CROSS-REFERENCED REGIONS

Placement, possession, substance, calling: when we pivot these and related terms around to face the seventeenth century more squarely, they require adjustment to fit texts like Milton’s *Christian Doctrine* and *Paradise Lost*, where places are either validated by some degree of divine presence or judged by its lack. To such topics we also need to add, for Milton’s extensive epic cosmos, the principle of analogy and epitome by which one region reflects or contains another. With hell, chaos, heaven, Eden, and the wilderness as his chief settings, Milton is an ambitious and contrastive realmist, as Satan is an intrepid and combative voyager who carries those contrasts with him. His regions comparisons are often triple and quadruple, among them allusions to classics and to the present of the narrator.

The analogical stationing of realms is not unique with Milton, of course. When Marvell conceives of the soul in “On a Drop of Dew” as a reflection of “the clear Region where ’twas born,” he establishes double regions in an elaborate formal simile. The exiled soul “recollects” one place from another, gathering itself “in its pure and circling thought”:

Every way it turns away:
So the World excluding round,
Yet receiving in the Day.
Dark beneath, but bright above:
Here disdaining, there in Love.
Undesirable in itself the lower realm is receptive to the upper one only insofar as the soul remains uncontaminated in it. The upper region is often signalled for neoplatonists by a light playing across surfaces or being cast outward from the intellect. The soul here, receiving no aid from its purple flower-body, shines therein with its own "mournful light," carrying entirely in itself the replica of its source.

As Terry Comito has pointed out, it is often fountains, in literary renderings of gardens, that gather the serene rays of paradise in their shimmering and sparkling. But nothing makes an absolutely sure medium through which paradise can be seen. In Vaughan's "Regeneration" the fountain spends its language "on the dumbe shades" as a music of tears, and its cistern has diverse stones, "some bright, and round" but others "ill-shap'd and dull." Water in "The Water-fall" is similarly ambiguous. It is a "useful Element and clear," a "sacred wash and cleanser," and Vaughan exclaims, "What sublime truths, and wholesome themes, / Lodge in thy mystical, deep streams!" The fall of loud brooks "in streaming rings restagnates all" in imitation of eternity's stasis and ring of calm. Yet it is not water but Vaughan's "invisible estate," his "glorious liberty, still late," that conducts him upward finally: "Thou art the Channel my soul seekes, / Not this with Cataracts and Creeks." The analogy holds just long enough to make the regional contrast clear and to measure the limits of likenesses. In less Platonist versions, the heavens may be doubled or at least received in lower realms, as the realm of Neptune in Comus is assigned from above and remains hospitable to the Attendant Spirit from Jove's starry court. The ocean is sufficiently established as a duplicating place in "The Garden" for Marvell to think of the mind itself as an ocean wherein each kind finds its resemblance.

Despite such forerunners Paradise Lost goes much further with the interactions of complementary and contrasting realms and looks further into extremes in the expressive language of place already rendered into topics by scripture and its commentaries. Milton's two main localities of "hubbub," for instance—hell and chaos—deny analogies except of an ironic sort. As a place of primal disorder, chaos lies outside expression; since the logos has not penetrated it, proportioning and description flounder in it. Between paradise and chaos, the cosmos is intelligible but also bounded by them, so that the poet in defining it must go outward into them by a metaleptic tracing of the same power that set the boundaries.
SONGS OF GREETING AND ODES TO TREES

The songs and addresses of Adam and Eve, together with the narrator’s invocations, are Milton’s chief inset lyrics. They warrant our attention both for their establishing of a human center between demonic and celestial extremes in *Paradise Lost* and for their usefulness in outlining other seventeenth-century realm-crossings. As chronologically the first genii loci this side of the creator himself, Adam and Eve have a readable terrain to work with and not surprisingly avoid serious errors in its interpretation.⁴

Among Milton’s demonstrations of attunement between intelligence and creation, however, Eve’s lyrics are especially sensitive, beginning with her extended address to Adam in Book 4 (635–58). That opening example of her lyricism sets a standard with which Milton measures certain renaissance predecessors in the love lyric and Eve’s own developments later. It is dutiful before it lists the objects of paradise that appeal to her and again after she has summed them up:

My Author and Disposer, what thou bidd’st
Unargu’d I obey; so God ordains,
God is thy Law, thou mine: to know no more
Is woman’s happiest knowledge and her praise.

4.635–38

Eve’s attraction to Adam is reinforced by this bracketing assessment of place. Obligations also have something to do with it, but questions of marital authority are diminished for the time being by the interdiction, which overshadows other matters of rule-making and dominion. Eve’s speech not only endorses creation’s gifts but cherishes them with propriety and due weight, which corrects Sin’s earlier version of rhapsody over an imagined Eden to come. Her awareness of disobedience is limited momentarily to a denial of any: she fully repossesses Eden and is in turn possessed by her author and disposer. Although that bow to masculine authority may not fit our ideas of ideal husband-wife relations, it confirms the limits that Milton sets for all intellects. Only through that “happiest knowledge” can one make the crossings of envy-free love to the other, which Satan finds impossible to do. Without it, competition and struggle for empire intrude, and every crossing becomes an intelligence mission or invasion. Thus it is that Eve’s other delights must be secondary to her delight in Adam, who brings into focus her native balance of possession and celebration:

With thee conversing I forget all time,
All seasons and th’ir change, all please alike.
Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest Birds; pleasant the Sun
When first on this delightful Land he spreads
His orient Beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flow'r,
Glist'ring with dew

This rendering of tribute allows no romantic breach between rising appreciation and its object. Neither Adam nor Eve knows a higher paradise as yet or looks for advancement. Even here, however, the reader needs to be wary of negotiations between desire and fulfillment and distinguish carefully between this early expression of marital love and later reachings for transcendence. Milton is simultaneously filling out the contrast with Sin and preparing for realmic contrasts that come in Books 9–12, where heaven and hell find new representation in Eden. Feeling achieves immediate gratification here not as the fulfilling of ambition but as a domestic satisfaction. It can very easily grow more complicated, but when Adam replies to “Daughter of God and Man, accomplisht Eve,” he suggests that she is already a finished product, not merely a promising pupil. The title is in fact quite exact for the time being and shuts off access to other realms and other planes of knowledge. The relationship with God is solid and the adjective “accomplished” is a tribute to a generous creation. Eve thus requires no course of discoveries of the sort that might bring uneasiness in their wake, whatever Adam might still have to teach her about the purposes of stars. The possibility of sorrow and early loss and the conversion of tribute into elegy, and of marital dialogue into quarrel may be hinted by Satan’s presence, but they lie far off. Eve has no difficulty accommodating herself not only to rapturous speech but to the quiet tone of lesser dialogues. She fulfills the express purpose of her making that God and Adam have collaborated in working out. In the addresses of the first parents to each other, Milton thus establishes a well-met language that ranges from information-giving dialogue to love lyric. Although their speech is limited by its circumstances, it is both ideal in its kind and encompassing. The creator’s presence is its underlying substance, as are the connections that make their surroundings part of a created totality.

All this is relatively straightforward, but it is also placed under shadow by Satan’s presence and the distance between Eden and the reader. Satan has already challenged the edenic balance of possession and celebration by his vow at the beginning of Book 4 to seek divided empire. He has also substituted embittered self-analysis for the language of thanksgiving and praise and has begotten inap-
propriate hymns of praise in others. As his helpmate, for instance, Sin upends rhapsodic proprieties in foretelling Eve's version of them (2.864–68). She has her own vision of holy calm that she plans to maintain in Adam's and Eve's place. Those are important acts of misnaming and seized verbal possession, not only because they fill out a set of perspectives by which we gauge Eve's lyric skill but because of the general importance of idolatry in Milton's theory of signs. As a master of icons and tableaus, Satan is always setting scenes, staging speeches, and rearranging the relations of inhabitants to their places. So that he can serve as God there, he makes hell heaven translated; he makes Eden a demonstration of his influence, which requires his changing of Eve's perception of it and translation of the forbidden tree into an object of worship. What Sin will introduce to Eden under his auspices is a will to devour its forms, a will that we do not find in Eve's celebration, of course, but do find in the satanic command over things, always their unmaking. In Sin's praise of her consort is also the marital competition that Adam does not inspire in Eve as we first see her.

Eve does fall into a similar style, however, in her address to the forbidden fruit and revision of her address to Adam, both of which reveal the difference in lyric that satanic language works. Satan has by then of course modeled for her a new ode to place in his own idolatrous address to the tree:

O Sacred, Wise and Wisdom-giving Plant,
Mother of Science, Now I feel thy Power
Within me clear, not only to discern
Things in thir Causes, but to trace the ways
Of highest Agents, deem'd however wisc.

9.679–83

As Satan's cursing of the sun and Eden also illustrate, he is never more isolated than when he addresses things close by that press upon him and desert him simultaneously. As a God-substitute, the wisdom-giving plant here assumes a mystical crossing of object to subject and infusion of divine powers from one to the other, distantly like the infusion of Holy Light into the darkened mind of the seer.

But of course no real lyric crossing takes place, here or in any of the satanic apostrophes and rhetorical shows. Indeed, the closer Satan stands to Eden, the more forced his appropriation. Eden is a torture to him precisely as a reminder of his own lost seat:

O Earth, how like to Heav'n, if not preferr'd
More justly, Seat worthier of Gods, as built
With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
For what God after better worse would build?
Terrestrial Heav'n, dan't round by other Heav'ns
That shine, yet bear thir bright officious Lamps.
Light above Light, for thee alone, as seems,
In thee concentring all thir precious beams
Of sacred influence: As God in Heav'n
Is Centre, yet extends to all, so thou
Centring receiv'st from all those Orbs.

His dislocation is permanent as well as multifaceted—geographic,
verbal, spiritual. When feigned zeal for humankind culminates in
"Queen of this universe," we realize how close rapture is to mere
flattery and both are to idolatry, although Eve finds such words
"impregn'd / With Reason." We recall that hypocrisy also governs
Sin's address to Satan and his to the tree. Indeed, Satan is obsessed
with the notion in his soliloquy at the beginning of Book 4 that all
show is poisoned by insincerity and that no real bonds of love exist
even between angels and their God.

Eve's version of the satanic ode has a hurried list of justifications
and apparent analyses of the trees' properties and functions:

Great are thy Virtues, doubtless, best of Fruits,
Though kept from Man, and worthy to be admir'd,
Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay
Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
The Tongue not made for Speech to speak thy praise:
Thy praise hee also who forbids thy use,
Conceals not from us, naming thee the Tree
Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;
Forbids us then to taste, but his forbidding
Commends thee more, while it infers the good
By thee communicated, and our want:
For good unknown, sure is not had, or had
And yet unknown, is as not had at all.

If her address does not rise immediately to odic enthusiasm, it is
because she must first sidetrack reason and redefine the prohibi-
tion. Having tasted the fruit, she becomes convinced of her true
calling as knower and possessor. She defines the geography of
Eden as not a stable and assigned hierarchy of forms but a place for
questing minds working toward their highest possession. Rapt-
turous songs of this new sort will follow daily—or so it seems in her
first enthusiasm:

O Sovran, virtuous, precious of all Trees
In Paradise, of operation bleft
To Sapience, hitherto obscur'd, infam'd,
And thy fair Fruit let hang, as to no end
Created; but henceforth my early care,
Eve is of course confused as to presence and calling and avenues that knowledge opens from one realm to another. God works by analogy and substitutions, putting paradise into lesser figures and accommodating messages through interpreters. His representatives are clearly delegated and have exact commissions. He is thereby imparted from a distance, and between his first appearances to Adam and Eve and the recovery of paradise, he does not presuppose them "mature/In knowledge." In its romantic style, Eve's lyric presumes to bring the invisible nearer than that by removing the intervals that keep the hierarchy vertical and lengthy. Where celebration of an appropriate sort recognizes and cherishes degrees, analogies, and differences, she plans literally to devour what she praises and to be substantially changed by it. Up to this point, she has entertained just one set of presuppositions about paradise; she now introduces a hypothetical set of pre-texts in which what the great interdictor has said is replaced by what a venturesome and subtle interpreter might speculate. Whereas the hermit-seer of "Il Penseroso" plans to explore the secrets of things because he has to—the world having fallen into obscurity for genii loci—Eve plans to look into them because secrets yield power.

Obviously a good deal breaks apart in that redefinition of lyric crossing as magical tie, such as alliances between knowing and possession, perception and feeling, self and other, ego and its acknowledgment of obligations to authority. In the metapoetic dimension of Paradise Lost, Eve's revised lyricism constitutes a key phase of Milton's anatomy of fallen language based in pride—if one can assign the cause a single name—or in a kind of narcissism hinted earlier in Eve's pool-gazing. Spontaneous verse needs no such rationalizing as she now applies in this complicated and crafty verse. It is sustained by preliminary recognitions of the source of things and is definitional even while it is rapturous. Here, definition in the sense of acknowledged limitations of substance is circumvented; the tree grows elusive even as it seems to open up vistas. Behind the upsurge of ambition is still a domestic relation, however. Adam is not being by-passed by Eve's quick transcendence but gathered into her train. Among other things the tree-directed rapture is a new kink in the meet conversation that will require him to turn to something like troubadour lyric for a new supply of terms.
That Eve changes so quickly and with so little effort from Satan provides a new cause for complaints in the transition stage of 
Paradise Lost in Books 10 and 11—complaints more able to engage our sympathy than satanic ones and less vulnerable to irony than Sin’s raptures but nonetheless troubling. Milton makes a similar conversion of pastoral joy to sorrow in “L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso” and in the blight of “Lycidas”:

But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,  
Now thou art gone, and never must return!  
Thee Shepherd, thee the Woods, and desert Caves,  
With wild Thyme and the gadding Vine o’ergrown,  
And all their echoes mourn.

But Paradise Lost is more encompassing. In effect, Eve begets the ambivalent condition of all lyric crossings hereafter. As Adam discovers, Eden so alters in its promptings of song that it becomes a virtual blank and stalls any journey of mind through terrain to the creator:

This most afflicts me, that departing hence.  
As from his face I shall be hid, deprived  
His blessed countenance; here I could frequent,  
With worship, place by place where he vouchsafed  
Presence Divine, and to my Sons relate;  
On this Mount he appeared, under this Tree  
Stood visible, among these Pines his voice  
I heard, here with him at this Fountain talk’d.

For Eve, too, visitations to flowers in their ranks and tribes are now to be forbidden, and so for post-edenic poetry topography becomes enigmatic.

Michael eventually remarks that God is still omnipresent in it, merely in less visible ways. He fills

Land, Sea, and Air, and every kind that lives,  
Fomented by his virtual power and warm’d:  
All th’ Earth he gave thee to possess and rule,  
No despicable gift, surmise not then  
His presence to these narrow bounds confin’d  
Of Paradise or Eden.

However, as history discovers, the divine presence is perturbable in that lower world—enough so to destroy Eden and bring the flood. What Michael postpones saying is that God will show himself not only in providential gifts but in the tormented sea, the pillar of fire, and the parched land—new materials for the interpreter and barriers to lyric enthusiasm. If Satan and his host discover ashes where
they expect fruit, in the offing for human genii loci are also the vanity of Babel and philosophical errors that land their followers in the Limbo of Fools.

In its analysis of lyric occasions, *Paradise Lost* is concerned with God's partial retractions in other places as well, or more broadly with the "art of presence," in Arnold Stein's apt phrase, which I take to include half-presence as well. One thing is meant to be separated from another from the outset, the universe having been made by partial, graded expressions of the logos. Although Satan must bear the blame for inventing illusory rapture, difficulties with the full expression of one thing to another begin with that separation. Some formality and estrangement accompany approaches of one creature to another even in the love talk of Adam and Eve. The dusk of heaven is a revealing emblem of that partial knowledge, like the rhythmic "grateful vicissitude" of Eden's own days and nights. More and then less of God is communicated to his realms in the pulsations of light and dark, as in the issuing of his messengers; presence and absence are as twins, each inconceivable without the other, as good and evil are, darkness of course being the inferior twin—even (in Milton's peculiar word) an "obsequious" or "following" one:

Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour
To veil the Heav'n, though darkness there might well
Seem twilight here.

In the retractions of light, both free will and disobedience become possible. After the fall the rift widens, as grateful vicissitude becomes a sharper seasonal vicissitude and the round of complementary opposites comes to resemble Satan's seige of contraries.

**SATAN BRINGS HIS ROAD SHOW HOME**

The most extreme examples of the erosion of divine presence and dispossession come in Satan's travels, which have lyric pauses and apostrophes. Satan's attempt to stage an analogue to Christ's post-creation return to heaven points up forcefully the absence, in both chaos and hell, of positive recollections of other realms. As the completion of the satanic plot, his return is teleological: he has pointed toward it since Book 1, and it establishes permanently redefined relations between hell's inhabitants and their assigned region. The final stage of hell's colonizing, the transfer of empire,
and the triumph of the delegated governor over his subjects are included in its upending of forms.

However, this is not Satan’s first staging of his own presence as God’s substitute in what John Demaray calls his antitriumphs. In his first public performance after withdrawing from the precincts of light, he has come forth as a sort of emperor-general:

High in the midst exalted as a God
Th’ Apostate in his Sun-bright Chariot sat
Idol of Majesty Divine, enclos’d
With Flaming Cherubim, and golden Shields.

He has improved upon that masquelike glitter of idols in Pandemonium, seating himself “High on a Throne of Royal State” (2.1) not as a genius or interpreter for the moment but as the one interpreted. In these inversions of the pageantry and symbolism of empire, we sense the hidden God; but as the movement toward which God, too, has pointed in countering the satanic plot for divided rule, Satan’s return to hell exposes a more substantial negative image. Expecting to speak with a godlike eloquence that will raise personal to public triumph—but helpless to resist a second incarnation in serpent form—he issues and hears only hisses. Milton could not have devised a more appropriate exhibit of rhetoric failing to rise to hymnal greeting or of pageantry failing to become triumph. All lyric crossing is stopped up in the motives of the call and the absence of the logos.

But it is also true that although Satan’s homecoming fails in its attempt to reproduce God-host relations, his delegates have better luck in Eden, where they complete the movement of desire to devourable objects that Sin has anticipated and Eve enabled. Responding to a call that they take to be from him, they greet him enroute as if he warranted a venerable address:

O Parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
Thy Trophies, which thou view’st as not thine own,
Thou art their Author and prime Architect.

He in turn applies to them the language of priestly hierarchy, or of commanders of new empire issuing patents to colonial emissaries:

My Substitutes I send ye, and Create
Plenipotent on Earth, of matchless might
Issuing from mee.

The terrain that once awoke spontaneous verse in Adam and Eve will henceforth feed Death. But as a final twist, we discover that
Satan is incapable of summoning anything from such distances and that the command to Sin and Death to be plenipotent would be without force if he did. Instead, it is God who arranges earth's wreckage and thereby makes death an ironic gateway to paradise, as in extreme and summary form at world's end. Lamentation thus becomes a preliminary to something like the unexpressive nuptial song that follows the weeping of shepherds.

*Paradise Lost* has still other sorts of shadowy presences behind the implication of one realm in another and the imitative performances of their inhabitants. We cannot examine all of these merely to assess Milton's topographical doubling, but some of them bear upon the nature of lyric moments as crossings of subjects to evasive objects that contain much more than themselves. In the aftermath of Satan's visit to Eden, we see innumerable infiltrations of his working as satanic doubleness creeps into the reading of signs. Like the permission he implicitly receives to rise from the floor of hell, they are the result of a partial withholding of God's rule and so are infiltrations of divine purpose also, but again ironically and indirectly. When Eve goes to work alone and Satan proceeds with the temptation, we are aware of both God and Adam as half-presences. In prediction of that shadowing, when she hears the call to come forth in her dream, she mistakenly thinks that it comes from Adam inducing her to see the beauty of the moonlit landscape and soar above it. Character is always a compound of influences, and so we find nothing surprising about that.

More broadly, narrative is itself a mixture of moments, as past and future stand behind the present, one character behind another, and one phase of character behind another phase. Eve's full course lies implicit in her early tendencies toward narcissism and ambition, in presences-as-presentiments, hints of a self lacking as yet in circumstantial development and trials of place. In Adam, too, potential remains concealed in innocence—potential for both sin and added stature. It is good narrative technique for Milton to give us such proleptic glimpses, but it is also effective moral and metaphysical shading. With Adam and Eve, it rests on a distinction between a harmless anticipation of sin and actual commitments of the will to it, the first without repercussions, since as Adam explains to Eve in interpreting her dream, evil can come and go in the mind and do no damage if it does not find lodging there. Even without reference to the Fall, traces of the future would draw Eden part way out of its passing moments, since they include the long-range plan for Adam and Eve to increase and hold enlarged dominion.
Such traces in every given moment amount to an analeptic and proleptic deepening of experience, not to the degree or with the dire effects that fallen angels torment the present with forlorn recollection and anxiety-ridden plotting but with a sense of the entire narrative process in the moment, just as a given place refers to other places and to an ultimate celestial topography. More particularly, all moments look forward to a finish foreseen by omniscience and guaranteed by omnipotence, as later Old Testament typology will import remote phases of history into present figures and events. All epochs are guided by essentially the same directions to paradise restored.

The not-present and the future are powerful solicitations, as any incomplete narrative or dramatic state is; they ask to come forth to full recognition, as full presence is hailed by lyrics. But the differences between actual and virtual presence are as significant as the one between anticipated and actual sin. Only God has unqualified standing for Milton, and even he cannot be fully present through mediation to limited intelligences. Incompleteness generates anxiety and an intensity of lyric moments in somewhat the way Eve's dream generates the morning song as a purging of confused feeling, or as wisdom, shut out at one entrance in the second invocation, generates compensatory inner light, the reverse side of which is the expectation of a triumph that gets pulled away just as one reaches for it.

Although one hesitates to set up these theologically oriented insights into lyric crossings as a model for all others, they have several advantages in that capacity. They bring lyric greetings into relation to narrative and dramatic frameworks as expressions of a sense of place and calling, as Adam and Eve in hailing Eden and its creator situate themselves in the overall design. Though their lyrics are lacking at first in reprehensible aspects of indictment and empire-making, Milton finds these too in Eve's fall. Very few aspects of language in fact do not find an origin in the combined myths of creation, fall, and redemption. This makes *Paradise Lost* useful for paradigmatic purposes. But beyond that it offers a map of historical possibilities within which Vaughan, Herbert, Marvell, and others are locatable—outside of which Spenser, Jonson, and Shakespeare stand as chief predecessors. Certainly, compared with the latter, and with Virgil and Italian heroic romances, Milton chose a singularly place-oriented epic, sparing of people until Michael's panorama of tribes and nations and distant view of the gathered saints.
Milton culminates a long process of subversion by which common Elizabethan associations of nature and social hierarchy were brought into question. Without tracing the stages by which he does so, we can see that from his viewpoint such an association would have seemed appropriate almost from the beginning of his career. Elizabethan political eulogy depended heavily on links between the delegated governance of the kingdom and natural resources. Even hampered by Richard, John of Gaunt is able to draw upon those links in pleading that “This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,” this “other Eden, demi-paradise” be ruled once again by kings renowned for Christian service and true chivalry. Without acknowledging Gaunt’s criticism, Richard himself ratifies that alliance of prince and island blessings when he arms the native creatures of Wales against rebellion:

Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,
Though rebels wound thee with their horses’ hoofs.
But let thy spiders that suck up thy venom
And heavy-gaited toads lie in their way,
Doing annoyance to the treacherous feet,
Which with usurping steps do trample thee:
Yield stinging nettles to mine enemies.

Richard II, 3.2.6–18

Like any lyric address to place, Richard’s mixes celebration and possession. His use of lurking adders for military purposes makes an unusual application of orphic powers to enemies, and it is clear elsewhere in Shakespeare as well that the alliance of civil rule and orphic address is complex and subject to misuse; but Richard’s pieties are not necessarily undone by that. Even Ulysses’ famous reinforcement of social degree by cosmic analogy, though no doubt partly cynical in its application, voices assumptions that very few Elizabethans would dismiss. “Degree, priority, and place./Insisture, course, proportion, season, form, / Office, and custom, in all line of order” readily apply to both the glorious planet Sol and Noble enthroned eminences. Ulysses’ rhetoric rises toward the ode in the listing of such vast examples. The division of the world into parts becomes an argument for primogeniture, natural “place” among planets and stars an argument for rank and office. Any poet who makes a companionable inventory of creatures and objects—given these rhetorical commonplaces—will necessarily be political unless he first breaks that connection.7

Of all Shakespeare’s figures of authority, Prospero makes the most effective and probably the most legitimate political use of natural and supernatural connections in turning Ariel and demi-
elves loose on rebels to reseat himself as rightful duke, and it is primarily that Prospero-Ariel alliance that Milton thinks of in his own early reconsiderations of delegated rule and orphic capacity in "Arcades" and "Comus." Certainly Milton’s association of the Earl of Bridgewater with Sabrina and the shepherd lad is not totally out of reach of notions that guide Richard and Ulysses. But the Genius of the Wood complicates matters by claiming orphic powers over the same region. It is he who knows the forest best, whatever titular and ceremonial command he surrenders to the radiant head of state he calls the citizenry to acknowledge—he who stakes out hallowed ground and utters “puissant words.” The powers of the genius, a mask for the poet, are later based in the same spirit that enters all valid hermeneutic endeavors whether addressed to nature’s book or to scripture. Like Marvell and Vaughan, Milton finds both nature’s rule and civil rule thus hearkening back to the word as well as forward to a final kingdom, also quite beyond the Ulysses-Richard concept of rule.

Once the poet journeys into the forest to read its mosaic, he finds it difficult to maneuver ordinary society back into view or to take up mere laureate functions. (Herbert and Crashaw suggest that assumption of transcendental authority as well.) Though Marvell follows “Arcades” and “Comus” in granting vicereignty to a local patron, he also makes a point of Lord Fairfax’s retirement and becomes himself the chief reader of the woodland’s “mystic book.” Whether such transcendental connections undo the social bond or social disconnection comes first and throws the poet back on them, poems like “Upon Appleton House,” “The Garden,” Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained abandon the nature-society-providence alliance. Milton has already turned angrily from a besotted church to hymning saints in “Lycidas” and a resumed anger is not hard to identify in Michael's vision in Paradise Lost. These frame the years when, as sloganeer for civil and religious reforms, he postponed further unfoldings of the orphic power he anticipated in “Arcades” and “Comus.”

For the present this is perhaps sufficient to suggest that Milton’s sense of a divine presence infused into times and places has a historical function in breaking the analogy between nature and the social order that Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare, and others elaborate. I have continued to echo Heidegger’s terms in describing that sense, not out of a perverse love of anachronism but because Heidegger’s vocabulary reflects a masked theological bias even while translating it. Heidegger’s Being, which simultaneously
comes forth and hides, resembles Milton's grateful vicissitude and its shading of moments and places. The difference is that where Heidegger heralds Derrida, without of course endorsing the final step into deconstruction, for Milton a creator's authoritative voice has been imposed on confusion and an even completer imparting of the divine purpose will eventually collect the scattered saints. Meanwhile, the divine presence in nature and scripture allows supplementary writing to interpret it and to make further accommodations of human limits.