

ANNA GRUDZIEN
Kraków — Oxford

MILTON'S GOD AND "PARADISE LOST"

The purpose of this article is to investigate the way in which some aspects of Milton's theology are reflected in *Paradise Lost*. From the bulk of Milton's views I have chosen two concepts: man's liberty and his fall, and man's final reconciliation with God. These two concepts form the beginning and the end of God's homily, the main poetical representation of the author's views in *Paradise Lost*. In addition, these concepts are also kernels of the Christian tradition for, according to the Bible, they mark the beginning and the end of human history. I shall deal with those complex problems separately. I shall also try to define the way in which Milton's doctrines influence the epic conventions of the poem and vice versa, how the epic conventions influence the exposition of the poet's arguments.

LIBERTY AND THE FALL OF MAN

In *Areopagitica*¹ Milton states that truth reveals itself to man in more shapes than one. In order to attain it man must be granted both unrestricted access to the variegated ways leading to the final truth and a fundamental right to speak freely about his search. Therefore Milton postulates liberty of speech as a necessary pre-condition of man's quest for truth and complete liberty. Such is only one of many aspects of Milton's theory. Let us now examine the remaining elements of this theory and see how they manifest themselves in *Paradise Lost*. Much of Milton's conception of liberty is to be found in *De Doctrina*, which is the main source of the following discussion.

Man was originally created free. He was given freedom because he was the image of God. The poet says "necessity and chance approach not the Father" (VII, 770—773).² Being infinitely free, God endows man with the same entire

¹ J. Milton, *Areopagitica*, [in:] *Milton's Areopagitica and Other Prose Works* with an Introduction of Prof. C. E. Vaughan, Ernest Rhys (ed.), New York 1927, p. 50.

² All quotations from *Paradise Lost* are taken from *The Poems of John Milton*, J. Carey and A. Fowler, eds., London and Harlow 1968.

freedom to choose. However, this original state was not immutable. It was conditional upon man's obedience. *De Doctrina*³ explains that obedience is bound up with the value of freedom and rejection of obedience turns freedom to slavery. However, man's rejection of obedience can stem only from his own free choice.

If man were created without free will to rule over choices, he would be unable to demonstrate his faith and love. Consequently, he would be deprived of the possibilities of further development.⁴ Devoid of his freedom man would worship not God but necessity.⁵ Therefore, in defining freedom Milton emphasizes that it must be considered entirely independent of necessity.

If it (necessity) constrain them (free agents) against their will, man being subject of this compulsory decree becomes the cause of sin only per accidens, God being the cause of sin per se.⁶

Amplifying this argument Milton urges in *De Doctrina* that the Deity ordains His decrees with reference to particular circumstances so that He might permit free causes to act conformably to the liberty which His free agents possess.⁷ Although God in His omniscience foresees the actions of free agents, the Divine Foreknowledge has no influence on their choices. Thus God foresaw that Adam would fall; however, this Divine decree, though certain in God's infinite wisdom, was not necessary. The trespass of Adam and Eve originated in man's free choice, which was not determined by necessity. Milton differentiates the certainty of God's decrees from their necessity, refuting at the same time Calvin's doctrine of Predestination.⁸ Therefore, Milton's chain of beings may be described as consisting of the free wills of all God's creatures whose constant interplay is organized by the Will of God which achieves the aim foreseen by the Divine Love, Justice and Wisdom.

In *Paradise Lost* the doctrine of man's freedom manifests itself in two shapes: first in the Divine concept of liberty uniform with the one as in *De Doctrina* and second in the false Satanic interpretation of freedom. The Divine concept of liberty occurs in God's homily in Book III and in Raphael's speech in Book V. The philosophical message of God's homily is in harmony with the theory of liberty conveyed in *De Doctrina*. It stresses both the conditions of freedom, i. e., free will, constant faith and love which is obedience, and God's foreknowledge of man's fall.

I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.

³ J. Milton, "Of the Divine Decrees", *De Doctrina*, [in] *The Prose Works of John Milton*, trans. Charles S. Summer, vol. IV, London 1853, p. 38.

⁴ The possibilities of reaching the spiritual level of the angels through obedience are mentioned in *Paradise Lost*, V, 493—500.

⁵ J. Milton, "Of Predestination", *De Doctrina*, [in] *Prose Works* . . . , vol. IV, p. 63.

⁶ J. Milton, "Of the Divine Decrees", *De Doctrina*, [in:] *Prose Works*, vol. IV, p. 37.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40—41.

Such I created all the ethereal powers
 And spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;
 Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
 Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
 Of true allegiance, constant faith or love,
 Where only what they needs must do, appeared,
 Not what they would? What praise could they receive?
 What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
 When will and reason (reason also is choice)
 Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
 Made passive both, had served necessity,
 Not me. They therefore as to right belonged,
 So were created, nor can justly accuse
 Their maker, or their making, or their fate,
 As if predestination overruled
 Their will, disposed by absolute decree
 Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed
 Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
 Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
 Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
 So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
 Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
 They trespass, authors to themselves in all
 Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
 I formed them free, and free they must remain,
 Till they enthrall themselves:

(III. 98—125)

The above passage fulfils various functions in the poem. First, through the presentation of the concept of free will it forms the basis of the poet's justification of the ways of God to man. When man falls and suffers, he cannot blame his Maker for the consequences of his fall. Instead, he is bound to look for the cause of his hard lot in his own free choice (III. 95—98). Second, as a part of God's sermon upon the basic theological doctrines, the passage contributes to the encyclopaedic quality of the poem and thus exhibits a typical feature of a classical epic. And third, owing to its place in the structure of the poem—the homily precedes the events which happen in Paradise—it confirms the Divine Foreknowledge, so much stressed in God's own words. For, whatever we face later in the poem is in accord with the Divine prophecy from Book III. The fact that man's fall is seen beforehand and takes place later in the epic, makes it possible to presume that man's redemption and his final beauty, also foretold in Book III and confirmed by Michael in Book XII, are similarly bound to occur later in human history.

Raphael's version of man's liberty may be treated as a reiteration of God's homily as it focuses on the same doctrines of Milton's theory of liberty: free will, the lack of necessity and the law of obedience.

Attend: that thou art happy, owe to God;
 That thou continuest such owe to thyself,
 That is, to thy obedience; therein stand

This was that caution given thee; be advised.
 God made thee perfect, not immutable;
 And good he made thee, but to persevere
 He left it in thy power; ordained thy will
 By nature free, not over-ruled by fate
 Inextricable, or strict necessity;

(V. 520—528)

Raphael's words have a special function in the action of the epic. Not only are they to reassure Adam of his freedom but also to warn him of Satanic temptation. Through Raphael's teaching Adam acquires a full awareness of his capacity to obey God's law. Moreover, he is informed about the disobedience of Satan and his punishment and, finally, he is taught to take heed lest he should become Satan's victim. Thus Adam becomes fully aware of his position and his power to reject enticement. Therefore, when he later falls, he has no right to call his trespass a necessity or God's decree. So it can be concluded that Milton's concept of liberty influenced the shape of the epic. The author exposed it introducing Raphael's mission, an element in the story of the fall which is absent in the Bible. Milton's addition shapes the story of man's fall according to his own ideas: had God absolutely determined man's fall. He would not have sent Raphael to warn Adam.

The false concept of freedom is presented twice in *Paradise Lost*. First, it appears in Book II as Satan's words of consolation. After the rebellious host is expelled from heaven, Satan claims that, though fallen from their previous splendid state, "the freedom" they have attained is better than God's yoke. Thus he refuses to accept the notion of freedom as obedience to God and, as it were, reverses concepts of true and false:

... but rather seek
 Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
 Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
 Free, and to none accountable, preferring
 Hard Liberty before the easy yoke
 Of senile pomp.

(II. 252—257)

This reverse understanding of liberty also occurs much later in the poem, in Book IX, when Eve, having trusted Satan's account of the fruit, starts to argue from false premises and asserts that God forbids knowledge, which is good in itself, and threatens man with death (IX, 758—762). In her speculations Eve does the same thing as Satan did in Book II. She detaches freedom from obedience by claiming that obedience under threat of death is only incomplete freedom.

Thus in *Paradise Lost* Milton's concept of liberty from *De Doctrina* is supplemented by the addition of Satan's false understanding. This presumably resulted from the literary necessity of presenting temptation and the fall. Therefore, it can be inferred that a literary transcription of the poet's theology

in the presentation of an additional philosophical conclusion viewing the fall and surrender to temptation as preceded by a false comprehension of liberty. This idea is merely implied in *De Doctrina*. In the chapter "Of the Fall of Our First Parents" Milton asserts that the fall was "the casting of man's obedience to God." Now that Milton connects liberty with obedience, it can be easily deduced that the fall was not only "the casting" of man's obedience but the casting of his right understanding of freedom as well. However, this conclusion is not made explicit in *De Doctrina*. It is only in *Paradise Lost* that it is fully presented.

There still remains one thing to be mentioned, namely, the chronological order of the presentation of the concept of liberty in *Paradise Lost*. The reader of the poem is first confronted with the Satanic version of freedom (Book II). Then in God's homily in Book III the Divine definition comes into view; this true comprehension of liberty is upheld by Raphael in Book V. Finally in Book IX, when Eve gives in to temptation, the true understanding of freedom yields to Satanic fancy. I think that this order of presentation, the Satanic version preceding the Divine concept, has its source in the classical epic tradition followed by Milton, according to which the action begins, as Horace's phrase goes, *in medias res*. Since, for Milton, a dramatically well advanced point was Satan in his fallen state, he follows the same order in the exposition of the concept of liberty and introduces Satan's fancy as the first version of liberty in the poem. Thus it can be inferred that in the literary transcriptions of liberty the epic rules which govern the poem influence the presentation of the poet's views. However, this influence is rather disadvantageous from the point of view of clarity: those readers and critics who are not acquainted with Milton's notion of freedom, as expressed in *De Doctrina* and later in the poem may fail to recognize the Satanic parody of freedom and may accept Satan's rejection of the tyranny of God as a real attempt at gaining liberty. I think this was one of the reasons why the so-called "Satanic school of criticism", which saw Milton's Satan as a hero who strove for freedom, gained ground. For example, Empson⁹ does not investigate the correspondences between Milton's philosophy of *De Doctrina* and of *Paradise Lost* and fails to observe that Satan argues from false premises, and therefore, cannot be correct because righteousness, for Milton, can exist only when it is in accord with the Divine.

Together with freedom man was given the power to act, or as Milton asserts in *De Doctrina*, to express the energy of a free and conscious being. Consequently, only where there is freedom can acts be performed. Since, for Milton, freedom means obedience to God's law, acts exist only when they are in harmony with the Divine Will. Therefore, any act estranged from the Divine turns into a parody of true action.

If, bearing in mind this definition of an act, we examine *Paradise Lost* in order to find the hero of the epic we have to reject both Adam and Satan for neither of them remains obedient to God. As Satan and Adam grow apart from

⁹ W. Empson, *Milton's God*, London 1965, p. 71.

the Divine their acts become pseudo-acts which cannot be associated with true heroism. In *Paradise Lost* the Divine acts are creation and redemption. Both these acts are performed by Christ. Hence, as Frye says,¹⁰ Christ is the real hero of *Paradise Lost*. Otherwise, according to Milton's own definition of an act, the epic would have lacked a hero.

The pattern of genuine heroism based on obedience is repeated in *Paradise Lost*. First, it is exemplified in Abdiel, the seraph who obeys the Divine commands with incomparable zeal (V. 805—806). Abdiel is the only angel among the whole host tempted by Satan who finds the power to withstand Satan's arguments. Later in the poem the same type of heroism occurs in Michael's presentation of the patriarchs, Noe and Abraham, who remain righteous in times of extreme apostasy. However, it should be noted that these examples of heroism do not appear in the action proper of the poem but are mentioned in the speeches of Raphael and Michael as examples. This fact reinforces the assertion that Christ is the only hero of *Paradise Lost*.

Divine law, within which the human soul has been originally created, endowed man with a certain hierarchy. According to this hierarchy the soul consisted of three main levels, as Frye puts it, "the reason, which is in control of the soul; the will, the agent carrying out the decrees of the reason and the appetite."¹¹ In the seventeenth century it was a generally accepted axiom that the reason was in command of the two remaining elements and it remained under the control of a higher principle, i. e., revelation from above. In one of his *Prologues* Milton points to the reason's influence on the will.

The human intellect, as head and ruler surpasses in the splendour the other faculties of the mind, it governs and illuminates with its splendour the will itself, otherwise blind and dark, that like the moon shines with another's light.¹²

The will of the perfect man, as God ordains it, is free because it obeys reason and "true liberty always with right reason dwells" (XII. 83—84). Both the appetite for food and the sexual appetite, though controlled by reason itself with the immediate submission to will, are influenced from below by fancy, just as the reason is enlightened from above by revelation. After the fall the hierarchy of the soul is destroyed and the original order reversed. Reason surrenders to appetite. Having gained the highest position, appetite changes into passion. Its illumination, fancy, reaches the position of revelation. Will, now the agent of upstart passion "shines with passion's light" instead of reflecting reason. Reason, degraded to the lowest position, can no longer choose rightly. Will, detached from reason, is no longer free. That is the end of man's freedom (XII. 83—85).

In *Paradise Lost* Milton's understanding of the order of the human soul

¹⁰ N. Frye, *Five Essays on Milton's Epics*, London 1965, p. 23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹² *Ibid.*

and its destruction at the fall is shown not only through the poetical reiterations of the author's views but also through the presentation of Adam and Eve before and after the fall. Let us first examine the way in which Milton renders the order of the soul in the presentation of his characters.

In the perfect man, the appetite for food and the sexual appetite were situated in their original places under the intrinsic control of the reason. Therefore, Milton in his presentation of Adam and Eve treats these appetites as good in themselves. This is why eating in Paradise is presented as altogether good. Even Raphael tastes the liquors and fruit with which Eve entertains him. However, Adam, Eve and their heavenly guest eat with the temperance characteristic of those whose souls are in a perfect state. Milton renders the physical love between Adam and Eve before the fall in a similar way. Their natural and sexual adjustment being perfect, they are physically united in the joyful approval of "the whole nature" (VIII. 510—514). Interestingly enough, in Genesis physical love is mentioned for the first time only after the fall.¹³ Therefore, the comparison of the Biblical story and *Paradise Lost* shows that Milton interprets the history from Genesis according to his understanding of the order of the perfect soul.

The relationship between the first couple changes entirely after they have tasted of the forbidden fruit. Their physical love becomes an expression of lust rather than of love (IX. 1011—1015).

The poetical reiterations of Milton's concept of the soul also appear both before and after Adam's lapse. Before the fall the emphasis rests on man's free will, its subjection to reason and a warning lest passion should control the will. In Book VIII Raphael warns Adam:

Be strong, live happy and love but first of all
Him whom to love is to obey and keep
His great command; take heed lest passion sway
Thy judgement to do aught, which else free will
Would not admit.

(VIII. 633—637)

In Book IX Adam repeats the warning to Eve who is just about to leave him.

... God left free the will, for what obeys
Reason, is free, and reason he made right,
But bid her will, beware, and still erect,
Lest by some fair appearing good surprised
She dictate false, and misinform the will
To do what God expressly hath forbid.

(IX. 351—356)

The second passage does not mention victory of passion over the will. Instead, Adam urges Eve to take care lest deceived reason dictate a false choice. Thus Adam is warned against passion and Eve against the false argument of deceived reason. I think that these two warnings stand behind the understanding

¹³ The fall of man Genesis III.

"And Adam knew his wife" Genesis IV. 1.

of the moment of the fall. Eve trespasses because she accepts Satan's false arguments but Adam, conscious of these false assumptions, reaches for the forbidden fruit out of love of Eve (IX. 908—916).¹⁴ However, I should say that this is passion rather than love, for his decision is no longer in agreement with reason. Such an interpretation of Adam's fall, as resulting not from love but from passion, is supported by the fact that in the quoted passage from Book VIII (633—637) Adam is taught what love means. If he loves, he must, first of all, love his Creator "whom to love is to obey his commands." True love is the love of God, and since Divinity illuminates reason, love is also rational. After Adam's confession of love Milton comments on Adam's deed:

he scrupled not to eat
Against his better knowledge not deceived
But fondly overcome with female charm.
(IX. 9979)

Thus the examination of the moment of the fall in the light of Milton's understanding of the order of the soul makes it clear that Adam's fall has its source, not as the majority of the critics argue, in larger than life love,¹⁵ but in the conscious rejection of reason followed by an outburst of passion.

The destruction of the soul's order is manifested in Book IX and in Book XII. In Book IX the narrator's comment

For understanding ruled not, and the will
Heard not her love, both in subjection now
To sensual appetite, who from beneath
Usurping over sovereign reason claimed
Superior sway

(IX. 1126—1131)

is an introduction to the description of Adam and Eve's miserable position and their first bitter quarrel. In Book XII while explaining man's outward slavery, Michael repeats the same arguments.

Since thy original lapse, true liberty
Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
Thinned, and from her hath no dividual being:
Reason in man obscured, or not obeyed.
Immediately inordinate desires
And upstart passions catch the government
From reason, and to servitude reduce
Man till then free.

(XII. 84—90)

¹⁴ Thus Milton asserts that Eve succumbs to Satan's temptations unconsciously while Adam is not deceived but consciously yields to Eve's false arguments. In such an interpretation of the fall Milton follows St Paul's argument:

And Adam was not deceived
but the woman being deceived was
in the transgression.

1 Tim II, 14.

¹⁵ A. J. Waldock, *"Paradise Lost" and Its Critics*, Cambridge 1947, p. 42—64.

Thus both passages can be treated as the poet's justification of the consequences of the fall. Man's miserable state, i.e., his anger, hate, lack of peace and slavery are all effects of his self-imposed reversal of the individual soul.

Since the original lapse man has not only lost his inward and outward liberty, destroyed the order of his soul, but has also been sentenced to know good only through the knowledge of evil. In such a state virtue is exercised in the apprehension of vice and can be maintained only by a conscious rejection of evil. This means choosing good in the full awareness of evil. As a result of such choice reason is restored, for "reason is but choosing"¹⁶ and free acts are again possible.

In *Paradise Lost* the concept of virtue is presented on two levels: human and angelic. It is put forward both before and after Satan's rebellion, as well as before and after man's fall. Before the fall (Satan's as well as man's) both angels and man display virtue by rejection of a provoking object. The provoking object for man is the forbidden fruit, whereas for angels it is God's exaltation of the Son. These two elements are brought into view and exist solely as a test of obedience, or as Milton says in *De Doctrina* "a pledge, as it were, and memorial of obedience"¹⁷.

When evil enters the world after the fall, the way of displaying virtue changes. Now man, who so far has been kept apart from evil, has to reject it consciously. Similarly, after Satan's refusal to worship the Son, those angels who are tempted by Satan but who, nevertheless, choose to remain free, have to oppose him consciously and openly. However, only one of them, Abdiel, stands by virtue.

I think that although in *Paradise Lost* we are not told about Adam's future life, Milton implies the ability of a fallen man to maintain virtue. Man's knowledge of evil comes not only from the fall, the actual experience of evil, but also from Michael's prophecy in which, as in the imperfect human world, good is intermingled with evil. Therefore, when Adam leaves Paradise he realizes what evil is and how virtue can be maintained. The only thing he must do now is to display his knowledge in his future deeds.

... only add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love
... then wilt thou not be loth
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A paradise within thee, happier far
(XII. 581—583, 585—587)

Thus Adam's future happiness is conditioned by virtue. Milton even maintains that now Adam's happiness can be far greater than it used to be in the lost Paradise. I think that this possibility can be explained in terms of the new concept of virtue. If man, having learnt what evil is, rightly chooses to stand by virtue, the state he retains seems far happier for now happiness is contrasted with evil and misery.

¹⁶ J. Milton, *Areopagitica*, *Milton's Areopagitica and Other Prose Works*, p. 5.

¹⁷ J. Milton, "Of the Special Government of Man", *De Doctrina*, [in:] *Prose Works*..., vol. IV, p. 221.

Milton's presentation of virtue in *Paradise Lost* brings forth the analogies between angelic and human life. On both levels of existence there is a provoking object or a pledge of virtue that shelters God's creatures from evil. However, when the provoking object is no longer respected, man and angels, as manifested by the figures of Abdiel, Noe, Abraham, still have a chance to reject evil and maintain virtue. These parallels stress that the epic world is organized into two levels: spiritual and human. Such an organization of the epic world is important in the justification of God's ways to man for it emphasizes that the Divine law is the same for all God's creatures. It can be concluded, therefore, that though Milton's world is hierarchical in its structure it is governed by the principle of equality, for life and liberty of all God's creature are conditioned by obedience.

Milton's theory of liberty, as reflected in *Paradise Lost*, points out that though grafted in the biblical story, Milton's poem remains unique in the epic tradition. This uniqueness results from the influence of the poet's independent Christian philosophy upon the shape of the epic.

RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

In *De Doctrina* Milton differentiates between a vision of the individual ways of salvation and an eschatological vision of God's reconciliation with the whole of mankind. Both these visions have their poetical counterparts in *Paradise Lost*. Individual salvation is mentioned three times (in Book III, Book VII and Book XII) and the final reconciliation manifests itself in two poetical prophecies in Book III and in Book XII. Such a wide exposition of these complex problems suggests that they not only add to the encyclopedic quality of the poem but form an integral part of the epic as well.

In "Of Man's Restoration"¹⁸ Milton presents the process of individual salvation as inner regeneration. Describing in detail the stages of such spiritual development, Milton refutes the doctrine of predestination.

The three poetical transcriptions of Milton's ideas on man's individual salvation (God's homily in Book III, Raphael's speech in Book VII and Michael's prophecy in Book XII) express only some aspects of the doctrine of salvation as put forward in *De Doctrina*. Book III, for example, mentions briefly the callings of man but omits the whole exposition of man's spiritual development, at the same time bringing into special prominence the role of God's grace in the process of reaching salvation (III. 173—174; 183—188). From the literary point of view such a shift of emphasis serves the purpose of presenting God as a character in the epic. The homily, from Book III, bears witness to God's goodness, foreknowledge, and interest in man's salvation. It is the only direct literary counterpart of Milton's doctrine of man's individual redemption. Although some aspects of this tenet can be traced in the messages brought to Adam by Raphael and Michael, they are not presented with their full theological content. What

¹⁸ J. Milton, "Of Man's Restoration", *De Doctrina*, [in:] *Prose Works*, vol. IV, p. 321—331.

Raphael's account of the will of the Almighty indicates to Adam is the possibility for man to find the way to heaven (VII. 154—159). Raphael announces this message to Adam before man is tempted and falls. Granting Adam the knowledge of salvation of the fallen before his own fall would imply assenting to the doctrine of predestination already rejected in Book III. So Adam can be instructed only in those elements of man's salvation which would not contradict the teachings conveyed in God's homily in Book III. Even after the fall Adam does not acquire a full knowledge of salvation. When he learns that:

... to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God, to walk
As in his presence, ever to observe
His providence, and on him sole depend.
(XII. 561—564)

he is not shown the way leading to reconciliation with God through spiritual development under the influence of the Spirit, but is only taught patience and obedience. Thus he is prepared to endure what shall come to pass. Salvation is possible only through the sacrifice of Jesus (XII. 293—296). As Adam knows Christ only through the vision of the future he can seek in his life only the happiness he has lost, but he cannot search for renovation through the Spirit.

As has been pointed out, in the presentation of man's salvation in Raphael's speech and in Michael's prophecy, the doctrine of salvation does not precede the fall of man and the Advent of Christ. It can be concluded therefore, that in the action of the epic Milton presents his theology in a chronological way paying attention that Adam is given only the amount of knowledge appropriate to the moment at which it is being delivered.

Out of the three poetical transcriptions of the poet's ideas on individual salvation (i. e., God's homily in Book III, Raphael's speech—Book VII, Michael's prophecy—Book XII) the one from Book III seems to convey the fullest theological meaning. A comparison of the above passages elucidates the poetical means embodying Milton's philosophical arguments. While the expressions of the doctrines in the action of the epic requires a careful conveyance of the message depending on the structure of the poem, the manifestation of doctrines in God's homilies becomes a necessary part of the poet's justification of God's ways to man. If it were not for the theological messages included in God's homilies Milton would fall into some theological traps or would at least prompt a multiple interpretation of his philosophical views. By the introduction of God's speeches before the presentation of the protagonists of *Paradise Lost* Milton manages to keep his theology aloof from the structure of the poem and to impose the philosophical background against which the action of the epic develops. The philosophical background of the epic is based on the poet's view of history. Were it not for the presentation of the history of the present world with both its starting point and eschatological end the poem would never become a Christian epic.

In *Paradise Lost* the poet's eschatological vision manifests itself in two main

prophecies: in Book III in God's declaration of His gracious purpose towards mankind and in Book XII in Michael's account of the termination of the present world. Both prophecies demonstrate the execution of God's will towards man and thus become significant in the poet's justification of God's ways to men. This philosophical aim can be achieved only through the presentation of God's plan in view of eternity. For, as Sterry alleges, "in this light of eternity alone is the work of God seen aright in the entire piece in the whole design from the beginning to the end."¹⁹

The two eschatological visions, from Book III and Book XII, reveal different literary functions. Book III is important in the presentation of Milton's God as a character; Book XII, on the other hand, shows the process of shaping Adam's new psychological identity. Both visions have double structural functions in the epic. Firstly, they mark not only the end of universal history but also a conclusion of the two integral parts of the epic; the picture of the heavenly order in Book III and Michael's prophecy from Book XI and Book XII. Secondly, the two visions constitute a part of a structural symmetry of the poem which is based on the juxtaposition of good and evil. At the beginning of the poem the picture of Satanic hell is confronted with the vision of the ordered glory and harmony of heaven which concludes with the prophecy of man's final bliss.

Another structural contrast between good and evil starts at the climax of the poem, the fall of man. From now on there develops a vision of man's various iniquities and the pervasiveness of evil. It is interrupted only once, by a vision of God sending man a counsellor, but soon continues in Michael's account of the history of the present world. This image of good is finally contrasted with a vision of the victory of good and final harmony in Christ's Kingdom. God's and Michael's prophecies are present in both structural juxtapositions of good and evil, as mentioned above. They mark the end of the two visions of good as well as the ultimate victory of good over evil.

Milton's eschatological vision comprises five main stages: Christ's Second Coming, the resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgement followed by the conflagration of the world and the ultimate renovation of heaven and earth. In *De Doctrina* Milton alleges that the first stage of the future kingdom, Christ's Second Advent, will come in an hour which is known only to the Father. However, this hour will be evidenced through certain signs pointed out by Christ and His Apostles. First, it will come in the time of "an extreme recklessness and impiety and an almost universal apostasy".²⁰ The second sign will be the restoration of Israel to its land.²¹ The second coming will be glorious and terrible. Bolstering

¹⁹ P. Sterry, *A Discourse of the Freedom of the Will*, 1975, p. 166, after, C. A. Patrides, *Milton and the Christian Tradition*, Oxford 1966, p. 220.

²⁰ John Milton, "Of Perfect Glorification", *De Doctrina*, [in:] *Prose Works...*, vol. IV, p. 476—477.

²¹ Supporting these signs Milton cites from the *Old* and the *New Testament*: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on earth" (Luke XVIII, 8), "Jehovah will have mercy on Jacob and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land" (Iza XIV, 1).

the glorious and terrible vision of the Parousia Milton quotes from the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. XXV, 31; XXIV, 29, 30). In *Paradise Lost* the poetical visions of the Second Advent, both in Book III. 323—324 and in Book XII. 543—546, stress its magnificent aspect. However, while Book XII emphasizes the recklessness and impiety which will usher in Christ's Coming, Book III does not mention it.

Truth shall retire
Bestuck with slanderous darts and works of faith
Rarely be found: so shall the world go on,
To good malignant to bad man benign,
Under her own weight groaning till the day
Appears of respiration to the just
And vengeance to the wicked,
(XII. 535—540)

The difference between the two images results from the already mentioned function of Michael's prophecy in the poem. Michael is sent to teach Adam a moral lesson. This aim is achieved through the vision of punishment which comes as an effect of a general recklessness and reprobation. Hence the stress on the impiety which precedes the Second Advent.

In *De Doctrina* Milton substantiates the second stage of the Kingdom, the resurrection of the dead, by "the testimonies of Scripture and several arguments from reason."²² To give the testimonies of Scripture he quotes from the Gospel of John and Matthew (Matt. XXII, 32; John V, 28). To bolster his vision with the arguments of reason Milton propounds that:

... were there no resurrection, the righteous would be of all men the most miserable, and the wicked who have a better position in this life, most happy, which would be altogether inconsistent with the providence and justice of God.²³

The Resurrection of the dead will be succeeded by the Last Judgement "wherein Christ with the saints, arrayed in the glory and power of the Father shall judge the evil angels and the whole race of mankind,"²⁴ according to the conscience of each individual. The Last Judgement will not be confined to a single day. Supporting his argument with a quotation from Revelation,²⁵ Milton conceives the Day of Judgement as co-existent with the millenium. Consequently Milton's millenarianism can be defined²⁶ as a belief in the Day of Judgement which will last a thousand years.

The vision of resurrection is absent from Michael's prophecy. The omission results again from the moral function of the prophecy. Michael is to announce

²² J. Milton, "Of Perfect Glorification", *De Doctrina*, [in:] *Prose Works*... vol. IV, p. 480.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 481.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 481—482.

²⁵ I saw the thrones and they set upon them, and judgement was given to them and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years (Rev. XX, 4).

²⁶ J. Milton, "Of Perfect Glorification", *De Doctrina*, [in:] *Prose Works*... vol. IV, p. 486.

to Adam the consequences of his trespass and thus to give him a moral lesson and that is why he omits to mention resurrection lest Adam should regard death, his punishment, as insignificant. Resurrection is the only element of Milton's eschatology which is not mentioned in Michael's prophecy. This indicates that in *Paradise Lost* there are passages when Milton's dogma remains in a subordinate position to the literary function of the poem. Although not mentioned in Michael's prophecy, resurrection is implied in the poetical picture of the Day of Judgement in Book III.

forthwith from all winds
The living, and forthwith the cited dead
Of all past ages to the general doom
Shall hasten.

(III. 326—329)

This image implies the poet's reference to the resurrection of the dead because, first, Milton states in *De Doctrina* that the Last Judgement will follow resurrection²⁷ and second, "all winds" go back to the life breathing kinds from the prophecy of Ezekiel.²⁸

While the vision of resurrection is mentioned only once, the Last Judgement maintains a central role in the two main prophetic passages in *Paradise Lost*, in Book II and in Book XII. However, the two visions differ in emphasis. The vision in Book III (330—333) stresses the punishment of the bad whereas the one in Book XII (461—465) puts the emphasis on the rewarding of the good. This difference stems from the consolatory aspect of Michael's prophecy. The comfort which Adam desires from the vision lies mainly in the beatific promise of final bliss. Hence Michael brings it into special prominence.

According to *De Doctrina* the Day of Judgement will be succeeded by the final conflagration which will destroy the present unclean and polluted world. Though sure that the final conflagration will happen, Milton dismisses as of no importance the question "whether by this is meant the destruction of the substance of the world itself, or only a change in the nature of its constituent parts."²⁹ Therefore, it can be concluded that Milton abstains from accepting either the literal or the symbolical interpretation of the final annihilation of the world. Such a conclusion refutes Patrides's assertion: "It is Milton who is the most distinguished English expositor of the literalistic belief in the conflagration of the universe."³⁰

In *Paradise Lost* the conflagration of the world appears in the magnificent address of the Father (III. 333) and in Michael's account of the future (XII.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 479.

²⁸ O come from the four winds
O breath; and breath upon these slain
That they may live. (Ezek'XXXII, 9).

²⁹ J. Milton, "Of Perfect Glorification", *De Doctrina*, [in] *Prose Works...*, vol. IV, p. 488.

³⁰ C. A. Patrides, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

547—549). As in the treatise, both passages imply neither a literary nor a symbolical interpretation but keep to the imagery of the Scripture cited in *De Doctrina* (2 Peter III, 7).

Having thus examined the four elements of Milton's eschatological vision, i.e., the Second Coming, resurrection, the Last Judgement, and the final conflagration, as represented in the two visions in Book III and in Book XII, it can be inferred that the two passages, though they both are in accord with the dogma expressed in *De Doctrina*, bring forth philosophical messages which differ in emphasis. This difference stems from the different literary functions of the two prophecies. The passage in Book III is a characterization of Milton's God and a compendium of Milton's theological views while the prophecy in Book XII is a moral lesson which helps Adam to develop a new psychological identity. The conflagration of the world constitutes a stage which will terminate this temporal, polluted reality and begin the ages of endless happiness. That is why in *Paradise Lost* (III. 333—335; XII. 547—549) it is juxtaposed with the vision of the ultimate, pure Heaven and Earth.

The contrast between evil, which is destroyed by fire, and good, which arises from fire, is a poetical illustration of Milton's belief in the Divine Power turning evil into good. Milton asserts in the Treatise that:

the end which a sinner has in view is generally something evil and unjust, from which God uniformly educes a good and just result, thus as it were, creating light of darkness.

Man's sin of disobedience and his final salvation form a part of God's change of evil into good. Under the Divine Plan, man's fall is to be turned into good "more wonderful than this which, by Creation first brought forth light out of darkness" (XII, 471). According to such an interpretation Adam's sin becomes the fortunate fall, frequently referred to in Latin as *Felix Culpa*. The paradox of the Fortunate Fall is illustrated in Book X. After the entrance of Sin and Sin-born Death into the world, God promises to create stainless sanctity but at the same time He orders the heavenly host to alter the universe from its original perfect harmony. Ready to carry out God's commands, the angels sing out in praise of God's ways. Their paradoxical joy, at the moment when the world is being destroyed, stems from the belief that the act of destruction is the first step towards a future, far greater good. *Felix Culpa* is also illustrated in Michael's final assertion that the earth will be changed into a happier place than Eden. That is why, when Michael finishes his prophecy, Adam understands that the Divine goodness lies in God's power to turn evil into good and exclaims:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness. Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin

By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
 Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
 From God, and over wrath grace shall abound.

(XII. 469—478)

Adam's exclamation forms a climax in the exposition of the theme of the epic: the poet's justification of God's ways to men. Whatever man's choice might be, whether he chooses to obey God or to trespass, God in His omnipotence uses man's wrongdoing to create a far greater good.

The final inducing of good from evil will mark the beginning of the last stage in the Kingdom of Christ, the future ages of bliss and happiness. In *De Doctrina* Milton presents a vision of this endless epoch, confining himself to numerous quotes from Scripture (1 Cor II, 9; Rev XXI, 4; Isa LXV, 17). The vision of future bliss is presented four times in *Paradise Lost*: in God's homily in Book III, in Book X after sin and Death enter the world and twice in Michael's prophecy in Book XII. Depending on the context and moment of action each poetical prophecy of future happiness puts the emphasis on a different aspect of the new epoch. In Book III, for instance, love, truth and joy are brought to light, illustrating that there will be a time when these values will become motives of all deeds (III, 335—341). This emphasis is the result of the fact that God's prophecy in Book III is one of the main passages which contribute to the characterization of God. Hence the homily stresses those values which are characteristic of God, and which, therefore, exist in the final state of unity with Divinity permeating the whole universe and God being all in all. The vision of the final beatitude in Book X follows the entrance of Sin and Death into the world, therefore, it stresses the ultimate destruction of death and the complete future purity and sanctity (X. 635—639). Michael's account of the Coming Kingdom is not only a prophecy but also man's consolation, henceforth it brings into special prominence the future happiness far greater than the newly lost Paradise (XII. 463—465). The last and the fullest image of new earth recapitulates every lineament of the new epoch already mentioned in the poem.

purged and refined,
 New heavens, new earth, ages of endless date
 Founded in righteousness and peace and love
 To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss

(XII. 548—551)

Each of the passages mentioned counterpoises a vision of degradation and thus completes the pattern of structural juxtapositions of evil and good which I have already suggested. God's prophecy in Book III follows the picture of Satan's world, the vision in Book X is contrasted with the fall of man and victory of Sin and Death. The first passage in Book XII 463—465 counterpoises the picture of the evil world from Adam to Christ's First Advent, whereas the second passage in Book XII 548—551 equipoises the picture of the polluted world from the First Advent to the Parousia. I think that this pattern might be considered as a literary equivalent of the concept of Felix Culpa. Just as man's fall is turned into far

greater good, the visions of evil in the poem finish with the promise of future good and happiness.

The pattern of contrast between good and evil brings into focus the message of *Paradise Lost* which is summed up in Adam's admission that:

to obey is best
And love with fear the only God, to walk
As in his presence, ever to observe
His providence, and on him sole depend,
Merciful over all his works, with good
Still overcoming evil,
(XII. 561—566)

It is in the power of God to change evil into good, yet only man himself can maintain the good which God has created for him. The Paradise which Adam lost and which Jesus regained can be transferred into a far happier place only through obedience to God's law. This is the only way to achieve a perfect harmony of the soul within itself and with the ordered universe outside. The purpose of Milton's exposition of man's reconciliation with God, both in poetical and theological terms, is to show that those who choose obedience will pass the border between this side of Paradise and Eden, the world where all know where good lies. In this world

there shall be a way
called the way of holiness, the unclean shall
not pass over it; but it shall be for those:
the wayfaring men, though fools shall not
err therein...
And the ransomed of the Lord shall
return and come to Zion with songs and
everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall
obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and
sighing shall flee away.

(Is XXXV 8, 10)

CONCLUSION

In the present article I have touched upon some problems concerning the presentation of Milton's philosophy in *Paradise Lost*. Generally speaking, they may be arranged in two thematic groups: the influence of Milton's philosophy upon the shape and the interpretation of *Paradise Lost*, and the influence of some literary aspects of *Paradise Lost* upon the presentation of the poet's tenet within the epic.

Now I shall list the arguments already presented, classifying them as belonging to an appropriate group. The points which have been made so far will not be further developed, each of them having been previously considered.

THE INFLUENCE OF MILTON'S PHILOSOPHY UPON THE SHAPE OF THE POEM AND ITS INTERPRETATION

Milton's intention of presenting his philosophy within the framework of the poem justifies the introduction of God's homilies. For this was the only way that the poet could keep his theology aloof from the structure of the poem.

Milton's theory of good and evil comes into view not only in the poetical transcriptions of the author's ideas but also in the structural pattern of juxtaposition of good and evil. This, as it were, twofold presentation of the concept suggests the decisive influence of Milton's philosophy upon the structure of the epic.

Milton's definition of an act classifies Christ as the only hero of *Paradise Lost*.

Adam's fall, when considered in terms of Milton's concept of the soul's order, stems not from enormous love but from passion.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOME LITERARY ASPECTS OF "PARADISE LOST" UPON THE PRESENTATION OF THE POET'S TENETS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE POEM

The presentation of the concept of temptation and of the figure of Satan in the epic aroused the necessity of showing Satan's false concept of freedom and brought about the additional philosophical conclusion which says that the fall is preceded by a false comprehension of liberty. This argument, though implied in *De Doctrina*, is made explicit only in the epic.

Dealing, in God's homily, with the exposition of the individual ways of salvation, Milton omits the whole process of man's spiritual development, stressing the role of God's grace instead. This shift of emphasis results from the literary role of God's homily, aiming at presenting God as a character in the epic.

The poet's philosophical arguments are presented in an order which depends upon the structure of the epic. For example, Adam at each particular moment of the action is endowed only with such an amount of knowledge as is necessary and sufficient for him to obey God's law and remain free and happy. Also the epic rule of beginning the action *in medias res* influenced the order of the exposition of the concept of liberty, i.e., the Satanic fancy rather than the Divine true version is presented first. As I have already suggested, this influence was rather disadvantageous from the point of view of clarity in the presentation of the poet's philosophy.

As has been demonstrated in the two eschatological visions, in Book III and in Book XII, the philosophical message included in the poem changes according to the literary function of the passage in which it is being delivered.

The above arrangement of arguments brings into view a mutual relation between the poem and the poet's philosophy. The mutual influence of the two factors, the literary features of the epic and the author's views, proves that the

two should not be kept apart while reading *Paradise Lost* and that Milton's theology forms an integral part of the poem. Therefore, I think that a genuine critical investigation of *Paradise Lost* should derive its methods from both literary and philosophical types of criticism. Only through such an investigation can we arrive at a satisfactory interpretation of the poem.

BÓG MILTONA I „RAJ UTRACONY”

STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest rozważenie wpływu poglądów filozoficznych Miltona na kształt *Raju Utraconego* i przeciwnie, wpływu formy literackiej na przedstawienie poglądów w eposie. Spośród zagadnień poruszonych przez poetę wybrano pojęcie wolności i upadku człowieka oraz wizję pojednania człowieka z Bogiem. Problemy te są przedstawione w dwóch oddzielnych częściach artykułu.

Wykazano, iż forma utworu wpływa na przedstawienie poszczególnych zagadnień filozoficzno-teologicznych.

Przykładowo w zależności od miejsca akcji, te same poglądy wykazują pewną odmienność wynikającą z przyjętej formy literackiej. Innym przykładem jest sposób w jaki Milton, za pomocą postaci Szatana, ukazuje zarysowaną w „*De Doctrina Christiana*” tezę, iż upadek poprzedzony jest fałszywym zrozumieniem wolności.

Filozoficzny problem dobra i zła pokazany jest w utworze dwójako: w homiliach i w następujących bezpośrednio po sobie poetyckich wizjach dobra i zła.

Takie przedstawienie zagadnienia jest ilustracją w jaki sposób forma odzwierciedla pogląd Miltona, według którego końcowym następstwem zła jest dobro.

Omawiane zależności wskazują, że wnikliwa analiza utworu nie jest możliwa bez znajomości filozofii Miltona.