Nations, did not only allow of Divorce upon mutual Aversion or Consent; but in many other cases, besides the violation of the nuptial Bed, there was a Separation made on the Petition of one Party, tho the other should not be willing.' After stating that the narrative of Scripture, as well as other sources of ancient wisdom, support

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[421] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*, 297.

[422] *The Bible*, Matthew 7:2.

Milton's interpretation of Deuteronomy 24, Toland lambasts the orthodox understanding of what constitutes a valid reason for divorce and the effect it has had on law-making:

> It seems likewise to me very gross, that in Lawmaking (particularly in the Canon Law) a regard should be had for the fit Disposition of the marry'd Couples Bodies, and no consideration of the Agreeableness of their Minds, when the Charms of the latter are often the greatest inducements to the conjunction of the former. [423]

Like Milton, Toland affirms that the Old Testament law outlines 'other sufficient Reasons for Divorce besides Adultery; and to prohibit any sort of Divorce, but such as are excepted by *Moses*, is unjust and against the Reason of the Law.' For the sake and maintenance of reason and God's immutable moral law, Christ's teachings cannot contradict the Mosaic law and must strictly agree that marriage is chiefly for the pleasure of its participants. It follows that if that pleasure is lost, then divorce should be permitted. In support of Christ's validation, Toland summarises Milton's chapter that presents marriage as a covenant or contract similar to the sabbath, and like the sabbath, '…Marriage certainly…was ordain'd for the benefit of Man, and not Man created for Marriage: wherefore it ought to be suted to his Convenience and Happiness, and not be made a Snare to render him uneasy or miserable.'[424] This interpretation of Christ's sentiments feels somewhat eisegetical, but serves to solidify a continuation from the Old to the New Testament and enshrines the purpose of all covenants as being for the good of man and the glory of God, something that the 'cruel and senseless bondage' of an unhappy marriage could never fulfil.[425]

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[423] Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*…, 19.

[424] Toland, 'The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*…, 19-20. Toland is drawing on Christ's words from the gospel of Mark: 'And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.' See *The Bible*, Mark 2:27. For Milton's chapter on the similarities between sabbath and marriage see, Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*', 297-298.

[425] Milton, 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton*', 297.

Unlike Fenton, who enables the reader to trace an evolution of thought from Milton's divorce tracts through to *PL*, Toland makes no suggestion that Milton's opinions on divorce underwent any real change after Mary's return. To the contrary, Toland sees no such evolution, and although he concedes that a complete reconciliation was obtained, there is no hint that Milton remained anything but stalwart in his views.[426] It does not matter that there exists a seeming contradiction between Milton's ideologies and his real-life experience, in fact, Toland remains adamant that Milton's case is compelling regardless of the influence that his personal circumstances had on its formulation: '…[Milton's] Arguments ought not be esteem'd the less cogent, because occasion'd by his domestic Uneasiness'.[427] By presenting Milton's divorce tracts as compliant with logic and reason, Toland infuses them with a level of objectivity that makes it difficult for them to be undermined by the mutable nature of circumstance. As long as the principles that underpin Milton's writing remain arguably 'cogent', then their credibility can be sustained regardless as to whether their author's reality reflects their outworking.

In terms of *PL*, both biographers are driven by their particular agendas. Toland is happy to engage with the poem, just as long as the focus promotes Milton's ideas about opposing different forms of Tyranny. Fenton, on the other hand, conveys Milton moving from his tumultuous younger years—a tumultuousness that was very much reflected in his prose writing—to a more sanitised and orthodox mode of thinking in his later years, something that is marked and aptly represented by *PL*. This means that, unlike Milton's prose, *PL* is wholly appropriate and edifying. Both accounts of Milton's life necessarily follow a chronological process, but Fenton's is characteristically redemptive and shows the intertwining of personal and literary growth, while Toland's conveys a sense of invariableness. In terms of the debate surrounding the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, Toland perceives that Milton's standpoint on divorce was characterised by the logical enshrining of his interpretation of Deuteronomic law by the New Testament church, a position which led to his dissent from orthodoxy, whereas Fenton seemingly

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[426] Toland The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton…*, 23.

[427] Toland, The Life of John Milton', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton…*, 21.

discerns that Milton's personal reconciliation and the events of *PL* support a simpler and orthodox interpretation of Christ's teachings on divorce. Fenton makes no mention of Milton's exegesis of Deuteronomy 24, but his emphasis on the reconciliation with Mary feasibly supports the idea that Milton's thoughts on the subject underwent change. For Fenton, it is perhaps not that the argument for continuation need be surrendered, but that the interpretation of what is continuing from the Old Testament into the new becomes more aligned with orthodox schools of thought. Of course, Milton never completely lost his radical edge, something that Toland's *Life* clearly demonstrates through its analysis of Milton's prose oeuvre, and this is likely why Fenton makes no reference to any other tracts. Fenton actually has no intention of engaging with much of Milton's personal and literary activities after the publishing of *PL*, and in the closing sections of his *Life* he makes clear that he is most interested in Milton the poet. Fenton strongly implies that the poetry is where the pinnacle of Milton's genius can be glimpsed, it is this alone that garners universal appreciation and ensures that he will never be forgotten:

> We come now to take a survey of him in that point of View, in which He will be look'd on by all succeeding ages with equal delight, and admiration. An interval of above twenty years had elaps'd since He wrote the Mask of *Comus*, *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, and *Lycidas*; all of such an exquisite strain! that though He had left no other monuments of his Genius behind him, his name had been immortal. But the infirmities of age and constitution, nor the vicissitudes of fortune, cou'd depress the vigor of his mind; or divert it from executing a design He had long conceiv'd of writing an Heroic Poem.[428]

Fenton declares with certainty that it is not Milton's polemical tracts that future generations will inevitably remember and look upon with admiration, but the poems. And although Milton's earlier minor poems were enough to ensure that his genius always be remembered, it is *PL* that enshrines him as unsurpassable. Indeed, there is, according to Fenton, no English poet who has ever inspired as much emulation and yet remained matchless in their skill: 'Nor is it unworthy our observation, that though, perhaps, no One of

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[428] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xix-xx.

our *English* Poets hath excited so many Admirers to imitate his Manner, yet I think never any was known to aspire to emulation'.[429]

This move to untether Milton from his tracts, leaving them securely in the past, and present him primarily as a poet rather than a polemicist is justified by Fenton's aforementioned notion that '[Milton's] Judgement, when dis-engag'd from Religious and Political Speculations, was just and penetrating'. This kind of depoliticising does not ignore Milton's radicalism, but redirects the reader to something that is infinitely better. Fenton is, however, still acutely aware of the past's powerful hold and is left wishing that 'the Laws of Civil History cou'd have extended the benefit of that Oblivion to the memory of his guilt, which was indulg'd to his Person'. But even when Fenton displays signs of ever-lingering regret for Milton's involvement in past Republican controversies, he ends his *Life* contemplating the idea that 'with so many Accomplishments, not to have had some Faults, and Misfortunes, to be laid in the balance with the Fame, and Felicity, of writing PARADISE LOST, wou'd have been too great a portion for Humanity.'[430] Toland, would have of course disparaged Fenton's notions and efforts to make Milton out to be someone he was not. Milton cannot be saved, nor does he require saving. The great man, according to Toland, should be completely embraced.

As part of his discussion concerning the different styles of biography that accompany Milton's prose and poetry, Peter Lindenbaum has stated that:

> The poetry started, and for a long period in the eighteenth-century remained, in the hands of figures affecting high aesthetic taste, while the prose stayed with those wishing to promote rather different values or causes, overtly Whig and republican ones.[431]

While this is broadly true, it does lack a consideration of certain nuances. In the cases of the Toland and Fenton biographies, Milton's prose and poetry did not remain completely separated, but mingled in ways that served conflicting agendas. This thesis has shown that

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[429] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xxii.

[430] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xxviii.

[431] Lindenbaum, 'Rematerializing Milton', 7.

while championing the aesthetic superiority of *PL*, the Tonsons also viewed the poem as politically useful in the support of the Williamite regime and future Whig debates. This then led to a recognition that political and religious intervention were required in order to achieve maximal popularity and usefulness. The younger Tonson was thrilled with Fenton's humble offering, so much so that he included it in the next two editions (1727 and 1730). And it is reasonable to conclude that his satisfaction can, for the large part, be attributed to Fenton's attempts at softening Milton's historically harsh characterisation, as well as his striving to oppose any radical reading of Milton's most famous work, something that prominent fanatics, such as Toland, had previously encouraged.

The Beginning of a Disturbance: Fenton's Textual Emendations

In spite of Fenton's declaration about the completeness of *PL*, he was the first scholar that produced a Tonson edition that moved away from the realm of commentary to intervene with the text of the poem, and although his *Life* was well received, the handful of changes that he made were not. The narrative by which Fenton was convinced about the text being misconstrued by Milton's amanuensis, an acquaintance he was forced to rely upon because of his blindness, is a well-known one. From its publication, the Grub Street culture deemed Fenton's editorial efforts as trivial and unnecessary, something that resembled re-writing rather than restoration, and this opinion has not changed. R.G. Moyles views Fenton's edition as militating against textual fidelity: 'Under his [Fenton's] editorial supervision the text of Paradise Lost becomes less authoritative with each printing, and intuitive emendation becomes excessive.'[432] Moreover, David Harper sees Fenton's edition as inspiring the greatest attack that has ever been made on the textual authority of *PL*, that is until Bentley's 1732 edition. Harper argues that 'Fenton made most of his 'intuitive emendations' silently, but he innovated by bringing some of them to readers' attention in footnotes.'[433] He maintains that it was the visibility rather than the content of these interventions, printed '…at the bottom of a few pages and sharing space with Milton's text',

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[432] Moyles, 56.

[433] Harper, 'Critical Mass, Contextualising Bentley's *Paradise Lost*', in *Milton in the Long Restoration*, eds. Blair Hoxby and Ann Baynes Coiro, 25-26.

that mainly influenced the poem's most notorious editor.[434] Although Harper believes that Fenton's influence on Bentley resided mainly within the realms of the aesthetic, he acknowledges that '…despite the lack of explanatory apparatus for the interventions, it is clear from his first such emendation that Fenton worked from a theoretical framework that blamed Milton's reliance on an amanuensis for purported blemishes in the text.'[435] Not only a blundering, but a spurious amanuensis was of course the exact excuse that Bentley employed when explaining the need for his far more extensive intervention. Indeed, 'Fenton's dialogue with Milton in the margins of the poem, and his bold assertion that the text had been corrupted between Milton's utterance and its setting down, may well have influenced Bentley's far more intrusive encounter with the poem.'[436]

It is no easy task to ascertain Tonson's reasoning for publishing Bentley's edition. One would think that he should have guessed that the scholar's conclusions would not have been well received. There are similarities between Bentley and his predecessors, but his defence of orthodoxy does not attempt to slide over or explain away Milton's radicalism, instead it alters or removes them altogether. If Hume was the most erudite scholar, and Addison was the most practical, then Bentley is the most puritanically pedantic. As William Kolbrener has stated when comparing Bentley to Addison, 'the hyper-orthodox Bentley, by contrast, locates the heterodoxies of the poem, and then displaces them through his figure of the editor/printer.'[437] We have already seen Tonson's preference for the less classical or mythical renditions of Chéron's illustrations, and perhaps this was but an initial indication of his dislike for the mingling of the sacred with the vulgar. Perhaps then, Tonson would have been equally pleased when surveying Bentley's expulsive methods, and how he aggressively sanitises *PL*.

Religio-political issues aside, Bentley's edition followed in the footsteps of Fenton's and brought into sharp focus one of the most important questions permeating eighteenth-

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[434] Harper, 'Critical Mass, Contextualising Bentley's *Paradise Lost*', in *Milton in the Long Restoration*, eds. Blair Hoxby and Ann Baynes Coiro, 25-26.

[435] Harper, 'Critical Mass, Contextualising Bentley's *Paradise Lost*', in *Milton in the Long Restoration*, eds. Blair Hoxby and Ann Baynes Coiro, 26.

[436] Ibid.

[437] Kolbrener, '15. Reception', in *The Cambridge Companion to 'Paradise Lost'*, ed. Louis Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 199.

century literary culture: to what extent was it acceptable for an editor to implement conjectural emendation? This was a debate that had played out within the confines of classical scholarship, where conjecture had been applied to classical texts, most notably by Bentley, but Fenton was the first to shift the focus onto the vernacular. The visible results were few, but they revealed an attitude that an editor's intuition should at least be considered as a viable tool for amending, and more than that, should be taken seriously, especially when the text being edited was especially susceptible to scribal negligence. In relation to 'Hillocks' (X:860), Fenton wrote at the bottom of the page 'Perhaps it shou'd be Hills, Rocks',[438] and again he suggests that 'brow of God' (XI:880) should perhaps be 'Bow of God'.[439] One can see how Fenton might have reached such intuitions when the sounds of his alternatives so closely resemble the original words, but on another occasion, he seems to amend in order to achieve something that is more closely linked to geographical correctness. He changes 'NEGUS' (XI:397) for 'Ethiopia' and 'GUIANA' (410) for 'Manoa', and unlike the previous examples, he gives no hint that this was a case of the amanuensis misapprehending Milton, but rather that the text was inaccurate and required rectification.[440] In a final instance, Fenton amends the text more fundamentally when he re-writes 'And temperate vapors bland, which th' only found / Of leaves and fuming rills (AURORA's fan) / Lightly disper'd' (V:5-7). It is here that the idea of a corrupting amanuensis is most notable: 'Perhaps these two verses were originally dictated by the author thus: And temperate vapors bland from fuming rills, / Which th'only sound of leaves (AURORA'S fan) / Lightly dispers'd, &c.'[441]

As we will see in the final chapter, conjectural emendation and approaches to textual criticism in general were other areas of interest that characterised the Tonsons' dealings with *PL* and seemingly caused much division between the pair. The younger Tonson was far more interested than his uncle in utilising *PL* and other notable English literary works as textual sites that facilitated discussion about unorthodox critical approaches to vernacular poems throughout the 1720s and going into the 1730s. This would become part

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[438] Fenton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Elijah Fenton, 290.

[439] Fenton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Elijah Fenton, 327.

[440] Fenton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Elijah Fenton, 313.

[441] Fenton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Elijah Fenton, 123.

of his broader desire to carve out a publishing legacy that was distinctive from that of his uncle's, one that not only cared about securing and monopolising the publication of the most popular English authors, but also spearheaded methodological approaches that had yet to be applied to vernacular texts. Although Bentley's *PL* was not the last of the younger Tonson's projects that championed conjecture as a legitimate technique, it was a contentious climax in the discussion about how to best edit vernacular texts. Out of the many scholars that have produced an edition of *PL*, Bentley stands as the most controversial, which has led to him being viewed as the most frustrating, interesting, and complex to decipher. Whether or not Fenton should be viewed as having the majority influence on Bentley's contribution, he was certainly the initial ripple of what was to become a monumental disturbance in the tradition of Tonson editions.

Chapter 4: Emendation

Richard Bentley's 1732 Edition of *Paradise Lost*

A Turn of Fortune: The Tonsons' Final Edition of *PL*

The Tonsons had invested decades of effort into redeeming Milton's character and ensuring that *PL* was rebranded as a safely accessible poem for an ever-expanding polite readership. In order to achieve this, they employed some of the leading scholars, thinkers, and poets of the time. The Tonsons' logic appears to be quite simple: the more Milton was portrayed as orthodox and moderate, the more popular he would become. This was business savvy that reaped both ideological and financial reward. In the hands of Hume, *PL* illuminated Milton as a fervent anti-Catholic, in the hands of Addison, a pious Christian moralist, and in the hands of Fenton, a man of unimpeachable character and upholder of orthodox doctrine. The annotator, critic, and biographer were wonderfully successful in presenting Milton and *PL* as ideological exemplars. It is quite remarkable that the Tonsons were so successful in selling this domesticated image of Milton, especially when there were still prominent and influential voices attempting to discredit the poet and his epic. Besides the lingering concerns that *PL* espoused regicide, something to which Hume's *Annotations* most fully attended, at the closing of the seventeenth-century many criticisms tended towards the theological. The leading Jacobite propagandist, Charles Leslie (1650-1722), had noted heresy in Milton's angels and their ignorance of the Trinity in the preface of *The History of Sin and Heresy* (1698):

> To make the Angels ignorant of the blessed Trinity; and to take it ill to acknowledge him for their King whom they had always ador'd as their God; or as if the Son had not been their King, or had not been begotten till that day. This scheme of the Angels revolt cannot answer either to the eternal Generation of the Son, which was before the Angels had a Being, or to his temporal Generation of the blessed Virgin, that being long after the fall of the Angels.[442]

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[442] Charles Leslie, 'Preface' in *The History of Sin and Heresy* (London, 1698), A2r.

By claiming that *PL* propagated one of the most dangerous heterodoxies, Leslie was effectively dealing a death blow to any notion that the poem was orthodox. Once secretary of the Royal Society, Abraham Hill (1635-1722) is a remarkable example of an early reader who was interested in Leslie's comments. In one of his numerous commonplace books (BL Sloane Ms 2894), Hill reacts to Milton on a strictly theological level, reading his poetry and prose alongside Scripture and Leslie's criticism in order to build a picture of Milton as an Antitrinitarian. If nothing else, this could signify something resembling a prevalent view of Milton within late-seventeenth century literary culture.[443] In addition to this, at the beginning of the eighteenth-century, John Dennis (1657-1734) also proposed that Socinianism taints the angels' account of Christ in Book III: 'I have rather mention'd these Verses, to show that *Milton* was a little tainted with Socinianism, for by the first Verse 'tis evident, that he look't upon the Son of God as a Created Being.'[444] These aspersions, no matter how true they would prove to be, had little to no effect on the rising popularity of *PL*.[445] The specific passages that Leslie and Dennis found problematic received no comment from Hume, Addison, or Fenton, and were seemingly drowned amidst waves of affirmation that the Tonsons masterfully engineered, or at least used to their advantage. Each new example of paratextuality that accompanied a Tonson edition made Milton and his epic that bit more politically and religiously agreeable, and although some of them might have

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[443] Abraham Hill, *Commonplace Book*. Ms Sloane 2894. The British Library. fol. 70v. Hill writes, 'Milton makes the cause of the Angels revolt to be when God declar[s] Christ to be his son but it would have bin more poetical & more true that there revolt was upon the incarnation of Christ declared to them & so the humane nature prefered before the angelica[l] to their great discontent, Discours Pride the cause of heresy Milton a Socinian logic 132 Iohn 17. 3.' For further studies on Hill's commonplace books and in particular his engagement with Milton see: William Poole, 'Two Early Readers of Milton: John Beale and Abraham Hill', *Milton Quarterly*, 38.2 (2004), 76–99; Vladimir Brljak, 'Early Comments on Milton's Anti-Trinitarianism', *Milton Quarterly*, 49.1 (2015), 44-50.

[444] John Dennis, *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (London, 1704), 36.

[445] Milton's religious treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*, which was first published in 1825 explicitly outlines his Antitrinitarian views. See Hale and Cullington, J. Donald, *The Complete Works of John Milton, Vol. 8: De Doctrina Christiana, Vol. 1*, eds. John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), VIII.

wanted to, no commentator significantly interfered with the text, for such a practice seemed inappropriate and unnecessary. There was, to all appearances, no problem plaguing Milton or *PL* that could not be dealt with by casting light upon the poem's countless excellencies. However, the almost unanimous success that the younger Tonson had thus far experienced with *PL* was subject to brutal change in the wake of the final edition that he supervised and subsequently published in 1732.

It is no exaggeration to say that Richard Bentley's edition of *PL* has gone down in literary history as one of the most enigmatic and hotly contested pieces of textual criticism. Prior to its publication, Bentley had already acquired infamy for his polemical style and questionable use of conjectural emendation, but his critical editions of Latinate texts, most notably his Horace and Terence, had also evoked excitement because of their unique nature and claims of editorial authority. As brilliant and admired as he was problematic and maligned, Bentley was someone who certainly divided opinion. By the beginning of the eighteenth-century, even before he published his Horace, Bentley's publications were guaranteed to draw attention and pique the public's interest. This may well have been what attracted the young Jacob Tonson to the prospect of Bentley producing the next edition of *PL*. We do not know whether Tonson approached Bentley, or vice versa, but what is commonly accepted is that Bentley's patron, Queen Caroline, encouraged him to work on a new edition.[446] The Queen, according to R. J. White,

> …was understood to have said that she would like to see Dr Bentley exercise his fabulous critical powers upon the great English epic. It was all very well for such powers to be exercised upon fragmentary and uncertain texts surviving in the ancient tongues. How revealing to see them applied to the familiar and accessible text of an English poet of not much more than half a century ago! Let the great conjuror perform for once in daylight.[447]

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[446] Geduld, 128-129. Geduld is just one example that constitutes a consensus across the literature concerning the major role that Queen Caroline played in encouraging Bentley's edition.

[447] R. J. White, *Dr Bentley, A Study in Academic Scarlet* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1965), 210.

Seemingly, Bentley did not need too much convincing. He had always been interested in growing as a public figure and he was certainly passionate about making textual criticism accessible to polite society, something that would be made much easier if the text that he was working on was written in the vernacular. Tonson was obviously happy to oblige. This would be new, it would likely be controversial, but it would also sell. However, the lucrativeness of an edition produced by England's leading classicist was not the only incentive. The younger Tonson had already been publishing critical editions of Milton and Shakespeare that implemented conjectural emendation throughout the 1720s, which strongly indicates that he was invested in championing this kind of textual criticism. It seems, therefore, entirely plausible that after having observed Bentley push the boundaries of classical scholarship with his editions of Horace and Terence, Tonson, like the Queen, was excited at the prospect of letting Bentley loose on an English poem. The results were monumental. Bentley's penchant for orthodox theology upheld and dramatically expanded the Tonson tradition of sanitisation, but as we will see, this is largely pushed into the background. More so than those who came before him, Bentley's edition tried to steer the course of vernacular scholarship into new and controversial waters.

Many scholars would attest that trying to understand the mechanics of Bentley's edition is no easy task. The number of attempts that have been made to pinpoint Bentley's primary methodology prove that there is no singular rationale to what he was doing. In fact, because his critical methodologies and patterns of annotation often conflict, the reader is left wondering whether Bentley himself knew what he was doing when it came to editing *PL*. The edition exudes experimentation and was clearly a testing ground that offered scope for Bentley to intervene with a text more extensively and haphazardly than had been previously available to him. It was common knowledge that Milton's personal circumstances meant that he had to rely on amanuenses when writing *PL*, and this was something that allowed Bentley to build on his previous pronouncements concerning textual corruption, and challenge the fidelity of the poem more vehemently than he had been able to do with his Horace and Terence. There was also, according to Bentley's preface, no manuscript for *PL* which meant that he was not bound by any authority except his own sagacity when it came to editing the text. Emancipated from the restrictive manuscript tradition, emendation by conjecture could broaden its horizons. Bentley's debut in the field of editing English poetry would be characterised by a move away from strictly philological concerns to

interrogating the text's classical decorum and religious ideologies, a trajectory that was set by the general acceptance of *PL* as an epic, and a Christian one at that. Nevertheless, Bentley's edition was not a complete break away, it was influenced by those who came before him and it was largely characterised by the reassumption of past patterns of textual editing. Moreover, a rather remarkable editorial evolution can be tracked from his two annotated copies, a 1674 second edition and a 1720 'Tickell's' edition, through to his printed edition. However, Bentley's *PL* is somewhat of an anomaly, in that it has not been treated with any measure of approval since its publication. Mired in disrepute, it stands as Bentley's greatest failure, but this predominantly comes from those who view it as a bizarre conclusion to Bentley's overzealous preference for emendatio, rather than the initial steps in exploring how his trademark methods might transfer onto editing an English text. Reception history tells us that the world was not ready for Bentley's edition and perhaps it never will be. By all accounts, conjecture was viewed as a divisive practice, something that was cutting-edge innovation for some, and closer to mutilation than restoration for many.[448]

Reception: Understanding Bentley's Motives and Methods

Seeking to understand Bentley's efforts, or simply entertain the idea that his central purpose for intervening might not be entirely shrouded in falsehood, is by no means

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[448] In the prefaces and footnotes of his critical editions, Bentley confidently asserted that his powers of divination were more reliable when it came to restoring a text than any manuscript, or indeed multiple manuscripts. In *Odes*, book III, ode 27, line 15, Bentley famously writes: 'To us reason and common sense are better than a hundred codices'. This mindset, when married to his deep-seated conviction that all texts had been subjected to corruption, rewarded Bentley with more enemies than friends and facilitated his excessive and often unnecessary emendations. For all his flaws, Bentley was brilliant and his critical editions, although outlandish, were not necessarily incorrect in terms of their critical approach. As Christopher Ricks relays when discussing Bentley's Milton, he showed 'a great gift for getting hold of the right thing—by the wrong end'. See Ricks, *Milton's Grand Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 14. If one looks passed Bentley's insatiable need to amend for the sake of amending then there is much brilliance to discover. As Hugh de Quehen writes: 'Yet, even where his solutions are wrong, Bentley's grasp of textual problems and the learning he brings to bear on them are quite extraordinary.' See, Quehen, 'Bentley, Richard (1662–1742), philologist and classical scholar', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2169 [accessed 16 February 2020], 7.

straightforward, and for some it verges on the impossible. John K. Hale writes on one occasion that he does not believe that Bentley's edition can be defended,[449] and on another, he concludes that the 1732 edition is nothing more than 'a deeply-flawed ego-trip.'[450] For Hale, the narrative of the editor was a fictive device lacking all credibility, its only feasible purpose being that it enabled Bentley to nurture his already swollen ego. Most modern reviews are not this scathing, but broadly speaking, the editing of Milton's epic under the guise of restoration has always been surrounded by unwavering scepticism. This critical confusion is something that Joseph Levine encapsulates well in his initial engagement with Bentley's edition: 'Bentley's Paradise Lost remains a puzzle. Just why the great man should think of editing a modern poem, in obvious haste and against advice, and risk his reputation as the most celebrated scholar of his time, is not at all apparent.'[451] Although not as spiteful as Hale, Levine also refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of the editor's existence, but in light of Bentley's invaluable past contributions to scholarship, he leaves the reader hoping that there still could exist some logical explanation for 'the great man['s]' tampering. Levine acknowledges that the reasons for Bentley's intervention are not at all obvious, but his comment nonetheless encourages us to bypass the idea of a dishonest amanuensis and continue searching.

After viewing Bentley's conception of the spurious editor alongside his prolific career as a classical scholar, and the advanced knowledge of antiquity that is on display throughout his edition, scholars such as Ants Oras, John T. Shawcross, and more recently, Esther Yu, have concluded that Bentley created a fiction so that he could re-write *PL* to make it more compatible with classical epics. His focus on style, poetic metre, the meaning of Milton's language, and the accurate representation and creation of classical parallels all contribute towards the project being viewed as an attempt at classicisation.[452] It was, of course, Bentley's personal sense of classical decorum that was the ultimate judge in such matters, but what better judge could there be.

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[449] Hale, 'Notes on Richards Bentley's Edition of "Paradise Lost" (1732)', 46.

[450] Hale, 'Paradise Purified, Dr Bentley's Marginalia for his 1732 Edition of "Paradise Lost"', 73.

[451] Levine, 'Bentley's Milton: Philology and Criticism in Eighteenth-Century England', 549. It was Bentley's nephew, Thomas Bentley (1693-1742), who advised his uncle against publishing his edition of *PL*.

[452] Oras, 50-74; Shawcross, 'Introduction' in *John Milton Volume 2, 1732-1801. The Critical Heritage*, ed. by John T. Shawcross, 20-21; Yu, 185-187.

Moving away from the realm of classical scholarship, some critics have noted that Bentley's editor serves more religious purposes. Milton scholar, John Leonard, has briefly examined one or two of Bentley's religious edits that address Milton's heretical tendencies;[453] however, the majority of his attention is dedicated to Bentley's efforts to make the style and genre of *PL* adhere to his classical sensibilities.[454] Robert E. Bourdette and William Kolbrener are the two scholars who have paid most attention to the outworking of Bentley's orthodox agenda in his edition of *PL*. Both see Bentley's edition as being embroiled in eighteenth-century Whig politics, a political manoeuvre designed to rescue Milton from radical freethinkers, such as Anthony Collins and Toland, both of whom had claimed him in order to reinforce their sectarian agendas.[455] Unlike Leonard, Kolbrener and Bourdette give Bentley's creation a human face when they view him as an avatar for Toland. Kolbrener, in particular, concludes that Toland was the 'inexplicit target of Bentley's implicit attack'.[456] Essentially, Bentley's edition of *PL* shows him functioning as a warrior of orthodox Christianity who is trying to separate Milton from the camps of radical Whiggism.

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[453] Leonard, '7. God' in *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost, 1667-1970: Volume I: Style and Genre; Volume II: Interpretative Issues*, II, 484-485. Here, Leonard touches upon Bentley's concerns with Milton's perceived Arianism and his conception of God's foreknowledge.

[454] Leonard, '1. Sound and Sense 1667-1800' in *Faithful Labourers…*, I, 21-29; '4. Paradise Lost and Epic' in *Faithful Labourers…*, I, 279; '5. Epic Similes' in *Faithful Labourers…*, I, 331-332. Leonard's argument highlights a belief that Bentley's key concern was to draw *Paradise Lost* back in line with his idea of classical style and the epic genre.

[455] Bourdette, 'A Sense of the Sacred: Richard Bentley's Reading of *Paradise Lost*'. Bourdette focuses on the attack on Scriptural accuracy that was presented by freethinkers such as Collins and Toland and reads Bentley's *PL* as a response to the controversy (85). See also, Kolbrener, '6. Those Grand Whigs, Bentley and Fish' in *Milton's Warring Angels: A Study of Critical Engagements*, 107-132. Kolbrener argues that Bentley's *PL* was undertaken as a response to John Toland's *Life of Milton* (1699) and its promotion of Milton as an advocate for radical free-thinking ideologies. Kolbrener sees Bentley's edition as being primarily concerned with refuting hylozoism: the doctrine that all matter has life, something that Bentley adamantly refutes in his Boyle Lectures. Kolbrener also touches upon Bentley's hostility toward the conflation of fable with divine narrative (124-125). See also, Kolbrener, 'The poverty of context: Cambridge School History and the New Milton Criticism' in *The New Milton Criticism*, edited by Peter C. Herman and Elizabeth Sauer, 212-230. Here, Kolbrener re-states his theory concerning Bentley's edition functioning as a polemical response to Toland.

[456] Kolbrener, *Milton's Warring Angels*, 118.

There are, then, two main schools of thought, both of which view the editor as a means to an end, a figure who allows Bentley to implement his conjectural methods to make *PL* reflect his classical and religious preferences. I have come to view Bentley's edition in a more holistic sense because it so clearly illuminates his dualistic personas, that of classical scholar and theologian, co-existing within the same project. It is therefore difficult to agree with Kristine Haugen's observation that Bentley's theological and scholarly undertakings were essentially divorced from one another, especially when his edition of *PL* so clearly bears the marks of a classicist and defender of orthodoxy.[457] If anything, Bentley rejects the notion of professional linearity, and his edition of *PL* stands as an example of how the dominating fields of classical scholarship and theology were intertwined. In short, Milton's Christian epic functioned as a literary site that allowed all of Bentley's scholarly interests to converge. Haugen too treats the existence of Bentley's editor with more than a degree of suspicion, recognising that Bentley was functioning 'In an era when editions of English poems were a new and increasingly prestigious vehicle for displaying a critic's sagacity.'[458] Accordingly, the editor is discredited as a creation of the scholar's own design, one that provided Bentley with the opportunity to further solidify his reputation as the eminent classical scholar of his time by editing what was the most exquisite specimen of English poetry of its time, rivalled only by the likes of Spenser and Shakespeare. Although Haugen engages with a handful of religious edits, the main focus of her monograph is to present Bentley the Latinate scholar, rather than Bentley the theologian. Similar to Yu, Bentley is presented as entering into silent dialogue with Addison, a process which involves measuring *PL* against Aristotelian and Longinian principles.

While the literature is generally very good at attempting to answer what Bentley was doing and how he went about editing *PL*, I have become less convinced at the attempts of scholarship to frame the primary editorial device as a complete farce. If *PL* was a genuine epic, a status achieved mainly by Hume's and Addison's treatment of the poem, then Bentley reserved the right to treat it as he did other classics. It was, therefore, inevitable

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[457] Haugen states that 'Bentley's theological writing was essentially divorced from his real work as a scholar, undertaken as a quite separate enterprise and solely on occasions when he might gain patronage and reward.' Haugen, 104.

[458] Haugen, 2.

that the fidelity of the text would be called into question. Granted, the magnitude of Bentley's intervention is shocking, but modern scholarship is not so much concerned with overzealousness as it is with Bentley's disingenuousness and efforts to conceal important information. Bentley claimed that he 'made the notes extempore, and put them to the Press as soon as made; without any Apprehension of growing leaner by Censures, or plumper by Commendations.'[459] He had taken a similar tact with his Horace, boasting that the notes had been made speedily and sent to press as soon as they were written, when in reality Bentley had spent at least a decade on the project.[460] Bentley's two annotated copies are the most damning pieces of evidence that challenge his claims to have acted with haste. David Harper maintains that the annotated copies prove that Bentley's 'final edition [is] the result of a prolonged and thoughtful engagement with Milton',[461] and I would agree that Bentley had certainly been thinking about *PL* for a number of years, some of his emendations were even in circulation in the years leading up to the publication of his edition.[462] However, when it comes to his final notes on the poem it is Ants Oras' observation that still remains most fitting: 'the preface seems to have been written hastily, like the rest of the work'.[463] It feels like the edition is comprised of live reading annotations, as though Bentley was performing the act of criticism to himself and noting down thoughts as they occurred. Moreover, just because Bentley's edition is printed does not mean that it was his final thoughts on the poem; this was no end point but a third instalment of Bentley's latest musings. Although his notes are more extensive and better organised on the page it might be more appropriate to think of Bentley's edition as another annotated copy. Hale is right when he says that Bentley's 'assertion in the preface is misleading, if not disingenuous', but this behaviour was

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[459] Richard Bentley, 'Preface', *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley.

[460] Bentley, 'Preface', in *Q. Horatius Flaccus*, ed. Richard Bentley (London, 1712); Haugen, 132.

[461] Harper, 'Bentley's Annotated 1674 Edition of *Paradise Lost*: Hidden Method and Peculiar Madness', *The Review of English Studies*, 64.263 (2013), 60-86 (74).

[462] Hale writes it is 'clear that a few genuine Bentley emendations were circulating, and that there was a general awareness of his approach, spreading in 1730 from Cambridge to London and further...' Hale, 'Paradise Purified, Dr Bentley's Marginalia for his 1732 Edition of "Paradise Lost"', 47.

[463] Oras, 52.

not out of character and it would not have surprised anyone who was familiar with his usual bravado.[464]

What is more troubling was Bentley's suppression of a particular piece of textual evidence. Helen Darbishire, as part of her James Bryce Memorial Lecture, was the first modern scholar to conclude that Bentley was being wildly dishonest regarding *PL*. Having engaged with Bentley's 1720 edition, Darbishire felt compelled to label Bentley a 'rogue' because it revealed, contrary to his claims made in the preface of the 1732 edition, that a manuscript for *PL* did exist, and that he 'not only saw the manuscript of Book I but collated it carefully.'[465] While Darbishire demonstrates admiration for Bentley, calling him 'the greatest scholar of his age', and claiming that 'Perhaps no other critic of Milton has examined so rigorously every line, every sentence, every word, of the poem', Hale's systematic analysis of Bentley's manuscript collation renders him ultimately unable to find anything praiseworthy about Bentley's *PL*.[466] The evidence that Bentley consulted the manuscript for Book I of *PL* is indeed incontrovertible, but I am not as convinced as others about the level of harm that this deals to the legitimate existence of the editor.

I struggle to agree with Darbishire's assertions about Bentley's required denial of the manuscript's existence: 'Indeed he had to say so, for his whole ingenious theory about the meddling editor, on which his scheme of emendation is founded, falls to the ground if the manuscript is consulted.'[467] It did not matter whether a text had a hundred manuscripts if those manuscripts had fallen victim to interpolation. And this was precisely what Bentley's standpoint had always been and why he would never hesitate to proclaim with certainty that textual corruption had invariably taken place. Even if Bentley did consult the manuscript of book I, which he did, but only minimally, it does not mean that he thought it was authoritative.[468] For the entirety of his career, he had argued that the best classical

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[464] Hale, 'Paradise Purified, Dr Bentley's Marginalia for his 1732 Edition of "Paradise Lost"', 46.

[465] Helen Darbishire, 'XVIII Milton's *Paradise Lost*: The James Bryce Memorial Lecture: 1951,' in *Somerville College Chapel Addresses and Other Papers* (London, 1962), 125.

[466] Darbishire, 'XVIII Milton's *Paradise Lost*: The James Bryce Memorial Lecture: 1951,' 112; Hale, 'Paradise Purified, Dr Bentley's Marginalia for his 1732 Edition of "Paradise Lost"', 72-73.

[467] Darbishire, 'XVIII Milton's *Paradise Lost*: The James Bryce Memorial Lecture: 1951, 125.

[468] There are only five examples of Bentley collating the manuscript of book I of *PL*: I:403 – 'the' is changed to 'that'; I:432 – 'those' to 'these'; I:456 – 'eyes' to 'eye'; I:504 – 'door' to 'doors'; I:703 – 'found out' to 'founded'.

scholarship assumed all texts were susceptible to fraudulent activity and that there was a glaring oversight when it came to relying on the manuscript tradition to fix the problem. Whenever the issue arose, Bentley vehemently maintained that the collation of manuscripts was not wholly reliable because of their seeming corruptibility. Although viewed by most as the primary authority when it came to suggesting amendments to a text, the often-sheer number of manuscripts that were produced by erring scribes and filled with variant readings, was enough to convince Bentley that this out-of-date tradition had the potential of militating against a text's authority rather than restoring it. Years before the publication of his *PL*, Bentley had largely followed in the footsteps of Dutch scholars, Joseph Scaliger (1540-1609), Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655), and his son, Nicolaas Heinsius (1620-1681), when producing his edition of Horace that boasted over seven hundred conjectural emendations.[469] In the preface, Bentley paid half-hearted homage to the part that erudition plays in producing a critical edition of a text, before moving swiftly onto championing 'keen judgement', 'sagacity and shrewdness', and 'a certain faculty of divination and prophecy', all qualities that he saw as far more vital for the critic to possess. Do not, Bentley pleaded, 'venerate Scribes alone, but dare to be wise for yourself; measure every word by the flow of the speech and the genius of the language, and so at last pronounce and render your verdict.'[470] Bentley encourages the critic to question manuscripts and assume the worst about variant readings, for they were likely the spurious work of scribes. In her monograph on Bentley, Haugen traces the narrative presented in his Horace concerning the misbehaviour of medieval scribes: 'Bentley apparently assumed that medieval scribes had conjecturally emended their texts only in ways that could be explained as innocent errors in the event of a challenge or complaint.'[471] It was often just single words or even letters that Bentley claimed had been transposed because these were undetectable to most readers. This pessimism was instilled into Bentley's students during his early days at Cambridge, when he supervised a number of editions that 'featured substantially more intervention and

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[469] For a study of Scaliger's textual criticism see Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship. I: Textual Criticism and Exegesis*, 2 vols, I. And for a study of the older Heinsius see Dirk Van Miert, *The Emancipation of Biblical Philology in the Dutch Republic, 1590-1670* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[470] Bentley, 'Preface', in *Q. Horatius Flaccus*, ed. Richard Bentley.

[471] Haugen, 146.

comment from the individual editor', as well as being 'sharply focused on questions of textual criticism rather than historical or interpretative commentary.'[472]

The questioning of a manuscript's authority was embedded in the very foundations of Bentley's critical approach, but this did not mean that manuscripts were not useful. Bentley's practice usually started with him filling the margins of a conjecture book before searching the available manuscripts in hope that his conjectures would be confirmed. This was the approach that he took with his Horace: 'before collating any manuscripts or older editions, Bentley filled the margins of a printed Horace with his conjectures in the evident hope that he might find his conjecture confirmed by a manuscript or anticipated by a venerated older critic.'[473] Although the resources available to him were far less extensive, there is a rather remarkable instance of Bentley following suit with his edition of *PL*. In his initial conjecture book, a 1674 second edition, Bentley changes 'found out' to 'founded' (I:703) and notes a parallel use of 'founded' within the text as justification for his conjecture. The amendment is copied over into his 'Tickell's' edition where he seemingly has a change of heart and crosses out 'founded', that is until he checks the manuscript which confirms his initial speculation and causes him to re-amend.[474] The conjecture, like all of the manuscript collations, is copied over silently into the published edition, but what the annotated copies show us is that for all his blustering about the inferiority of the manuscript tradition, Bentley could never quite bring himself to abandon it altogether, even if he might have desperately wanted to. It is, nonetheless, apparent that Bentley's own *ingenium* was the crowning jewel of his editorial tools, with manuscripts following as a secondary and less reliable authority. In short, Bentley always remained convinced that just because a manuscript was helpful on occasion did not mean that it could be trusted as consistently authoritative. A manuscript, as Bentley's practice leads us to believe, was only correct if it passed the test of aligning with his innate ability to produce the most correct reading.

Bentley strongly believed, and desired the reader to believe, that Milton's blindness also factored into the ultimate reliability of any manuscript or early edition. One interesting

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[472] Haugen, 126-127.

[473] Haugen, 135.

[474] Bentley, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 1674 with Bentley's annotations, 23; Bentley, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 'Tickell's' 1720 with Bentley's annotations, 35; Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Richard Bentley, 32.

way that he does this is by labouring the similarities between Milton and one of his poetic forefathers. For Bentley, there is no ancient poet that Milton related to more than blind Homer.[475] The Homeric parallels that Bentley locates throughout *PL* are far more than the those of Virgil and Ovid, and Bentley often attempts to build a closeness between the pair by describing them as friends, or as master and student. Bentley is also keen to ensure that the bonds of skill and shared circumstance are not weakened by more ill-fitting comparisons, so when reviewing a passage where Milton is compared to several blind poets from antiquity: Thamyris, Tiresias, Phineus, and Homer (III:32-37), it is only the 'Grecian Bard' who is allowed to remain, on account that Milton 'is dishonour'd by the other Company.'[476] But Milton is perhaps most like Homer in that they were both unfortunate enough to be exploited by spurious editors. Bentley initially frames the idea that the sun '…at Ev'n / Sups with the Ocean' (V:425-426) as a Homeric nod before quickly redeeming Homer from what he perceives to be a technical error, 'But I hold to the Point, that *Homer* himself did not write This, but *Choerilus* his Editor.'[477] Bentley is likely referring to Choerilus of Iasus, the court poet of Alexander the Great who recorded his numerous accomplishments. Although I can find no evidence to support Bentley's claim that Choerilus was Homer's editor, he certainly aspired to imitate Homer in his own poetry. The consensus, however, is that he fell short. None other than Alexander famously 'remarked that he would rather have been Homer's Thersites than Choerilus' Achilles'.[478] Whether or not Choerilus edited Homer, his character and skill certainly reflected the editor's apparently poor and spurious imitation of Milton. Bentley builds a narrative throughout his edition designed to convince the reader that Milton is in every way a modern-day Homer. This assimilation borders on the uncanny and aims to, among other things, make the existence of the editor a genuine possibility.

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[475] For discussions on Homer's blindness see: Alexander Beecroft, 'Blindness and Literacy in the "Lives" of Homer', *The Classical Quarterly* 61.1 (2011), 1-18; Barbara Graziosi, *Inventing Homer: The Early Reception of Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 126-132.

[476] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 78-79.

[477] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 163.

[478] Robert Drews, 'Heroditus' Other Logoi', *The American Journal of Philology*, 91.2 (1970), 181-191 (187). See also Pomponius Porphyrio, commentary on Horace, *Epistle* II, 1, 233-234.

The preface also makes every effort to portray the poet and his circumstances as being in a pathetic and wretched state, in order to dissuade the reader from passively accepting the supposed fidelity of the text. At one point Bentley writes, 'Our celebrated Author, when he compos'd this Poem, being obnoxious to the Government, poor, friendless, and what is worst of all, blind with a Gutta Serena, could only dictate his verses to be writ by another.' And on another occasion he claims that Milton, 'with Three-score Years Weight upon his Shoulders, might be reckoned more than half Dead.'[479] If these were the circumstances that beset Milton when he began to dictate *PL*, thought Bentley, then it certainly seemed plausible, even likely, that the manuscript would have been filled with mistakes, or worse, wilful interpolations.[480] For Bentley, 'the Friend or Acquaintance, whoever he was, to who Milton committed his Copy and the Overseeing of the Press, did so vilely execute that Trust, that Paradise under his Ignorance and Audaciousness may be said to be twice lost.' The editor had abused Milton's trust and the result was that the first two editions, both published while Milton was still alive, were fundamentally faulty. Rather than the issues being rectified in the second edition, Bentley argues that the problems actually multiplied, which, in his mind, did nothing but corroborate the theory of foul play: 'The First came out in 1667, and a Second in 1674; in which all the Faults of the Former are continued, with the Addition of some New ones.'[481] Generally the earliest manuscripts and editions were seen as being the most authoritative, but Bentley's point is that the whole tradition of collation had to be questioned in light of Milton's unique circumstances.

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[479] Bentley, 'Preface', *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley.

[480] Darbishire, 'Introduction', in *The Manuscript of Milton's Paradise Lost Book I*, ed. Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931). Darbishire notes that 'The date when it [the manuscript] was written is not certainly known; the rest of the manuscript is lost; but if this first book was part of the copy of *Paradise Lost* which Milton gave to Elwood at Chalfont St. Giles… then it must have been finished before the late summer of 1665, when Elwood visited Milton in his retreat from London at the height of the Plague' (b). If true, this proves that Milton was fully blind by the time he came to produce the manuscript. She goes onto to admit that while 'Milton took unusual pains to prepare an accurate text for his printer… the tendency to err is inseparable from human beings and their machines.' By the time she concludes her observations on the manuscript, Darbishire almost sounds like Bentley: '…Milton was blind, and though gifted with a noble patience, he did not dictate the spelling, letter by letter, of every word his amanuensis wrote: nor did he correct the printer's proofs, letter by letter and point by point, from beginning to end' (xlvi).

[481] Richard Bentley, 'Preface', *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley.

At the very least, *PL* had been corrupted in the same way that Horace had been. To champion his point from the outset, Bentley provides a list of examples in his preface demonstrating where he had salvaged the text from the minor faults: 'Rose' is restored to 'Rode', 'Dust' to 'Just', and the more outlandish, 'Loveliest' to Forehead', are just some examples. All of these are laid at the feet of the editor who either let them negligently pass through the press or 'wilfully made' them himself.[482] It was not that literary culture completely opposed this kind of conjecture, nor did anyone disagree with Bentley's thesis that manuscripts should be treated with a degree of caution; in fact, many hailed Bentley's Horace as splendidly avantgarde. However, as Matthew Fox has argued when discussing early critics of Bentley's Horace, it was 'the excessive liberty with which he granted to his own imaginative inventions' that gave rise to hostility.[483] The same is true with regard to *PL*, except that not even those most close to Bentley could abide his treatment of Milton. In correspondence with a friend, we learn that Thomas Bentley disagreed with the concept of the editor and many of his uncle's subsequent edits, but one of the most shocking was Bentley's emendation of 'Hesperian *fables* true' to 'apples' (IV:251-252). According to Bentley, the editor 'would often have a Finger in so fine a Work; and here he gives us an Insertion of *Hesperian Fables*.' Bemused by the notion that fables can be true, Bentley proceeds to berate the printer who has 'given foul Play to the Editor', a line of argument that is very much in keeping with his preface. The solution sees Bentley applying the very same logic that underpins many of the edits in his Horace, '*Apples* and *Fables* are not very distant in Letters; and *Hesperian Apples* are celebrated by all the Antient Writers'.[484] For Bentley, the pattern was clear; just as the scribes had interfered with Horace, so too had the editor interfered with Milton and nobody had noticed, until now. Bentley's cavernous knowledge of the classics had triumphed. Thomas was not at all convinced.

> I will tell you that I disputed with him [Bentley] about this place and some others,
> and indeed his whole design, till I quite put him out of humour, and till he called me

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482 Ibid.

483 Matthew Fox, 'Manners and Method in Classical Criticism of the Early Eighteenth Century', *The Cambridge Classical Journal*, 59 (2013), 98-124 (120).

484 Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 114.

Ignoramus and several other hard words. I told him I would never object again, since I saw he could not bear it, and hoped he would take the ill language to himself, if I proved in the right. Se we parted, and I have not been able to talk with him since, since he can't forbear talking of Milton, and I can't forbear the nonsense and absurdities he puts on him.[485]

Conjecture was seen as a legitimate tool that an editor had at his disposal, but it needed to be used sparingly and thoughtfully, something that Bentley disregarded. While Haugen claims that 'there is nothing particularly sinister in Bentley's eclectic use of his judgment and his consequent appeal to whatever argument suited him at a given moment, nor did contemporaries find his practice objectionable', Fox believes that scholarship is, broadly speaking, too accepting and benevolent towards Bentley's Horace.[486] Those who admire Bentley often cite his Horace as a marker of his genius and innovation which functions to veil its flaws, but even if this is the case, the scorn that his edition of *PL* received has more than made up for any potentially overgenerous judgements.

Similar to the list of corrupted words, Bentley provides a sizeable and yet far from complete list of 'spurious Verses; which the Poet, had he known of them… would have thrown out with a Fork'.[487] Although the pedantic changes that Bentley suggested frustrated some, these alone were not enough to discredit the idea of Bentley's editor. But the removal of entire passages and the amending of whole lines, something that moved the project beyond the remit of rectifying typographical and editorial mistakes, and flung it into the realms of, ironically so, interpolation, militated against Bentley's cause. He claimed that the purpose of all his conjecture was to 'attempt a Restoration of the Genuine Milton', but the net response was hostile and the public would come to view him more as a poetaster than a restorer.[488] Such an application of conjecture had never been seen and Bentley's radical scepticism gave rise to an undying suspicion surrounding his edition. Bentley, however, thought that his theory held up. The reason why such a flawed text went to print

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[485] Quoted in Hale, 'More on Bentley's Milton', *Milton Quarterly*, 14 (1980), 131.

[486] Haugen, 146.

[487] Ibid.

[488] Bentley, 'Preface', *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley.

was because 'the Proof-sheets of the First Edition were never read to Milton'. This must be the case, Bentley exclaims, because 'unless he was as deaf as blind, [he] could not possibly let pass such gross and palpable Faults.'[489] Although Bentley never suggests that the entire poem is a forgery, the editor who worked with Milton was so incredibly busy, inserting anything from a dozen lines (VII:463-474) to a colossal fifty-four (III:444-498), that Bentley judged vast swathes of *PL* as being written by him under the guise of Milton.

This level of fraud was not entirely different to what Bentley had previously argued was a genuine problem facing many classical authors. In *A Dissertation Upon the Epistles of Phalaris* (1697), he situates himself among the school of ancient critics who laboured to ascertain legitimate authorship and assign each book to their correct author. Bentley does this continually throughout his notes on *PL*, applauding what he deems to be the genuine Milton and returning to the editor what he believes to be spurious. It was common, according to Bentley, for Greek Sophists to pass off their works as the products of 'those they endeavoured to express.' Rather than receiving 'an honest Commendation from Posterity for being good Imitators' they preferred 'that silent Pride and fraudulent Pleasure, though it was to die with them'.[490] The editor of *PL*, however, was by no means a good imitator. With ease the 'Interpolations are detected by their own Silliness and Unfitness'.[491] Considering the extent to which Bentley claimed that Milton had fallen victim to forgery, one is left wondering whether he had *PL* in mind when he wrote in *Epistles* decades before the publication of his edition that 'even some Modern Attempts of this kind have met with Success not altogether discouraging.'[492] And of course, Bentley's conviction was also spurred on by Scaliger and the Heinsius'. It was texts like Scaliger's Manilius (1579), which was found to be riddled with interpolations, and the younger Heinsius' claims that the

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[489] Bentley, 'Preface', *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley.

[490] Bentley, *A Dissertation Upon the Epistles of Phalaris* (London, 1697), 7.

[491] Bentley, 'Preface', *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley.

[492] Bentley, *A Dissertation Upon the Epistles of Phalaris*, 7-8. The language of forgery is consistent throughout Bentley's edition of *PL*. An example of this appears in the footnote corresponding to VII:481, where Bentley addresses the editor and writes 'You are caught here in the Forgery…' See Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 236.

majority of Ovid's *Heroides*, which he published an edition of in 1646, was largely spurious, that most clearly influenced the most radical elements of Bentley's process with *PL*.[493]

Bentley's chief concern certainly started as an earnest one. After considering the important factors like scribal error and Milton's blindness, it was not at all unreasonable for him to conclude that *PL* had been tampered with. As we saw in the previous chapter, he was not even the first to assume that it had. James Monk, in his biography on Bentley, fleetingly suggested that

> the idea of correcting a poem, which from the blindness of its author, might be supposed to have suffered some injury in the transcription and the press, originated with Elijah Fenton…[who] published in 1725 an edition of Milton, containing many changes in the punctuation, and some substitutions for words which he imagined might, from similarity of sound, have been misapprehended by the amanuensis. This performance seems to have led Bentley to exercise his critical ingenuity in some corrections of the poem…[494]

According to Monk, the idea of a deceitful editor was inspired by Fenton's observations concerning Milton's reliance on an amanuensis. Fenton notes that '…when He had wholly lost the use of his Eyes; [he] was forc'd to employ in the office of an Amanuensis any friend who accidentally paid him a visit.'[495] Bentley introduces a generous dose of pessimism to Fenton's claim. The amanuensis is demonised by Bentley, re-cast as a treacherous

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[493] Haugen, 145.

[494] James Henry Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley* (London, 1832), 577-578. See also J. W. Mackail, *Bentley's Milton*, Warton Lecture on English Poetry, no. XV (1924), 4. Mackail proposes that Bentley likely became interested in *PL* after reading Fenton's edition, 'in which for the first time the suggestion was made that a certain number of mistakes had crept into the original text either through the blunders of Milton's amanuenses, or through his inability from blindness to ensure correction of the proof-sheets.' See also, Harper, 'Critical Mass, Contextualising Bentley's *Paradise Lost*', 25. Harper has most recently noted that Fenton's edition '…provides insight into both the form that Bentley's intervention takes and also the genesis of his assumption that Milton's text was corrupted even before it made it to Simmons' print shop.' See also, William Empson, 'Milton and Bentley', in *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London, 1935).

[495] Fenton, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', in *Paradise Lost*, xxi.

opportunist whose intentional and many marks need to be removed from the poem. Conversely, Fenton claims that unlike the '…works of inferior Geniuses' that 'often receive additions of strength and beauty, in the several Impressions they undergo whilst Authors live,' Milton's poem 'came into the world…in a state of maturity.'[496] And although Fenton did correct much of Milton's punctuation, a handful of words, and alter a couple of passages, the former of which was part of a wider project that involved the similar revision of several of Milton's works, his alterations are not really comparable to Bentley's more outlandish claims.[497]

The theory of interpolation is itself not problematic but the extent to which Bentley claims that it affected Milton's epic lost him all support. When discussing the most controversial aspects of Bentley's conjectural method, Sebastiano Timpanaro, has stated that 'the goal of a critical edition [was] not the historically most probable text but the best text that the editor's taste and mentality could imagine'.[498] This is precisely how Bentley's edition has always been viewed. He stands accused of the very thing that he was supposed to rectify, the re-writing of Milton to sound like the editor's voice. Not only did he take great liberties as he went about the business of editing the text, but his process also involved the suppression of key evidence. It perhaps would have gone better for Bentley if he had admitted that a manuscript existed and that he made use of it. It only constituted one book of the poem and was written after Milton had gone completely blind, which for Bentley, militated against its authority. He could have easily mounted a similar defence to the one that prefaced his Horace and this would have cast shadows of doubt, rightfully so, over the manuscript's authority. After all, Bentley knew better than anyone that manuscripts could be deceptive, something that complicates Walsh's claim that Bentley's edition was 'an early case of non-objective editing' because of its unorthodox character.[499] His neglect of honesty is why Haugen concludes that the edition is essentially built upon fabrication: 'In turning to

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[496] Fenton, 'Postscript', in *Paradise Lost*, a3.

[497] Arthur Sherbo, 'Fenton, Elijah (1683-1730)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004), < https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9295> [accessed 9 December 2022], 2.

[498] Sebastiano Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, ed. and trans by Glenn W. Most (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 56.

[499] Walsh, 'Bentley our Contemporary', in *The Theory and practice of Text-Editing*, eds. by Ian Small and Marcus Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 162.

Milton, then, Bentley chose (and in part created) an editorial project in which conjecture, the method most closely associated with him in contemporary controversy, was the only possible means of emending the text.'[500] Bentley longed for an opportunity to produce an edition that solely relied on conjecture and this was the closest that he was going to get. And besides, if the manuscript was not authoritative then was it worth mentioning or was Bentley really required to acknowledge its existence? Bentley seemingly thought not, and in doing so made a bold claim about what he thought the trajectory of textual criticism and the relatively new field of vernacular scholarship should look like. Assume that every text and manuscript is flawed and be free from the cumbersome tradition of manuscript collation. This was a portent of things to come, a future where an editor's ingenium would function as the highest authority in textual criticism and Bentley was not averse to telling a lie or two in order to realise his vision.

The final result was the product of a long gestation which nurtured a gradual development of thought concerning the extent of the editor's handiwork; this can broadly be traced from Bentley's annotated copies through to his published edition. Bentley built upon what he had done before in his earlier critical editions by engaging with numerous texts that either specifically focussed or were linked to Milton and *PL*, all of which influenced his conception of how the editor had interfered. The edition is arguably the nexus of so many texts that went before it. There are hints of Hume's thorough erudition and attention to seemingly insignificant details; we can say with certainty that Bentley had engaged with Addison's *Spectator* essays and that Addison's identifiably Aristotelian approach and the types of comments it yielded had a large impact on Bentley's own thoughts; and finally, Fenton's *Life* likely played a part in influencing Bentley's formulation of the spurious editor, and the handful of amendments Fenton made to the text of *PL* could have been a factor that propelled Bentley's far more invasive approach. There are, however, no clear comparisons that can be made. In fact, Bentley does not borrow as much as he warps his predecessors' critical approaches by means of his trademark tool, conjecture. In this regard, it was the likes of Scaliger who most influenced Bentley's approach, but even he would have perhaps questioned Bentley's conjectures. Rather than trailblazing, Bentley became a warning to those who would choose to work on editing modern and vernacular

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[500] Haugen, 219.

texts which had far fewer manuscripts to assist in the process of amending. Without the safety net of manuscript collation, the temptation was to overemphasise what was a legitimate and plausible concern of corruption, and in doing so, the editor was at risk of butchering rather than restoring a text. The question loomed over Bentley's edition, and is still present today, to what extent was this restoration, or a re-writing?

Tracing Bentley's Evolution of Conjecture

The process began as it always did, with Bentley noting his conjectures in a copy of the text of which he intended to publish his own edition. He set to work on his 1674 second edition, moving 'through the text fairly quickly, emending some lines, noting others to be returned to later, marking accents on metrically unusual lines, and designating only a few passages for deletion'.[501] This is perhaps most similar to the approach that he took with Horace, filling his edition with perceived classical parallels, amending a multitude of words, and removing a 'passage as an interpolation only once, on the grounds of meter'.[502] All of this would indicate that Bentley's editor was an early conception, one that reflected the kind of badly behaved scribes that had dealt negligently or intentionally meddled with a text. Having said that, the spirit of the editor is not always detectable in the annotations of the 1674 second edition, nor does he always appear in the notes of the printed edition.

Bentley came from a tradition where the practice of identifying parallels was often the easy starting point that allowed the critic to interact with a text in a largely uncontroversial and even enjoyable way.[503] Nothing preoccupied Hume like noting and expounding classical and Biblical parallels, his *Annotations* boasts countless examples, and Addison was enamoured with the beauties he found in *PL*, many of which were imitations of ancient poets. Although there is no solid evidence to suggest that Bentley read Hume's

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[501] Haugen, 220-221.

[502] Haugen, 145.

[503] In his chapter dedicated to allusion, published as part of *The Oxford Handbook of British Poetry, 1660-1800*, Marcus Walsh writes that the '…pleasure given by "imitation" or allusion is underwritten, as one might expect, by Aristotle's theory of mimesis, and in particular by his account of the characterizing pleasure humans take in the recognition that the imitation resembles its object'. See Walsh, 'Allusion', in *The Oxford Handbook of British Poetry, 1660-1800*' (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 649-667 (650).

Annotations, beyond a shared interest in many of the same passages, he certainly comes from the same tradition of thorough erudition and his 1674 second edition, as well as his published edition, somewhat begrudgingly reflect that. Combined there are close to seventy Biblical and classical references noted in the margins of the 1674 second edition, but because the references are so vague it is often difficult to ascertain with any certainty the specifics of any given parallel. Sometimes he simply writes the name of a classical author in the margin, or he scrawls out short Latin and Greek quotations without giving any indication about how they might relate to the text. Most likely Bentley was sensing allusions as he scanned the text but could not call to mind an exact parallel. However, some certainty can be gleaned from the twenty-eight examples that are carried over into the 1732 edition, thirteen of which show Bentley simply noting a parallel, while the majority denote his standard practice of amending the text to create more parallels with literary antiquity.[504] The latter of these demonstrates Bentley breaking free from the tradition of explanatory erudition in order to practice a far more invasive kind of textual criticism and editing.

As the title page of *Annotations* stated, Hume's goal was to cite and compare 'The Parallel Places and Imitations of the most Excellent *Homer* and *Virgil*', and this he did rigorously. His note on 'Who first seduc'd them to that foul revolt?' (I:33) cites the *Iliad* as Milton's source text and provides the quotation in full. But Hume has a penchant for thoroughness, so he also gives an almost patronising interpretation of the line based on the etymology of 'seduc'd' and 'revolt': 'Who first mislead them to the base Rebellion'.[505] This kind of commentary had always frustrated Bentley, it was too explanatory and only suitable as a preliminary measure, something he made clear decades before in the preface to his Horace.[506] Bentley was clear about his aversion to scholarship that simply aimed at making a text understandable; if he could not offer an amendment then he generally refused to comment on a passage, or at the very least, he would provide the bare minimum. In relation to our current example, Bentley only scrawls a fragment of the quotation at the bottom of

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[504] What constitutes a parallel for Bentley broadly fits into Edward P. J. Corbett's definition: '...the rhetorical notion of copying, aping, simulating, [and] emulating models.' See Corbett, 'The Theory and Practice of Imitation in Classical Rhetoric', *College Composition and Communication*, 22.3 (1971), 243-250 (243).

[505] Hume, *Annotations*, 5.

[506] Bentley, 'Preface', in *Q. Horatius Flaccus*, ed. Richard Bentley, sig. c1 ro.

the page of the 1674 second edition, before scarcely expanding on this in his published edition, where he provides the quotation in full and the relevant citations.[507]

While Hume represented the erudition that Bentley could never quite escape, that is the practice of noting and expounding parallels, his process of ensuring that *PL* rigidly reflected the epics from antiquity garnered more attention and fuller commentary than almost anything else. In his 1674 edition, Bentley amends 'The ridges of grim War' (VI:236) to 'The bridges of grim War' and provides another fragment of Greek at the bottom of the page. This is copied over into the 1732 edition where the corresponding note clarifies that this amendment makes the line an imitation of 'his [Milton's] Master *Homer*, πολέμοιο γεφύρας.'[508] As he had always done, Bentley followed closely in the footsteps of Scaliger and the Heinsius, who 'adduced parallel passages in support of their preferred readings'.[509] But even without the prospect of the parallel, Bentley would have likely made the amendment because 'ridges' is incomprehensible to him. 'What are the *Ridges* of War', he questions, 'I understand not'. This was yet another of Bentley's habits that characterised his earlier editions. As Haugen describes in relation to his Horace, he 'began with finding relatively vague words that he disliked and ended by making them more lively and exact'.[510] Bentley's desire to make the text more pleasing and rational also exemplifies one of Yu's comments about his reliance on classical schools of thought when it came to amending *PL*: 'Passages of the text that are "impossible"-that is, illogical in reality, "irrational," or lacking coherent logical cause, and "contradictory," or logically inconsistent, are all to be condemned according to Aristotle.'[511] Guided by Aristotle, Bentley's logic becomes the touchstone by which the editor's carelessness is gauged, and the veracity of the text is measured and so often found wanting. Not once does Bentley stop to ask whether his amendments actually make the text better, so convinced is he in the harmony between his logic and Milton's that whenever he finds something that displeases him, a rightful authority

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[507] Bentley, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 1674 with Bentley's annotations, 3; Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 3.

[508] Bentley, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 1674 with Bentley's annotations, 152; Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 190.

[509] Haugen, 145.

[510] Haugen, 143.

[511] Yu, 187.

to amend is evoked. For Bentley, 'bridges' corresponds to 'the open Intervals between Rank and File', and logic confirms that 'To open and close such Bridges is a Phrase intelligible.' This must have been, Bentley presumes, how 'the Author gave it'.[512] Hume, on the other hand, sees nothing wrong with 'ridges' and his analysis of the passage is as one would expect. He records a parallel, on this occasion from the *Aeneid*, and explains that 'The Ranks of Array'd Angels in their due distances, are compared to the Ridges of Furrow'd Fields, widen'd or s195traightened greater or less as the Nature of the Soil in the one, and the assault in the other requires.'[513]

Bentley's conjectural process does, then, somewhat resonate with another of Hume's aims, that is to make 'The Old and Obsolete Words, with their Originals, Explain'd and made easie to the *English* Reader.' However, the shared interest of tackling the strangeness of Milton's language produces very different results. Any word that could cause potential difficulty for the reader is glossed by Hume, whereas Bentley often changed what he believed to be strange words to make them more understandable and fit for the context. He famously switches 'Hosting' (VI:93) for 'Jousting', claiming in his printed edition that he does 'not remember ever to have met with the Word HOSTING either in Verse or Prose.'[514] In the 1674 second edition he provides two alternatives, 'lusting' and 'jousting', before settling on the latter in both his 'Tickell's' edition and printed edition.[515] Bentley is unforthcoming about how he settled on the alternative 'Jousting', but something clearly influenced his discarding of 'lusting'. The 'Tickell's' edition provides the answer. Recorded on the end page is a block of quotations and paraphrases taken from Toland's, *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton* (1699); I will provide the block of text in full, before proceeding to focus on the relevant section.

> Born in London 1606. P.6. skilld in Mathematics & Music p. 7, 46. Vol. I. p.215. As those smaller squares in Battel unite into a great <u>Cube</u> the main Phalanx. P.217 So

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[512] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 190.

[513] Hume, *Annotations*, 196.

[514] Richard Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 184.

[515] Bentley, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 1674 with Bentley's annotations, 148; Bentley, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 'Tickell's' 1720 with Bentley's annotations, 233.

violent a <u>jousting.</u> P.222 To write a Poem. – if there be nothing adverse in our climate or the fate of this Age. P.177 He used in his youth to read Romances. P.411 A dishonourable honour. 416 the obtunding story. 417. Lost and <u>tempested</u> in a sea of… 432 when God gave Adam Reason, he gave him reason to choose for <u>Reason is but Choosing.</u>[516]

Part of Bentley's preparation for his edition clearly involved building a characterisation of Milton that was separate from the act of pouring over the author's poetry; he begins by recording general biographical details and information about Milton's hobbies that he has gleaned from Toland's *Life*, before engaging with Milton's prose, which he silently uses to amend the text. It is extraordinary that Bentley read Toland's biography of Milton, considering the pair were so ideologically opposed. Bourdette and Kolbrener would likely interpret this evidence as Bentley making the effort to familiarise himself with the enemy, including what Toland claimed about Milton's religio-political convictions, so that he could better debunk them. While this is perhaps true, and certainly strengthens Bourdette and Kolbrener's case, Toland's prefatory section to Milton's collection of prose appears to get nothing more than a cursory glance before Bentley delves into the tracts.[517] Our current example relates to the place in *The Reason of Church-Government urg'd against Prelaty* (1642) where Milton describes the battle between truth and falsehood as 'jousting'. The parallel that this evokes between the good and bad angels of *PL* seems too salient to ignore and Bentley reaches the conclusion that this is surely what Milton originally provided.

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[516] Bentley, front endpapers, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 'Tickell's' 1720 with Bentley's annotations.

[517] Kolbrener's and Bourdette's view that Bentley was reacting to Toland's appropriation of Milton to support radical Whig ideologies is perhaps overstated. Considering that the process of sanitisation had largely and successfully taken place before Bentley's edition was published, it is more likely that Bentley had no ulterior motives and was simply using Toland's biography to learn about Milton's life. Although a chief intention of Toland's *Life* was to frame Milton as a radical, it was nonetheless admired by a moderate readership for its depth and general accuracy. In one of letters to his nephew that critique Bentley's edition, the older Tonson leans on the authority of Toland's account in order to debunk some of Bentley's claims about Milton's friendlessness and poverty at the time when *PL* was published. He writes, 'I believe in Tolands life of him some useful things might be found.' See, Tonson, 'Letter 148: Tonson to Jacob Tonson the Younger, Ledbury, 7 February 1732/33', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 272.

Hume, on the other hand, finds 'hosting' wholly unproblematic and offers an obvious interpretation: 'Joyn in adverse Encounters charging each other in destructive Deeds.'[518] The 1674 second edition shows that in the earliest stages of Bentley's editorial project, he was looking for parallels with classical texts and from within *PL* itself to support some of his amendments, but this practice expanded to encompass Milton's wider oeuvre. Most interestingly, Bentley seemed to have divined 'jousting' before reading *The Reason of Church-Government urg'd against Prelaty*, something that would have furthered the conviction that himself and Milton were of one mind. Just as Bentley hoped that his preliminary conjectures he made on a text would be corroborated by manuscripts, this stands as an example of him applying the same principal to Milton's wider oeuvre. However, Bentley felt largely unable to present Milton's prose as evidence in his edition because the tracts were mostly seen as politically and religiously problematic texts that Milton needed to be dissociated from, something that Fenton had previously strived for in his *Life*.

On other occasions, Bentley seems to work in an opposite fashion. Following, as he had always done, the principle of *lectio difficilior potior* (the more difficult reading is the stronger), he seemingly implants 'Old and Obsolete' words into the text. Bentley was well aware that scribes, when producing manuscripts, would frequently come across words that they did not understand and then proceed to swap them out for simpler alternatives. Accordingly, he is compelled to upset the simple sense of 'disturb / His inmost Counsels…' (I:167-168) by changing 'disturb' to 'disturn', something that appears in both annotated copies and the published edition.[519] In opposition to Hume, who thought that 'disturb' was exact and clear: 'And make his most secret Deliberations miscarry, and fall short of their designed end',[520] Bentley reasons in the notes of the 1732 edition that 'it does not reach up to our Poet's usual Exactness'. After the switch has been made and Milton has been successfully restored, Bentley feels free to explain, in an almost Humeian manner, that the poet's choice of word is 'authoris'd by our *Chaucer*, in *Troilus* and *Cressid*.' After using parallels from classical texts, *PL*, and Milton's prose to support his conjectures, Bentley now

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[518] Hume, *Annotations*, 194.

[519] Bentley, in *Paradise Lost*, ed. 1674 with Bentley's annotations, 7; Bentley, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 'Tickell's' 1720 with Bentley's annotations, 11; Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 9.

[520] Hume, *Annotations*, 11.

utilises the authority of other vernacular texts to the same end. He then proceeds to provide the etymology of 'disturn' as '*Distornare*, a vulgar Word, *Italic*; as *Gallic Detourner*', which is exactly what Hume does for 'disturb'. The note concludes with a question that exudes sarcastic loathing: 'And who knows not *Milton's* Inclination to revive old Words, or even coin new ones, especially with the *Italian* Stamp?'[521] Milton's spurious and stupid editor is, of course, who Bentley had in mind.

While the 1674 second edition most closely resembles Bentley's earlier critical editions—the touches of the editor, as we have seen, map onto the problems facing classical texts that Bentley describes in the preface to his Horace—it still exhibits difference. His amendment of 'Swift as a shooting star' (IV:556), for example, more closely resembles a re-writing rather than a restoring of *PL*. Unlike Hume, who continues his hunt for parallels and lists Virgil, Ovid, and Homer as influencing Milton, Bentley is not interested in locating the source of Milton's epic simile, instead, he attacks the line on the grounds of rational inconsistency.[522] Addison too complains about Uriel's 'gliding down to the Earth upon a Sun-Beam', but his gripe is because the passage falls short of Milton's usual sublimity, it 'is a prettiness that might have been admired in a little fanciful Poet, but seems below the genius of *Milton*.'[523] We cannot know exactly when Bentley engaged with the previous critics of Milton—unlike his preliminary work on Horace, Bentley does not date his conjectures in either of his annotated copies of *PL*—but his interest in reaching different conclusions on many of the same passages is a staple part of all his engagements with *PL*.[524] In the 1674 second edition, Bentley reworks the line at the bottom of the page, 'Upon a Sunb. Swift as shooting star', before settling on 'On a Sun-beam; swifter than shooting Star' in the 'Tickell's' and published edition. In the latter he declares, 'For Philosophy's sake, let it be, SWIFTER THAN *shooting Star*' because 'if he [Raphael] slid no faster than a shooting Star falls, he would come too late for his Errand.'[525] Nothing suggests that Bentley thought this was an interpolation, or a scribal oversight, instead, he had noticed an incorrect idea that

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[521] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 9.

[522] Hume, *Annotations*, 152-153.

[523] Addison, *Spectator* No. 321, 65.

[524] Haugen, 135.

[525] Bentley, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 1674 with Bentley's annotations, 101; Bentley, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 'Tickell's' 1720 with Bentley's annotations, 158; Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 126.

required amending so that the text could be the best it could be. It was these kinds of edits that Bentley's readers saw as impudence of the highest degree. Bentley, however, had declared that *PL* was 'worthy of all Wonder', but it was by no means perfect.[526] When amending Horace, Bentley's primary goal was to make the text more accurate, to make it reflect the author's original sentiments, but the same cannot be said here. Bentley unapologetically amended because he thought he could make the text better, and it was this kind of editing that most strongly militated against the narrative of the editor set out in his preface. Haugen captures the strange dilemma that Bentley found himself in when she writes, 'The dangerous "Editor" who played the villain in Bentley's textual narrative resembled no one more than Bentley himself.'[527] In that regard, the 1674 second edition was the humble beginnings of what was to follow.

Harper's analysis of the 1674 second edition leads him to conclude that Bentley was 'initially gentler on the poem'.[528] Haugen too observes Bentley's evolution from the gentler editing of the 1674 second edition to the more heavy-handed approach applied to the 'Tickell's' edition. She notes that the folio sized edition was more useful because it contained line numbers, an index, and Addison's *Spectator* essays on *PL*, as well as bigger margins that allowed for the recording of more conjectural emendations.[529] Its bibliographical layout constituted an invitation to Bentley's more interventionist annotations. There are similarities between the annotated copies, but there are more differences. The hunt for words that had fallen victim to scribal error is continued, but the lack of noting parallels and the dramatic increase in bracketing passages for expulsion are the most striking differences. There are close to thirty Biblical references written in the margins of the 1674 second edition, that is over double what is recorded in his Tickell's edition.[530] There are also over forty classical references in the 1674 second edition, dwarfing the 'Tickell's' edition which fails to reach double figures. Haugen certainly believes that Bentley consulted his first annotated copy when beginning work on his second. She states

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[526] Bentley, 'Preface', *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley.

[527] Haugen, 2.

[528] Harper, 'Bentley's Annotated 1674 Edition of *Paradise Lost*: Hidden Method and Peculiar Madness', 65

[529] Haugen, 220-221.

[530] There are twenty-nine Biblical references in the 1674 second edition and only fourteen in the 'Tickell's' edition.

that Bentley spent time transferring 'his conjectures from the 1674 volume' into the 1720 edition, but this does not seem to be the case when it came to recording Biblical and classical parallels.[531] There are only two examples of a Scripture reference being transferred from the 1674 second edition into the 'Tickell's' edition, and there is just a single classical reference copied over.[532] There is, however, a further strangeness related to Bentley's noting of parallels. For some reason, he only begins marking his 1674 second edition with Biblical references from Book III onwards, before stopping again when he reaches Book XII. Conversely, over half the Biblical references in the 'Tickell's' edition are found in books I, II, and XII. This would suggest that, when it came to noting parallels, Bentley mainly used the 'Tickell's' edition to fill in the gaps that he left in the 1674 second edition. Clearly Bentley's analysis when turning to the 'Tickell's' edition was, to a large degree, driven by different interests. The scepticism about the textual fidelity of *PL* increases, which more often than not leads to the expulsion of entire passages.[533] Like the younger Heinsius had thought about Ovid's *Heroides*, Bentley began to think that *PL* was fundamentally flawed. He was no longer as interested in citing parallel passages to support his conjectures, not after realising that the editor's spuriousness was far worse than he had originally thought. It was, then, not so much that Bentley was being gentler when annotating his first conjecture book, but that

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[531] Haugen, 221.

[532] The first Biblical example can be found in Book IV, where Bentley uses the Apocryphal Book of Tobit to amend '…Ægypt, there fast bound', to '…Ægypt's utmost bound' (line 171). The second Biblical example can be found in Book VIII, where Bentley replaces 'till' with 'dress' (line 320), referencing Genesis 2:15 to support his edit. The classical example pertains to Book V and Bentley's compulsion to elaborate on Milton's use of the word 'Emblem' (line 703), claiming that it relates to 'the *Greek* and *Latin* Sense for inlaid Floors of Stone or Wood, to make Figures Mathematical or Pictural…'

[533] The margins of the 1720 'Tickell's' edition are littered with Bentley's questions about the logical inconsistency of certain narrative details. Some examples include Bentley questioning how the fallen angels, as described in I:553, could possibly arm for battle when in VI:840, Christ's appearance in battle causes Satan's crew to throw down their arms. Accordingly, Bentley writes at the bottom of the page, 'How then could they have them here?' Again, Bentley takes issue with the appearance of horses in hell's Olympic games (II:531) and writes 'How got they steeds?' at the bottom of the page. He also asks the same question in relation to harps (II:348). Finally, Bentley cannot believe that Adam, as relayed in VIII:121-135, could have possibly witnessed the cosmic order and motion of the universe. He writes at the bottom of the page, 'Adam could not yet have seen those phaenomena.'

his conception of the project and the problems that faced *PL* had shifted to something altogether more serious. This shift continued to play out in the realms of classical decorum as well as expanding to include a heightened interest in the text's religious ideas—on multiple occasions these two areas overlap—but rather than focussing on the minute concerns of textual criticism, Bentley's amendments in the 'Tickell's' edition are far more severe.

More than anybody else, Addison and his *Spectator* essays seem to influence the specifics of Bentley's chopping in the 'Tickell's' and published edition. What he found most useful about the essays was their identification of the poem's weaknesses, rather than their general practice of drawing attention to its strengths. There are not many examples of Addison's fault finding, but the ones that do exist have a profound effect on Bentley. He leaves the first three *Spectator* essays basically untouched, only marking the name 'Polyphemus' in No. 273 and correcting a spelling mistake in No. 279. The first example that really engages Bentley appears in No. 285 and implicates a passage that Hume celebrated for its polemical nature: 'Embryo's and Idiots. Eremites and Friars / White, Black, and Grey, with all their trumpery. / Here Pilgrims roam… (III:474-476). Unlike Hume, Addison views this passage as 'Idiomatic' and lacking in sublimity, before deeming it one of only 'a few Failings' in *PL*.[534] Bentley agrees with Addison that this passage is faulty, albeit for different reasons, and places it within square brackets in his 'Tickell's' edition. He would later explain his decision in the 1732 edition: 'This is cruel upon those Innocents, who never *built fond hopes of Glory*, as at the first he peopled the Place with only such. Or, if they are to be lodg'd as *Nature's unaccomplish'd, abortive works*, v. 455. then we have had them once before.'[535] Addison views the language as unimpressive and unbecoming of Milton's poetic genius, while Bentley sees it as unnecessarily cruel to place unborn children in limbo. This is of course part of the larger section of Book III that describes The Paradise of Fools (III:444-498), a lengthy passage that Addison and Bentley both found problematic, again, for different reasons. As Haugen points out, Addison took issue with Milton's limbo because it lacked 'Probability' and was therefore 'not Credible' (*Spectator* No. 315), whereas Bentley

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[534] Addison, '*Spectator* No 285', in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 'Tickell's' 1720 with Bentley's annotations (London, 1720), 542.

[535] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 94.

initially marks the passage for expulsion in the 'Tickell's' edition before elaborating in the 1732 edition that it is 'a silly Interruption of the Story in the very middle, which ought to have been continued,' or in the words of Haugen, 'a digression.'[536] Addison is content to let the failing remain, but Bentley draws a line through it, signalling its expulsion from the poem. This limbo, according to Bentley, is 'the fittest Habitation for [the] Interpolator' who of course concocted this monstrous interruption that is so opposed to correct poetic decorum.[537]

Although their conclusions concerning the faultiness of the limbo passage differed, Bentley does follow Addison in his dislike for the improbable and unrealistic, even if they might often disagree with which passages of *PL* fit this criterion. In *Spectator* No. 309, Bentley marks the margin where Addison criticises Satan's trip through Chaos and the creatures he encounters. Addison states, '…but for my own part I am pleased most with those Passages in this Description which carry in them a greater measure of Probability, and are such as might possibly have happened.'[538] On the same page of this *Spectator* essay there is an example of Bentley applying this logic by amending a passage from Book II that Addison celebrates for its succinctness:

> …nature breeds
> Perverse all monstrous, all prodigious things;
> Abominable, unutterable, and worse
> Than Fables yet have feign'd, or Fear conceiv'd
> Gorgons and Hydra's and Chimaera's dire.
>
> (II:624-628)

Here, the fallen angels are described as traversing through hell, where they witness things that are more horrible than those found in the fables that have yet been written. Whereas Addison views the brevity as a strength, arguing that Milton's 'single Line' description of

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[536] Haugen, 224; Addison, '*Spectator* No 315', in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 'Tickell's' 1720 with Bentley's annotations, 558; Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 93.

[537] Richard Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 95.

[538] Addison, '*Spectator* No. 309', in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 'Tickell's' 1720 with Bentley's annotations, 555.

hell's monsters 'gives us a more horrid Idea of them, than a much longer Description would have done', Bentley focusses his attention on the fabulous nature of the passage, something that he finds deeply problematic. He underscores 'Fables' in protest, and in the 1732 edition, it is explained that '*Fable* and *Fear* here are by Poetical Power and Authority made *Persons*. But *Fables cannot be made so: nor can They* feign *any thing, but Themselves* are *feign'd*.'[539]

In *Spectator* No. 297, Addison had stated that 'Another Blemish that appears in some of [Milton's] Thoughts, is his frequent Allusion to Heathen Fables, which are not certainly of a Piece with the Divine Subject, of which he treats', something that obviously influenced Bentley's process.[540] But here, he demonstrates a belief that Addison does not go far enough with his censuring. He sees a contradiction between Addison's views about the strength of poetic description relying heavily on the probability, or even possibility, of the thing being described, and the notion of something feigned possessing the ability to create and populate reality with its creation. This was not only about pagan fables being unfit to exist alongside Milton's divine narrative because they were poor comparisons, as Addison suggests. Throughout his career, Bentley exhibited a deep aversion towards the mingling of what he perceived to be fiction and non-fiction, this often manifested in his wariness of the idea that pagan texts corroborated the events of Scripture.[541] For Bentley, a strange kind of mythicization happens to the Biblical narrative if this is allowed to take place. The concern reared its head again when Bentley turned his attention to *PL*, and of course, it is always the editor who is responsible. Dozens of similes and metaphors comparing Biblical events and characters with those of pagan antiquity are bracketed in the 'Tickell's' edition and this only increases in the published edition, where Bentley's objections are properly expounded.

Adam and Eve are continuously emancipated from ill-fitting comparisons with pagan deities. The 'feign'd' Pan, Sylvanus, and Faunus (IV:705-708) stand among the many

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[539] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 59.

[540] Addison, '*Spectator* No. 309', in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 'Tickell's' 1720 with Bentley's annotations, 548.

[541] Haugen provides a useful summary of Bentley's works that demonstrated this particular aversion: 'In the *Letter to Mill*, he ridiculed Joannes Malalas's attempts to divine Old Testament history in Greek poetry; in his Boyle Lectures, he appropriated virtually all of his patron Edward Stilling- fleet's apologetic arguments with the exception of this one; meanwhile, Bentley's historical chronology in the *Dissertation* on Phalaris was confined strictly and self-consciously to the pagan world.' See Haugen, 225.

examples that Bentley deems to be insertions from the editor. He writes that these 'savage and beastly Deities, and acknowledg'd *feign'd*, are brought here in Comparison; and their wild Grottos forsooth are *Sacred*.'[542] Bentley at once takes issue with the vulgarity and baseness of the comparisons, he then suggests that the feigness of the deities renders their comparison with the historical Adam and Eve nonsensical, before scoffing at the idea that the 'wild Grottos' of these forest gods are at all comparable to Eden. At a later point, Bentley's disdain is brought into sharp focus when he rails against the editor's pointless attempts to suggest that Eden is in fact incomparable to a number of pagan locations:

> *Spot more delicious than those Gardens feign'd*
> *Or of reviv'd* Adonis, *or renown'd*
> Alcinous, *host of old* Laertes *Son,*
> *Or that, not mystic, where the sapient King*
> *Held dalliance with his fair* Egyptian *Spouse*.

<div align="right">(IX:439-443)</div>

Again, Bentley notes the fictional nature of the comparisons and questions, 'Why then brought in here at all? What *Deliciousness* can exist in a Fable? or what Proportion, what Compare between Truth and Fiction?'[543] Bentley's main concern is that, if these comparisons between truth and fiction are allowed to remain, they will destabilise the reality of the Biblical characters and events that underpin *PL*. When commenting on Eve's comparison to three feigned goddesses (V:381-382), Bentley muses about what might have been the editor's intention. If they are 'feign'd', he asks, 'Why then do you bring them in; unless you design to insinuate, that *Eve's* Beauty, nay her very Person too, are equally a Fiction?'[544] Elsewhere, Bentley writes that it is unfathomable 'that *Milton* gave such wretched Nonsense', and without exception, every comparison that is made between Scripture and feigned antiquity is returned to the editor.[545]

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[542] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 132.

[543] Richard Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 282.

[544] Richard Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 161.

[545] Richard Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 327.

This deep conviction was certainly inspired by Addison's Aristotelian censuring of the improbable elements of *PL*, but, what the 'Tickell's edition reveals, is that it was also shaped by a wider engagement with Milton's prose. Amidst the paragraph of quotations taken from Milton's tracts that Bentley records on the endpaper of his 'Tickell's' edition, there is a note on *An APOLOGY for Smectymnus* (1642): 'He used in his youth to read Romances.'[546] This is certainly a paraphrase of the following passage:

> Next, (for heare me out now Readers) that I may tell ye whither my younger feet wander'd; I betook me among those lofty Fables and Romances, which recount in solemne Canto's, the deeds of Knighthood founded by our Victorious Kings, and from hence had in renowne over all Christendome...[547]

Broadly speaking, the tract is a reflection on the evolution of Milton's literary preferences, and this is precisely what interests Bentley. He notes that the young Milton began his readerly exploits by engaging with Arthurian romances and fables, knowing full well that Milton then progressed to ancient philosophy, before finding the greatest moral instruction in Scripture. Milton's presentation of the Bible as the supreme example of moral didacticism certainly appeals to Bentley, but his vision for the application of Milton's prose is far broader. What truly excites Bentley is the idea that the Bible is in every way superior to all other forms of literature, and it is this superiority that motivates him to exclude numerous inferior literary sources that are referenced throughout *PL*. After a careful reading of the 'Tickell's' edition and the 1732 edition, one can see that Bentley's reading of *An APOLOGY for Smectymnus* informed his removal of the comparison between Satan's fallen angels and King Arthur's knights: '...and what resounds / In Fable or romance of Uther's Son, / Begirt with British and Armoric Knights...' (II:579-582). In the 'Tickell's' edition, Bentley demonstrates his displeasure by placing square brackets around the lines and aggressively scrawling a line through their centre, but there is no obvious explanation in the margins as to why Bentley removes them. He does write at the top of the page, 'Uther's Son) Arthur...

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[546] Bentley, front endpapers, in *Paradise* Lost, ed. 'Tickell's' 1720 with Bentley's annotations.

[547] Milton, 'An APOLOGY for Smectymnus', in *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton...*, 177.

Selden on Poly Olbion p.16,' which is a reference to John Selden's comments on Michael Drayton's topographical poem, *Poly Olbion* (1612), but this seems to be little more than Bentley toying with the idea of directing the uninformed readers of his future printed edition to Selden's historical summary, where they can learn the identity and history of Uther's son.[548] This does not, however, appear in the notes of the 1732 edition, but the expulsion of the lines do carry over. Bentley's explanation as to why he finds the lines problematic points us back to his prose:

> *Milton* indeed in his Prose works tells us, That in his Youth he was a great Lover and Reader of Romances: but surely he had more Judgment in his Old Age, than to clog and sully his Poem with such Romantic Trash, as even then when he wrote was obsolete and forgot. To stuff in here a heap of barbarous Words, without any Ornament or Poetical colouring, serving only to make his own Argument, which he takes from Scripture, to be suppos'd equally Fabulous...[549]

For Bentley, it was simple: if Milton's view was that the Bible surpasses all other literature, a conclusion he reached long before writing *PL*, then why would he include references to literature that was 'obsolete and forgot,' romances that he no longer engaged with, and therefore no longer had bearing on him in his 'Old Age'? According to Bentley, all that can be achieved by mingling fabulous accounts with Scripture is the destabilisation of Christian truth. Milton would never do this, and the blame is laid at the feet of the interpolating editor. Darbishire has rightly challenged Bentley's univocal reading and claim that Milton would not include what he calls 'Romantic Trash' in *PL*:

> In this he showed no understanding at all of Milton's motive in packing his poem with all it would hold of the imaginative history of man, human history seen through the imagination, to Bentley romantic trash.[550]

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[548] John Selden, 'Were worthy of his end, but where he had his birth', in Michael Drayton's, *Poly-Albion* (London, 1612), 16.

[549] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 26.

[550] Darbishire, 'XVIII Milton's *Paradise Lost*: The James Bryce Memorial Lecture: 1951,' 114.

It seems that Bentley missed the point. But the exclusivity and primacy that he affords Scripture goes a long way in rendering Milton pedantically orthodox, and to a certain degree, is a noble standpoint that Milton would have agreed with.

Bentley grants his orthodox inclinations full sway as he engages with some of the most pressing religious debates that he sees emerging in *PL*, but he also cares for the more pedantic aspects of Scriptural accuracy. His note on 'This Paradise I give thee; count it thine / To *till* and keep…' (VIII:319-320) highlights a single problem with God's instruction to Adam concerning the maintenance of Eden. Bentley notes that 'Paradise was not to be *till'd*, but the common Earth after the Fall', and so he amends to draw the passage in line with Genesis 2:15, 'And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.'[551] Bentley's religious edits generally suggest a view that Scriptural embellishments should be minimal. Accordingly, passages that are not directly reflective of Scripture are treated with a greater level of suspicion and often removed. For example, Bentley deletes a passage that details the first Passover in Egypt:

> *Lik'ning his Maker to the grazed Oxe,*
> Jehovah, *who in one Night when he pass'd*
> *From Æ*gypt *marching, equal'd with one stroke*
> *Both her first-born and all her bleating Gods.*

<div align="right">(I:486-489)</div>

There are three major problems with these lines. Firstly, nowhere in the Exodus account does Moses state that God 'pass'd / From Ægypt marching…', but as Bentley rightly points out, Exodus 11:4 reads, 'About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt.'[552] Secondly, nowhere in Scripture is God likened to an Ox. There are only two occasions where God is depicted as an animal and in both instances, it is a calf, or calves. The first can be found in Exodus 32 where Aaron forges a golden, calf-shaped idol in response to Israel's demands in the wilderness of Sinai, and the second is found in I Kings 12, which details king Jeroboam's

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[551] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 253; *The Bible*, Genesis 2:15.

[552] *The Bible*, Exodus 11:4.

forging of two golden calves. Thirdly, the Exodus text only mentions that Jehovah kills the first-born sons and all cattle and mentions nothing about the Egyptian gods. In regard to this last point, Milton can be defended by acknowledging that the Old Testament does relay God as destroying images of false gods. Milton likely had in mind the two instances where Ezekiel records the Lord's promise to destroy idols, one of which directly implicates Egypt.[553] However, even if Milton was foreshadowing Ezekiel, Bentley is right in thinking that during the Passover no such destruction of idols is mentioned. When all these infringements of Scripture are combined, it amounts to enough evidence for Bentley to damn the four verses.

Walsh is not wrong when he says that Bentley's edition '…so signally failed to treat *Paradise Lost* with the reverence due to Scripture'.[554] Bentley had stated when working on an edition of the New Testament that 'in the sacred writings there's no place for conjectures', a belief that did not translate onto any other text that he amended.[555] However, in one sense it was Bentley's ultimate reverence for Scripture that largely characterised and propelled his amendment of *PL*. What Walsh views as the de-sacralisation of *PL*, Bentley sees as a deeper sacralisation. Thomas Newton would later suggest that the status of *PL* could be compared to that of Scripture: 'Whoever has any true taste and genius, we are confident, will esteem this poem the best of modern productions, and the Scriptures the best of all ancient ones.'[556] But Bentley's earlier editing reveals that the status of *PL* rests on its layered reflection of Scripture. As such, Bentley applies Scriptural saturation to his edition, ensuring that the minutiae of Biblical language were manifest and that, on the majority of occasions, a corresponding Bible verse was supplied to support his emendations.

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[553] *The Bible*, Ezekiel 6:6. 'In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished'; moreover, Ezekiel 30:13 directly addresses the idols of Egypt, 'Thus saith the Lord God; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause *their* images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.'

[554] Walsh, 'Bentley our Contemporary', in *The Theory and practice of Text-Editing*, eds. Ian Small and Marcus Walsh, 179.

[555] Bentley, *Proposals for Printing a New Edition of the Greek Testament and St. Hierom's Latin Version* (London, 1721), 3:488–489.

[556] Newton, 'Preface', in *Paradise Lost: A New Edition, with Notes of Various Authors*, ed. Thomas Newton, 2 vols, II, 432.

The similarities between Bentley's classicising efforts and his religious edits are plain, and just as his sense of classical decorum drove many amendments, so Bentley's religious bent also leads to the expulsion of seemingly unorthodox theology.

It seems, then, that the editor was no better than the atheist thinkers that Bentley had spent the entirety of his career confronting. Numerous battles had been waged to uphold the authority of Scripture against those who did not treat it with the reverence that it deserved, and as a result, slipped into the clutches of heresy. The editor's interpolations were, to a great extent, an extension of this attitude. From the outset of his first Boyle Lecture, Bentley argues that religious radicals initially come to believe their heterodox views by negating the divine authority of '…our Text [in this case, the Psalms]; and profess no greater, or, it may be they will say, less Veneration for these Sacred Hymns, than for the profane Songs of *Anacreon* or *Horace*.'[557] For Bentley, the negation of Scripture as the inspired word of God could easily lead to a belief that classical poetry and the Bible shared equal authority. The results of this equality, as Bentley goes onto explore in the remainder of the first and then subsequent sermons, is the inevitable adoption of pagan ideologies and outlooks.[558] Bentley would again raise this concern four years later in his sermon, *On revelation and the messias* (5 July 1696), where he challenges the ideas of free-thinkers, specifically deists.[559] Bentley perceived that deists were 'repudiating at once the whole authority of Revelation, and debasing the sacred Volumes to the rank of Ordinary Books of History and Ethicks.'[560] The threat was not that these individuals were incapable of recognising 'the whole system of Christian Morals' as being profitable to a person's life, but

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[557] Bentley, 'Sermon 1: Psalm XIV. v. I.' in *The Newton Project*
<http://www.newtonproject.ox.ac.uk/view/texts/normalized/THEM00244> [accessed 2 July 2020].

[558] Instituted by eminent writer and scientist, Robert Boyle (1627-1691), the Boyle Lectures emerged from the panoply of religious and political debates of the era and were specifically commissioned to refute atheistic arguments. £50 a year was bequeathed to an individual who could deliver a series of eight lectures that would disprove atheistic schools of thought. For insight into the content of Bentley's Boyle Lectures and, in particular, their relationship with Newtonianism, see, Henry Guerlac and M. C. Jacob, 'Bentley, Newton, and Providence: The Boyle Lectures Once More', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 30.3 (1969), 307-318, and John Dahm, 'Science and Apologetics in the Early Boyle Lectures', *Church History*, 39.2 (1970), 172-186.

[559] Quehen, 'Bentley, Richard (1662–1742), philologist and classical scholar', 4.

[560] Bentley, *On revelation and the messias* (London, 1696), 4.

rather, it was their refusal to receive the Bible 'as a collection of divine Statutes and Ordinances sent us by an express from Heaven' that gave rise to concern.[561] The gradual rejection of Scripture as the inerrant and primary guide of man fittingly gave rise to one of the greatest heresies that plagued the church in Bentley's day, anti-providentialism. Bentley summarises the position well when defining what constitutes atheism in his inaugural Boyle Lecture, writing that the atheist 'excludes the Deity from governing the World by his Providence, or judging it by his Righteousness, or creating it by his Wisdom and Power.'[562]

Because the unprecedented discoveries of natural philosophy were causing the doctrine of divine providence to fall under scrutiny, Bentley saw it as his duty to show how the two fields of theology and science could still co-exist in harmony. He scarcely delivered a sermon or published a polemic that did not address the issue, but this was not just restricted to his theological writing. Bentley's aversion to Epicurean materialism also characterises his edit of a passage in *Astronomicon* (1739) that momentarily seemed to abandon its high view of providence: 'Sive individuis, in idem reditura soluta, / Principiis natura manet, post saecula mille; / Et Paene ex nihilo sumptum est nihilumque futurum, / Caecaque materies caelum perfecit et orbem' (I:128-131).[563] It is also not surprising that *PL*, a poem that travels 'through the Compass of the whole Universe, and through all Heaven beyond it', and that 'survey[s] all Periods of time from before the Creation too the Consummation of all Things', but had fallen victim to an atheistic editor, could reflect similar anti-providentialist sentiments.[564]

Bentley edits Eve's misapprehension of God's role as cosmic creator (V:172), and he also amends a passage that seems to diminish God's omniscience (III:117). But the most well-known amendment implicated in this debate is Bentley's re-writing of the final lines, which appear to negate God's providential guidance of Adam and Eve as they leave Eden: 'They hand in hand with their wandering steps and slow, / Through Eden took their solitary way' (XII:648-649). Leonard, among others, has noted Addison's influence on Bentley here, but it is not theological. In his *Spectator* essays, Addison stated that *PL* was unheroic

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[561] Ibid.

[562] Bentley, 'Sermon 1: Psalm XIV. v. I.' in *The Newton Project*.

[563] Manilius, *Astronomicon*, ed. Richard Bentley (London: 1739), 10.

[564] Bentley, 'Preface', *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley.

because of its depressing final lines, and although there may be some room for debate as to whether classical epics do indeed end on a positive note, it would appear that Bentley and Addison agree that such a bleak ending should not remain.[565] Bentley, however, takes a more hands-on approach and offers his own substitute: 'Then *hand in hand with* SOCIAL *steps their way / Through* Eden *took*, WITH HEAV'NLY COMFORT CHEER'D.'[566] Leonard describes this as a 'step forward', stating that 'Addison had wanted to eject it; Bentley had rewritten it.'[567] Consequently, Bentley's substitution transforms their expulsion into a cheery affair, an ending that is much more conducive to the rules of epic. While this might be true, Bentley's footnote reveals something further about his potential motives:

> He tells us before, That *Adam*, upon hearing *Michael's* Predictions, was even *surcharg'd with Joy*, v. 372; was *replete with Joy and Wonder*, 468; was in doubt, whether he should *repent of*, or *rejoice in his Fall*, 475… Why then does this Distich dismiss our first Parents in Anguish, and the Reader in Melancholy? And how can the Expression be justified, *with wand'ring Steps and slow?* Why *wand'ring?* Erratic Steps? Very improper: when in the Line before, they were *guided by Providence*.[568]

It made little sense for Milton to conclude *PL* with sadness when Adam and Eve had been cheered by the good news of Christ's coming to redeem mankind. Adam in particular seems to display a belief in felix culpa. For Bentley, the notion of their 'wandering steps' is equated to unpredictability and erraticism, characteristics that are incompatible with being guided by providence, and 'solitary way' impresses upon the reader that the parting from Eden was entirely sorrowful. While there is no shortage of examples within Scripture that testify to God's providence sometimes being bitter, Bentley's optimistic re-write reframes the exile from Eden as explicitly hopeful. This was a literal stepping out into God's plan for salvation and a joyful submission to his governing of events.

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[565] Leonard, *Faithful Labourers*…, 274.

[566] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 399.

[567] Leonard, *Faithful Labourers*…, 280.

[568] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 399.

There is much that can be said in support of Bentley maintaining a place among the collective of early critics who, as we have seen, were concerned with the poem's proficiency when it came to successfully imitating the classics, while also engaging with its more troubling religio-political elements in an attempt to contain them, or in Bentley's case, expel them. Interestingly, Bentley never once stopped to ask how his patterns of annotation seemed to highlight an incompatibility between these two areas; how he attempted to draw the text closer to its classical sources, while simultaneously separating it from pagan antiquity. This inconsistency was buried beneath the experimental nature of the project. No-one had dealt with the religiously offensive elements of *PL* quite like Bentley, and while his excessive conjectural approach did facilitate the sanitisation of Milton, it also functioned as a rather large stake in the ground with regard to the wider and ongoing conversations about how to best approach critical editions of English poems.

The Tonsons: A Divide in the Camp

When discussing the controversies surrounding early eighteenth-century textual criticism and editing, Fox notes the emergence of 'a debate about the nature of one particular aspect of textual criticism: emendation, and in particular the question of how far, even if the transmitted text is linguistically correct, the critic is justified, on the basis of his own individual judgement, in improving it by alteration.' With Bentley's Horace in mind, Matthew Fox writes that 'In some cases, an exaggerated faith in the critic's expertise is matched with a freedom to depart from the established manuscript tradition.'[569] This would become the older Tonson's main issue with Bentley's edition of *PL*, especially because he owned a manuscript for book I which he believed unequivocally disproved a number of Bentley's edits, and in turn, his theory of the spurious editor. A clear picture emerges of the older Tonson's frustration and disappointment from the correspondence that he had with his nephew around the time of the edition's publication. In one letter, after inquiring about various business matters, he writes:

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[569] Fox, 'Manners and Method in Classical Criticism of the Early Eighteenth Century', 107-108.

Pray be something perticular, you cannot be too large, of the opinions about Bs notes, or rather criticism on Milton & what is come, & likely to come out upon him. I have spent some hours in examining his & Mr. Addisons sentiments of M. they are quite opposite, if Bentley is in the right Paradise lost is the worst & most nonsensical (to use one of his terms) poem that ever appeard in the world. I observe again in this letter, that I find upon a careful examination he forbears to find fault, or very little upon the many lines Adison quotes. Milton dos not in them seem to be blind the printer makes noe blunders, & noe interpolation of the Sham editor in them. This shews the cowardlines of the Critik. I hope Mr. Pope wil lash him, he wil See in the manuscript of the 1st book (which I desire you wil shew him, & keep very carefully tis of valew) enough to knock down the Dr.'s opinion, which is of his own invention & he knows to be false & fantastical.[570]

The older Tonson rails against Bentley for wandering so far from Addison's (seemingly his favourite commentator) sentiments on *PL*, he denies the existence of a clumsy printer and spurious editor and hopes that Pope (whom he clearly thought was a superior critic) would soon respond and 'lash him' for his impertinence. He also desires that his nephew would cautiously show Pope the manuscript of *PL* to help in his endeavours.[571] His proceeding plea, 'pray write to me about this. you see how I am really concerned at this crude insolent villainous attack…',[572] exudes an eagerness for the younger Tonson to explain and perhaps reassure him that the whole affair was a mistake, one that will hopefully be quickly forgotten. This was wishful thinking on all fronts.

We do not have the younger Tonson's reply, but judging by the opening remark of his uncle's follow up letter, we can assume that he asked for specific thoughts on Bentley's edition: 'Since you desire my thoughts upon Dr. Bentleys edition of Milton, I in compliance

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[570] Tonson, 'Letter 144: Tonson to Jacob Tonson the Younger, Ledbury, 5 February 1731/2', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 264.

[571] Pope did eventually deliver a lashing to Bentley in *An Epistle from Mr. Pope, to Dr. Arbuthnot* (London, 1735).

[572] Tonson, 'Letter 144: Tonson to Jacob Tonson the Younger, Ledbury, 5 February 1731/2', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 264-265.

write what follows'.[573] The less erratic style indicates that the older Tonson had taken time to regain composure, and with manuscript in hand, he proceeded to dispel a number of Bentley's edits that contradict the manuscript. Moreover, the authority of Addison is again pitted against Bentley's edits and Pope is invited to produce an edition that consulted the manuscript.[574] Whereas Tonson had previously noted that Bentley had largely abstained from finding fault with the lines that Addison highlights, he was now astounded that Bentley had actually found fault with some lines that Addison celebrates.[575] But this was the very same approach that Bentley took with his edition of *Astronomicon*, in which he argued against many of Scaliger's amendments. Haugen writes,

> In his annotations, Bentley found fault with Scaliger's use of his manuscripts, rejected Scaliger's conjectures…, and argued for retaining lines that Scaliger had obelized. Even more pugnaciously, Bentley used one of Scaliger's own techniques—the identification of interpolated passages—both to trump Scaliger, when Bentley called for the removal of passages in which Scaliger had perceived no difficulty, and piously to justify Manilius, when Bentley deattributed from the poet lines about which Scaliger had complained on various grounds.[576]

It seems that Bentley was simply paying Addison the same respect that he had given Scaliger. This was not personal: Bentley had always been compelled to disagree, even with those he most admired. The older Tonson also continued to make it clear, like so many of

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[573] Tonson, 'Letter 148: Tonson to Jacob Tonson the Younger, Ledbury, 7 February 1732/33', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 269.

[574] Pope never produced an edition and there is no suggestion that he ever engaged with the manuscript of *PL*. In her work on the provenance of the manuscript, Darbishire responds to this letter stating that 'Pope seems to have shown no signs of waking up to his responsibilities, and the manuscript stayed with the second Jacob Tonson till he died in 1737…' See Darbishire, 'Introduction', in *The Manuscript of Milton's* 'Paradise Lost' *Book I*, ed. Helen Darbishire, xv.

[575] Tonson, 'Letter 148: Tonson to Jacob Tonson the Younger, Ledbury, 7 February 1732/33', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 271.

[576] Haugen, 213. Haugen provides a list of examples in her notes of Bentley disagreeing with Scaliger's amendments. See Haugen, 'nn.5', 308.

his contemporaries and those who came after him, that Bentley's editor was clearly a phantom of the Dr's mind that enabled him to tamper with the poem: 'As to the Editor, I think that is a meer fantome of the Dr.'s creation & raised on purpose to Season in Appearance [his scurrilous invectives against Milton.]'[577] Bentley's attempts were ultimately viewed as an insult to the very individual that the Tonsons had spent years defending. Nearing the close of the letter, the older Tonson outlines his hopes and desires regarding Bentley's edition:

> I am yet of my former opinion, that the Edition wil flag in a little time, the general esteem every one has for the Poem wil make one edition goe of with any notes—But Bentleys notes if allowd to be right are enough to ruin the esteem for the author, & I doe verily believe that was & is his design, but equally vain as any other of his pretensions…[578]

Although it passes without comment, what was potentially most shocking for the older Tonson was the fact that his nephew knew about the existence of the manuscript and yet still allowed Bentley's edition to be published. Hale writes that 'He [the older Tonson] knew, and knew that young Jacob knew, there *was* this manuscript', and this likely left him feeling as though 'his nephew was fouling the family nest'.[579] The manuscript was certainly treated as a prized possession by the older Tonson, which he guarded as though it were a family

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[577] Tonson, 'Letter 148: Tonson to Jacob Tonson the Younger, Ledbury, 7 February 1732/33', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 270.

[578] Tonson, 'Letter 148: Tonson to Jacob Tonson the Younger, Ledbury, 7 February 1732/33', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 271. The older Tonson's view that Bentley's 'notes' were designed to ruin Milton was also held by the Scottish poet and dramatist, David Mallett (1705-1765), who suggested that Bentley's editor was none other than Milton himself. Mallett accused Bentley of 'Calling *Milton* himself, in the per son of this phantom, fool, ignorant, ideot, and like critical compellations…' See, Mallett, *Of Verbal Criticism: an Epistle to Mr. Pope. Occasioned by Theobald's Shakespeare, and Bentley's Milton* (London, 1733), 10. Samuel Johnson also entertained the possibility that Bentley's theory of the editor was a direct attack on Milton. The device was 'a supposition rash and groundless, if he thought it true; and vile and pernicious, if, as is said, he in private allowed it to be false.' See Johnson, 'Life of Milton', in *Lives of the English Poets*, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill, 3 vols (Oxford, 1905), I, 181.

[579] Hale, 'Notes on Richard Bentley's Edition of "Paradise Lost"', 49.

secret. Stephen Bernard has suggested that the command in the initial letter for his nephew to keep the manuscript safe while showing it to Pope because it is of great value could signify a desire to keep its existence relatively unknown.[580] The available evidence indeed suggests that only a handful of individuals outside of the Tonsons knew about its existence. In a letter addressed to Pope in 1722, Francis Atterbury (1663-1732) pleads for the poet to ask the younger Tonson for the opportunity to allow Atterbury access to the manuscript:

> I long to see the Original M.S. of Milton: but don't know how to come at it, without your repeated assistance, I shall have superstition enough to Collate it with my printed Book if Tonson will allow me the use of it for a few days. There was a time when his Uncle would have leap'd at such an opportunity of Obliging me, but then I was a Retainer to the Muses, and he did know but he might have got something by me.[581]

When discussing Atterbury's early involvement with the older Tonson and *PL*, Mary D. Ravenhall confirms that Atterbury likely acquired knowledge of the manuscript's existence, or might have even seen it 'at the time it was used in the preparation of Tonson's edition of 1688…' However, due to irreconcilable political difference, Atterbury being a high church Tory, the pair eventually parted ways.[582] Atterbury's letter gives off the impression that he, and probably Pope, knew about the existence of the manuscript, and that the Tonsons' were vigilant custodians. The narrative surrounding the manuscript was characterised by safety and surveillance, there were only two people who had unfettered access and they were the Tonsons. This obviously means that Bentley's use of the manuscript was facilitated by the younger Tonson, something that the older Jacob seemingly remained unaware of. We can conclude, remarkably so, that if Bentley can be charged with suppressing evidence,

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[580] Bernard, 'nn.18', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 266.

[581] Francis Atterbury, *The Correspondence of Alexander Pope*, ed. George Sherburn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), II, 124.

[582] Mary D. Ravehall, 'Francis Atterbury and the First Illustrated Edition of "Paradise Lost", *Milton Quarterly*, 16.2 (1982), 29-36 (33).

then the younger Tonson must be charged with going along with the ruse, or worse, as an active accomplice.

Just as the older Tonson's mind was set ablaze with concerns, it was also plagued with questions. What excuse could be made as to why Bentley's fallacious edition was allowed to be published? The younger Tonson could not plead ignorance concerning Bentley's methods; even if the notes and preface were pushed through the press as soon as they were complete, Tonson would not have run the risk of neglecting to read any edition before signing off on its publication. Too much was at stake with *PL*, which had long since become the Tonson's highest commodity. And besides, before Bentley's edition was published, *The Grub-street Journal* had been attempting to slowly disintegrate the public's confidence in the particulars of his suggested method as well as a number of his authentic amendments which were in circulation.[583] Even if the younger Tonson disagreed with those who opposed Bentley's forthcoming edition, his uncle among them, the business surrounding the manuscript was inescapably damning. What then, caused him to sign off on such a radical project?

Joseph Loewenstein has attributed the publication to the younger Tonson's efforts to retain the copyright to *PL* amidst the lapse of statutory protections from 1731 onwards. He writes that Tonson was

> eager in sponsorship, for he seems to have been hoping to publish an edition so substantially revised that it might arguably be represented as a new work, in some sense technically untethered from Milton and therefore capable of new statutory protection. He found the perfect editor for this project in Richard Bentley.[584]

The younger Tonson required an editor who would re-write *PL* so as to enable the Tonson dynasty to maintain its hold on Milton's poem. Conversely, William St Clair has challenged

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[583] Hale gives an overview of the *Journal's* engagement with Bentley's project from 1730 to its publication. The *Journal* contributor's early engagement with the idea of revising *PL* was marked by a cautious intrigue, but this eventually turned into contempt by the summer of 1731. See Hale, 'Paradise Purified, Dr Bentley's Marginalia for his 1732 Edition of "Paradise Lost"'.

[584] Joseph Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 234.

this kind of argument when discussing Theobald's edition of Shakespeare (1733). Edmund G. C. King agrees with Clair's claim that publishers took little notice of copyright legislation, and 'behaved as though perpetual copyright still existed.'[585] Regardless of the degree to which the younger Tonson cared about such things, this thesis has affirmed that the lucrativeness of *PL* was a chief concern for the Tonsons and securing a future where this could continue to be monopolised undoubtedly factored into the younger Jacob's thinking. But there were also more immediate benefits to be reaped. Bentley's previous publications were incredibly divisive and split public opinion, but they were also new and exciting. As Haugen acknowledges, Bentley's edition of Horace made his contemporaries 'see that an English philological scholar could be a highly public, highly controversial, and highly exciting figure.'[586] The fact that Bentley's type of scholarship sold and created a stir in literary circles was enticing. In terms of Bentley's work with Milton, the literary milieu was characterised by increasing division, but this did not stop the public's eager anticipation for the publication of the edition. The Tonsons, however, were not solely interested in the lucrativeness of *PL*. I believe, the younger Jacob's actions also point towards an interest in promoting an audacious vision for vernacular scholarship, one that he had seen showcased by the likes of Bentley's Horace within contemporary classical circles. His biggest publications of English poetry throughout the 1720s had drawn heavily upon Bentley-esque textual criticism and now it was time to turn to the progenitor.

Clearly, Bentley's edition divided the Tonsons. Although both of the publishers shared similar visions when it came to Milton and *PL*, the methods that they allowed to be implemented to secure these visions differed severely. The older Tonson wanted to present

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[585] King, '4. *Cardenio* and the Eighteenth-Century Shakespeare Canon', in *The Quest for Cardenio: Shakespeare, Fletcher, Cervantes, and the Lost Play*, eds. David Carnegie and Gary Taylor, 91. See also William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 93–4, 154–7; Simon Jarvis, *Scholars and Gentlemen: Shakespearian Textual Criticism and Representations of Scholarly Labour, 1725–1765*, 94–5; Andrew Murphy, *Shakespeare in Print: A History and Chronology of Shakespeare Publishing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 73–4. Jeffrey M. Gaba also gives an overview of the Tonson's dealings with the copyright of Shakespeare. See Gaba, 'Copyrighting Shakespeare: Jacob Tonson, Eighteenth Century English Copyright, and the Birth of Shakespeare Scholarship', *Journal of Intellectual Property Law*, 19.1 (2011), 21-63.

[586] Haugen, 153.

PL as essentially perfect, he prized textual fidelity and would take issue with anyone enforcing alterations unless they were supported by manuscript evidence. The manuscript tradition had always been the locus of authority, something that is well supported by the older Tonson's collaboration with the Cambridge University Press to print the complete and correct works of a number of Latin poets in the mid-1690s. The younger Jacob, on the other hand, was evidently happy with a more intrusive approach, which would eventually involve the rejection of manuscript evidence. He had already published Pope's Shakespeare and Fenton's *PL*, but these had been met with little success in the field of textual editing. Pope's edition of Shakespeare (1725 and 1728) was ridiculed as 'hardly competent by the best eighteenth-century standards',[587] and prompted Lewis Theobald (1688-1744) to publish *Shakespeare restored, or, A specimen of the many errors as well committed, as unamended, by Mr. Pope in his late edition of this poet* (1726). This was a preliminary work that established 'many of the editorial principles and techniques found in Theobald's later edition of *Shakespeare* (1733).'[588] Bentley's influence on Pope and Theobald was tangible, both had identified conjecture as a key critical tool after the publication of Bentley's Horace, and both utilised this technique—admittedly in varying degrees, and in Pope's case, dishonestly and with reluctance—when working on Shakespeare.[589] Clearly Pope's

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[587] Erskine-Hill, 'Pope, Alexander (1688-1744)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/22526> [accessed 23 March 2021], 8.

[588] Peter Seary, 'Theobald, Lewis (*bap.* 1688, *d.* 1744)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2006), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27169> [accessed 10 August 2021], 4.

[589] Pope announced in the preface of his edition to Shakespeare that 'I have discharg'd the dull duty of an Editor to my best judgment, with more labour than I expect thanks, with a religious abhorrence of all Innovation, and without any indulgence to my private sense or conjecture.' See Pope, 'Preface', in *The Works of Shakespeare in Six Volumes*, ed. Alexander Pope. His wholesale rejection of conjecture, however, has been rendered entirely disingenuous in light of the plethora of verbal changes he implements. One critic has claimed that 'A small proportion of these may be regarded as legitimate conjectures; but the great majority are arbitrary corrections, not of copyists' errors, but of Shakespeare's own composition. We are left to guess the reasons for his changes.' See '11. Conjectures and restorations of Pope', in *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature. Volume V. The Drama to 1642: Part 1. XI. The Text of Shakespeare*, eds. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, 18 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907-1921), V. Theobald, on the other hand, defends conjecture in the introduction of *Shakespeare restored* as a legitimate method of editing: 'Wherever he finds the Reading suspected, manifestly corrupted, deficient in Sense, and unintelligible…to exert every

deceitfulness did not offend the older Tonson too much, because he continued to champion his abilities as poet and critic. In the same year as Pope's Shakespeare, Fenton's edition of *PL* was published, which, aside from the popularity of its paratextual *Life*, was also criticised for its unwarranted textual trifling. Just a year before the publishing of Bentley's edition, the *Gentleman's Magazine* reflected and reinforced the complaints that previous periodicals had against Fenton's edition:

> The restoring of the text of a valuable author to the original sense and reading, is a work of merit, if not undertaken by one unequal to such a task. The *Traveller* in this paper has pointed out a few specimens of ignorance, want of taste, and silly officiousness of Mr. Fenton in his corrections of Milton…All the various readings of this edition are either mean or trifling.[590]

The criticism had already been taken on board and the younger Tonson looked eagerly ahead to the publication of Bentley's edition. Both Haugen and Levine view Bentley's edition as a somewhat belated response to the polemic between Pope and Theobald. While the pair were quarrelling over how to best edit Shakespeare throughout the mid-1720s, Bentley remained silent, itching to display his scholastic superiority.[591] Although this is likely true, I find Bentley's mission to be more far-reaching and Tonson central to its realisation. It was time for the next instalment of *PL*, and, on this occasion, it would be undertaken by the most accomplished and intrepid scholar to date. Pope had argued that the manuscripts of Shakespeare had been corrupted by the players and so could not be wholly relied upon, similarly, Fenton had begun to amend *PL* because it had been corrupted by Milton's amanuensis, and Bentley, who was in so many ways the source of the theories that Pope

Power and Faculty of the Mind to supply such a Defect, to give Light and restore Sense to the Passage, and, by a reasonable Emendation, to make that satisfactory and consistent with the Context, which before was so absurd, unintelligible and intricate.' See Lewis Theobald, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare restored…* (London, 1726), v.

[590] 'Observations on an edition of Milton, publish'd in the year 1725', in *Gentleman's Magazine* 1 (London, February 1731), 55.

[591] Haugen, 219; Levine, *The Battle of the Books, History and Literature in the Augustan Age*, 245-263.

and Fenton espoused, was a natural next step.[592] This was to be a ground-breaking product, an edition of an English poem that was not interested in taking gradual steps, but rather gigantic leaps away from relying on the manuscript tradition towards the tool of conjecture.

The Tonsons' dealings with *PL* and Shakespeare over a number of decades shows that the editing of English texts was on a trajectory characterised by the defining and redefining of ideas about the genre of annotation, commentary, and emendation. While Pope and Theobald attempted to create varying degrees of distance between their editorial projects and Bentley's notorious conjectural methods, it is evident that they were both influenced by the Dr's brand of scholarship. Edmund G. C. King views Pope's *Shakespeare* as an attempt to highlight particular points of 'literary and moral worthiness.' He does this by implementing a typographical system that utilises asterisks and inverted commas to draw attention to specific passages.[593] This bears striking resemblance to the kind of moral hunting that was characteristic of Addison's *Spectator* essays on *PL*; however, Addison not only accentuated the excellencies, but the faults as well. Pope's typography also functioned in this manner, and in the words of J. Paul Hunter, Pope not only highlighted but defined 'the insignificant, the inappropriate, and the inadequate out of literature' altogether.'[594] This puffed-up view of one's own ability to identify what was good and right with a text, and then be bold enough to remove what fell short of personal taste, was certainly closer to Bentley than Addison.[595] And of course, anything that was wrong was not laid at the feet of Shakespeare, but the interpolating players. This narrative enabled Pope to disregard

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[592] For more on Pope's theory that Shakespeare had been corrupted by the players, see James R. Sutherland, "'The Dull Duty of an Editor'", *Review of English Studies* 21 (1945), 202-215 (213), and Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1999), 69–70, 72.

[593] Edmund G. C. King, 'Pope's 1723-25 *Shakespear*, Classical Editing, and Humanistic Reading Practices', *Eighteenth Century Life*, 32.2 (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2008), 3-13 (4). Margreta de Grazia also views Pope's *Shakespear* as an attempt to steer the 'aesthetic and moral sensibility' of the reading public. See Margreta de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 197.

[594] J. Paul Hunter, 'Literary Theory and Literary Practice: The Example of Pope', in *Talking Forward, Talking Back: Critical Dialogues with the Enlightenment*, eds. Rüdiger Ahrens and Kevin Cope (New York: AMS Press, 2002), 322.

[595] When discussing Pope's chopping, David Nichol Smith characterises him as a literary executor. See David Nichol Smith, *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), 34.

important manuscript evidence in favour of his own poetic intuition, something that was, and continues to be, viewed as a show of editorial negligence and unwarrantable liberty.[596] King writes that 'Pope was providing his audience with a privileged glimpse at the private annotations of a sophisticated reader.'[597] Not only a sophisticated reader, but someone whose elevated taste was the only reliable tool that would facilitate the restoration of Shakespeare. This was a Bentleian mindset if ever there was one.

Theobald's approach was different and yet still whiffed of Bentley's influence. He 'couched his argument in terms of external authority—manuscript, cultural, aristocratic—rather than relying on his own, analytical sense of Shakespeare's stylistic presence in the text.'[598] Counter to Pope's reliance on his taste to gage the text's rightness, Peter Seary has said that Theobald 'sought to replace taste with fact or probability', and Adam Rounce concludes that Theobald's 'far greater knowledge of Elizabethan linguistic parallels', among other things, contributed towards 'a more systematic approach, generally, to recovering the authorial text.'[599] This approach infuriated Pope, who thought that a 'focus on the minute rather than the general by a self-satisfied pedantic egotist' was 'a threat to culture' and 'lacked rhetorical elegance'.[600] As Rounce states, 'The cultural malaise, for Pope, is that pedantry and detail obscure the wider general principles and values of art and culture.'[601] Pope had actually complained to the older Tonson about his nephew endorsing this kind of scholarship, warning him that Theobald was in danger of threatening the good name of Tonson by employing a Bentleian-esque method to Shakespeare. With more than a hint of sarcasm, Pope writes: 'I think I should congratulate your Cosen on the New Trade he is

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[596] Thomas Lounsbury, *The First Editors of Shakespeare: Pope and Theobald* (London: D. Nutt, 1906), 94–95. See also Richard Foster Jones, *Lewis Theobald: His Contribution to English Scholarship with Some Unpublished Letters* (1919; rep. New York: AMS, 1966), 62–64.

[597] King, 'Pope's 1723-25 *Shakespear*, Classical Editing, and Humanistic Reading Practices', 10.

[598] King, '4. *Cardenio* and the Eighteenth-Century Shakespeare Canon', 82.

[599] Seary, *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 9; Adam Rounce, '40. Scholarship' in *The Oxford Handbook of British Poetry, 1660-1800*', ed. Jack Lynch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 685-700 (693).

[600] Howard D. Weinbrot, *Menippean Satire Reconsidered: From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2005), 235.

[601] Rounce, 694.

commencing of publishing English Classicks with huge Commentaries. Tibbalds <is an> ^ \will be ye/ the Follower of Bently, & Bentley of Scriblerus.'[602] Theobald's style of conjectural emendation certainly echoed Bentley's sentiments concerning the minutiae of language and the role that conjecture played in 'resto[ring] Sense to Passages in which no Sense has hitherto been found'.[603] Unlike Pope, who despaired of being compared to Bentley, Theobald praised him as a master of conjecture in *Shakespeare Restored*:

> The Alteration of a *Letter*, when it restores Sense to a corrupted Passage, in a *learned Language*, is an Atchievement that brings Honour to the *Critick* who advances it: And Dr. bentley will be remember'd to Posterity for his Performances of this Sort, as long as the World shall have any Esteem for the Remains of *Menander* and *Philemon*.[604]

However, it was likely the reception of Bentley's *PL* that encouraged Theobald's later emphasis and celebration of a traditionally acceptable form of conjecture in the preface to his edition.[605] Here, he side-lines the notion of relying on any critical methodology other than 'a diligent and laborious Collation... of all the older Copies'.[606] Although Theobald deeply admired Bentley, the outrage that ensued following the publishing of his edition was enough of a reason to reassure his own readership that 'the late Edition of *Milton* by the Learned Dr. *Bentley* is, in the main, a Performance of another Species' to his Shakespeare.[607] Whether they liked it or not, and no matter how hard they might have tried to distance themselves, Pope and Theobald were Bentley's successors. All three critics were advocates for conjectural emendation, even if Pope implemented it silently, and the fact that their editions of English works, all of which relied on conjecture, were published by the younger

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[602] Pope, 'Letter 142: Alexander Pope to Tonson, 14 November 1731', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 262.

[603] Theobald, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare restored*… (London, 1726), v.

[604] Theobald, *Shakespeare restored*… (London, 1726), 193.

[605] Jarvis has argued that Theobald 'took pains inoffensively to distance' his edition of Shakespeare from Bentley's Milton. See Jarvis, 90-91. See also Watson, 169-170.

[606] Theobald, 'Preface' in *The Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Lewis Theobald, 7 vols (London, 1733), I, xlii.

[607] Theobald, 'Preface' in *The Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Lewis Theobald, I, xxxix.

Tonson is a strong indicator that he too endorsed this particular approach. Even after the disaster of Bentley's *PL*, the younger Tonson still went ahead and published another critical edition that applied a very similar methodology. This was trailblazing in the field of textual criticism, and even if this kind of invasive scholarship was not fully appreciated in their own day, Pope, Bentley, and Theobald contributed towards and pre-empted the much later critical approaches to literary texts. This faction of early editors who utilised conjecture, and in doing so, often achieved something more akin to rewriting than restoration, fit within Rounce's assessment of textual criticism that 'anticipates the modern and postmodern approaches of the later twentieth century, where a text can be read against the grain, have its absent center revealed, and generally be made to say things very different from its ostensible meaning.'[608] Though many find Bentley's edition particularly perplexing, it seems to prefigure the kind of scholarship that characterises modernity.

A Tradition Gone Awry

Each editor and commentator applied their own critical and ethical system to *PL*, and while there are similarities, a notable evolution from exhaustive annotation to a critical argumentative commentary can be traced, the latter of which transformed into the eventual emendation of the text itself. At the centre, overseeing the entire operation that spanned from the end of seventeenth-century well into the eighteenth-, were the Tonsons. Hume's thorough erudition, which highlighted everything that was stylistically excellent about *PL*, gave way to Addison's essayistic approach that relied heavily on Aristotelian and Longinian poetic theory, and as such enabled him to employ an analytical system that exposed the potential deficiencies of the poem. Addison's criticisms, however, were tentative and few, barely noticeable amidst the praise he heaped upon the poem. Although a handful of his comments were negative, occasioned by a rigid upholding of his chosen Aristotelian system, Addison never took steps to intervene and rectify what he believed to be unbefitting of the epic genre. Addison knew that it was justifiable for a critic to disagree with Milton and wish that he had made different creative choices, but it was unacceptable for an editor to imaginatively amend so that *PL* conformed to any critical system or personal

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[608] Rounce, 689.

taste that Milton himself had not intended. This is precisely what Fenton and, to a far greater degree, Bentley was charged with. In fact, Theobald commented on the matter with that very accusation:

> It is plain, it is the Intention of that Great Man rather to correct and pare off the Excrescencies of the Paradise Lost, in the manner that Tucca and Varius were employ'd to criticize the Aeneis of Virgil, than to restore corrupted passages. Hence, therefore, may be seen the Iniquity or Ignorance of his Censurers, who, from some Expressions, would make us believe, the Doctor every where gives us his Corrections as the Original Text of the Author; whereas the chief Turn of his Criticism is plainly to shew the World, that if Milton did not write as He would have him, he ought to have wrote so.[609]

One is left wondering whether the younger Tonson might have felt as though he had overburdened himself with Bentley's edition. Judging by what he published throughout the 1720s, he had likely viewed Bentley's Horace as a marker of progression for classical scholarship, and his edition of *PL* was to be a hopeful, if not daring, attempt to achieve the same status within the relatively new setting of vernacular scholarship. This did not mean that it provided definitive answers to the questions surrounding the trajectory of said scholarship, but it was an exploration that promoted conjecture as the best way to edit poetry. Aside from its technical concerns, the edition also upheld and intensified the tradition of sanitisation, but even this was more of an inevitable biproduct resulting from Bentley's personal interests filtering through and shaping the results of his conjectural process. As such, any merit that could be gleaned from such edits was cancelled out by a fierce contempt for Bentley's editorial process. The edition does not receive even a scrap of praise from the older Tonson, who, in his correspondence with his nephew, rejects Bentley from the canon of editions, rendering him anomalous, an example of a tradition gone awry. He then proceeded to join in with the steady stream of polemic that issued from the *The Grub-Street Journal*, and other such magazines, while his nephew was left to lick his wounds in silence. Bentley did secure a bright future for *PL*, but not one that he or the younger

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[609] Quoted in Shawcross, *John Milton Volume 2, 1732-1801. The Critical Heritage*, ed. John T. Shawcross, 66.

Tonson envisioned. His edition was successful at dealing with any residual negativity attributed to Milton, but it did so by evoking powerful indignation that a distinguished text could be treated so violently and with such perceived carelessness. Many rushed to the aid of Milton and *PL*, which did nothing but further solidify the greatness of the author and his Christian epic.

Conclusion

Broadening the Scope of the Present Research

Out of all the Tonson editions, Bentley's caused the most uproar. The fact that people continued to talk about it long after its publication implies its importance. For centuries the debate has continued, and whether one approves of Bentley's methods or not, his influence on the subsequent editions of *PL* and other vernacular texts cannot be denied. This thesis has offered an overview of Lewis Theobald's editorial methods, but future research should seek to offer a more in-depth comparison between Bentley's *PL* and Theobald's 1733 edition of Shakespeare. While Bentley's *PL* was universally discredited, the ideas and critical apparatus that underpinned the project would endure and gain momentum. Just as Bentley's unconventional approach with Horace had inspired Pope and Theobald, his *PL* arguably had a similar effect on the future editors of vernacular texts. In the wake of Bentley's edition, vernacular scholarship might have reverted to the safety of a recognisably erudite and neoclassical approach, but, as Haugen has stated:

> The editors of Shakespeare and Spenser who came after Bentley emulated virtually all of his orientations to one degree or another. They intervened in their texts; they wrote annotations in which they explicitly handed down their personal verdicts; they often worked to find parallels in Shakespeare and other poetry; and they necessarily devoted their attention to single works, rather than indulging in the vaporous generalities favored by the neoclassical tradition.[610]

Theobald's edition of Shakespeare is the perfect example of this, a work that anxiously distanced itself from Bentley's *PL*, while simultaneously implementing many of its habits. Although Bentley's edition could be viewed as encapsulating the fullest picture of the Tonsons' vision for *PL*, it seemingly overreached to the point of self-destruction. The mission was not necessarily about the criticism and editing of a single poem, *PL* was merely the

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[610] Haugen, 235-236.

vehicle that facilitated the casting of a bold vision for the future of scholarship, and in this regard, both Bentley and the younger Tonson succeeded. Ultimately, the immediate success of Bentley's edition did not matter because the ideas that it propagated, regardless of their questionable application in *PL*, would become foundational, in some ways, to the future of literary studies. The subsequent editions of *PL* also offer some interesting insights into the capacity of Bentley's edition to shock its readers, but also shape the field of textual criticism and editing.

Although Bentley's *PL* came later and espoused a similar narrative of corruption and interpolation, he was not particularly influenced by the likes of Fenton, Pope, and Theobald. In reality, they were influenced by him.[611] We can learn from Thomas Newton, who acquired Pope's annotated copy of Bentley's edition from William Warburton (1698-1779), that even the great satirist, who lambasted Bentley privately to the older Tonson, and publicly in the pages of the *Dunciad*, secretly agreed or at least did not disagree with many of Bentley's edits.

> And he [Warburton] very kindly lent me Mr. Pope's Milton of Bentley's edition, wherein Mr. Pope had all along; with his own hand set some mark of approbation, recte, bene, pulchre &c, in the margin over-against; such emendations of the Doctor's, as seemed to him just and reasonable. It was a satisfaction to see fee what so great a genius thought particularly of that edition, and he appears throughout the whole to have been a very candid reader, and to have approved of more than really merits approbation.[612]

Even Bentley's adversaries were not able to fully deny his genius, but as Pope's example shows, they never felt obliged, and likely thought it unwise, to go public with their commendations. The same cannot be said for Bentley's advocates and successors, who

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[611] When discussing the impact of Bentley's critical editions, Haugen writes, 'What is truly distinctive about Bentley the critic is his dealings with his authors, as well as his loud assaults on the authority of manuscripts and of earlier textual editions. For however much his fellow scholars admired his work in Greek, it was manifestly Bentley's Horace, Terence, and Paradise Lost that made his wider reputation.' See Haugen, 239.

[612] Newton, 'Preface', in *Paradise Lost: A New Edition, with Notes of Various Authors*, ed. Thomas Newton.

never once denied his scholarly acumen, but nevertheless felt compelled to criticise his *PL* for its outlandishness. One such example is Zachary Pearce (1690-1774), who was the first to publish a full-length rebuttal of Bentley's most infamous conjectures in 1733. Pearce states that

> Dr Bentley is deservedly distinguish'd for his superior Talents in Critical Knowledge; they are own'd by the unanimous Consent of the Learned World, and have gain'd him a Reputation which is real and substantial: but this will be understood with exception to what he has done on Milton's Poem: In which tho' he has given us some useful and judicious Remarks, yet at the same time he has made many Emendations, which may justly be call'd in question.[613]

Pearce goes on to question some of Bentley's key assertions concerning the condition of Milton's personal circumstances at the time of writing *PL*. In particular, he disagrees with Bentley's notion that Milton was poor and friendless around the time when *PL* was published, which leads him to seriously doubt the existence of the editor, an individual who 'made Alterations and added Verses at his Pleasure in the first Edition of this Poem.' In fact, Pearce continues, 'Several of his Acquaintance, we are sure that Some of them, had had the perusal of the Poem before it was Publish'd; and would none of them have discover'd it to Milton if he had receiv'd such an Injury? Would none have warn'd him of the bold Alterations, time enough at least to have prevented their being continued in the second Edition…'[614] This response set the tone of those who followed. It was not that Bentley's critics wholly disagreed with the method and even some of the results that his conjectural approach yielded, but they refuted the extent and his key reasons for intervention.

      Over a decade later, Thomas Newton produced the first variorum of *PL*, in which he outlined what he deemed to be the positive and negative attributes of each major work of

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[613] Zachary Pearce, 'Preface', in *A Review of the Text of the Twelve Books of Milton's* 'Paradise Lost': *in which the Chief of Dr. Bentley's Emendations are Consider'd* (London: 1733), iv.

[614] Pearce, 'Preface', in *A Review of the Text of the Twelve Books of Milton's* 'Paradise Lost': *in which the Chief of Dr. Bentley's Emendations are Consider'd*, v.

Milton criticism that predated his own contribution (1749).[615] He begins by announcing that 'To publish new and correct editions of the works of approved authors has ever been esteemed a service to learning, and an employment worthy of men of learning.' After elevating the position of the critic, he attempts to transcend the longstanding literary debate that Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) famously labelled, 'The Battle of the Books', by claiming that 'It is not material whether the author is ancient or modern. Good criticism is the same in all languages.' As a 'good critic', Newton's 'first care [was] to print the text correctly according to Milton's own editions…' Echoing Pope and Theobald, he states that this was a luxury that could not be afforded to the editors of Shakespeare, largely because, 'the first editions of Shakespeare's works being printed from the incorrect copies of the players, there is more room left for conjectures and emendations.'[616] However,

> we who undertake to publish Milton's Paradise Lost are not reduced to that
> uncertainty; we are not left floting in the wide ocean of conjecture, but have a chart
> and compass to steer by; we have an authentic copy to follow in the two editions
> printed in his own life-time, and have only to correct what may be supposed to be
> the errors of the press, or mistakes occasioned by the author's blindness.[617]

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[615] Before Newton's variorum, Jonathan Richardson the elder (1667-1745) and his son of the same name (1694-1771), produced a lengthy biography of Milton's life followed by explanatory notes on *PL* in 1734. See Jonathan Richardson, Father and Son, *Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton's* 'Paradise Lost' (London: 1734). Although Bentley is not mentioned by name, it is clear that Richardson senior is alluding to him at various points throughout his *Life*. At one point the Richardson senior writes that '…*Milton*'s Blindness and Other Disadvantages had Occasion'd Suggestions and Assertions that we have it [*PL*] not as the Author *gave* it, but as Corrupted by Presumption, Folly, Carelessness, and I know not what' (cxxii). Seemingly, he fundamentally disagrees with Bentley's hypothesis of the interpolating editor, but at another point he affirms Bentley's only universally accepted edit of 'smelling' for 'swelling' (cxxxv). Similar to Pearce and Newton, the Richardson(s) take issue with Bentley's reasons for intervention, while also agreeing with a number of his comments and edits. Leonard gives a good account of the places where he believes the Richardsons's and Newton's analysis is being directly influenced by Bentley. See Leonard, 'Sound and Sense: 1667-1800', in *Faithful Labourers*…, I.

[616] Newton, 'Preface', in *Paradise Lost: A New Edition, with Notes of Various Authors*, ed. Thomas Newton, a2.

[617] Newton, 'Preface', in *Paradise Lost: A New Edition, with Notes of Various Authors*, ed. Thomas Newton.

Newton rigidly sticks to the tradition of collation, utilising the first two printed editions as the 'standard'. While always ensuring that 'the variations in each are noted', Newton is clear that 'we never deviate from them both without assigning, as we think, a substantial reason for it.'[618] The first two editions, according to Newton, are by no means infallible and must be treated with caution when consulted. Essentially, they must be sifted in order that Newton can 'transcribe all their excellences', while trying to avoid 'perpetuating their faults and errors.'[619] As Newton lays out his editorial approach, a tension becomes apparent between his claims and those of Bentley. What goes initially unspoken is soon commented upon and Bentley is subjected to a characteristic mixture of praise and censure, the latter of which issues from a reading of his *PL*.

> Dr. Bentley's is a great name in criticism, but he has not acquired any additional honor by his new edition of the Paradise Lost. Nay some have been so far prejudiced as to think, that he could not be a good critic in any language, who had shown himself so injudicious as one in his own mother-tongue. But prejudice apart, he was a very great man, of parts inferior to few, of learning superior to most men; and he has made some very judicious and useful remarks upon the Paradise Lost, though in the general they may rather be called the dotages of Dr. Bentley. He was more sagacious in finding faults, than happy in mending them; and if he had confined himself only to the former, he might have had better success; but when he attempted the latter, and substituted verses of his own in the room of Milton's, he commonly made most miserable bungling work, being no poet himself, and having little or no taste of poetry.[620]

This criticism is familiar and can be viewed alongside the common polemic of Bentley as poetaster. But Newton does not simply regurgitate denouncements of Bentley's type of scholarship, his is a compendious work that collects the good and useful insights from the

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[618] Ibid.

[619] Ibid.

[620] Ibid.

most notable Milton scholars of the long eighteenth-century, and Bentley was not entirely excluded from the exercise.

The Sanitisation of *PL* and Criticism of Vernacular Texts

The critical attention given to Shakespeare and Milton throughout the eighteenth-century remained unrivalled. In particular, Milton's chosen subject and widely accepted poetic genius instilled a great admiration within the early readers of *PL*. No other poet was as divinely inspired and no other poem was as sublime or packed with innumerable beauties that affected the reader so powerfully. *PL* was hailed as the first English classic that, by way of its Christian subject matter, transcended the narratives of its ancient predecessors. When considering *PL*'s historical status as elevated epic, John Leonard states that 'Milton is not writing for one nation or even one civilization, but for the entire human race. *Paradise Lost* is about how we got to be the way we are.'[621] Although Homer and Virgil sung of glorious battles and the establishment of empires, Milton's song rises to even greater heights as he tells of an event that has both universal and timeless implications. This unique and divine story that involved all humanity was also what largely facilitated a poetic style that elevated its author to the ranks of Homer and Virgil. Milton had undertaken an ambitious task and, as the self-professed conduit of the Holy Spirit, had executed it masterfully.

This thesis set out to answer a number of questions that complicate this narrative. I have endeavoured to show that the realisation of Milton's success required tremendous input from a group of early commentators, critics, and editors over a period that spanned decades. Milton was certainly a radical thinker, who broadly functioned outside of established orthodoxy, and by re-examining the reception history of *PL*, I have offered new insight into the extent to which his Republicanism and penchant for heterodoxical schools of thought affected the poem's initial popularity and acceptance. It was A.S.P Woodhouse, in 1949, who observed a conflict in the modern reception of Milton. He defines it as 'the emergence of two schools, one of which is so much impressed by Milton's heresies as to lose sight of his fundamental Christianity, while the other, in not unnatural reaction, insists

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[621] Leonard, *The Value of Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 87.

on the traditional character of the poet's religion.'[622] My thesis, however, asserts that this is not a modern occurrence, but rather it has always been the case that readers have grappled with Milton. *PL* initially struggled to get licensed because of an anxiety that it propagated regicidal ideas, and even when the first edition of the poem was published in 1667, it did not sell well. This led to a number of changes in the subsequent editions, including an explanation as to why the poem did not rhyme ('The Verse'), a prose 'argument' that prefaced every book, and a revision of the original ten-book format to a twelve-book version. While these aesthetic changes made some difference to the commercial viability of *PL*, the ideological wariness still remained and continued to militate against its acceptance. This is where my thesis intervenes. I have argued that from 1688 onwards the most resplendent editions conveyed a strong sense that the individuals who were involved in their production recognised that *PL* was plagued by its author's infamy and so they took steps, some bolder than others, to emancipate Milton and his epic from radicalism.

There is, therefore, little room for Stanley Fish's claims about seventeenth-century ideal Miltonic readership who were not at all interested in Milton's radicalism and how it might have impacted *PL*. In this regard, I have built upon the work of William Poole who has criticised Fish's apparent interest in the historical reader-response of *Paradise Lost*: 'That Milton himself was a radical and a heretic plays no part in this methodology; the ideal reader was not to be bothered by such extraliterary concerns.'[623] In reality, the detection of Milton's radicalism was precisely what concerned a number of early readers, and among these were the poem's publishers. This thesis has stressed the innovative role that publishers played through the beginning stages of the long eighteenth-century. Attempting to redefine who publishers were, the diverse roles that they played, and how their contributions affected the world of print going into the eighteenth-century complicates the still prominent narrative of them being predominantly driven by the desire to profit from the authors they worked with. This thesis has shown that publishers not only provided

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[622] A. S. P. Woodhouse, 'Notes on Milton's Views on the Creation: The Initial Phases', *Philological Quarterly*, 28 (1949), 211-236 (211).

[623] Poole, 'The Early Reception of Paradise Lost', 8. See also Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in 'Paradise Lost'* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967) and *How Milton Works* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001).

financial means that facilitated any given project, but they also partook in the creative and critical elements that characterised their publications. Publishers were not just tradesmen who released books, they actually decided the priorities of the book trade, and in doing so, shaped the field of literary criticism and editing.

It was largely the grandness of the older Tonson's 1688 edition that began the long effort to sanitise *PL* and nurture a sense of the text's pre-eminence. Without touching the body of the text, Tonson was able to initiate the process of separating Milton from his regicidal past. The aesthetic improvements imbued *PL* with the honour afforded to classical texts and encouraged the reading public to view it, for the first time, as an English classic. Milton was reframed as the nation's very own epic poet, and as such, the widespread scorn that he had evoked began to be transformed into a sense of national pride. It was, however, not only aesthetic issues that Tonson addressed, he also exploited the atmosphere of revolution that pervaded England at the end of the 1680s and presented *PL* as a piece of political propaganda that supported the Glorious Revolution. The phenomenon that was the 1688 edition of *PL* certainly encourages the reassessment of the publisher's role in the popularising and sanitising of their chosen authors, but the point of this thesis was to show how the priorities of that edition were perpetuated in the ones that followed. It could be said that the older Tonson was responsible for beginning a tradition of sanitisation. This was the beginnings of a revolution in print that was facilitated by broader societal revolution stemming from the Glorious Revolution.

The editions that followed the 1688 edition certainly offered something new. In particular, the chapters of this thesis convey how different educational genres of textual criticism and biography met with the religio-political landscape in interesting ways. We have seen that scholarship broadly views the new occurrence of luxury vernacular texts from 1688 onwards, and the equally new forms of vernacular criticism that often accompanied them, as attempts to make scholarship accessible to a lay readership. While I do not disagree with this, I have shown that when it came to Milton and *PL*, publishers and critics were also driven by the desire to redeem the reputation of Milton and his epic. This is because the accessibility and success of *PL* did not just rely on whether the reader could understand the text, but also if they were safe from the perceived regicidal author that haunted its pages. As such, this thesis challenges critics who believe that the early commentators and editors of *PL* were solely interested in issues pertaining to decorum and

style, not when the infamy of Milton hung like a shadow over his epic. *PL* needed emancipating from its author's past radicalism if it was to become more palatable, and popular political discourse continued to be utilised in the process. I have, therefore, shown that although the examples of paratextual criticism that this thesis examines belonged to the educational genre, that does not mean they were entirely disconnected from the earlier forms of vernacular literature that were inseparable from political discourse.[624]

Hume's *Annotations* shifted the attention onto the text of *PL*, which, as this thesis has demonstrated, was still overshadowed by lingering and fresh accusations of Milton's radicalism at the turn of the 1690s. I broadly agree with Marcus Walsh that the implementation of lengthy explanatory commentary did resemble that of seventeenth-century Biblical commentary and Latinate scholarship more broadly, and did help the public to view *PL* as the nation's own classical epic, but there were other politically beneficial reasons behind Hume's style of erudition. Expanding on the work of Howard Erskine-Hill and David Harper I have shown how it enabled him to obscure certain passages that whiffed of

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[624] For discussions on the political nature of the print and news revolution of the mid-seventeenth-century, see Clive Holmes, 'Drainers and Fenmen: The Problem of Popular Political Consciousness in the Seventeenth Century', in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, eds. A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 166-195; Sharon Achinstein, 'The Politics of Babel in the English Revolution', in *Pamphlet* Wars, ed. J. Holstun (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 14-44; Pauline Croft, 'Libels, Popular Literacy and Public Opinion in Early Modern England', *Historical Research*, 68.167 (1995), 266-285; Terence Kilburn and T. Kilburn and Anthony Milton, 'The Public Context of the Trial and Execution of Strafford', in *The Political World of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, 1621– 1641*, ed. J. F. Merritt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 230-251; Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper. English Newsbooks, 1641-1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Alexandra Walsham, '"Domme Preachers": Post-Reformation English Catholicism and the Culture of Print', *Past and Present*, 168.1 (2000), 72–123; Ann Hughes, 'Approaches to Presbyterian Print Culture: Thomas Edwards's Gangraena as Source and Text', in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England*, eds. J. Andersen and E. Sauer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 97-116; Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 266-285; Jason Peacey, 'Print and Public Politics in Seventeenth-Century England', *History Compass*, 5.1 (2007), 85-111; Graham Rees and Maria Wakely, *Publishing, Politics and Culture: The King's Printers in the Reign of James I and VI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Peacey, 'News, Politics, and People, 1603-1714', (2010), <https://www.gale.com/intl/essays/jason-peacey-news-politics-people-1603-1714> [accessed 5 October 2023]; David Cressy, *Dangerous Talk. Scandalous, Seditious and Treasonable Speech in Pre-Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Milton's republicanism. Even more than that, Hume's illumination of Milton's staunch anti-Catholicism bolstered Tonson's attempts to package *PL* as a text that supported the religious cause of the Glorious Revolution. Although *Annotations* was too clunky to be enjoyable, the return was great and Milton's popularity dramatically increased. Twenty-five years passed before the next notable edition was published, and as this thesis has controversially argued, the rise of Jacob Tonson II was accompanied by an exquisite edition of *PL*. The 1720 'Tickell's' edition was not only a reboot of similar aesthetic and critical processes that characterised the 1688 and 1695 editions, it was an upgrade.

While still preserving the goal of sanitisation, the 1720 edition moved away from petitioning the Williamite cause and into the more general field of nurturing a desire for national moral betterment. By including Addison's series of *Spectator* essays on *PL*, the 1720 edition was able to frame Milton's epic as a storehouse of practical and orthodox morality. Milton's poem was presented as an example of literary art that was wholesome and beneficial, not dissenting, and therefore troublesome. This was not just the work of a literary scholar, but a professional moralist, and contrary to the views of Nicolas von Maltzahn and Abigail Williams, Addison's essays were underpinned by political motivations and specific orthodox ideologies. In contrast to Hume's erudition, Addison's neoclassical approach more easily assisted the reader in successfully navigating *PL*, and by applying a system of literary criticism that emphasised the power of the poem's beauties and sublimity to enliven its moral underpinnings, he helped facilitate a readerly experience that was close to religious sanctification. As Addison diverged from Humeian erudition, he brought into sharp focus the issue of how to best critique vernacular texts. Addison's essayistic approach was triumphant and his creation became the most popular series of Milton criticism that had ever been produced.

The details of the process and production of this luxury book go a long way in quieting any lingering doubts pertaining to the younger Tonson's agency and creative output that existed outside of his uncle's immediate oversight and influence. Continuing the work of Stephen Bernard, I have shown that while the younger Jacob certainly trod the path that had been walked before him, he was eager to carve out his own reputation distinct from his uncle's, and this venture began with the publishing of the 1720 edition. Moreover, the inclusion of the *Spectator* essays was not only a shrewd marketing tactic, but it also implies that the younger Tonson was interested in the debates surrounding the processes of

vernacular literary criticism. It was, however, not just textual criticism that interested the younger Tonson, but textual editing. This thesis has shown that there was a divide in the Tonson camp over this issue, the elder being a fierce advocate for the manuscript tradition, while the younger was evidently far more open to endorsing experimentation with conjectural emendation. The difference of opinion initially became apparent after the publishing of Fenton's 1725 edition of *PL*.

Fenton had made minor amendments to *PL* that were seemingly driven by his own sense of textual rightness and taste. As a result, he was subjected to a *Grub Street* lashing for his textual meddling, but his edition was still widely celebrated for its unique biographical contribution. Similar to Hume and Addison, Fenton's account played its part in sanitising Milton's reputation by presenting a portrait of a mature and orthodox poet, who contrasted the younger and radical tract writer. This thesis has shown that Fenton's attempts to emancipate Milton from his past radicalism were in response to new threats from those who were trying to do the opposite. The likes of John Toland had previously ventured to appropriate Milton and *PL* in order to support their sectarian regimes at the turn of the eighteenth-century. With regard to the latter point, I have carried on the work of William Kolbrener, who, when discussing the early reception of *PL*, adopts a military metaphor to describe two opposing types of Miltonic scholar, aptly named as 'Milton's "warring angels" – or more particularly, that of angelic and satanic "camps" of critics.'[625] While Kolbrener, and Robert Bourdette before him, would view Bentley's edition as the foremost example of an orthodox critic engaging with the likes of Toland, I have argued that the contrasting nature of Fenton's and Toland's biographical accounts should also be viewed as evidence of an earlier critic intervening in this way. Comparatively, Fenton has received little attention from scholarship. Peter Lindenbaum alone has discerned a connection between the biographical accounts that preface Milton's prose and poetry, but I have intervened by reinterpreting the evidence in order to bring fresh clarity and new insight into the political and theological elements of Fenton's response to Toland. While offering a fresh interpretation of Fenton's textual amendments was not the main objective of my thesis, I do situate his edition amidst the work that Pope and Theobald were undertaking on Shakespeare in order to build a clear sense that the editing of vernacular texts was a rapidly

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[625] Kolbrener, *Milton's Warring Angels,* 1.

evolving field throughout the 1720s, and it was all happening under the supervision of the younger Tonson.

The Editing of *PL*

Perhaps future scholarship might discover more evidence that divulges the extent of the Tonsons' differing views on textual editing. There may well be further correspondence between the two publishers that reveal a dialogue about Fenton's edition of *PL*, as well as Pope and Theobald's work on Shakespeare. As this thesis has shown, we know that the older Tonson helped facilitate Pope's edition, and even after the backlash that it faced, he still seemed to hold the poet and his skills in high regard. However, we do not know what he thought about the drawn-out clash between Pope and Theobald, and although he joined in publicly lambasting Fenton, he did not appear to communicate to his nephew anything like what resembled his resentment for Bentley's edition. In general, it would be profitable for the claims of this thesis if more letters penned by the younger Tonson were discovered. One is left wondering whether there might be a response to his uncle's claims regarding Bentley's edition that would further ratify what I have asserted about his attitude towards conjectural emendation. Moreover, some more correspondence between the Tonsons and the critics that they employed would potentially help to bolster the claims I have made about a publisher's creative agency outworking in their projects, and specifically, *PL*. It would also be beneficial to our understanding of the relationship that publishers shared with the authors that they worked with. The lack of this kind of evidence is largely why the Tonsons were not able to receive their own chapter in this thesis. As it stands, the older Tonson seems to have little to say about his nephew's editorial projects, that is until the publication of Bentley's notorious edition.

Undertaken by England's leading classicist, this final edition was mired in falsehood and was viewed as an absolute affront on the textual fidelity of *PL*. In so many ways, Bentley's offering is the most interesting of all the Tonson editions and requires the most attention. One of this thesis' most important contributions has been to make sense of Bentley's critical methodologies and portray him as a bizarre, and yet somewhat inevitable, conclusion to a number of the Tonson's key interests relating to *PL*. Haugen writes that

'Throughout the eighteenth century, during and after his life, Bentley's name was synonymous with classical scholarship itself, largely displacing that of Joseph Scaliger.'[626] It was this prodigious reputation, a product of his unique brand of scholarship, that likely attracted the younger Tonson to the prospect of working with Bentley. Although there is far less surviving correspondence penned by the younger Tonson then there is from his uncle, there are some things that we can safely assume about the key role he played in the production of Bentley's edition from the available evidence. The most monumental insight is that he lent Bentley the only surviving manuscript for *PL*, and then seemingly conspired with him in concealing its existence, which understandably incurred his uncle's wrath. The younger Tonson was inclined to deception, something that can be seen in his dealings with Pope concerning the copyrights to his work and the publishing of Theobald's Shakespeare.[627] While this thesis has provided new insight into Bentley's contribution towards the sanitisation of *PL*, showing that his remarks concerning providentialism are reflected in his wider oeuvre, it maintains that what is most interesting is the unrivalled boldness with which he applies conjectural emendation. Unlike Haugen, who broadly divorces Bentley's theology from his work as a classicist, this thesis views his *PL* as reflecting all of his professional interests. However, primarily I believe that Bentley's edition functioned as a petition for conjecture to take its rightful place as the primary critical tool in the editing of English poems.

For the most part, Bentley was not interested in repeating Humeian and Addisonian scholarship, that is unless he could make an amendment in relation to any given principle of criticism. Just as Housman remarked about Scaliger's Manilius, any reader of Bentley's Milton can see that the act of amending the text was his main objective.[628] In and of itself this was not problematic, but Bentley's eagerness gave off the impression that he amended for the sake of amending. This begs the more pressing question that every reader of Bentley's *PL* wants answered: did he want to restore or alter? The answer was anticipated by Diarist and antiquary, Thomas Hearne, when, in 1712, he encapsulated the primary

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[626] Haugen, 230.

[627] Bernard, 'Introduction', in *The Literary Correspondences of the Tonsons*, ed. Stephen Bernard, 53-55.

[628] A. E. Housman, 'Housman to Asquith 22.iv.1926', in *Letters of A.E Housman*, ed. H. Maas (London: 1971), 236.

grievance that some intelligentsia had with Bentley's Horace: 'Dr Bentley's Horace is much condemn'd for the great Liberty he hath taken in altering the text'.[629] What was true for some regarding Bentley's Horace would become true for all in relation to his Milton. Even Bentley seemed to pre-empt the criticism that he was likely to receive when, in his note on I:647, he states: 'whether Restoring or Altering, let others judge'.[630] When discussing Bentley's Horace, Levine notes that 'Bentley may even have believed along with some of his modern admirers that it was less the rightness or wrongness of his conclusions that really mattered than provoking critical thought.'[631] This thesis has reached a similar conclusion with regard to his *PL*. Bentley believed that altering a text was no bad thing and that rewriting should be seen as a legitimate act of criticism, one that provoked critical thought, rather than passive acceptance. Most important to Bentley was the implementation of conjecture rather than the results it produced.

This kind of invasive approach would be made simpler when working with modern texts because they were not weighed down by countless manuscripts, and Bentley had struck gold with Milton because no manuscript existed—except that it did. Rather than abandon the unique opportunity to rely wholly on conjecture when editing a text, he denied its existence, but for Bentley, old habits die hard and he eventually silently consulted and collated the manuscript. This has served to wholly undermine Bentley's narrative of the editor and, as Harper states, has contributed towards the image of 'a callous or senile pedagogue slashing his way through paradise.'[632] Building on modern scholarship, this thesis has encouraged the reader to reconsider this fashionable opinion, but even if the methodological approach that underpins Bentley's *PL* is now less ambiguous and the claims

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[629] Thomas Hearne, *Remarks and collections of Thomas Hearne*, eds. Charles E. Doble and others, 13 vols (Oxford Historical Society: Clarendon Press, 1885-1921), XIII, 296.

[630] Bentley, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, 29.

[631] Levine, 'Bentley's Milton: Philology and Criticism in Eighteenth-Century England', 560. See also Paul Mass, *Textual Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 17; M. L. W. Laistner, 'Richard Bentley 1742-1942', in *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957), 252n.; D. R. Shakleton Bailey, 'Bentley and Horace', *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society*, 9 (1959-1962), 105-116; C. O. Brink, *English Classical Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 78-83.

[632] Harper, 'Bentley's Annotated 1674 Edition of *Paradise Lost*: Hidden Method and Peculiar Madness', 62.

he made about the text have been rendered not entirely unbelievable, the project as a whole is no less peculiar. Even more than Bentley's previous critical editions, his *PL* would come to be defined by 'excessive individuality' and a process of re-working an author in order to make them 'speak in the critic's voice'.[633] Regardless of the claims about the existence of a spurious interpolator, Bentley's project was to be received as an example of an editor who intervened not because he believed in Milton's genius and therefore cared about textual fidelity and restoration, but because he thought that he could improve what Milton had written.

It was not an edition of Dryden, or Shakespeare, or one of the many editions of Latin poets that the older Tonson clung to as he posed for his famous Kit-Kat portrait, but the 1688 edition of *PL*. Not only did he harbour an undying personal love for Milton's epic, but it was what had brought him the greatest share of his wealth and fame.[634] In a similar fashion, the Tonsons' efforts have secured *PL*'s reputation as an example of poetic excellence, and if it were not for their early editions, then the great poem might have been lost in obscurity. As it stands, it still remains a text situated at the heart of the study of English literature. It is no exaggeration to say that the Tonsons' dealings with *PL* shaped how generations of readers engaged with the poem and understood its key themes. Moreover, their editions were also vital to the instigation and evolution of literary studies and textual editing. In particular, the editions supervised by the younger Tonson functioned as an arena where the rival approaches of manuscript collation and conjectural emendation were pitted against each other in a battle for superiority. It is true that the Tonson enterprise, and the early enlightenment critics who helped build it, accomplished monumental success, but there were also instances of disunity. The majority of disagreements followed the publishing of the critical editions of major vernacular texts, which should perhaps come as no surprise considering that it was the divisive figure of John Milton who resided at the centre of this pioneering project. Milton's works were responsible for much discord both in his own time and in the years after his death, therefore, it was only fitting that the analysis and editing of his crown jewel would produce similar results.

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[633] Fox, 'Manners and Method in Classical Criticism of the Early Eighteenth Century', 119-120.

[634] Lynch, *Jacob Tonson, Kit-Cat Publisher*, 177.

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