A Calculation More Curious Than Instructive: Epic Chronology in *Paradise Lost*, Books 1-3

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Joseph Addison, examining the time scheme of *Paradise Lost* in the first sustained critical analysis of the epic, declared a chronology of its complete plotline to be both impossible and futile.

> The Modern Critics have collected from several Hints in the *Iliad* and *Æneid* the Space of Time, which is taken up by the Action of each of those Poems; but as a great Part of *Milton*'s Story was transacted in Regions that lie out of the Reach of the Sun and the Sphere of Day, it is impossible to gratifie the Reader with such a Calculation, which indeed would be more curious than instructive; none of the Criticks, either Antient or Modern, having laid down Rules to circumscribe the Action of an Epic Poem with any determined number of Years, Days, or Hours.
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> [*The Spectator* No. 267, 5 Jan. 1712. (2:20)]

Addison argues first that time cannot be calculated in Milton's epic because much of its action takes place outside the cosmos,[1] and, second, a chronology might satisfy our idle curiosity but would not be instructive because we have no established critical-theoretical framework within which to interpret the findings, whatever they might be. I will leave aside the quibble about the incompleteness of literary theory and only note that Addison's second point stands in tension with the first sentence of the passage, where the construction of epic chronologies is presented as a critical task that depends on the reader's ability to pick up *hints*. The exercise itself is apparently perfectly legitimate. Indeed, Addison's fundamental objection seems to be predicated ultimately not on the underdeveloped state of literary theory but on the logical impossibility of calculating the time of action "transacted in Regions that lie out of the Reach of the Sun and the Sphere of Day"—on the tacit presupposition that time does not apply in the other three cosmological regions.

In his last essay on *Paradise Lost*, Addison ventures a chronological tally for Books 4-12, but he maintains his initial point: "As for that part of the Action which is described in the three first Books, as it does not pass within the Regions of Nature, . . . it is not subject to any calculations of Time" [*The Spectator* No. 369, 3 May 1712, (2:151)]. A generation later Thomas Newton concurred: "for the action of the preceding books [1-3]

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lying out of the sphere of the sun, the time could not be computed" (1:275, ad 4.598). Even when he took issue with Addison's ten-day total, he confirmed the larger thesis: "this is the eleventh day of the poem, we mean of that part of it which is transacted within the sphere of day" (Newton 2:315, ad 11.135; cf. 2:281-82, ad 10.845). Given this unanimous consensus of influential early critics, it is no wonder that no overarching epic chronology was suggested for *Paradise Lost* for over two hundred and fifty years.[2]

Mid-twentieth-century criticism broke with that tradition quite rapidly and radically, although by no means completely. After Grant McColley's pioneering work in 1940, Gunnar Qvarnström and Alastair Fowler developed a highly influential 33-day scheme in the 1960s, which soon invited revisionist readings. First, Galbraith Crump offered a 28-day alternative in 1975, then a generation later Sherry L. Zivley proposed a 33+4-day chronology in 2000. What all these authors share in common is the conviction that the (re)construction of an overall chronology of epic action is possible from the Son's anointing to the expulsion, that is, including that part of the action which is "transacted in Regions that lie out of the Reach of the Sun and the Sphere of Day." That approach seems to have carried the day in the second half of the century, but there is another trajectory as well, of which Zivley's two-part arrangement, separating out the four days of the war in heaven, also reminds us. Critics like Allen H. Gilbert in 1947 and Laurence Stapleton in 1966 argued, on different grounds, that events of epic action could not be arranged along a single timeline. Most recently, Anthony Welch has articulated that point, explicitly drawing on the arguments of his eighteenth-century predecessors.

The problem first adumbrated by Addison thus remains a major crux in the interpretation of *Paradise Lost*. The timing of events in the first three books is still a fundamental question in any reconstruction of epic chronology.

In the beginning

First-order epic action begins, after the invocation to Book 1, with the rebels' awakening in hell:

> Nine times the space that measures day and night
> To mortal men, he [Satan] with his horrid crew
> Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf
> Confounded though immortal: but his doom

> Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
> Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
> Torments him[.] (1.50-56)[3]

From the point of view of time, this is tantalizing.[4] The passage is highly suggestive but offers very little solid ground (either literally, for the devils, or metaphorically, for the interpreter). I venture three observations.

First, the text begins, crucially, with a time adverbial: "Nine times the space that measures day and night / To mortal men" (1.50-51). Whatever the narrator is about to say, he relates it to our common experience of time ("day and night / To mortal men"). Our temporal experience—together with the related common sense terms such as *day* and *night*—are relevant, and presumably adequate, to clarify details of the ensuing story. Milton anchors the whole narrative, with its mind-blowing and other-worldly scope and duration, in our mundane experience, including our ordinary time-consciousness. On a less existential and more practical level, Milton also establishes a timescale for the action. Time is measured in days—not aeons, years, seconds, or whatever other units.

Second, if Milton does not quite say when—at what time of day—the narrative begins, the text provides some clues. Since Milton largely adheres to the Semitic tradition of measuring days from sunset to sunset,[5] it is logical that the action should begin in the evening, especially as we are now at the end of a previous episode that lasted for nine full days so we must be entering a new evening. Further, the line introducing the scene ends with "night" (1.50), which puts structural emphasis on the last word and connects it with the next time adverb in the text, the *now* of 1.55, suggesting that it is now night.

Third, the action starts in "utter darkness" (1.72),[6] and several similes evoke night images. Satan's huge body is like that of Leviathan which sailors often mistake for an island "while night / Invests the sea, and wished morn delays" (1.207-08), and his shield is "like the moon" (1.287). The dumbfounded rebels "sprung upon the wing" at Satan's call "as when men wont to watch / On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread" (1.331-33) and flew up like the locusts "That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung / Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile" (1.342-43). I therefore suggest that the action begins at night, although there is only a "feeling" of night; the time of the poem's opening scene cannot be determined with exactitude.

The first dawn

The sequence of events after the opening scene of awakening (1.54-669) is largely uncontroversial. Pandæmonium is built and admired (1.670-751); a general council convened and held (1.752-2.506). While the infernal MPs disperse (2.506-628), Satan departs for the newly created world and encounters Sin and Death at hell's gates (2.629-927). He then crosses chaos (2.927-1033) and catches sight of heaven and the cosmos (2.1034-55). It is here that light—other than "darkness visible" (1.63)—first appears in the poem. Both hell and chaos are dark places. The text really hammers home the point.[7] Attention is also repeatedly drawn to the absence of light.[8] By contrast, "the sacred influence / Of light appears" (2.1034-35) when Satan approaches the walls of heaven at the end of Book 2. It is a decidedly dim, "dubious light" (2.1042), but it is identified as "A glimmering dawn" (2.1037). This imagery will be consistently maintained.

Book 3 opens with an invocation to holy light (3.1-55),[9] followed by the narratively first scene of heavenly council (3.77-343), concluded with the jubilation of the heavenly host, which the narrator also joins in (3.344-417). The Father and Son's exchange is occasioned by the former surveying the universe (3.56-76) and beholding, first, Adam and Eve on earth,[10] and then Satan "[c]oasting the wall of heaven on this side night / . . . and ready now / To stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet, / On the bare outside of this world" (3.71-74)—completing the last stretch of his journey we saw him set out on at the end of Book 2. Just as at the end of Book 2 where the "glimmering dawn" shot "far into the bosom of dim Night" (2.1036-37) here, the metaphor of "on this side night" may have simple spatial referents given that Night as Chaos's consort (cf. 2.961-993, 1002) represents a cosmological realm. "Dawn" and "this side night" are the border zone between heaven and chaos viewed from opposite angles. Yet the reader can hardly ignore the temporal overtones—the literal meaning of "dawn" and the obvious metaphorical referent of "on this side night."

When the focus shifts back to the fiend after the heavenly council, his story line is picked up at the same point again, with Satan now landed: "Meanwhile upon the firm opacous globe / Of this round world . . . / Satan alighted walks" (3.418-22). This is followed by a detailed description of the region (3.422-554), including an account of the Paradise of Fools (3.444-99), of heaven's gate and the adjacent ladder (3.501-25), and of the flight path down to Eden inside the cosmos (3.526-54). After surveying the starry universe (3.555-61), Satan plunges in (3.561-612). He encounters Uriel at the sun (3.613-739) and then descends to land on Niphates (3.739-42). With

that, we have, of course, arrived in "the sphere of the sun" (Newton 1:275, ad 4.598) and that part of the poem where Milton takes great pains to mark the passage of time. Prior to the Uriel scene, the first securely datable event in epic action,[11] however, there is little hard and fast evidence to pin down a firm chronology.

Two details have been interpreted by critics as signaling specific times, but I find neither reading fully convincing. Zivley understands the "cursed hour" of 2.1055 as midnight (120), which might seem acceptable in and of itself, but it does not square with the emerging light symbolism discussed below. Further, if it is midnight at 2.1055 and early morning at 3.552-54, as Zivley agrees, this last leg of Satan's journey, which serves to unify the action (recall 2.1055; 3.69-76, 418-22), would take uncharacteristically long.

Fowler reconstructed the particulars of Satan's view inside the cosmos (3.555-61) as a chronographia and concluded that it must be midnight in Eden (Milton, Rev. 2nd ed. 201, cf. 31). His argument is, briefly, that Satan at the orifice is behind the sign of Libra while the sun is diametrically opposite in Aries, behind the earth. Since Eden is facing the orifice, it is the middle of the night there. An adequately detailed treatment of his analysis would burst the limits of this paper, but I can offer a few observations to indicate some weaknesses of his interpretation. First, his assumption that Satan is at or behind the sign of Libra is unwarranted. The text says that he takes a view "from eastern point / Of Libra to the fleecy star" (3.557-58), but it might designate the *extent* of his view, not his own position. With a logic comparable to Fowler's, for example, Masson placed the fiend at the celestial north pole (1:354-55, cf. 1:35, 39-40). Similarly, it is not self-evident that the *horizon* beyond which the Ram that "bears / Andromeda far off Atlantic seas" (3.558-59) is the edge of the earth's disc as Satan sees it—rather than an instance of Eurocentrism, shared by both writer and reader, in the defining relative clause which merely interprets the noun phrase "fleecy star" (3.568). Third, viewing the cosmos "from pole to pole / . . . in breadth" (3.360-61) need not necessarily mean a horizontal *axis mundi*. As early as 1734, the Richardsons proposed a Latinate interpretation: "[T]he Poles . . . are said to be in Breadth because the Ancients knowing Much more of the Earth East and West than North and South, and so having a Much Greater Journey One way than the Other, One was Called Length, or Longitude, the Other Breadth, or Latitude" (125).

In other words, *in breadth* here simply means "in the direction of latitude (as opposed to longitude)" and is synonymous with "from pole to

pole" or "from north to south." Milton never uses *latitude* in his English poetry, but *breadth* again appears in that sense in the description of the sun's annual path after the fall (10.673).[12] Fourth, Satan is "*high above* the circling canopy" (3.556, emphasis added), that is, the earth's conical shadow, which means that the sun (and the sign of Libra behind it) would not be fully hidden from his sight even when they are directly behind the earth: they are larger heavenly bodies than the earth and their rim would be visible from Satan's vantage point at the orifice. None of these perhaps invalidates Fowler's point definitively, but neither can they be verified independently, although they are all presuppositions of Fowler's reading. Finally and most importantly, his timing either contradicts the light imagery, as with Zivley, or disjoints the two timescales (it is early morning at the orifice when it is midnight in Eden), but the latter is inconsistent with Fowler's whole project.

To come up with a temporal interpretation of Satan's action outside the cosmos, we have to look elsewhere and return to our earlier clues. The cosmographic passages describing various regions where chaos, heaven, and the cosmos intersect are connected through references to Satan's progress:

> All this dark globe [the Paradise of Fools] the fiend found as he passed,
> And long he wandered, till at last *a gleam*
> *Of dawning light* turned thitherward in haste
> His travelled steps[.] (3.498-501; emphasis added)

At the orifice, his next stop, Satan

> Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
> Of all this world at once. As when a scout
> Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
> All night; *at last by break of cheerful dawn*
> Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
> Which to his eye discovers unaware
> The goodly prospect of some foreign land
> First seen, or some renowned metropolis
> With glistering spires and pinnacles adorned,
> Which *now the rising sun* gilds with his beams. (3.542-51; emphasis added)

Throughout the whole long scene, transitioning from Book 2 to Book 3, a cluster of images moving from night into daylight is steadily deployed.

Milton never quite says that it is dawn, but he unfailingly evokes a sense of early morning.

Two further considerations might be added. First, as I have argued elsewhere on the basis of some larger structural patterns of *Paradise Lost*, double-book units correspond to individual days of epic action. With the exception of Books 6-7, which continue the same afternoon, the transition occurs between even and odd numbered books (Ittzés, "Hero" 431-34). The turn from Book 2 to 3 falls into this pattern so we rightly expect the break of a new day here. Second, in other parts of the epic, where Milton formally keeps track of time, the imagery he uses—and the sense of the time of day he thus evokes—is consistent with the explicit clock time. Satan calls on Uriel at the sun at noon. The date is later explicitly confirmed (4.564), but in the original scene a noontide metaphor appears (3.616-18). A complex epic simile introducing Satan's first sight of the human pair during the long drawn-out twilight scene of Book 4 concludes with Mount Amara that can be reached at the *end* of "A whole day's journey" (4.284). At sunset, Uriel comes "gliding through the even / On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star / In autumn thwarts the night" (4.555-57) to visit the angelic guard at Eden. After dinner, Adam and Eve, appropriately, also discuss night topics (4.611-89) (Ittzés, "Ten Days" 102-06). In the light of all that, it would be highly unusual for Milton to deploy imagery with clear temporal import but in tension with the time of day actually suggested for the given episode. Considering all available evidence, I therefore contend that, bringing the metaphorical and literal levels of the text together, Book 3 begins at sunrise on what will turn out to be the first paradisiacal day and ends at noon, with Book 4 later completing the narrative of the second half of the same day.

A single night

If individual scenes are not easy to peg on a timeline, it is equally difficult to establish how much time these episodes occupy altogether. Two considerations might help us further. First, when the text offers definite time expressions, they indicate short duration. Pandæmonium is built "in an hour" (1.697). Welch protests that the phrase simply means a short time, with *hour* here "'used somewhat indefinitely for a short space of time, more or less than an hour' (*OED* 'hour' 2a)" (5). He may very well be right, for the import of the passage is surely to contrast the short time of devilish efficacy with the "age" the "incessant toil" of human "hands innumerable" (1.698-99) requires to create lesser marvels as Welch rightly points out. But in and of itself that does not invalidate or obliterate the literal meaning of

the words. Whether exactly or only roughly sixty minutes are meant, the shortness of the period is emphasized, and a relevant timescale is provided to interpret the brevity of the episode. Similarly, the devils "entertain / The irksome hours, till [their] great chief return" (2.526-27). We may conclude, with hindsight, that Satan's expedition must have taken several days and was by no means completed in a few hours but, moving into the story, we should pick up this line as an important clue to the chronological scale Milton is establishing for us. Long periods of epic action extend over days (recall 1.50); events narrated in detail cover hours of epic time (cf. 3.416-18).

There is nevertheless another aspect of Milton's treatment of time that we must consider. When Satan departs after the infernal council, his journey is presented as long and arduous.[13] The walls of hell come into sight "at last" (2.643). Before moving on, he stands "on the brink of hell . . . awhile" (2.918) and comes to the throne of Chaos "at length" (2.951). He loses no time there (2.1010), however, and "at last" (2.1034) reaches the far side of chaos. How long this voyage takes, we do not know, but the text makes us feel that it is long, and it might almost have taken him forever (2.931-38). Yet, the scale on which to interpret its lengthiness is provided by the rest of the text. In the immediate context, the devils expect Satan's return after some tedious *hours*. In a wider context, there are other occasions when chaos is crossed by various epic characters. The devils' fall through it lasts for nine days (6.871), but Raphael completes a return trip from heaven to hell and back within a single day (8.229-46). The sense of limited duration must color the interpretation of the sense of a great temporal extent because Milton gives us both. Taken together, this is probably a kind of double time so prevalent in Renaissance literature.[14]

Some critics refuse to venture any estimate for the length of time covered in Books 1-2 (esp. Stapleton 738-39; Welch 15), but most others agree that Satan reaches the coast of heaven either on the day of his awakening or a day later, such as McColley (17), Qvarnström (25-31), and Crump (166).[15] Fowler, on his complete timeline that also includes events of the second narrative order from the Son's anointing, consistently dates the awakening to day 22, while the arrival at the outskirts of this world to day 23 (Milton, 1st ed. 26-27, Rev. 2nd ed. 31, cf. Fowler 35). But, however surprising, Fowler is in fact slippery with his day numbering[16] which undercuts the evidentiary force of his chronological table. Zivley also argues for an extended time frame for the opening books (119-20), but she does not really explain why the events therein must fill more than a night.[17]

No convincing argument has thus been presented to establish that the events of the first two books fill several days. On the other hand, we have seen that the relevant scale by which to measure the extent of individual episodes is established by the text; it is the hour (esp. 1.697; 2.527, 1055, and cf. 2.796-97, 848). Second, the action of Books 1-2 is all set in darkness; light appears at the very end of the unit. The visual symbolism is overlaid with temporal significance (esp. 2.1034-1042, 3.498-501, and 542-51). The story up to Satan's emergence from chaos is presented as a single night, whether literal or metaphoric, of evil.[18] In short, nothing in the text explicitly contradicts, and virtually all evidence is coherent with the interpretation that Books 1-2 narrate the events of a single night and Book 3 those of the next morning, from sunrise to midday.

Conclusion

Addison's skepticism about the inapplicability of time to those segments of epic action that take place outside the cosmos may thus be not fully warranted. As is well known, Milton projects time far before the beginning of this world. In the foregoing analysis I have argued that it is possible to reconstruct at least a general chronology of events in the first three books of *Paradise Lost*. The exercise surely requires a different approach than its counterpart in Books 4-8, where Milton carefully peppers his text with unambiguous, if occasionally coded, references to the passage of time (Ittzés, "Ten Days" 102-12). Here, in the opening books, an interplay of a set of assumptions and recognitions must be brought to bear on the interpretation.

It must be recognized, first, that the action forms a continuous sequence. Individual scenes are carefully chained together without temporal gaps, and the whole is seamlessly tied in with the beginning of the action unfolding within "the Reach of the Sun and the Sphere of Day" [*The Spectator* No. 267, 5 Jan. 1712, (Addison 2:20)]. Further, Books 1-3 are "sandwiched" between nine days establishing the relevance of postlapsarian human time consciousness for the interpretation of the epic (1.50-52) and the mundane time of the regions of the sphere of the sun from Book 3 onward. That, together with the continuity of action, is a strong argument for—at least a robust sense of—a temporal continuum as well.

The interpretation of action in chronological terms also depends on the recognition of the relevant timescale the text establishes. Many events in the opening books are cast in temporally vague categories with indefinite duration, but Milton makes clear from the beginning that the acts of his

grand drama cover days, while individual scenes are presented more on the scale of hours. There is surely some discrepancy between the vast scope of cosmic action and the astronomical distances implying extended duration on the one hand and the mundaneness of the actual timescale on the other, but that is just the point. The reader must learn to hold those in tension, without letting one overcome and exclude the other. It would be as unwise to over-literalize the brevity of time—a crucial sense of immensity, so profoundly characteristic of *Paradise Lost*, would be gone—as it would be altogether to relinquish, because of the temporal indefiniteness of numerous episodes, the claim that we have a controlled sense of the passage of time. Hindsight also contributes to the interpretive process. Considerations of the poem's overall structure—pairs of books correspond to individual days of action—will help confirm the temporal parsing of the initial books.

While the reconstruction of epic chronology is first and foremost an intellectual exercise, it is definitely doomed to failure in Books 1-3 if the text is reduced to its cognitive content, and its poetic qualities are not recognized and embraced. A key to establishing a chronology of action prior to the Uriel scene lies in the imagery of the poem. Both the light-darkness symbolism in general and the references to specific times of day in the metaphors' vehicles in particular warrant close attention. Without working out the metaphoric implications of the text, no chronological argument can be remotely complete in the extraterrestrial books. A combination of all of these interpretive moves, however, can produce something akin to a cumulative case argument in analytic philosophy. A precise chronology of the first three books cannot be demonstrated with certainty, but the combined effect of all reasoned considerations is a strong case for a general temporal outline.

The principles of interpretation here mobilized for a reading of the opening books are not limited to "Regions that lie out of the Reach of the Sun and the Sphere of Day." They can be generalized and extended to the rest of *Paradise Lost*, enhancing the reading of the poem. Thus the continuity of action, with simultaneity clearly signaled, is a narrative principle that can be demonstrated for the entirety of the epic. Book 10 especially shows with what elegance and precision Milton can handle a narrative as multifarious as the story of the first postlapsarian afternoon and night with four parallel plotlines. The calculated complexity of the unfolding primary narrative with its analytical transparency and the carefully crafted seamlessness of the whole scheme suggest a chronologically unified structure for the entire poem.

Similarly, temporal dualities permeate *Paradise Lost*, and our findings in the first three books can be extended to the rest of the epic. The sense of a long duration generated by indefinite time lapses is not to override the rest of the evidence. If not altogether ignored, it is best understood as an instance of Renaissance double time in the broad sense that need not undercut the validity of the primary chronological reconstruction. A sense of long duration and an impression of fleeting time should be held in tension. This can be further generalized to suggest that there is an overarching pattern in that the middle of the narrative is drawn in chronologically sharp contours while the edges are left more blurry but certainly not altogether indefinite. Put differently, in the paradisiacal center of the epic, Milton provides explicit signals to keep track of time; in the infernal and postlapsarian books he uses different techniques including allusions encoded in the poem's imagery to suggest, rather than firmly state, the timing of important scenes—with the result that time is presented as both real and mythic, which is yet another of the epic's celebrated temporal dualities.

The blurriness at the edges notwithstanding, Milton establishes the relevant timescale throughout the narrative. His basic units of time are the day and the hour. Shorter and longer durations also occur—epic similes can have especially broad temporal sweeps—but do not take center stage. The crucial point in the present context is, however, not the precise units of time the epic utilizes most but the very fact that Milton lets us know on what timescale to think when reading his text.

In light of the ensuing cosmic drama, particularly noteworthy is the initial reference to fallen temporality ("Nine times the space that measures day and night / To mortal men," 1.50-51). The entire narrative, and not only the first scenes, is anchored in common, postlapsarian, human experience, which can be legitimately brought to bear on its interpretation. That is not to underappreciate the literary qualities of the epic. *Paradise Lost* is a poetic text, not a historical account or a logbook. It keeps track of time but not as a chronicle or a journal would. The imagery it employs—and the sense, including the passage of time or a particular time, it invokes in the reader—is an integral part of its meaning. The larger thesis requires further research to confirm, but it seems likely that Milton consistently synchronizes the temporal implications of his metaphors and similes with the actual chronological setting of the scene in which they occur.

The relevance of the interpretive principles here summarized—such as the continuity of action, the importance of the timescale, temporal

dualities, patterns of overall structure, applicability of mundane experience, cognitive utilization of the poetic text's metaphoric import—extend not only lengthwise beyond the first three books but also thematically beyond the reconstruction of epic chronology. If the initial calculation of a night's duration for the events narrated in the first two books and an additional morning for those in the third is perhaps more curious than instructive, the larger result of hermeneutical considerations and tools is surely every bit as instructive as curious. If Addison had foreseen this outcome, he might have forgiven us for engaging in the exercise.

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Notes

Research for this paper was supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund, OTKA (Grant No. K-101928).

[1] I use this term to describe the world created in six days (cf. Gen 1-2 and Bk. 7 of *Paradise Lost*), that is, the fourth cosmological region, in addition to heaven, hell, and chaos, in Milton's universe.

[2] Alastair Fowler indeed faults Newton's influence for "dissuad[ing] modern critics from examining the poem's time-scheme" (Milton, Rev. 2nd ed. 30). Note, however, that it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that Addison's and Newton's declarations were taken at face value and given more weight than their actual performance. Even then, earlier discussions survived for several decades in the critical apparatus of nineteenth-century editions (cf. Henry John Todd's edition that went through five editions from 1801 to 1852) until the issue was indeed dropped from critical enquiry for a century or so. Masson offered occasional speculations about the temporal interrelatedness of various episodes in the epic (esp. 1:358, ad 4.449-50) but ultimately stopped short of producing an overall chronology.

[3] The text of *Paradise Lost* is cited after Fowler's revised second edition.

[4] Properly speaking, the narrative opens with the fallen angels' nine-day stupor (1.50-53), but because those lines are in the past tense to which is contrasted the *now* of line 54, accompanied by a shift to present tense narrative (*torments*, line 56), critics agree that the action begins with the awakening and customarily treat the previous period of confusion as part of the secondary narrative. While that is not accurate in a strict sense (it is recounted by the narrator not a character in the epic), we can surely accept the traditional view, especially as the rebels' nine-day blackout is summed up in three and a half lines, while their regaining consciousness is described in the first grand scene of the epic, filling the bulk of the first book (1.54-669).

[5] Cf. for example, 7.253, 260, 274-75, 338, 386, 448, and 550. Perhaps the clearest evidence is supplied by Raphael's rarely quoted "Ere Sabbath evening" (8.246), where the context makes it incontrovertibly clear that the Sabbath comes after (or rather, begins with) the evening and not the evening after the Sabbath.

[6] For further affirmations of darkness in the opening scene, see 1.63, 73-74, 181-83, 226, and 244-45.

[7] Cf. 1.63, 72, 599, 659; 2.58, 220, 263, 269, and 377 for hell, and 2.405, 464, 891, 916, 953, 958, 960, 973, 984, and 1027 for chaos (see also 3.16, 20, 421, and 712).

[8] Cf. 1.73, 85, 181, 245; 2.137, 220, 269, 398, 433, and 867, 959, 974.

[9] On the invocation, see Péti, esp. 246-48 and 251-53.

[10] Incidentally, this is our first sight of the human pair—and not the one through Satan's eyes in Book 4, as is sometimes suggested. That one is surely more detailed, but it is obviously significant both that we first see Adam and Eve through God's eyes from heaven and that we only receive a passing glimpse (3.64-69).

[11] For the soliloquy, see 4.29-30; for the arrival, 4.564-65, and cf. 3.616-18 for an initial metaphoric dating (see Ittzés, "Ten Days" 102).

[12] The Richardsons' reading was also adopted (although, uncharacteristically, without acknowledgement) by Newton (1:208). Masson, as we have seen, also disagrees with Fowler.

[13] Cf. for example, "sometimes / . . . sometimes . . . / Now . . . then . . ." (2.632-34).

[14] The best known instance is, of course, Shakespeare's *Othello*, but temporal dualities were much discussed in Milton studies in the second half of the twentieth century as well (e.g., Gardner 39, Gilbert 147-50, 49, Stapleton *passim*, cf. Crump 151-53). More recently, Fowler has argued that Renaissance dualities of time should be understood in terms of multiple perspectives and a distinction between measured (represented) and narrated (reported) action rather than as a juxtaposition of short and long duration (34-44). The question deserves independent treatment. At any rate, I use "double time" in a loose sense, to include a variety of temporal dualities in *Paradise Lost* (and Renaissance literature in general).

[15] Gilbert speculates that Satan's voyage through chaos "presumably was not made more swiftly than his fall," that is, nine days (149). Later in the same page, however, he himself questions this very assumption. Of course, Raphael's trip is strong evidence for the possibility of a quick crossing (8.229-46).

[16] A case in point is his summary in the introduction. First he says that "[t]he duration of *directly represented* terrestrial action . . . is . . . eleven days (Days 23-33)." Later on the same page Fowler claims that a "similar symbolism underlies the arrangement of directly represented action. Satan's week of miscreation (ix 48-66) is framed by the four remaining days, Days 23-24 and 32-33" (Milton, Rev. 2nd ed. 32, italics original). First, "directly represented action" and "directly represented terrestrial action" are not coterminous, for the latter includes a temporally significant extraterrestrial component, Satan's awakening in and escape from hell. A similar slippage appears in *Renaissance Realism*, where Fowler says that "Addison remarks that the action directly narrated by Milton occupies eleven days" (43) although Addison clearly spoke of *terrestrial action*, excluding anything before Satan's arrival on Niphates (cf. the opening quotation of this essay). Second, elsewhere (Milton, Rev. 2nd ed. 31, 281, ad 5.1-2), Fowler dates Raphael's visit to day 24, which is also consistent with the "eleven days of *terrestrial* action from day 23 to 33" scheme, but day 24 is obviously the first day *of* Satan's flight and thus cannot *frame* it, as Fowler also recognizes when he allocates days 24-31 to the latter event (31). The fact that the said period consists of *eight* days constitutes another problem that is exacerbated in the notes (473, ad 9.67-68; 480, ad 9.192). For further analysis, see my essay on "Satan's Return" (499-501).

[17] She only nails down one episode (Satan's departure from chaos) with precision on the timeline. At any rate, even a reading of midnight for the "cursed hour" (cf. p. 397) would not automatically explain why the contents of Books 1-2 cannot fit into a single night.

[18] Cf. his journey through darkness between his two temptations of Eve (9.53-69) and also that after his fall we only see him either in darkness or in disguise except for the dim light as he moves from chaos into the cosmos (for details, see Ittzés, "Hero" 436, esp. n. 28).

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