

Stony Brook University



OFFICIAL COPY

The official electronic file of this thesis or dissertation is maintained by the University Libraries on behalf of The Graduate School at Stony Brook University.

© All Rights Reserved by Author.

Milton's Ideal Orator: God and Ethical Eloquence in *Paradise Lost*

A Thesis Presented

by

Libby Newhouse

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

English

Stony Brook University

December 2013

Stony Brook University

The Graduate School

Libby Newhouse

We, the thesis committee for the above candidate for the
Master of Arts degree, hereby recommend
acceptance of this thesis.

Douglas Pfeiffer
Assistant Professor, English

Clifford Huffman
Professor, English

This thesis is accepted by the Graduate School.

Charles Taber
Dean of the Graduate School

Abstract of the Thesis

Milton's Ideal Orator: God and Ethical Eloquence in *Paradise Lost*

by

Libby Newhouse

Master of Arts

in

English

Stony Brook University

2013

Modern criticism on John Milton's *Paradise Lost* has figured the poem as anti-rhetorical in its depictions of God, Satan, and their respective speaking styles. Such critiques, however, reveal a disregard for the rhetorical tradition and Milton's self-proclaimed humanism, and as a result reduce Milton's conception of rhetoric to a rejection of the art form. With an overview of humanist and Renaissance Christian understandings of rhetoric, this paper argues for a reconsideration of the poem's treatment of rhetoric. This paper demonstrates how Milton's depiction of the speech of God and Satan presents the reader with examples of ideal and corrupted eloquence respectively in order to educate the reader about the benefits and dangers of rhetoric.

Table of Contents

Milton's Ideal Orator: God and Ethical Eloquence in <i>Paradise Lost</i>	1
Bibliography	41

The publication date of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) marks a period of shifting views on the nature of rhetoric. While there is a turning to classical Greek and Roman rhetoric by the Renaissance humanists, the seventeenth century sees a turning away from rhetoric by both religious and secular communities alike. The rising skepticism toward rhetoric, specifically toward grand-style rhetoric that is associated with appeals to the emotions and with persuasion, has shaped contemporary Milton criticism. The understanding of Milton as anti-rhetorical is prevalent in modern Milton criticism, with Stanley Fish's work on Milton's figuring of God and Satan serving as a definitive example of this view's influence on Milton criticism. Such readings of Milton and *Paradise Lost* do not give proper attention to how the rhetorical tradition, not just rhetoric as it was understood in the seventeenth century, as well as Milton's identification as a humanist, shape his understanding of rhetoric. These readings of *Paradise Lost* as a rejection of rhetoric, with the reasoning that only Satan is rhetorical whereas God favors dialectic and logic, reduce Milton's conception of rhetoric to a mere rejection of it. On the contrary, by providing God and Satan with rhetorical speech, Milton offers an understanding of rhetoric that exceeds modern reductions of the art. *Paradise Lost* reveals an ideal conception of eloquence through God's speech, which is used for education and the promotion of truth and Christian love. Conversely, Milton demonstrates the necessity of uniting rhetorical speech with wisdom through the corrupt use of eloquence by Satan, who detaches rhetoric from truth and uses rhetoric as a means of deception. Looking to the rhetorical tradition as it relates to humanist education and Christian conceptions of truth provides a basis for the reconsideration of Milton's God as his understanding of the rhetorical ideal and his Satan as a warning against speech detached from the desire for truth.

Contemporary Milton scholarship often takes an anti-rhetorical stance on *Paradise Lost*, instead arguing that Milton rejects rhetoric within the poem through his portrayals of God and Satan. A critic noted for taking this stance is Stanley Fish, who has made significant contributions to Milton criticism with his analysis of the reader's journey through *Paradise Lost* in his book *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*. Devoting several chapters to the issues of language, rhetoric, and logic of *Paradise Lost*, Fish argues for an understanding of rhetoric that is based on his premise that the poem seeks to tempt the reader and the reader will naturally be tempted and forced to confront his or her position as a fallen person. Within this framework, rhetoric plays a fundamental role in the temptation of the reader. Fish goes further to argue that the poem's rhetoric is detached from its displays of logos and philosophic method, which in comparison to the ornate and technically skilled rhetoric of Satan that at the very least engages the reader, deters the reader from God's speech and leaves the reader in a compromising position between God's logical method and Satan's eloquence.

Fish acknowledges that the temptation of the reader need not be a dramatic affair wherein the reader is corrupted by Satan's words. The act that Fish is more interested in is the reader's relaxing of his or her guard, even for a second, and analyzing and recognizing the technical skill of Satan's speech, which leaves the reader to question the security of his or her faith. For Fish, rhetoric is a form of temptation, akin to the temptations of the flesh: "Through rhetoric man continues in the error of the Fall, through logic he can at least attempt a return to the clarity Adam lost" (61). This tension between rhetoric and logic, which can be traced to Plato, is stressed in Fish's argument. He says, "To the watchful Christian, the rhetorical appeal is something to be feared because it panders to a part of him he knows to be subversive, while the philosopher disdains it as a clouding of men's minds and an impediment to scientific

investigation,” which in turn makes clarity and plainness a valued form of speech precisely because it does not affect (61). While the reader may not be moved by or attracted to God’s speech, this is precisely the point according to Fish, as speech that affects the reader’s emotions obstructs the reader from using his or her reason to evaluate the truth and wisdom of the speaker.

For Fish, God’s speech is the pinnacle of non-affective speech as it avoids rhetorical strategies and tropes in favor of demonstrating a logical method. God is above eloquence, as he is the epitome of wisdom, and his speech is “Truth itself” (74). Fish figures God as a model of Stoic theory, saying, “his eloquence is not eloquence at all, but the natural persuasiveness that is inseparable from wisdom. The distinction between the truth and the form the truth takes in speech disappears...” (76). While God’s speech is Truth, to say that he is not eloquent because he surpasses the idea of eloquence is problematic. To reject God’s eloquence is to ignore the patterns of his speech that go beyond achieving the ideal of brevity as put forth by the Stoic philosophers or Cicero’s exordium. His speech does in fact make use of rhetorical tropes and strategies and with such skill and precision that they escape notice. As Longinus says in his treatise *On the Sublime*, “a figure is at its best when the very fact that it is a figure escapes attention” (xvii.1). While Fish is right to observe God’s preference for a logical and methodical style of speech, his insistence on rhetoric as temptation and God’s aversion to it due to its disguising qualities is to ignore the complexity of God’s speech and the diverse rhetorical tradition in which Milton was immersed.

Furthermore, while positioning Milton’s poem as an educational text for Christian readers, Fish fails to disclose the importance of emotion in Christian education and speech. Love is fundamental to Christian teaching, and is discussed in depth by St. Augustine in *De doctrina*, a source Fish cites often. While Milton’s God uses logos and structures his speech to demonstrate

a clear method of rationalization, he is not without emotion. His speech with the Son in Book III, for example, features several examples of pathos, such as his anger at Man's Fall but also his love for Man and for the Son, which are conveyed through rhetorical strategies that deviate from the model of brevity. Like Augustine, Milton too understands love as fundamental to Christian teaching and faith, and to deny emotion from Milton's God is to neglect the tradition of emotion in religious speech as well as Milton's intentions for the poem.

While Fish attempted to revise and defend his ideas in his follow up work *How Milton Works*, his view of rhetoric within *Paradise Lost* remains largely unchanged. Connected to his premise that "Milton works from the inside out," that is, that the direction of knowledge works from the inside out with the external landscape aligning with one's beliefs, the ability to speak well does not rely on one's rhetorical abilities and skills, but rather on one's character (23). This idea can be seen in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustine, as well as in Milton's other writings, but the idea of the ethical character being critical to oratory does not dismiss technique altogether. Fish cites the following quote from Milton's *An Apology*:

...yet true eloquence I find to be none but the serious and hearty love of truth: And that whose mind so ever is fully possest with a fervent desire to know good things and with the dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of them into others, when such a man speak, his words...like so many nimble and airy servitors trip about him at command, and in well order'd files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places. (948-949)

While Fish argues that Milton "renounces the very claims of art itself" and promotes "anti-aesthetic" principles, he cannot deny that there is a performance of rhetorical skill and technique within the quote (115). While Fish acknowledges Milton's skill as a rhetorician in the above quote, he continues to deny the importance of rhetoric as a whole in his insistence that

eloquence, for Milton, stems from a “rightly constituted soul” (120). This notion of the soul and of its desire for truth is fundamental to Milton’s view on rhetoric, but to simplify Milton’s views and demonstrations of rhetoric to one idea is to neglect the ways in which Milton engages with the tradition of rhetoric and demonstrates the importance of style.

Because this discussion of *Paradise Lost* focuses on Milton’s God as an ideal representation of rhetoric, William Empson’s text *Milton’s God*, the first major contribution to the topic, views Milton’s portrayal favorably, provides a valuable contribution to the discussion of Milton’s vision of God. Empson’s text is notable in its outright critique of Christianity itself and simultaneous defense of the poet against critics who argue that the poem’s inconsistencies and ambiguities pertaining to God serve as evidence of the poem’s failure. Repeatedly stating that he finds the traditional God of Christianity “wicked,” as well as drawing comparisons between God and historical tyrants like Stalin, Empson believes that people should be free to question whether God is wicked, which places Milton in a more sympathetic, and interesting, position regarding his portrayal of God (11). Empson says, “He [Milton] is struggling to make his God appear less wicked, as he tells us he will at the start (I. 25), and does succeed in making him noticeably less wicked than the traditional Christian one” (11). With this, Empson takes issue with critics, who, despite Milton’s dedication to scripture, have continued to deride and dismiss the merits of the poem in its success at creating a more virtuous and kinder God than that of scripture. Regarding the often-cited moral confusions of the poem, Empson argues that “the poem is not good in spite of but especially because of its moral confusions, which ought to be clear in your mind when you are feeling its power” (13). While Empson’s argument and analysis of Milton’s complex portrayals of both God and Satan do not focus on the rhetorical issues of the

poem, Empson provides an important defense of Milton's aesthetic achievements as well as a reading that places God as the central focus of the poem.

Empson's discussion of Satan questions how critics have previously read the character as a hero and as a fool. Rather than sympathizing with Satan or arguing that Satan is a tragic hero, Empson discusses Satan in relation to God and God's larger plan for the fortunate Fall. Although some critics have argued that there is inconsistency regarding God's omnipotence and Satan's arguments based on the fact that the war in Heaven lasted three days, Empson points out that there is a separation from what Satan and the other fallen angels perceive as the truth and God's knowledge. Empson highlights that Satan believes that God is not omnipotent because his army lasted three days, not realizing that God allowed for the war to continue for three days in order to display the powers of the Son for the loyal angels. As Empson notes, this opens up God's actions to questioning as it follows that God intentionally deluded Satan and provided him with a false sense of logic upon which he will base his opinion of God as usurper as well as his actions throughout the poem. Furthermore, Satan also fails to see that his intentions to corrupt God's newest creations, Adam and Eve, are in actuality part of God's plan as well for the fortunate Fall. As Empson says, "however wicked Satan's plan may be, it is God's plan too" (39). Rather than seeing an inconsistency between Satan's perception and the poet's, Empson calls attention to the ambiguities within Christian tradition that create difficulties for Milton in justifying God's way. For Empson, Satan and his fall stand as evidence of God's wickedness, which even Milton cannot escape, but he credits Milton's efforts in depicting a merciful God and in clarifying that although Satan is used by God, that does not make him heroic or sympathetic in his desire to sin and attempts to corrupt Adam and Eve.

While Empson's argument is clearly shaped by his strong and extreme personal views toward Christianity, his contribution to Milton criticism and to the discussion surrounding Milton's vision of God are significant. His attention to the ambiguities of God and the issues of fate, foreknowledge, and free will call for further conversation on the goodness of God and how Satan is to be understood within this context. This issue of God's goodness ties directly to rhetorical matters within the poem due to the strong current of ethics and morality within the rhetorical tradition and Milton's own ideas on rhetoric.

Addressing the debates on Milton's conception of rhetoric that surround *Paradise Lost* is Ryan Stark's article "Cold Styles: On Milton's Critiques of Frigid Rhetoric in *Paradise Lost*." Stark works against critics like Stanley Fish and Thomas Sloane, who argue that Milton rejects the rhetorical tradition and that his preference for plainness signifies his desire for aesthetic reform in respect to the idea of eloquence. Rather than focusing on plainness, as many critics have, Stark argues for a consideration of the warmth and vitality in Milton's rhetoric, and states that it is "the degree of heat" that determines Milton's view on rhetoric (21). For Milton, eloquent speech should give off warmth inspired by religious engagement that transfers pathos from speaker to listener, and this is exactly what Satanic speech can not accomplish with its "cold rhetoric" (21). Stark's analysis of rhetoric in *Paradise Lost* provides a contrasting critique to the Milton criticism that emphasizes Milton's aesthetic of plainness as a breaking from tradition and a discussion of Satan's subversion of eloquence that is beneficial to this discussion of Milton's portrayal of ideal eloquence.

Stark situates cold rhetoric within the tradition of rhetoric. Influenced by Longinus's work on the sublime and his concept of *psychrotita* ("false grandeur" or "frigidity"), Milton attributes Satan with a frigid sense of rhetoric that is magnificent, but best suited for courtly

displays rather than dialogues (21). Satan's speech, while possessing a sense of grandeur, is essentially empty and cannot convey a sense of warmth through genuine pathos. Starks draws parallels between the portrayal of Satan and Milton's political views. For instance, he sees a significant resemblance between Satan's "myself am Hell" (IV.75) and Louis XIV's famous "L'Etat, c'est moi" (I am the state), and he argues that the characterization of Satan is a critique on the self-aggrandizement and courtly behavior seen in Louis XIV and his Versailles project (22). The parallel between Satan's and Louis XIV's speech serves to broaden the critique of rhetorical false grandeur and arrogance. This arrogant rhetoric in *Paradise Lost* is constructed as a cold rhetoric that is a failed attempt at sublimity of speech. Longinus's idea of *psychrotita* suggests a deadness of speech as it leaves the audience cold rather than moved by lively eloquence, and with this, Satan's rhetoric is incapable of being sincere and can be seen as intending to "evacuate life itself from the listener" (23). Following this, Milton's extension of Dante's characterization of a frozen Hell in his description of the black flames and "darkness visible" (I.63) serves to capture the *psychrotita* of Satanic eloquence. Stark makes important connections between Milton and rhetoric that highlight the vacuous quality of Satan's speech, but in his discussion cold speech he does not clarify what constitutes warm speech aside from suggesting that in Milton's view it is brought about by religiosity of the speaker. Furthermore, while Stark argues that Milton is working within the tradition of rhetoric, he does not explain how God and the suggested warmth of God's speech can be seen as part of Milton's engagement with the tradition. Further examination of God's eloquence and how Milton works within the tradition through his characterization of God is needed.

Before turning to the poem itself, it is important to establish an understanding of Milton's conception of rhetoric as it relates to truth, education, and religion. To determine rhetoric as an

essential component to Milton's view of education and truth, Thomas Festa's *The End of Learning: Milton and Education* examines Milton's philosophy on education and provides a clear outline of Milton's conception of truth and humanistic learning, which are central to the motives and goals of *Paradise Lost* in educating its readers. Critiquing the anachronistic treatments of the term humanism, primarily the conflation of humanism as it stems from the Latin *studia humanitatis* with Christian humanism, Festa argues that Milton's humanism is firmly rooted in the Ciceronian conception of the humanities as a pursuit of cultural studies, which maintained a hold throughout the Italian Renaissance. This specific notion of humanism entails the study of classical and canonical texts for their ability to refine the sensibilities: "The refining function of literary study distinguishes the acculturated, equates the urban with the urbane, the literate with the literary. To know (or even to know *of*) these cultural pursuits, implies Cicero, is to cherish them for their superior humanizing influence" (81). In his defense of the study of Hellenistic texts in *Pro Archia* (62 B.C.E.), Cicero, Festa argues, locates the "distinguishing characteristics of learning and...ethical humanity in the remote Greek past" (82). Cicero's notion of locating ideals of learning and ethics in the past as a means of developing a more peaceful civilization through the refinement of the senatorial class' humanity and ethics establishes the characteristic of looking back or of "belatedness" found in republican humanism (82). Festa positions Milton as a humanist in this classical sense for his similar recognition of the value in classical texts for guidance in contemporary ethics, politics, and education.

While Festa pointedly emphasizes Milton's humanism as based on classical understandings of humanism, Milton's Christian faith undoubtedly shapes the goals of his humanist efforts. Pointing to Milton's allegory of the dismemberment of Truth in *Areopagitica* and his reliance on allegory in his system of education, which is not only a conventional means

of discovering truth, but a means of both encoding and decoding meaning, Festa highlights the Platonic conception of anamnesis present in Milton's conception of truth, which understands truth as not fully available to humans due to their fallen nature and removal from God (5). Man's fallen nature should not stop him from pursuing truth and attempting to reconstruct his prelapsarian knowledge, rather he should "remain faithful to what [he] must acknowledge is oblique to [him]," which, Festa argues, is what the conventionality of Milton's allegory teaches to readers (5). This issue of accepting a limited knowledge in the pursuit of rediscovering truth requires a hermeneutics that makes use of the limited access to past knowledge and tradition in order to knowingly construct an imperfect understanding of truth that can never achieve its previous sense of knowledge without direct access to God. Milton's conception of truth works alongside his understanding of humanism as a means of accessing prior knowledge and reconstructing lost ideas in order to implement them in politics and education for the betterment of society.

With this idea of humanism, Milton fostered a philosophy on education that was both ethical and political. Basing his humanist principles on those of the Venetian and Florentine Republicans, Milton believed the best way to unite and civilize the English nation was through the institution of local academies, rather than the reliance upon the universities and local churches, that promoted the study of the liberal arts (87). This emphasis on the "heroism of humanistic education" brings classical literary forms, namely the epic, into the discussion of education and how Milton's *Paradise Lost* figures into this larger context of humanism and education (90). While Socrates and Plato launched critiques against Homer and the potential for negative influence his epics carry, this demonstrates, as Aristotle recognized, the capacity for education and political influence through its mimetic qualities. The epic served as both policy

and education in poetic form, with the process of mimesis leading the audience to imitate the exemplary ideals and behavior demonstrated within the poem.

A combination of classical humanism with Milton's Christian understanding of truth can be seen in Book VIII, with the Socratic maieutics that occurs between God and Adam. This concept of Socratic maieutics is best demonstrated in the works of Plato, namely in *Symposium* and in the *Sophist*. Festa connects Plato's definition of Eros, the desire to possess the Good itself forever, and the issue of immortality, as it is the desire to possess forever that which is recognized in the mortal soul of another, to Socratic maieutics (137). The process of giving birth to an idea begins with the soul's being impregnated by the observation of beauty. The role of the philosopher, or in Milton's case, of God, is to "[help] the impregnated realize that he is pregnant with ideas" by means of providing questions so that the impregnated can realize he is expecting (137). Through dialectic, the impregnated gives birth to the idea, which is the Idea of Beauty Itself (*Symposium* 210e-212a). Beauty becomes an immortal form through this reproduction of the lover in love, which in *Paradise Lost*, Festa observes, is the correlation of God's image with the rationality Adam demonstrates in seeking a mate (137). In other words, God's image achieves immortality through Adam's request for a mate as the human race can now propagate with the creation of Eve.

With this, Festa considers Adam's request for a mate "the most significant educational scenario in the epic, since it is here that humankind reaches its first perfection, and it also here that Adam first learns" (135). Leading up to Adam's request, God fulfills the role of Socratic interlocutor, guiding Adam's thought process with questions and answers to lead Adam to learn his first lesson of the distinctions between heavenly and earthly orders and eventually "give birth to the *idea* of Eve in his dialogue with God" through first realizing her absence and his

want for companionship (135). God does not put something into Adam's mind explicitly, rather he helps to evolve the idea out of his mind by providing a context in which Adam can learn by recollection, "recalling...the nature of the divine image with which he was endowed," thus uniting this method of education with the conception of knowledge as remembering demonstrated in Milton's understanding of truth (138). Festa's examination of this scene between God and Adam connects his examination of Milton's understanding of humanism, knowledge, and education directly to *Paradise Lost* and provides an important overview of how Milton conceived of a humanistic education that understood knowledge as a remembering of truth, which has been obscured due to man's fall. Relevant to this humanistic model of education is the issue of rhetoric as it is one of the several arts to be undertaken in the study of liberal arts. Festa's examination of Milton's humanism and pedagogy unites Milton with the rhetorical tradition and highlights key concepts, such as Milton's conception of truth, understanding of knowledge as remembrance because of the Fall, and the resulting pedagogy that works within the tradition of humanism and rhetoric, which are relevant to this examination of Milton's God as rhetorician whose supreme eloquence educates the reader in its unity with and presentation of truth.

Festa's examination of the poem highlights Milton's use of the plain style within the poem, with the exchange between God and Adam highlighting the importance of dialectic to the plain style. With this, and because many Milton critics argue that Milton's God represents the plain style, it is necessary to review what the plain style entails in context of Milton's time. Although focusing on Ben Jonson and his poems, Wesley Trimpi looks to classical rhetoric to determine the qualifications of the plain style in his *Ben Jonson's Poems: A Study of the Plain Style*. He argues that the plain style is a result of the debates between rhetoric and dialectic, with

Socrates arguing for a philosophical style of speaking that counters the style of traditional rhetoric, which he associated with sophistry, and is more suitable for the purposes of discovery and teaching (6). For the early proponents of the plain style for educational purposes, rhetoric as an art represents a high style of speaking with higher concerns of persuading and moving the audience than on teaching. These debates raise the issue of a divide between meaning and expression, with plain stylists viewing speech that imitates dialectic and is stripped of ornamentation as increasingly suited for pursuits of truth.

While Socrates, and later Plato, see the two disciplines of rhetoric and dialectic as separate, Cicero tries to reunite the two disciplines by categorizing rhetoric into three main styles of speaking: forensic, epideictic, and deliberative, with forensic oratory representing the plain style. Trimpi uses Cicero's descriptions of the Attic orator and plain speech given in *Orator* as the model for the plain style. In *Orator*, Cicero declares that the plain stylist "is restrained and plain [and] follows the ordinary usage" and that the style "seems easy to imitate at first thought, but when attempted nothing is more difficult" (76). The plain style is conversational and seems effortless in its artlessness, but in actuality, the style requires great skill in order to achieve the right effect in the audience. The plain speaker, for Cicero, is also free from "the bonds of rhythm" and should not be concerned with "cementing his words together too smoothly," as it conveys a "not unpleasant carelessness...of a man who is paying more attention to thought than to words" (77). The plain style does not have to be monotonous, with plain orators being free to use maxims and to inject humor and wit into their speech (87). However, the plain stylist should avoid creating a spectacle of speech by forgoing ornamentation in the creation of elaborate patterns in syntax and structure, the creation of words, and the use of metaphor and embellishment. These standards set a standard definition of the plain style that holds in the

rhetorical tradition and provide a more precise understanding of what it means to adhere to the plain style.

Trimpi briefly discusses Milton's *Paradise Lost* in conjunction with the style of Ben Jonson and the plain style as described by Cicero. Miltonic blank verse, while sharing similarities to Jonson's controlled and restrained movement in his use of caesuras, reveals a persistence in Cicero's demands for the plain style. One of Cicero's suggestions for plain orators is to avoid "clauses of equal length, with similar endings, or identical cadences, and the studied charm produced by the change of a letter" (*Orator* 84). Such suggestions align Milton with a perpetuation of the plain style, at least in his avoidance of rhyme in his use of blank verse. While Milton demonstrates the plain style within *Paradise Lost*, especially with the poem's concerns on educating its readers and leading them to a discovery of God's mercy and love, the arguments that reduce Milton's God to a plain stylist and deny the role of the grand style in the poem overlook the issue of emotions in both Christian teaching and in rhetoric. For Milton, the plain style plays an important role in the educational goals of the poem, but it does not suffice in the necessity to convey the emotional aspects of the poem, such as God's love for man.

An understanding of the importance of emotion in Christian rhetoric comes from Deborah Shuger's examination of the role of rhetoric during the English Renaissance, specifically the relationship between the rhetorical tradition and Christian teaching. In Shuger's *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance*, she provides valuable context for understanding Milton's conception of emotional rhetoric as fundamental to education and persuading audiences of the truth. Rather than breaking from the rhetorical tradition, Shuger highlights how Renaissance England pulls from the "Greek, Roman, and medieval strands of rhetorical theory to create a Christian grand style in which art and grace, eloquence and

inspiration could cooperate” (54). Shuger argues against rough generalizations made of this time period’s understanding of rhetoric, namely the assumptions that the grand style had been completely displaced in favor of the plain style and that rhetoric was detached from philosophy and conflated with sophistry.

Shuger observes that some may find the idea of Christian rhetoric problematic. Indeed, much of her argument is framed by answering the following questions: “...how can rhetoric, and particularly the grand style, be a Christian discipline? That is, given the persistent Platonic-Patristic complaint that rhetoric operates in the realm of opinion, flattery, and appearance, is not sacred rhetoric a conceptual oxymoron?” (118). Such assumptions, Shuger argues, only take into consideration a small portion of the rhetorical tradition preceding the English Renaissance and disregard contemporary thought. Furthermore, while a shift away from the grand style can be observed in the second half of the seventeenth century and through the eighteenth century, this is not to say that there cannot be a Christian grand style; indeed, an elevated style of speaking is seen as a necessity for what is understood as the most important subject matter. Additionally, the religious issues of spiritual education and persuasion are highly rhetorical, and thus require a style of speaking that is able to convey truth and passion without indulging in mere word play.

While the Renaissance demonstrates a transition away from traditional Ciceronian rhetoric, there is still a reliance on classical rhetoric for the justification of a Christian grand rhetoric. Shuger emphasizes that the Renaissance does not break from early rhetorical theory as it adapts a “solution” of ancient rhetoric in maintaining the metaphors of the Battlefield and the Gymnasium to distinguish between commitment (rhetoric) and play (sophistry) (119). The emotional power or passion required of Christian preachers to move their audience toward the love of God suggests commitment and seriousness that detaches the Christian grand style from

sophistry's playful nature that readily makes the art of speaking visible. Furthermore, operating under the belief that a sacred subject required a sacred style of speaking, Renaissance rhetoricians look to Hellenistic rhetoric theory on the grand style as presented by Longinus, Demetrius, and Hermogenes, rather than to Ciceronian imitation, which although grand, was suited for forensic oratory and thus did not allow for sublimity and a sense of celebratory grandeur (155). It is important to note, Shuger emphasizes, that Renaissance scholars maintain a separation between rhetoric and sophistry through the avoidance of free play and dedication to preserve truth while simultaneously viewing rhetoric and philosophy as interrelated and not antithetical due to their mutual concerns with protecting knowledge and directing love.

The issue of passion and the emotions is central to Shuger's discussion of the creation of the Christian grand style, with the Renaissance embracing passionate rhetoric as a serious and legitimate discursive style and using Augustinian psychology of emotion to provide an emotional basis. The Renaissance is able to give passionate discourse legitimacy by means of the Augustinian psychology of emotions, where the will and love are the sources of emotion and all emotions are a form of love, which "provides the basis for the Christian grand style by reconnecting the emotions with the search for truth and the desire for God" (119). Moving in an opposing direction to that of Ramist theory, which simplified rhetoric to mere verbal embellishment removed from any psychological, theoretical, and historical bases, the Christian grand style treats "the specific characteristics of style (e.g. schemes and tropes) not as formal decorations of meaning but as the appropriate expression of the psyche in its attempt to apprehend and articulate transcendence" (194). Maintaining a connection between words and things, the Christian grand style maintains Augustine's semiotics. With this, verbal imagery through the use of metaphor and analogy is seen as a way to help stir the emotions and to allow

the mind to move from the seen to the unseen. The language of the grand style does not mask intent or truth, as it is later accused of in the second half of the seventeenth century due to the rising influences of Cartesian rationalism and scientific empiricism, but rather it joins rhetorical teaching with interconnected activities of the psychological and emotional activities of the self and the Spirit.

This brief summary of Shuger's extensive overview of English Renaissance religious rhetoric, from its origins to its disenfranchisement by scientific empiricism and Cartesian rationalism, helps to situate Milton and his views on rhetoric. The time in which Milton composed and published *Paradise Lost* is one of a gradual shift away from the Christian grand style, but it is crucial to keep in mind that this understanding of rhetoric maintains a hold, especially on the Christian and humanist Milton. Shuger's examination of the role of emotion in Christian rhetoric allows for Milton to give God emotional speech without compromising wisdom or logic as a result. Furthermore, her explication of Christian rhetorical theory provides support for this analysis on how rhetoric is fundamental to truth and knowledge for the Christian and in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Because of Shuger's thorough description of English Renaissance rhetoric and Christian rhetorical theory, the eloquence of Milton's God can be seen as an ideal representation in its being simultaneously serious and emotionally inspired.

Festa, Trimpi, and Shuger help to elucidate how Milton understood rhetoric and the rhetorical tradition due to his education and the humanist and religious traditions he inherited. While they highlight important concepts that are relevant to *Paradise Lost* and provide a clearer understanding of how God is a demonstration of an idealized sense of eloquence, there are further connections to be made between Milton's understanding of rhetoric as demonstrated in *Paradise Lost* and the rhetorical tradition. Daniel Shore's analysis of Milton's rhetoric in *Milton*

and the Art of Rhetoric provides a clearer picture of Milton's understanding of himself in relation to the tradition of rhetoric and how rhetoric connects to Milton's dedication to reason and truth. Shore's analysis is divided into two sections that analyze how Milton breaks from and adheres to the tradition of rhetoric. Shore's discussion of Milton's divergence from the tradition is distorted, however, due to his attention to Milton's political writings over his poetics and his limited scope on the rhetorical tradition, simply looking at only Greek and Roman rhetoric, thereby neglecting Augustine's views on rhetoric as well as the establishment of a Christian rhetoric as detailed by Deborah Shuger. Despite these issues in his analysis, he highlights important issues on freedom and constraint and how they are intertwined with reason and truth, which are useful for examining the role of rhetoric in *Paradise Lost*.

In analyzing Milton's conception of truth, Shore argues for a view of Milton's writings on truth as "rhetorical gestures," with the focus placed on how Milton uses truth as a means of persuasion (63). Refuting Stanley Fish's understanding of Milton as anxious in his representation of Scripture due to fear of misrepresentation, Shore positions Milton as possessing great skill in his ability to present truth with subtle and persuasive interpretation coming from within the language that allows Milton himself to become a supplement to Scripture (68). However, Truth needs no supplement, as Truth is fully capable of defending herself and defeating her enemies, as Milton points out in *An Apology* (72). Rather than erring and seeing Truth as in need of a defender, Shore says that for Milton "[t]he reason for allying ourselves with Truth is less that she needs us than that we need her" (74). Although one risks punishment and pain in speaking the truth, doing so allies us with Truth and is a better alternative than to be deserted by her and "have one's mouth to become a 'common road' from which truth, falsehood, and calumny emerge indistinguishably" (75). On the other hand, to speak truth is to be granted "true eloquence," with

Milton defining “true eloquence” as “the serious and hearty love of truth” (*An Apology* I.949). For Milton, eloquence relies solely on the expression of an inner condition, love; and only those who are moved by love to speak the truth are capable of the deeply persuasive true eloquence.

While Shore argues that this understanding of true eloquence separates Milton from the rhetorical tradition, the idea is present throughout the tradition and is especially stressed in classical rhetoric. Plato repeatedly expresses the necessity for rhetoric to be united with dialectically produced knowledge in order to teach audiences about the Good. In *Phaedrus*, Socrates critiques Phaedrus’s argument that an orator does not need to know the truth about his subject, only how to persuade, arguing that such rhetoric harvests “[a] crop of really poor quality” (260d). For Roman rhetoricians, like Cicero and Quintilian, rhetoric incorporates ethics and it is understood that the ethical man is better at speaking, sentiments popularized through Quintilian’s definition of rhetoric as *vir bonus, dicendi peritus* (“the good man speaking well”) (*Institutes of Oratory* 12.1.1). Furthermore, Shuger’s discussion of the role of love in Christian rhetoric, which finds support in Augustinian psychology of emotions and in Hellenistic rhetoric, highlights that Milton is not alone in his making connections between the emotions and the pursuit of truth. With this, Milton’s conception of true eloquence, while moving away from an emphasis on craft and skill, has a strong basis in the rhetorical tradition.

This particular notion of eloquence carries with it an understanding of the importance of the unity between ideas and words as “true eloquence” demonstrates a love and pursuit of truth through the ability to select the right language to articulate one’s wisdom. The unity of form and meaning receives attention from within the rhetorical tradition, notably from Longinus in his discussion of the sublime and Augustine’s semiotics. In Longinus’s description of the sublime, he explains that sublime speech should not be “left to itself without the ballast and stability of

knowledge” (115). Style cannot be separated from meaning for the true sublime, and one must always consider the adornment of a passage, which if “indiscriminately applied” shows itself to be “mere bombast when...stripped away” (120). Rhetorical figures should be appropriate to the idea in order to prevent excesses in style, and although “rhetorical figures by their nature reinforce the sublime,” “a rhetorical figure would appear to be most effective when the fact that it is a figure is concealed” (137, 138). The words should support the ideas and emotions and never overpower them. Augustine’s semiotics of *res* and *verba* also reiterates this idea that good speakers should strive for a harmonizing of the ideas and the words chosen to represent them, with Scripture serving as the model of eloquence for Augustine because of the union of content and style. He notes of the sacred writers’ eloquence: “...the words in which they are put seem not so much to be sought out by the speaker as spontaneously to suggest themselves; as if wisdom were walking out of its house, –that is, the breast of the wise man, and eloquence, like an inseparable attendant, followed it without being called for” (IV.vi). For both Longinus and Augustine, eloquence conveys a naturalness that stems from the speaker’s wisdom and discretion with content and style.

This overview of the fundamental role rhetoric plays for Milton in terms of education, religion, and truth provides a basis for the following considerations of God and Satan’s speeches as examples of Milton’s conceptions of good and bad rhetoric respectively. Milton’s understanding of rhetoric does not remove him from the rhetorical tradition, but shows how rhetoric is critical to religious and epistemological practices with direct connections made between knowledge and eloquence. Turning to the poem, rhetoric is fundamental to Milton’s goals to educate the reader and to represent truth in *Paradise Lost*, with Milton’s portrayals of God and Satan demonstrating his views on eloquence and wisdom.

A close examination of God's speeches throughout *Paradise Lost* reveals the use of several rhetorical conventions ranging beyond those conventionally used in the plain style as outlined by Cicero in *Orator*, following Trimpi's examination of the plain style. Rather than arguing for Milton's God as a strict dialectician, who adheres to logos and avoids techniques associated with rhetorical speech, or as an orator of the plain style, God's speeches demonstrate an oscillation between different styles of speaking, thus meriting further consideration of God as a rhetorician. In the beginning of his speech in Heaven, God's speech immediately reaches beyond the limits of the plain style. Viewing the events of Hell below with the Son, God directs the Son to witness Satan's fallen state:

Only begotten Son, seest thou what rage
Transports our adversarie, whom no bounds
Prescrib'd, no barrs of Hell, nor all the chains
Heapt on him there, nor yet the main Abyss
Wide interrupt can hold; so bent he seems
On desparate reveng, that shall redound
Upon his own rebellious head. (III. 80-86)

Rather than stating plainly that Satan has escaped the confines of Hell, thereby fulfilling the requirements of the plain style, God chooses to substantiate the events and provide a more elaborate depiction of the circumstances of Satan's journey. Detailing Satan's journey in such a manner has rhetorical consequences that surpass the effects of logos itself. By providing a step-by-step account of Satan's escape from the confines of Hell, God reveals a consideration for his audience, the Son and, reaching out from the poem, the reader, seeking to entertain with a brief yet elaborate narrative interlude. While a more straightforward acknowledgement of Satan's

escape would satisfy the requirements of logos and the plain style and, arguably, the immediate dramatic situation as well, God makes stylistic and rhetorical choices that complicate the positioning of God as a plain stylist.

God's speech in Heaven continues to reach beyond the boundaries of the plain style and instead serves as an exemplum of Milton's ideal of eloquence, which, to restate, is "the serious and hearty love of truth" (*An Apology* I.949). When foreseeing the Fall of Man, God demonstrates pathos through his anger at Man's disobedience, a technique traditionally linked to the grand style wherein the orator uses impassioned language to make an emotional appeal to the audience or, for the Christian speaker, to transfer the love and passion for God. However, God's display of pathos is conveyed through his limited use of interrogation, the rhetorical question. After providing a detailed account of Satan's agenda to make his way into Paradise and seduce Man with tempting lies, God first makes use of *exuscitatio*, the use of rhetorical questions to stir the audience by the conveyance of one's own vehement feeling, as he issues subdued indignation at Man's Fall:

...So will fall,

Hee and his faithless Progenie: whose fault?

Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of mee

All he could have... (III. 95-98)

The purpose of the second question is to answer the first, an example of anthypophora, as well as to imply the answer to its own. This self-answering question provides a simple directness expected of the plain style, but also imparts a sense of gravity to God's argument. By using different types of rhetorical questions for specific effects, emotional and logical, God delivers an impassioned speech that leads the audience to reason with the implied response as well as share

in his emotional state. Also, to pause here to consider God's word choice with the use of "ingrate," which carries modern connotations that can figure God as uncharacteristically indignant, it should be noted that "ingrate" is the correct word etymologically since it literally means ungrateful. Milton provides God with a word that is perfectly suited for its context, but his choice also works to remind the reader of his or her fallen perspective, with the reader having to face his or her limited abilities of language and understanding. Keeping this limited understanding in mind, Milton uses God and his diction to elevate his speech as it is not limited or corrupted by the Fall, but rather perfectly suited for its cause.

With this awareness of Milton directing God's speech outward toward the reader, it is necessary to consider the strategies God employs and the rhetorical effects they produce on his audience. The few instances of rhetorical questioning in God's speech in Heaven call attention to Milton's intended audience for God's speech: the reader. When addressing the Son as he sympathizes with Man's fate, God again makes use of questions for dramatic effect:

... what proof could they have givn sincere

Of true allegiance, constant Faith or Love,

Where onely what they needs must do, appeared,

Now what they would? what praise could they receive? (III. 103-106).

Early on in his speech, God demonstrates his skills as an orator, making use of rhetorical questions to prove not to the Son, but to the poem's audience, his reason as well as his compassion. Because the Son shares God's knowledge, it is unnecessary for God to inform the Son on events that have transpired and will transpire, as well as for his efforts of persuasion. God's speech is involved with the external rhetoric of the poem, on the level of the narrator speaking to the audience, and works in tandem with the poet's goal to "justify the ways of God

to men” (I. 26). Having God subtly address the reader reaffirms Milton’s understanding of free will where the reader, like Adam and Eve, are free to follow God’s good rhetoric or be persuaded by Satan’s false rhetoric. The subtlety of his address is such that the reader is not made aware of the direction of God’s speech immediately. Although the speech can be read as addressed to the reader from the beginning of the speech with God’s narrative of Satan’s voyage, the realization of this fact does not dawn on the reader immediately as it is not until God poses questions, which are explicitly for the reader and not the Son.

Throughout his speech in Heaven, God relies on the use of repetition (*conduplicatio*) to add emphasis and to convey pathos in a predominantly forensic speech. The repetition of words is prevalent in the beginning of the speech when God foresees Satan’s role in Man’s fall, in phrases such as “By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert,” and “For man will hark’n to his glozing lyes, / And easily transgress the sole Command, / Sole pledge of his obedience... (III. 92, 93-95). Repetition is a defining quality throughout God’s speech, as he continues to rely on the device throughout his oration on the Fall of Man: “Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell” and ““I formd them free, and free they must remain” (III. 102, 127). The repetition of these key words calls for the audience to focus on them and acknowledge the significant weight they carry in the story of the poem itself. Additionally, this stylistic repetition conveys pathos, such as when God proclaims, “O thou in Heav’n and Earth the only peace / Found out for mankind under wrauth, O thou / My sole complacence!” (274-276). The use of repetition allows for an expression of pathos by placing additional emphasis on key words, “O thou,” without breaking from the established tone and rhythm of the speech. Through his use of repetition, God achieves the primary goals of the Christian speaker to both educate and move the audience.

Like God, the Son also makes use of this stylistic pattern of repetition. The Son's use of *conduplicato*, a defining characteristic of God's speech in Heaven, supports the unity between the Father and Son. For example, when speaking of his sacrifice, the Son offers:

Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life

I offer, on mee let thine anger fall;

Account mee man; I for his sake will leave

Thy bosom, and his glorie next to thee

Freely put off, and for him lastly dye

Well pleas'd, on me let Death wreck all his rage... (III. 236-241)

There are several instances of repetition of words and phrases in this single passage. To enumerate, the Son repeats "mee," "life," the prepositional phrase construction seen in "mee for him" and "life for life," and the construction of the pleas "on mee let thine anger fall" and "on me let Death wreck all his rage." With the first use of "mee," the Son refers to his as the divine Son, which is in contrast to the Son as a mortal man who will die for Man's sins. Considering the repetitive phrase "life for life" in conjunction with the subtle repetitions of "mee," the speech draws attention to the fundamental role of the Son in Man's redemption with the meaning of "mee" transforming in meaning from the first line to the second and the clear exchange the Son intends to make with his sacrifice: his life for the eternal life of Man through salvation. These figures of repetition, along with the Son's use of *polypoton*, the repetition of a word in a different grammatical form (thee/Thy, dye/Death), which further emphasize the transformation of Christ, and consequently, Man, aligns with the rhythm and style of God's speech and emphasizes the unity between the Father and the Son. The Son's speech and its use of stylistic repetition stresses

this unity, which is important to God's concluding proclamation that the Son must be honored as God and through the Son, God will be reunited with Man:

Then thou thy regal Scepter shalt lay by,
For regal Scepter then no more shall need,
God shall be All in All. But all ye Gods,
Adore him, who to compass all this dies,
Adore the Son, and honour him as mee. (III. 339-343)

Both God's and the Son's use of repetition throughout Book III builds up to this statement that fulfills Christian destiny, "God shall be All in All." The sequence of repeated words throughout the speech is resolved in this phrase, which creates a sense of completion and harmony for the speech, but also for what the speech conveys: Man's salvation through providence. The conclusion of God's speech and the detailing of providence provided by the Son are united through their parallel stylistic expressions wherein the expression of the idea is as important as the idea itself.

The unity between style and content is important to God's speech in Heaven as it relates to Milton's understanding of ideal eloquence. As the source of truth and love, God's eloquence is a natural product of his love and wisdom, which allows for him to unite in harmony the *res* (things or ideas) and *verba* (words) in his speech. Throughout *Paradise Lost*, God's speech is exemplary in creating a harmony between the ideas and the words themselves, as can be seen in this particular instance of his speech in Heaven:

So Man, as is most just,
Shall satisfie for Man, be judg'd and die,
And dying rise, and rising with him raise

His Brethren, ransomd with his own dear life.

So Heav'nly love shall outdoo Hellish hate

Giving to death, and dying to redeeme,

So dearly to redeem what Hellish hate

So easily destroy'd and still destroyes

In those who, when they may, accept not grace. (III. 294-302)

This being one of God's more stylistically intricate passages serves as a demonstration of God's technical skill as a rhetorician and an exemplum of true eloquence. The repetitive phrases and structures that define God's and the Son's speech are present here as well, with the use of *polypoton* ("die" / "dying" / "death" and "rising" / "raise") serving a critical role in foregrounding the essential actions of providence. There is ornamentation of speech with the precise control of its form and use of detail, such as the frequent use of caesuras within the middle of a line that lend the speech a sense of control and restraint. However, the subtlety of this ornamentation allows the focus to remain on the meaning of the passage so that the ornamentation of repetition and precise syntactic phrasing does not draw attention to itself and obstruct the meaning. With this, Milton's God sets the standard for eloquence in the harmonizing of *res* and *verba* and for a command of style that ranges from sparser plain speech that showcases logos to more ornamental speech that uses techniques like strategic questions and repetition in order to demonstrate emotion and wisdom.

God's interactions with Adam in Eden before the Fall reveal the educational value of speaking with God. Although their conversation falls into the category of dialectic, which is traditionally set apart from rhetoric, the ways in which God adopts a new style of speaking and guides Adam through their conversation in order to illuminate truth are highly strategic and merit

a close rhetorical reading. While Socrates and Plato see oratory and dialectic as mutually exclusive, Aristotle and Cicero allow for a relationship between the two, with Aristotle seeing dialectic and rhetoric as counterparts in his *Rhetoric* and Cicero understanding rhetoric as the union of dialectic and ethics with his description of the plain style modeling the conversational quality of dialectic in his *Orator*. Even though the scene is primarily non-rhetorical in that there are no speeches and Milton himself would have understood rhetoric and dialectic as categorically different from one another, although not mutually exclusive or antithetical, the tradition as represented by Aristotle and Cicero allows for an understanding of the scene as more rhetorical than it immediately appears.

Soon after the creation, God converses with Adam and creates a specific speaking context in which Adam can exercise his reason to affirm his relation to God and request a partner in the form of Eve. The dialogue begins with Adam's "presumptuous" request: "In solitude/ What happiness, who can enjoy alone, / Or all enjoying, what contentment find?" (VIII. 367, 364-366). This request prompts God to launch the facetiously asked question "What call'st thou solitude?" and suggest that the animals provide companionship for "they also know, / And reason not contemptibly" (369, 373-374). Adam remarks that God replies to his questions "with a smile more brightened," which lends not only a human quality to God, but also a playful and paternal one. Through this adoption of a more distinctly human personality, God demonstrates his abilities as a speaker to readily adapt to the needs of different speaking situations. Wanting Adam to demonstrate his *logos*, or his ability to reason and determine his relationship to God, God deliberately takes an opposing stance to Adam so that he may encourage Adam to prove his own argument.

This exchange between God and Adam has rightly been compared to Socratic dialogues, as Thomas Festa demonstrates in his analysis. More attention is needed, however, to how rhetoric is still at work in this exchange in order to emphasize God's example of good rhetoric. The exchange is marked by God's use of artificially asked rhetorical questions with the answer in mind, which are not featured frequently in his speech in Heaven, beginning with the initial "What call'st thou solitude?," but continuing to ask: "is not the Earth / With various living creatures, and the Aire / Replenisht, and all these at thy command / To come and play before thee / know'st thou not / Thir language and thir wayes..." (369-373). These questions work to establish God on an opposing side of an issue from Adam, but the intention is not for eristic purposes with God seeking to win an argument with Adam. Rather, God takes an opposing side for the sake of discovery and expression of truth, thus making his intentions heuristic, as he eventually tells Adam at the end of their discourse that he agreed with him all along:

I, ere thou spak'st,
Knew it not good for Man to be alone,
And no such companie as then thou saw'st
Intended thee, for trial onely brought,
To see how thou could'st judge of fit and meet. (VIII. 444-448)

God reveals his intentions of wanting Adam to make use of his rational and verbal skills in order to persuade him of his argument. With this admission of playing a part to encourage Adam to exercise his skills, God creates a specific speaking situation, an exchange of ideas and contrasting arguments for the educational purpose of uncovering truth in the guise of a debate, with both God and Adam making use of their verbal skills in order to persuade the other. While God performs many functions in this dialogue, including his taking a contrary stance, serving as

Socratic teacher, establishing a heuristic setting for the dialogue, asking strategic questions to direct the course of the argument and thus its inquiry, he leaves the discovery to Adam, who is not discovering a new truth but rather recognizing the truth that was previously hidden from him.

This conversation between God and Adam reveals the interrelationship between verbal and rational skills that defenders of rhetoric like Aristotle, Cicero, and Augustine have stressed in order to uphold rhetoric's importance against its philosophic opponents. Unlike God, Adam sees the exchange as eristic wherein his future contentment is at stake. This urges Adam to make the most effective use of language and use logos in order to persuade God of his argument. To do so, Adam must convince God of his awareness of his subordinate position to God as well as his likeness to God, which Adam accomplishes by mirroring God's style by posing rhetorical questions:

Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
And these inferiour farr beneath me set?
Among unequals what societie
Can sort, what harmonie or true delight? (381-384).

More so than God's rhetorical questions, Adam's questions are an example of *erotesis*, which in strongly implying its own answer, work to convey a truth on the subject. The succession of these questions demonstrates awareness for both audience and decorum, as Adam conveys his commitment to his argument and his passion to one who has total control over the matter. Furthermore, these questions are part of a larger strategy of comparison that Adam employs throughout his argument, comparing himself to the animals to show his superiority and to God to show his imperfection, which he demonstrates on multiple occasions: "Thou in thy self art perfet, and in thee / Is no deficiencie found; not so is Man" and "[Thou are] through all numbers

absolute, though One; / But Man by number is to manifest / His single imperfection..." (VIII. 415-416, 421-423). These comparisons demonstrate Adam's understanding of his unique position among God's creations as unable to converse with beasts and unable to reach God's perfection, who achieves the absolute within his oneness. These comparisons highlight Adam's progress towards discovering knowledge through a process that is rhetorical, as his argument hinges on how he make skillful use of rhetorical devices to construct and support his argument.

This analysis of God as a demonstration of Milton's conception of ideal rhetoric works against the modern conception of rhetoric and its role within the poem. Rhetoric has, at least since Romanticism, often been associated with Satan, and Milton's depiction of Satan has inspired much discussion and debate of his eloquence and command for rhetorical technique. Indeed, the nature of Satan's temptation of Eve, of convincing her of a lie so that it appears more true than God's commands, is cited by critics like Stanley Fish (*Surprised by Sin*) and Thomas Sloane (*Donne, Milton, and the End of Humanist Rhetoric*) as an example of Satan's abilities of persuasion and rhetorical skill and of Milton's rejection of rhetoric. When considering Satan, however, in context of how classical and Renaissance rhetoric conceived of eloquence and wisdom, it becomes clear that Satan is a vision of eloquence and wisdom that is corrupt or crooked. Considering the view, shared by Cicero, Augustine, and Renaissance humanists, that eloquence is wisdom speaking copiously, Satan, then, can be seen as only embodying one part of this statement. Satan's ideas and speech do not demonstrate true wisdom, but rather through his skill at presenting fallacy and lies convincingly, his ideas and speech take on the appearance of wisdom while in actuality being removed from truth. Through a close examination of his speech, the skill and craft behind the creation of this illusion of truth and wisdom are made readily

apparent and Milton's understanding of good rhetoric is made clear with the contrast of Satan's example of corrupted rhetoric.

In the poem, Milton quickly establishes Satan as a kind of sophist who makes the weaker argument appear the stronger. Defeated and banished to Hell, Satan demonstrates in his first speech his self-deception and attempts to convince his fellow fallen angels of his false beliefs. Satan and the fallen angels attempt to frame their defeat and degradation as a triumph and seek an open-ended future where their fates are uncertain rather than determined by God. Satan's speech reveals his desire for freedom and an undetermined future by means of the rhetorical question, that is a question that is not asked with the intention for an answer, a distinctive feature of Satan's and the fallen angels' speech. In one instance of Satan's use of the rhetorical question, when he asks, "What though the field be lost?," the question highlights his desire for open-endedness, and the response he immediately provides, "All is not lost; the unconquerable Will, / And study of revenge, immortal hate, / And courage never to submit or yield," reveals his self-deception and desire to deceive others (I. 105, 106-108). From Satan's perspective, his future contains the possibility for future victory:

Since through experience of this great event
In Arms not worse, in foresight much advanc't,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal Warr... (I. 118-121)

Satan sees a possibility for victory in the future and God as his rival rather than his master. The Christian reader however should recognize the flaw in Satan's reasoning because it is removed from God, the source of truth as Milton understands it. Practiced and performed correctly, according to Plato and Cicero, rhetoric requires that the orator have knowledge of his or her

subject before speaking. Milton structures the poem such that Satan reveals his ignorance of what the reader eventually finds to be, in Book II, the structures of providence and justice that govern him. The narrator initiates this understanding by reminding the reader that God left Satan

Chain'd on the burning Lake, nor ever thence
Had ris'n or heav'd his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs... (I. 210-213)

From the very beginning of the poem, Milton reveals Satan's ignorance and self-deception to the reader as he contextualizes Satan's speeches in relation to God's display of good rhetoric that is aligned with truth. While thought to be an example of a skilled rhetorician by critics like Fish and Sloane, who use Satan's rhetoric to argue that Milton rejects the rhetorical tradition in favor of logic and reason, Satan's lack of knowledge and his desire to intentionally deceive positions him opposite of God's rhetoric. It is not Satan's skill that is problematic for Milton, it is the direction of his skill, which is not meant to direct listeners toward truth but to deceive and persuade them to act in his favor.

Unlike the rhetoric of Heaven, which features the desires to reveal and to educate as well as to persuade, Satan's rhetoric is single-focused on persuasion. Throughout the poem, Satan's speeches demonstrate a singularity in purpose, as they are all constructed to persuade and move his immediate audience to action. This is apparent in the opening book of the poem, when, immediately upon regaining consciousness after his fall from Heaven, Satan rallies the fallen angels with a persuasive speech that once again reveals Satan's deception and intentions to deceive others:

...Or in this abject posture have ye sworn

To adore the Conquerour? who now beholds
Cherube and Seraph rowling in the Flood
With scatter'd Arms and Ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heav'n Gates discern
Th' advantage, and descending tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked Thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this Gulfe.

Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n. (I. 318-326)

Here, the rhetorical question serves as a reprimand to the fallen angels for the purpose of motivating them to action as evidenced by his final imperative statement “Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n.” Satan is constantly reacting to the ever-changing rhetorical moment, as seen here by his immediate leap to rhetorical action and ability to argue the moment as one of further resistance rather than submission and defeat. Masterful at observing *kairos*, an understanding shared by the Sophists and Aristotle that a speech is most effective and meaningful only within a certain temporal and spatial context, Satan knows the precise moment to take advantage of his audience's susceptibilities. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle demonstrates that showing consideration for *kairos* conveys the idea of appropriateness for both audience and style when it comes to implementing logos, ethos, and pathos in one's oration (III.vii). The setting and audience of this particular speech bears resemblance to a military speech given at a moment of defeat where, appealing to the idea of *kairos*, Satan must model himself after an inspirational military commander and deliver a speech that rouses and motivates his audience. The similarity is further emphasized when Satan receives his desired outcome and demonstrates his powers of persuasion:

They heard, and were abasht, and up they sprung
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake. (I. 327-330)

Satan speaks in the same vein as military leaders and heroes, putting his speech to work in order to bring about action among the fallen angels. Like Odysseus rallying his men between Scylla and Charybdis or Aeneas encouraging the remains of his crew on the shores of Carthage, Satan makes speech work for him at opportune moments in order to persuade and move his audience to action. Through his forceful utterances and alignment with great military heroes, Satan creates an illusion of power and success that when examined in the context of the poem's understanding of truth and perfect eloquence reveals the antithetical nature of the phrase "Awake, arise or be for ever fallen," and the delusion that pervades Satan's speech.

Milton invites the reader to contextualize Satan's rhetoric by providing the contrasting examples of Satan's fellow fallen angels attempting to deliver persuasive speeches to the fallen angels in Pandemonium. This scene demonstrates several instances of the fallen angels abusing the power of speech and shaping it to reflect their deluded understandings of their situation. Belial is especially noteworthy in this debate as the narrator warns the reader of his ignoble attempts to persuade his audience with empty speech:

...he seemed
For dignity compos'd and high exploit:
But all was false and hollow; though his Tongue
Dropt Manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash

Maturest Counsels: for his thoughts were low;
To vice industrious, but to Nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful; yet he pleas'd the ear,
And with perswasive accent thus began. (II. 110-118)

This description, in its positioning of Belial with speakers who show no regard of ethics or morals yet please the ear, aligns Belial with the type of sophistry that Plato critiqued and opposed. Belial, like the denounced sophist, portrays immorality in a favorable light, and he reveals how the art of speaking can be used by those with intentions to deceive rather than educate. Speakers like Belial do not wish to lead their audience toward what is true and good, but rather they seek to please the audience with words and to encourage them to value that pleasure over the truth. Distinctive of Belial's speech, and the rhetoric in Hell, is the desire to distract audiences with style and to obscure the speaker's motives. For example, in response to Moloch's question "what can be worse / Then [sic] to dwell here?," Belial offers an ornate speech that relies heavily on the use of the rhetorical question (II. 85-86):

Say then who counsel Warr, we are decreed,
Reserv'd and destin'd to Eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse? is this then worst,
Thus fitting, thus consulting, thus in Arms?
What when we fled amain, pursu'd and strook
With Heav'ns afflicting Thunder, and besought
The Deep to shelter us? this Hell then seem'd
A refuge from those wounds... (II. 160-168)

Belial refutes Moloch's argument by amassing rhetorical questions, used thirteen times in a single speech, as a form of argumentation. Through the reliance on this trope, Belial conjures up images of a worse fate than the one already before the fallen angels while still concealing his true motive of not wanting to take any action at all, which the narrator reveals to the reader: "Thus Belial with words cloath'd in reasons garb / Counsel'd ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth, / Not peace" (II. 226-228). Belial and his speech emphasize the sophistic and corrupted nature of the rhetoric performed in Hell, with the fallen angels' speech taking on a façade of logos and truth through the copious use of the rhetorical question.

Beelzebub, like Belial, also makes conspicuous use of the trope of the rhetorical question. However, unlike the other fallen angels, Beelzebub seems to demonstrate the most awareness of their situation. His speech acknowledges the rebels' situation in their bondage to God, who he accepts as more powerful than the army of the fallen angels:

...for what peace will be giv'n
To us enslav'd, but custody fevere,
And stripes, and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
But to our power hostility and hate,
Untam'd reluctance, and revenge though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror leaft
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoyce
In doing what we most in suffering feel? (II. 332-40)

While he understands God as a conqueror and that the fallen angels were defeated and are being punished by God, Beelzebub, like Belial and Satan himself, has a limited understanding. He does

not elaborate on the reasons for their punishment or the other dimensions to God and his power, such as his love and mercy, because he is limited by his removal from the truth of God. The use of rhetorical questions in Belial's and Satan's speeches reveals this state of mind of a limited understanding as these questions are unable to declare truths like God does. Although these infernal speakers use the trope of rhetorical questions to convey an argumentative effect in a speech, the questions themselves do not function as an argument and cannot state truth.

The use of the rhetorical question throughout the infernal speeches highlights a fundamental focus and reliance on style over meaning and truth. While God's speech masters the harmony of *res* and *verba* so that the style of his speech is effaced into its meaning, the speech of Satan and the devils seeks to conceal its inability to declare truth and to speak authoritatively through an overreliance on stylistic devices like the rhetorical question. Both God's and the devils' speech reflects the internal *logos* of the speaker, with God's speech highlighting clarity and *logos* and the speech of the devils revealing deception and confusion.

In addition to Milton drawing the reader's attention to the good and bad rhetoric of God and Satan respectively, the Fall can be understood in context with the rhetoric of the poem as a lesson on the necessity of adhering to rhetoric as used by God and the dangers of engaging with persuasive rhetoric that is detached from truth. Adam and Eve's transgression occurs because of their attention to corrupted eloquence and simultaneous turning away from God's rhetoric, and consequentially, truth. Through the Fall, Milton reveals that involved in rhetoric is a method of reasoning and a negotiation within ourselves as Adam and Eve choose between alternative possibilities, the self and God. Milton's conception of rhetoric requires an ethical speaker as well as an ethical listener, as one's ethical nature directs how wisely he or she chooses a course of action, which for Adam and Eve, are presented as arguments intended to move and persuade.

Satan's corrupted eloquence is able to move Eve to sin only because she chooses to place herself above her love of God, and Adam makes a similar self-interested decision of choosing Eve over God. The expulsion from Eden severs the direct connection to God, which disrupts Man's understanding of truth. Because of the Fall, the method of aligning oneself with Christian truth is deeply rhetorical through the reading and interpreting of the figurative language of Scripture. With this, Milton emphasizes the importance of the ability to distinguish between rhetoric that connects to truth and that which does not through an ethical self and a desire for truth above all else, as well as reaffirming the connection between reason and rhetoric.

The contemporary scholarship on Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which reads the poem as anti-rhetorical, bases its readings of the text on a modern conception of rhetoric that understands rhetoric as antithetical to logic and equivalent to sophistry. Studying rhetoric as it was historically understood within the Greek and Roman rhetorical tradition, and how Renaissance humanists and Christian scholars later interpreted it, reveals a more nuanced understanding of rhetoric and its role in Milton's epic. Writing for Christian readers, rhetoric serves Milton and his educational purposes for the poem as his understanding does not fit the model of Enlightenment skepticism of rhetoric, but that of Renaissance humanists, who understand rhetoric as having critical value to the pursuit of knowledge and truth. Demonstrating this understanding, Milton's epic situates the reader in a position where he or she is presented with two modes of eloquence, God's ideal example and Satan's corrupted, yet persuasive, version. With this, it is the reader's ethical self that determines his or her understanding of the poem's presentation of God's mercy to Man and Satan's failures of perception. Explicitly dealing with Man's fallen state, Milton positions rhetorical knowledge as essential in the process of recovering the truth of God's wisdom, and Milton gives his reader an education in interpreting good and bad rhetoric through

God and Satan and their speeches. Moreover, unlike dialectic, rhetoric has the distinct ability to transfer emotion from speaker to listener, which is essential for Christian wisdom as the love of God aligns one with the love of truth itself. Through God's ideal eloquence and Satan's corrupted style, Milton offers his reader an education in the benefits and dangers of rhetoric as he understands them to be, and as a result, a means of bringing oneself closer to God's wisdom through rhetorical knowledge.

Bibliography:

Aristotle. *On Rhetoric*. Trans. W. Rhys Roberts. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004. Print.

Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine*. Trans. J. F. Shaw. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2009. Print.

Cicero. *Orator*. Trans. H.M. Hubbell. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939. Print.

Empson, William. *Milton's God*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1965. Print.

Festa, Thomas. *The End of Learning: Milton and Education*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Fish, Stanley. *How Milton Works*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001. Print.

Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971. Print.

Longinus. *On the Sublime*. Trans. Penelope Murray and T. S. Dorsch. *Classical Literary Criticism*. London: Penguin, 2000. 113-166. Print.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost: A Poem in Twelve Books*. London, 1675. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 23 April 2013.

Milton, John. "An apology against a pamphlet call'd A modest confutation of the animadversions upon the remonstrant against Smectymnuus." London, 1642. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 15 June 2013.

Plato. *Symposium*. Trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989. Print.

Plato. *Phaedrus*. Trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995. Print.

Quintilian. *Institutes of Oratory; or, Education of an orator*. Trans. Rev. John Selby Watson. London: G. Bell, 1910. Print.

Shuger, Debora. *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988. Print.

Sloane, Thomas O. *Donne, Milton, And The End Of Humanist Rhetoric*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. Print.

Sloane, Thomas O. *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. Print.

Stark, Ryan J. "Cold Styles: On Milton's Critiques Of Frigid Rhetoric In Paradise Lost." *Milton Quarterly* 37.1 (2003): 21-30. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 20 Apr. 2013.

Trimpi, Wesley. *Ben Jonson's Poems: A Study in the Plain Style*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962. Print.