

The Making of Satan, Milton's Old Enemy  
—from *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* to *Paradise Lost*—<sup>1</sup>

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In 1658, amid extensive political anxiety entangling the minds of many English people caused by the death of Cromwell, Milton revised *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (hereafter mentioned as *FD*). He added and inserted some significant phrases to the version of 1651, and published his revision in order to encourage the English republican minds and remind them of the cause and spirit they had had when they had undertaken their task of establishing the ideal government. In the concluding part of the new version, he added the following phrase, which is important in terms with his making of *Paradise Lost* (hereafter mentioned as *PL*), whose oral dictation, it is reported, Milton already had already begun in 1658, too:

...to the cause of Christendom above all—that I am pursuing after yet greater things if my strength suffice (nay, if will is God grant), and for their sake meanwhile am taking thought, and studying to make ready.<sup>2</sup>

It is surmised that while he dictated *PL*, the whole contents of *FD* were sometimes recurring and resounding in his mind, and playing an important role in the making of *PL*. We encounter relevant parallels between the descriptions in *PL* and *FD*, as Joan S. Bennett elaborately argues in her “God, Satan, and King Charles: Milton’s Royal Portraits”.<sup>3</sup>

My aims in this paper are to show the similarity of Satan to Milton’s political opponents in his controversies on the same side with Bennett and to reconfirm here that any so-called “Romantic” reading of *PL* is beside the point. Then I would affirm that Milton’s devotion of some twenty years to his republicanism and the English republican government, his deep involvement in the controversies between Royalists and republicans and the experience in writing the polemical pamphlets had crucial influences on his later poetical works. A close reading of his prose clarifies how Milton came to integrate into his later poems various elements, images, or concepts expressed in these political writings.

In the middle of Book X, Satan, after succeeding in the temptation of our first ancestors, triumphantly gives a speech of his victory (though illusory) over God in front of his fellow fiends in Hell. Finishing his hyperbolic and “fabulous” (that is, of fables) speech, Satan awaits ‘Universal...applause’ (l.505). Instead, he is forced to exit from the stage of *PL* forever by ‘A dismal universal hiss, the sound of public scorn’ (ll.508-509). Simultaneously he is metamorphosed into ‘A monstrous Serpent’ (l.514). Hissing reechoes hissing. The whole of Hell resounds with the hissing sounds uttered by all kinds of fiendish serpents.

The minutes of this scene are of Milton’s own creation though stories like Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* give the background of it.<sup>4</sup> In the Bible we find no place referring to Satan coming back to Hell after the fall of Man and Woman. Here two points should be emphasized; the one is that Satan is transformed into the shape of a serpent not by his own will, but by the Will of God. The other is that Satan is presented in the image of **hamfatter**, an

ineffective or over-emphatic actor. The word, “hiss,” in line 573 should be understood as having a twofold meaning; making a harsh noise of serpents and hissing an actor off the stage. Oddly Le Comte makes no mention of this second meaning.<sup>5</sup> In Satan’s obsessed and limited scope of self-estimation, he is an Epic hero who deserves universal praise, but in the eyes of God, he is merely a snake, an over-exaggerated actor, a poor orator, a pseudo-prophet, a jester, and a mock-epic hero. God utilizes the very mouths of infernal fiends changed into serpents to sentence the infernal Buffoon to banishment from the world and stage of *PL*.

In *FD*, we find the same image, that of a player exploded (that is, clapped and hooted) off the stage, who is eagerly seeking universal applause but in vain, in the figure of Salmasius. He is wont to “hanker after so desperately,”<sup>6</sup> “Well Done’s” and “Bravo’s” though “...arguing like this who would not hiss you [Salmasius] from the platform?” (CM, VII, pp.232-3) Milton ironically interrogates, using the Latin word, “explodere.” Hamfatter imagery echoes in the figure of Charles I in *Eikonoklastes*, where “...the general voice of the people almost hissing him [Charles I] and his ill-acted regality off the Stage, compell’d at the length both by his wants, and by his feares, upon meer extremety he summon’d this last Parliament.” (CE v.78-9) He is “found and convinced to be chief actor.” (CM, V, p. 302) For Milton, as expressly affirmed in *FD*, Charles I is a tyrant, and “...tyrant is no real king; he is but a player-king, the mere mask and spectre of a king.” (CM, VII, p.17)

Milton’s dramatization of his political opponents as comic jesters and hamfatters continues in *SD*, where he attacks More, complaining about “balatronis ...stridorem”, a buffoon making a hissing noise, (CM, VIII, p.145) or a “te Balatronem”. (CM, VIII, p.185) After all, in the “quasi tragoediam”, mock tragedy, of *Regii sanguinis clamor*, the audiences have “the dramatis personae: The cry, by way of prologue; Vlaccus (the printer) a paltry rogue; or poetasters, drunk with stale beer; More, adulterer and whore-master.” (CM, VIII, p.43) However, all these characters are to be expelled off the stage by the argument of Milton, Salmasius and More being advised to “repent in manner of Judas of Iscariot,” that is, to hang themselves. (CM, VII, p. 549; VIII, p.157)

This seemingly grotesque admonition that his opponents commit suicide in the paradigm of mock tragedy is, in the strictest terms, not Milton’s own creation. We have a classical precedence of advising political agitators to commit suicide, who appeal to the passions and prejudices of the mob in order to obtain their own interests. Close to the end of a Greek comedy, *The Frogs* by Aristophanes, Pluto, the God of Hades, entrusts Aescylus with the tools of suicide for demagogues in Athens, so that they may hang themselves and become residents of Hades (ll. 1500-1514).<sup>7</sup>

In *FD*, Salmasius is not only mocked as a poor actor, but also as a poor writer of tragedy, when he “goes on with his bombast, play-acting strange tragedies,” “pergit...ampullari mirabiles tragoedias fingere” in Latin (CM, VII, pp.18-19). When Milton derides his opponents, using the Greek phrase, “kgithiom apxkerem”, “your pitcher is gone”(CM, VII, pp.172-173), we realize that he mocks Salmasius as Aescylus banter the repetition of the same words and set phrases of his rival six times in *The Frogs* (ll. 1500-1514). As a result, Milton sets his enemy in the frame of farce, and ridicules him and his argument as a poor writer and mock tragedy.

Salmasius in *FD* is often presented in the image of a serpent. Trying to delude the minds of people and searching for words and discourses fit for his purpose, he “...turn[s] and twist[s]” he round-about and upside down and inside out”(CM, VII, pp. 68-69). It is noteworthy that the Latin words, “verto” and “voluvo,” are used at this juncture. On top of it, when Salmasius argues for the absolute supremacy of kings over all the laws, citing some words from Aeschylus’s *The Suppliants* as a strong testimony, he is delineated as a serpentine figure “reckless and without judgement wherever you [he] turn[s].”(CM, VII, p.306) Again we encounter the Latin word, “verto,” the

one used with “*voluvo*,” together in the citation above. And Milton attacks his enemy, pointing that Salmasius ignores the whole context where the phrase in question appears, and abuses it, copying only the part useful for his false reasoning. Milton asserts that the whole context of *The Suppliants* shows a completely contrary political situation from that of Salmasius, that is, the kings rule according to the laws of the community where the will of his people are respected. As Neil Forsyth tells us in his *The Old Enemy*, “Tertullian thought Satan was especially good at interpolation.”<sup>8</sup> Salmasius in *FD* is also good at interpolation, plagiaries and copying as Milton reproaches; “...you senseless witless bawling pettifogger, born only to pick good writers to pieces or transcribe them...” (CM, VII, p.41) Here we remember that Milton breaks down the martyred Christ-like image of Charles I, blaming his plagiarizing of Pamela’s prayer in *Arcadia* as King Charles’ prayer in *Eikonoklastes*. (CM, V, p.86)

When Satan undertakes to tempt Eve in Book IX, “Neerer he drew, and many a walk traversid Of stateliest Covert, Cedar, Pine, or Palme, Then *voluble* [my Italics] and bold, now hid, now seen.” (l. 436) It is important to realize that the word, “*voluble*,” used here, is derived from the Latin, “*voluvo*,” which appears in *FD*, denoting the serpentine feature of Milton’s antagonist. It goes without saying that Satan in the shape of a serpent in Book IX is on the verge of deluding Eve, using false reasoning, “characterized by great fluency and readiness of utterance”, and “moving rapidly and easily with a gliding or undulating movement”. (Quotations are from the definitions of “*voluble*” of *The Oxford English Dictionary*.)

As Salmasius in *FD* is ridiculed as a misinterpreter of God’s words, Greek and Latin classics, and other political and historical writings, so Satan is described as an erroneous interpreter in *PL*. Here we take as the most critical example the interpretation of “Woman’s Seed” foretold to Adam and Eve by God in Book X. While Adam and Eve accept the sentence directly from God, Satan runs away, hides himself and later overhears the conversation between the married couple. Consequently, he misunderstands the sentence pronounced on him and human beings.

While God puts enmity between his seed and her [Woman’s] Seed, Satan thinks of enmity between him and his [Man’s] seed (l.499). He overlooks the mysterious meaning contained in Woman’s Seed, confusing man and woman, disregarding the gender difference, and using the word, “Mankind” which has functioned as generalizing / masculinizing the female gender from a male-centred point of view for a long time. His misinterpretation of Woman’s Seed for Man’s seed is cast into clear relief when Satan’s words in *PR* are contrasted. There he uses the words correctly denoting Christ. (Book I, l.64)

On the other hand, Adam and Eve regain “paradise within” through the right interpretation of the words, Woman’s Seed. Eve worries over an utterly miserable fate falling on “*their* Seed” (that is, Seed of Man and Woman. Misinterpretation occurs here again!) Therefore, she advises her husband to commit suicide. This is Eve’s second temptation of Adam, although she is quite sincere, never conscious of the fatality of her proposal, and because of her total unconsciousness, it is a very dangerous proposal for them both. They are on the verge of sinning again. But Adam argues against Eve, affirming not to doubt “God / Hath wiselier arm’d his vengeful ire than so / To be forestall’d” and call “to mind with heed / Part of” their “Sentence, that” Eve’s “Seed shall bruise / The Serpent’s head...” (ll.1021-1032).

Adam is never again deluded by Eve into any false decision. He has learnt from his agonizing experience. At Eve’s first temptation of Adam, he failed to behave rightly in spite of Raphael’s advice beforehand, ‘fondly overcome by female charm’. But now with the help of God’s Son as the mediator, Adam dissuades her. He believes in the words of God and God’s Son. He hopes for human posterity, ‘the Woman’s Seed’. This time Eve obeys her husband. Adam overcomes his weakest point, effeminacy.<sup>9</sup>

Milton's adversaries, Charles I and Salmasius in *Eikonoklastes*, *FD* and *SD* are depicted as effeminate men overruled by their wives. (CM, V, p.139, p.278 et al.; CM, VII, p.280, pp.400-402 et al.; CM, VIII, pp.14-16) They fail at critical junctures, fondly or grudgingly overcome by female tyranny and in thrall to their wives' words. Effeminacy is the weak place of men, where Satan waits for the chance of capturing and enslaving men in both spiritual and secular tyranny. Adam's effeminacy is stated in Jungian terms as the shadow of negative aspects of his "anima". In other words, it symbolizes his internalized satanic aspect. Conversely, Adam's internalized heroic (=Christian) aspect is demonstrated when he persuades his wife to forgo suicide and "magnanimously" endure the supposed punishment of God with him as is shown above. Milton apparently represents the paradigm of humankind, Adam, as a microcosm for dominion of whose mind Christ and his enemy vie.

In *Eikonoklastes*, *FD* and *SD*, Milton asserts that the story of King Charles' martyrdom narrated in *Eikon Basilike*, *Defensio Regia Pro Carolo I* and *Regii sanguinis clamor* is not a true tragedy, but a fable, a farce and a mock-tragedy. Charles I / John Gauden, Salmasius and More / Du Moulin pomp, hyperbolize and pretend to be great tragedians, but they are mere poetasters and buffoons in their own farce in spite of themselves. Charles, "when about to finish the drama of life [vitae fabulam]... would not act in the same way... as if now making his exit from the stage, that he may leave behind him in the minds of men a feeling of compassion, or a conviction of his innocence? That Charles dissembled." (CM, VII, pp. 174-175) We know that Charles I and his wife, Henrietta Maria, played the chief parts of masks, where he demonstrated his grandeur and dignity as a king, which he never exercised in his politics and real life. Those expenses became serious threatening of royal revenues and expenditures of England, as William Prynne impeached in his *Histrionomastix* (1643). To delineate Charles as chief of actors in his political pamphlets is, therefore, most suitable and practical procedure for Milton. It is a fact taken from real history.

Charles, Salmasius, More and Satan resemble one another in that they are mere shadows of what they want to be, King, Poets and God. All the images and concepts expressed in Milton's political antagonists converge in the shape of Satan in *PL*. The fable narrated and acted by Satan himself cannot be entitled as a tragedy nor a heroic epic. He presents his story as an epic or tragedy, and plays his role. In short, he is an actor, and a buffoon. He is a mere shadow of tragic or epic hero, not the true one.

#### NOTES

*Complete Poems and Major prose*, ed. M. Y. Hughes (New York, 1957).

1. Original script of this paper was delivered by the author at the Seventh International Milton Symposium held at South Carolina University, Beaufort on the seventh of June in 2002. (2002年6月7日米国サウス・キャロライナ大学ビューフォート校で開催された第七回国際ミルトン学会における著者による口頭発表が本論文の基になっている。)
2. *The Works of John Milton*, ed. Frank A. Patterson et al., (New York, 1931-38), vol. VII, p. 559.
3. "God, Satan, and King Charles: Milton's Royal Portraits", *PMLA* (1977), pp.
4. *Complete Poems and Major prose*, ed. M. Y. Hughes (New York, 1957), p. 420 et al. All quotations from Milton's poetry are from prose are from this book.
5. See the item of "hiss" in Edward Le Comte, *A Dictionary of Puns in Milton's English Dictionary* (London, 1981)
6. *The Works of John Milton*, ed. Frank A. Patterson et al., (New York, 1931-38), vol. VII, p. 13, hereafter cited as CM.
7. *Aristophanes II*, (Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press. 1974), pp.408-413.
8. Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy—Satan and the Combat Myth*, (Princeton, 1987), p. xv. 尚、当該書の邦訳は野呂有子監

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訳『古代悪魔学— サタンと闘争神話』（法政大学出版局、2001）である。

9. Yuko Kanakubo Noro, “A Comparative Study of ‘the Ultimate Love’ in *Paradise Lost* and *Shitsurakuen*”, *Tokyo Seitoku University Bulletin* No.9. (Tokyo Seitoku University, 2002,) pp.48-49.