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THE SYMBOLIC AND STRUCTURAL SIGNIFICANCE  
OF MUSIC IMAGERY IN THE ENGLISH POETRY  
OF JOHN MILTON

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the  
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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The purpose of this study is to investigate how John Milton uses music imagery in his English poetry. This is accomplished through consideration of the musical milieu of the late Renaissance, particularly of seventeenth-century England, through examination of the symbolic function of music imagery in the poetry, and through study of the significance of music imagery for the structure of the poem.

The study is introduced by a brief review of scholarship relative to Milton's imagery and his knowledge and use of music, noting the fragmentary nature of that scholarship.

The consideration of the musical developments of the Renaissance notes especially two important aspects of the period: the development of the vertical method of composition, along with a growing sense of tonal harmony, and the idea that text and music should fit each other. Also, acknowledgement is made of the continuing use of classical concepts, such as the music of the spheres. To provide more specific reference for Milton's own musical

background, the musical atmosphere of Renaissance England is examined. Milton's musical education, his association with musicians, and his ideas about music are also studied.

The examination of the symbolic use of music imagery in Milton's poetry is divided into the study of the images of speculative music and the harmony of heard sounds and the study of images of practical music. Images of speculative music are used to symbolize the harmony between God and the heavenly host, between God and prelapsarian man, and between Adam and Eve. Images of discord symbolize the broken relationship between God and the fallen angels and are used in connection with references to pagan gods.

Practical music, the music of heard sounds, natural, vocal, and instrumental, is used to illustrate good and evil, to add another dimension of thought to the ideas that the images illustrate. Milton relies on his readers' familiarity with sounds and contemporary musical forms as well as with the classical associations of some references.

Images of practical music form the greater part of the imagery of music that Milton uses, partly because of the greater range of possibilities for practical images than for speculative images. The greater use of speculative images in the early poems indicates the

more idealistic stance of these poems, while the greater number of practical images in the later poems demonstrates Milton's greater awareness of the realities of the human situation arising from the years spent as apologist for the Puritan cause and as Latin Secretary of State.

Music imagery is important as a structural device for Milton. He uses music images to provide unity for, to "frame," and to maintain decorum in the poems. A number of the earlier, shorter poems rely heavily on music as structural device. "At a Solemn Music" depends solely on the use of extended music imagery. "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are linked by parallel music images. Music imagery maintains the decorum in "Lycidas" and to a lesser degree in A Mask. In the epics music images, used in a variety of ways, serve to unify the poems. Most notable in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained is the echoic effect Milton achieves through the use of repeated music images.

This study demonstrates the interdependence of the symbolic and structural uses of music imagery in the poems and shows how Milton used both classical and contemporary musical concepts to full advantage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. MUSICAL BACKGROUNDS . . . . .	7
III. SPECULATIVE MUSIC AND HEARD HARMONY . . . . .	57
IV. PRACTICAL MUSIC IMAGERY . . . . .	83
V. THE STRUCTURAL FUNCTION OF MUSIC IMAGERY . . .	153
VI. CONCLUSION . . . . .	232
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	241

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Music imagery plays an important part in the poetry of John Milton. He uses a great quantity of music imagery in most of his English poems, beginning with "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" and continuing through the early poems, most notably "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," "At a Solemn Music," "Lycidas," and Sonnet XIII, "To Mr. H. Lawes, on his Aires." Of the major works of his later years, Paradise Lost has by far the greatest number and proportion of music images. Paradise Regained contains several images of note but cannot compare with the larger epic, and Samson Agonistes is Milton's most "unmusical" work, excepting, of course, several of the short early poems in which music imagery would be inappropriate considering the subject matter and length of the works.

In spite of this wealth of material, as yet no comprehensive study of Milton's music imagery has appeared. Sigmund Spaeth's Milton's Knowledge of Music concentrates on the poet's background and the sources of his knowledge, although he fails to mention such works as Zarlino's Istitutioni Harmoniche, with which, since it was one of the most widely-read musical treatises of the Renaissance,

Milton was quite probably familiar. Spaeth provides an appendix of "most important passages" from Milton's works referring to music, but he does not study the significance of imagery in relation to the meaning and structure of the poems. Spaeth's book, which was first published in 1913, is outdated in reference to studies of Milton's philosophy and development, particularly the work of A. S. P. Woodhouse, A. E. Barker, and H. F. Fletcher. While acknowledging Milton's position as a product of the Renaissance, Spaeth does not fully recognize how much a product of contemporary English culture and thought he was and fails to place him in his cultural milieu. Although he refers frequently to the prose works, he leaves the impression that they had little effect on Milton's later poetry. Spaeth's work is nevertheless a pioneer study and a valuable starting point for a study of Milton's music imagery.

Theodore Banks' Milton's Imagery treats several types of images--London public life, London private life, travel, war, nature, animals, and books and learning--but neglects music as a type, relegating it to approximately five pages in the chapter on London public life. This classification hardly seems adequate, especially considering the number of music images with a pastoral background, such as those in "L'Allegro" and "Lycidas" and



many of those in Paradise Lost and A Mask. In his chapters on nature and animal imagery Banks discusses Milton's use of sound in images, pointing out an increased sensitivity to sound with the advent of his blindness, but Banks does not regard images of the sounds of nature as musical. Obviously, Banks had to organize his study in a fashion that he found workable. In the introduction he acknowledges the arbitrary nature of such an undertaking; nevertheless, his consideration of music images per se under only one heading is puzzling and seems inadequate in view of their total quantity and complexity.

Another book concerned with Milton's imagery is Rosamund Tuve's Images and Themes in Five Poems by Milton. Tuve approaches the imagery in individual poems, rather than considering types of images running throughout the poetry as Banks did. Four of the five poems she examines, "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Lycidas," and "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," are especially rich in music imagery, and the fifth, A Mask, contains some important figures. Obviously, she does treat music imagery, but only in the context of other types.

In an analogous fashion, Don Cameron Allen considers references to musical harmony in The Harmonious Vision. Allen does not attempt to analyze images, and his concern with musical harmony is as a manifestation of philosophical

harmony. Allen's book provides valuable insights into Milton's ideas about harmony, but it considers only harmony and not other forms of music and is not concerned with imagery.

Most studies of Milton's music imagery appear in articles concerned with individual poems or with single images. The best of these include Nan Cooke Carpenter's "The Place of Music in 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso'" (UTQ, 22), Garland Ethel's "Hell's March Music" (MLQ, 18), Gretchen Finney's "A Musical Background for 'Lycidas'" (Huntington Library Quarterly, 15), Fred Jones' "Paradise Lost I, 549-64" (MLN, 49), John M. Patrick's "More on the Dorian Mood in Paradise Lost" (NQ, NS 4), Laurance Stapleton's "Milton and the New Music" (UTQ, 23), Paul Turner's "The Dorian Mood (A Note on 'Paradise Lost' I 549-61)" (NQ, NS 4), H. and P. Williams' "Milton and Music, or the Pandaemonic Organ" (Musical Times, 107). This list certainly does not cover all the articles written on Milton's use of music, but does show the range of the scholarship.

There are several excellent comprehensive studies of the relationship of music and literature in the English Renaissance which include background on Milton. James Hutton's article in English Miscellany II, "Some English Poems in Praise of Music," is a fine study, but

necessarily limited in scope because of its length, sixty-three pages. By far the two best comprehensive studies are Gretchen Finney's Musical Backgrounds for English Literature 1580-1660 and John Hollander's The Untuning of the Sky. Both authors pay considerable attention to Milton, but only one is concerned exclusively with imagery. Of the two Hollander is the more readable and often more sensitive to developments new to the Renaissance.

As the preceding review has shown, scholarship concerned with Milton's music imagery, while relatively extensive, is fragmented. This study proposes to investigate the music imagery in Milton's English poetry as vehicle for meaning and as structural device, functions which are related and frequently interdependent. Understanding these functions is most important in poetry as complex as Milton's. The poet uses images to provide depth of meaning through their associations, classical, biblical, and contemporary. He also uses the images as unifying devices within, and in some cases between, poems. Milton's use of music imagery is not static but develops along with his philosophy. He uses more practical music imagery in his later poetry and correspondingly less

speculative music imagery.<sup>1</sup> Such a development is indicative of the poet's increased awareness of the realities of the human situation arising from his years of writing polemical prose and of serving the Puritan cause in the political arena, while continuing to study and plan his great later works.

Basically, three subjects will be pursued in this study. First the musical milieu of the Renaissance in general and of Renaissance England in particular will be examined, leading to a brief study of Milton's personal background in and attitudes toward music. Then types of music imagery in the poetry will be analyzed for meaning or symbolic function. Finally, the music imagery of individual poems will be studied to determine its structural function. The study is not intended as a search into the specific origins of various images, rather, the cultural context will be explored in the analysis of the images.

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<sup>1</sup>The term "practical music" refers to heard sounds, vocal, instrumental, and natural, such as the warble of birds, while "speculative music" refers to the unheard music of the spheres, the harmony created by the movement of the spheres. The harmony of heard sounds forms a bridge between the two, since it is the theoretical aspect of actual music.

## CHAPTER II

### MUSICAL BACKGROUNDS

In attempting a study of the uses to which Milton puts music imagery it is necessary to understand the musical milieu into which he was born and from which he drew his material. Living as he did at the end of the English Renaissance, he was heir to a rich musical tradition. He could count on his educated readers being heirs to the same tradition and having much the same musical background that he had, for music was a part of the education of the era. Therefore, he could build music imagery full of pertinent associations for his contemporaries.<sup>1</sup>

During the Renaissance two major developments changed the course that music was to take.<sup>2</sup> One was the change from the successive method of polyphonic composition in which one line at a time was composed and then laid

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the background of Milton's audience see Balachandra Rajan, Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948).

<sup>2</sup>It is not pertinent here to discuss in detail particular types and styles of music or theories about music; these will be dealt with as they appear in the images later in this study. Rather, emphasis here will be on important developments and on the musical milieu of the Renaissance, especially Renaissance England.

over the parts already written to the simultaneous method in which the various parts were considered at one time (often called "horizontal" and "vertical" methods respectively). This new method was inspired by a growing sense of tonal harmony and in turn aided the growth of this sense. The second development was the idea that texts and music should be appropriate to each other.

Both of these developments were indicative of an increasing awareness of the possibilities music presented as a medium for human expression even though music was scholastically a part of the quadrivium and hence a science. In medieval times music had been held to be strictly mathematical, a derivation of Pythagorean theory:

Whatever is delightful in song is brought about by number through the proportioned dimensions of sounds. Whatever is excellent in rhythms, or in songs, or in any rhythmic movements you will find effected wholly by number. Sounds pass quickly away, but numbers, which are obscured by the corporeal element in sounds and movements, remain.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly Boethius' musica mundana (or music of the universe), influenced by Pythagorean theory, was concerned with the organization of musical structure with little regard for the effects on the hearer.<sup>4</sup> This musical

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<sup>3</sup>Scholia Enchiriadis, in Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity through the Romantic Era, ed. William Oliver Strunk (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1950), p. 137. Hereafter cited as Source Readings.

<sup>4</sup>John Hollander, "The Music of Poetry," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 15 (1956), 233.

philosophy, governed by the conception that harmony is the product of the movement of the spheres, began to lose ground in the fifteenth century. Joannes Tinctoris in Liber de Arte Contrapuncti (1477) says that pleasing sounds are not the product of heavenly bodies but of "earthly instruments with the co-operation of nature."<sup>5</sup> However, the music of the spheres did not pass out of popular thought and idiom, as is evidenced by its widespread literary use long after the Renaissance.

Nevertheless, music was freed from many of the shackles imposed by medieval rules. This trend is evidenced in the treatises of Guiseffi Zarlino (1517-1590), the most important of the Renaissance theorists. In the Istitutioni Harmoniche Zarlino sets up requirements for composition which are governed not exclusively by rules of mathematical correctness in the medieval manner but consider also the pleasure derived by the listener from the sound itself. Music for Zarlino is art as well as science.

Composers began to see their works as unified, carefully planned wholes and to work with the idea of simultaneous composition of parts as opposed to the medieval successive composition in which music was composed layer by layer. Simultaneous composition could exist only when

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<sup>5</sup>Tinctoris, in Source Readings, p. 198.

composers began to think in harmonies, and it in turn enforced the idea of harmonies. By the late fifteenth century Italian composers had created entire works in four part harmony with the melody in the highest and the root of the chord in the lowest part.<sup>6</sup> Lowinsky calls this development the "most essential single factor in the epoch-making changes in the process of composition in the Renaissance."<sup>7</sup>

The development of harmony fascinated Renaissance musicians, whose experimentation resulted in some incredibly complex compositions, many of which were probably never performed but were merely intellectual exercises for the composers. Lowinsky analyzes this fascination and its results in "Music in the Culture of the Renaissance":

The steady addition of voices used to duplicate, triplicate and quadruplicate triadic harmony, the continuous expansion of the harmonic range until it included the triads on all twelve tones . . . the further experimentation with quarter tone harmony . . . the constant enlargement of the vocal and instrumental apparatus, point to a state of growing intoxication with the power of sound, the multicolored brilliance of modulatory harmony, the emotional effects of major and minor, consonance and dissonance, high and low registers, the play

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<sup>6</sup>Edward Lowinsky, "Music in the Culture of the Renaissance," Journal of the History of Ideas, 15 (1954), 529.

<sup>7</sup>Lowinsky, p. 531.



of contrasts between several choirs, between vocal and instrumental choirs, and the play with echo effects.<sup>8</sup>

Such a variety of musical effects provided a fertile field for writers, who found a wealth of material for the images of and allusions to music that appear in Renaissance literature.

It also bears mentioning that the major and minor modes, familiar to today's listeners, did not come into their own until well into the Renaissance. They were considered variants of the ancient Lydian and Dorian modes until Glareanus recognized them as independent in Dodecachordon in 1547.<sup>9</sup> Both the new and old frames of reference are used in musical treatises and literature well past the culmination of the Renaissance.

While the relationship of music and text seems rather elementary to modern readers and listeners, the idea was new to the Renaissance. In medieval music, particularly sacred music, the text and melodic line were coupled with little regard for appropriateness. Liturgical texts for various services, seasons, and celebrations were established by the church, as were the tunes to which they were set. Gregorian chant, supposedly dictated to

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<sup>8</sup>Lowinsky, pp. 532-33.

<sup>9</sup>Gustav Reese, Music in the Renaissance (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1954), p. 185.

Pope Gregory I by the Holy Ghost,<sup>10</sup> was the accepted setting, and was used in monophonic and later polyphonic settings. Some polyphonic versions were so complex that the actual words of the text were obscured, not a great problem when the audience knew which text went with which melody. However, when composers branched out into new texts there was a problem. Obviously the text should be clear to the audience, a need prompting composers to use simpler settings and encouraging the development of block or vertical harmony, and the text should be enhanced by the melody. No less an authority than Zarlino says, "a musical composition shall complement the text, that is the words. With gay texts it should not be plaintive, and vice versa; with sad subjects it should not be gay."<sup>11</sup> Thomas Campion, in the address to the reader prefacing his Two Bookes of Ayres, echoes Zarlino's sentiments rather poetically in his famous statement: "I have chiefly aymed to couple my Words and Notes lovingly together."<sup>12</sup> Analyzing the development for modern readers, Lowinsky goes so far as to say that

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<sup>10</sup>Lowinsky, p. 539.

<sup>11</sup>Gioseffo Zarlino, The Art of Counterpoint: Part Three of Le Istitutioni Harmoniche, 1558, trans. Guy A. Marco and Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 52.

<sup>12</sup>"To the Reader," Two Bookes of Ayres, in The Works of Thomas Campion, ed. Walter R. Davis (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1969), p. 55.

. . . the real heart of Renaissance music is the new relation to the word and to language. To sing the text in each part so that it can be understood and felt, so that the subject matter becomes, as it were "visible through tones," this is the deepest motivation of the stylistic revolution in Renaissance music. . . . it may be said that this is the contribution of humanism to music.<sup>13</sup>

Such then were the most important developments in Renaissance music. To approach more closely the musical background of John Milton himself, one must focus more specifically on the place of music in England.

Musical developments in Renaissance England were such that the era has come to be known as the Golden Age of English music. The period beginning with the reign of Henry VIII, who dabbled in composition himself, and ending with the Restoration, saw many changes and developments in both sacred and secular music. Although the peak of activity came around the end of the sixteenth century, music continued to be an important part of English culture in the Commonwealth. Although England produced no theorist of Zarlino's stature, the list of composers and of writers of educational and theoretical treatises is impressive. It should be noted that English music did not develop independently of continental influence, for there was exchange of musicians and musical ideas in the sixteenth century; foreign music is found in manuscript in British libraries

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<sup>13</sup>Lowinsky, p. 552.

and vice versa.<sup>14</sup> Early sixteenth-century accounts tell of foreign musicians engaged to play at the English court. Henry VIII evidently encouraged and attracted such foreign talent.<sup>15</sup>

In English music generally there was a tendency toward dramatic and personal settings which ultimately led to the collapse of the polyphonic style and the simultaneous cultivation of an archaic liturgical style. The introduction of the Italian madrigal no doubt helped speed up the tendency. As is to be expected, the leading composers were the more adventurous.<sup>16</sup> However, composers of sacred music were conservative in the use of harmony and tonality, rarely employing chromaticisms, perhaps limited by the tuning of church organs.<sup>17</sup>

The situation of English music has been made both more interesting and more exasperating by the alternating waves of Protestant and Catholic supremacy which rolled over England during the Renaissance. These alternating influences gave rise to a variety of sacred music, from

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<sup>14</sup> Joseph Kerman, The Elizabethan Madrigal: A Comparative Study (New York: American Musicological Society, 1962), pp. 44-48.

<sup>15</sup> Reese, pp. 771-72.

<sup>16</sup> Peter LeHuray, Music and the Reformation in England: 1549-1660 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 145-46.

<sup>17</sup> LeHuray, p. 148.

Catholic and high church Anglican service settings to simple psalm tunes. However, the zealots, both Protestant and Catholic, in their desire to purge previous heresy, probably destroyed a good deal of music, so that it is impossible to determine the quantity and quality of what was lost. In spite of alternating influences, the basic tendency toward more personal expression and more careful correlation of texts and music is apparent throughout the era.

From the time of Henry VIII's break with Rome and dissolution of the monasteries (which had a detrimental effect on the performance of sacred music, since the larger houses had trained choirs which nearly all disappeared<sup>18</sup>) to the ascension of Mary Tudor, the move was toward simplicity in liturgical music. Although Henry defended both vocal and organ music in the Six Articles of 1539,<sup>19</sup> the English procession (the litany) seems to have been the only substantial development that occurred during his reign.<sup>20</sup> Concerning the translation of "certain processions to be used upon festival days," Thomas Cranmer wrote to Henry in a letter of October 7, 1544,

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<sup>18</sup>LeHuray, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup>Henry Davey, History of English Music, 2nd ed. rev. (London: J. Curwen & Sons, Ltd., 1921), p. 116.

<sup>20</sup>LeHuray, p. 7.

" . . . in my opinion, the song that should be made thereunto would not be full of notes, but, as near as may be, for every syllable a note, so that it may be sung distinctly and devoutly. . . . "<sup>21</sup> The zeal for simple, distinct music to accompany texts became more fervent as the church in England became more Protestant.

In spite of Cranmer's urgings, the real reform of liturgy and music did not begin until the reign of Edward VI, when music in churches was both simplified and reduced in quantity.<sup>22</sup> In 1549 the First Act of Uniformity decreed the exclusive use of the Book of Common Prayer. This service book contained no music and rubrics which gave only little instruction.<sup>23</sup> But the Booke of Common Praier Noted appeared in 1550 with monophonic settings adapted from plainsong by Thomas Merbeck. His "noting" of the Versicles and Responses is the basis for all further reforms.<sup>24</sup> Merbeck shows obvious sympathy with liturgical reform, and his setting evidently had the approval of Northumberland, the regent, and Cranmer, perhaps being commissioned by them; there is little evidence, however, that he wrote further music for the English rite.<sup>25</sup> Besides the mass setting, the whole of his output seems to

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<sup>21</sup> Cranmer, in Source Readings, p. 352.

<sup>22</sup> LeHuray, pp. 8-18.

<sup>23</sup> LeHuray, pp. 18-19.

<sup>24</sup> Reese, pp. 796-97.

<sup>25</sup> LeHuray, p. 22.

have been two motets and one carol.<sup>26</sup> The trend toward simplification continued through Edward's reign, with the reformation of the English church becoming more Calvinistic as the period went on. During the years 1550-1553, several injunctions applying to music appeared, demanding simplification, particularly in the areas of solo organ music and organ accompaniments.<sup>27</sup> Considering this increasingly Calvinistic trend, music historian Peter LeHuray wonders if perhaps the English choral tradition was not saved by the ascension of Mary Tudor.<sup>28</sup>

Musically Mary's reign seems to have been mainly an attempt to return to the liturgical and musical practices of the period prior to the break with Rome. There does not seem to have been much official encouragement of composers during her reign; indeed, only two English composers of the first rank, Tallis and Tye, were of suitable age to have been active at the time. Since Tye, often called the "father of the English anthem," had been active and enthusiastic in writing for the English service during Edward's reign,<sup>29</sup> it is highly unlikely that he received much royal support. However, the durable

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<sup>26</sup>Eric Blom, ed., Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed. (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1954), V, 561-63.

<sup>27</sup>LeHuray, pp. 24-25.

<sup>28</sup>LeHuray, pp. 28-29.

<sup>29</sup>Grove's Dictionary, VIII, 624-27.

and versatile Tallis, the "father of English cathedral music," over his long career served four Tudor monarchs from Henry VIII to Elizabeth as a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, composing Latin service music and motets, English service music and anthems, and secular and instrumental music, as well as holding a license to print music and music paper.<sup>30</sup>

William Munday, whose music, both English and Latin, has limited appeal, experimented during Mary's reign with a florid votive-antiphon style.<sup>31</sup> Preoccupied as he was with technical problems, he allowed the word-note relationship of his composition to suffer; nevertheless, his work helped build what LeHuray calls the "foundation for the future, not only in the 'full' style but also in the new 'verse' idiom that was to be the vehicle of much of the finest Elizabethan and early Seventeenth Century church music."<sup>32</sup>

If the reigns of Edward and Mary were not conducive to the composition of sacred music, the reign of Elizabeth, marked by comparative moderation, made up for them. Unlike her father, she had no aspirations as a composer herself; like him she encouraged musicians and was the inspiration for music as well as poetry. Elizabeth favored

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<sup>30</sup>Grove's Dictionary, VIII, 293-300.

<sup>31</sup>LeHuray, p. 212.

<sup>32</sup>LeHuray, p. 216.



a vernacular liturgy but not a return to the austerity of the Book of Common Prayer of Edward's reign. The 1559 Injunctions specified that music was to remain in churches and that it be of such a nature that the words be clearly understood.<sup>33</sup> She encouraged congregational singing, and psalm singing accordingly gained in popularity in the years following her ascension.<sup>34</sup> Placating the Puritan element with encouragement of understandable vocal music and congregational singing, Elizabeth indulged her own tastes in the practices at her private chapel with candles, vestments, crucifixes, and music, which may not have set well with the Puritans, but which she knew were good for international diplomacy.<sup>35</sup>

Although it had little real influence without her approval, the movement to restrict church music remained strong. In addition, economic problems in the later years of the sixteenth century caused a decline in the quality of church musicians and music. In the 1570's and 1580's a good deal of criticism pertaining to church music was published, part of the attack on the entire episcopal system by the Puritan faction.<sup>36</sup> There were defenders of church music as well as detractors, one of whom, John Case, whose The Praise of Music is an interesting

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<sup>33</sup> LeHuray, pp. 32-33.

<sup>34</sup> LeHuray, pp. 374-76.

<sup>35</sup> LeHuray, p. 34.

<sup>36</sup> LeHuray, pp. 35-46.

and competent treatise, was not a professional musician but a physician.<sup>37</sup>

But overall, church music flourished in Elizabeth's time. Numerous composers were at work, including Tallis and Tye of an earlier generation, forming a list as impressive as that of Elizabethan literary figures, and contributing a body of music as valuable as the work of their literary counterparts. It would be impractical to list here all of the major figures and their contributions, but a few deserve mention. Foremost among Elizabethan composers is William Byrd, organist at the Chapel Royal. Although a Roman Catholic, Byrd wrote a good deal of Anglican service music and almost sixty English anthems. He has been called a key figure in maintaining the tradition of vocal polyphony in England as well as his more famous title the "father of English keyboard music." Byrd shows increasing care in the choice of his texts, progressing from chiefly liturgical texts to the use of composite texts, indicative of a concern for the expression of the personal situation. This concern is also apparent in the music itself.<sup>38</sup> He was also joint holder with Tallis of a license to print music. Thomas Morley, more famous for secular music and his educational treatise

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<sup>37</sup> Grove's Dictionary, I, 106.

<sup>38</sup> LeHuray, p. 142.

A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Music, was among the earliest writers of verse anthems.<sup>39</sup> Morley's friend Thomas Weelkes, like him a noted madrigalist, was a prolific composer of church music, showing remarkable originality in developing a form of service music using verse passages with independent organ accompaniment and antiphonal effects.<sup>40</sup>

Two families are especially noteworthy: the Tompkinses and the Gibbonses. Thomas Tompkins and his sons Thomas and John were organists and composer of stature. The younger Thomas is classified with sixteenth-century composers even though most of his work was done during the Stuart reigns (he served as composer in ordinary to Charles I), for he adhered to the polyphonic style<sup>41</sup> and there is no change or development, no experimentation, in the style he employed during his prolific career.<sup>42</sup> John Tompkins' career also fell mostly into the Stuart era. The Gibbons family probably contributed more to English music than any other. William, the father, himself contributed little except four active sons, Edward, Ellis, and Ferdinando, all of whom made minor contributions, and

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<sup>39</sup> LeHuray, pp. 249-50.

<sup>40</sup> Grove's Dictionary, IX, 230-33.

<sup>41</sup> Grove's Dictionary, VIII, 496-97.

<sup>42</sup> LeHuray, p. 281.

Orlando, organist at the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey and father of Christopher, who served the Stuarts before and after the interregnum. Orlando wrote English church music exclusively, leaving a full service, a verse service, three sets of festal psalms, two sets of Preces, seventeen hymn tunes, and around forty anthems,<sup>43</sup> of which fifteen are purely polyphonic and the rest largely experimental, employing chorus and solo voices with instrumental accompaniment.<sup>44</sup>

In some ways the single most important musical publication in the Elizabethan era was John Day's 1560 edition of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, which was first published in Geneva in 1556 but had not appeared in England during Mary's reign. The tunes were unharmonized and strictly one note per syllable.<sup>45</sup> The music in this psalter is uninspired and seemingly uninspiring, but the volume is the first of several of its kind which played a most important part in the religious services of the Puritan faction in the English church. Plain congregational singing of the psalms was the only sacred music approved by the stern Puritans, who placed much emphasis on the importance of the texts, best understood

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<sup>43</sup>LeHuray, pp. 310-11.

<sup>44</sup>Grove's Dictionary, III, 630-34.

<sup>45</sup>LeHuray, pp. 310-11.

if sung to simple tunes. An earlier book for congregational singing, Myles Coverdale's Goostly Psalms and spiritual songes (c. 1539), was Lutheran in flavor and contained metrical versions of the Magnificat, Nunc dimittis, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and a dozen or so German and Latin hymns as well as thirteen metrical psalms. Goostly Psalms survived only as long as Thomas Cromwell, Coverdale's patron, and was evidently not very popular, since only one copy is extant.<sup>46</sup> Robert Crowley's unsuccessful Psalter of David newly translated into Englysh metre (1549) was the first complete English metrical psalter and the first to contain harmonized music.<sup>47</sup>

Interest in psalms and other congregational singing continued throughout the Stuart reign, in spite of a "high church" movement. In 1621 appeared The Whole Booke of Psalms, edited by Thomas Ravenscroft, a harmonized edition of Sternhold and Hopkins. In the preface, addressed to "all that have skill or will unto sacred music," Ravenscroft stresses proper text/tune relationship, giving instructions on the method of singing.<sup>48</sup> Of one hundred pieces in the psalter, forty-eight are Ravenscroft's

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<sup>46</sup>LeHuray, pp. 370-71.

<sup>47</sup>LeHuray, pp. 371-72.

<sup>48</sup>LeHuray, p. 383.

own.<sup>49</sup> In 1635 William Slatyer published Psalmes or songs of Sion, turned into the language, and set to the tunes of a strange land, using popular contemporary tunes for Sternhold and Hopkins texts.<sup>50</sup>

Hymns as well as psalms gained in popularity during the seventeenth century with hymn tunes being written by numerous prominent musicians such as Campion. The first real hymnal of the Church of England was George Wither's The Hymnes and Songs of the Church (1623).<sup>51</sup>

Contrasting with Puritan austerity in the Stuart years was the "high church" movement led by Archbishop Laud. The earliest years of James I's reign found Puritans in high places in the English church, resulting in antimusical leanings, so that while secular music was cultivated, sacred music was neglected.<sup>52</sup> The high church movement revived ecclesiastical music along with a revival of liturgical forms. Naturally, the Puritanical churchmen objected, contending that the music obscured the text of the service. During the 1630's anti-Episcopal pamphleteering increased, rising to new heights of anti-musical invective.<sup>53</sup> Church music had its supporters, however, the most notable being Richard Hooker in Of the

<sup>49</sup> Grove's Dictionary, VII, 64.

<sup>50</sup> LeHuray, p. 384.

<sup>51</sup> LeHuray, pp. 391-92.

<sup>52</sup> Davey, pp. 169-70.

<sup>53</sup> LeHuray, pp. 46-53.

Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity.<sup>54</sup> In spite of the fashionable nature of church music, the public's acceptance of the Stuarts' musical tastes began to wane relatively early in Charles' reign. The Chapel Royal, that venerable institution, whose choristers are first mentioned in the reign of Henry V,<sup>55</sup> does not appear to have been such a dominant force under the Stuarts as it was in earlier reigns.<sup>56</sup>

The most important of a new generation of composers is William Child, who was involved in the high church movement of the 1630's. Child, nearly all of whose extant work is for the Anglican rite, is probably the first church musician to adopt openly the major and minor system of tonality and to use sharps as well as flats in key signatures.<sup>57</sup> His compositions are indicative of the tendency toward "declamatory solo and choral writing."<sup>58</sup> The stile Nuovo found a dedicated practitioner in George Jeffries, a wide-ranging composer of both secular and sacred music. Since the dating of Jeffries' compositions is questionable, it is not certain if any of his religious works are pre-Civil War, but his formative years were spent in the Stuart era.<sup>59</sup> Another family of note was at work during

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<sup>54</sup> LeHuray, p. 45.

<sup>55</sup> Reese, p. 767.

<sup>56</sup> LeHuray, p. 46.

<sup>57</sup> LeHuray, p. 154.

<sup>58</sup> LeHuray, p. 362.

<sup>59</sup> LeHuray, p. 350.

this period. William and Henry Lawes jointly produced Choice Psalms put into musick (1648), three-part psalms for George Sandys' verses. The prefatory material to the volume includes Milton's sonnet to Henry.<sup>60</sup> The bulk of Henry's work is liturgical and devotional; besides thirty of the psalms in Choice Psalms, he wrote simple hymn tunes for Sandys' 1638 Psalter and around twenty anthems, only six of which are complete.<sup>61</sup> William was a prolific composer, whose chief interest was consort music. Some of his interesting compositions are twenty-six psalm settings in a trio sonata idiom, several of which are notable for their unusual style and form; psalm tunes are used as refrains with freely composed verses for solo voices and continuo inserted between refrains.<sup>62</sup>

Two books deserve some note as curiosities and as works which are examples of a fashion of setting verses of all sorts to music. Leighton's The Teares or Lamentations of a Sorrowfull Soule (1614) contained verses written in prison, which he persuaded leading composers to set to music much better than his poetry;<sup>63</sup> and Psalterium Carolinum (1652), the versified devotions of Charles I set to music by John Wilson, a labor

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<sup>60</sup> LeHuray, p. 398.

<sup>61</sup> LeHuray, p. 343.

<sup>62</sup> LeHuray, pp. 347-49.

<sup>63</sup> LeHuray, pp. 388-89.



Peter LeHuray calls "a tribute to his royalist loyalties if not to his common sense."<sup>64</sup>

While sacred music during the English Renaissance was brilliant, it was also erratic in development, following the fortunes of the Reformation in the Church of England. On the other hand; English secular music progressed steadily, unaffected by religious controversy. Even the Puritans supported music in everyday life and education. Both vocal and instrumental music flourished, influenced by continental trends and at the same time developing independently. Most of the great composers wrote both sacred and secular music, and one can see the interdependence of one upon another.

To the modern audience, the most familiar musical form of the Renaissance is the madrigal. There are, however, numerous other forms, all of which were important in their day and influential in the development of the music of the future. The solo ayre, ballads, and instrumental music for the virginal, lute, viol, and various consorts all were extremely popular.

Although Dr. Burney claims that Nicholas Yonge's first edition of Musica Transalpina (1588) introduced the madrigal to England, the volume is actually a reflection of an established interest.<sup>65</sup> Yonge's work

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<sup>64</sup>LeHuray, p. 399.

<sup>65</sup>Kerman, p. 52.

was preceded by a few months by William Byrd's Psalmes, Sonnets, and Songs for Five Voyces.<sup>66</sup> For practical purposes, the period of the English madrigal can be said to have begun as early as 1530, when Wynken deWorde published a collection of secular songs.<sup>67</sup> Influenced by Italian madrigals, the English nevertheless developed the form in their own way. English interest was in lighter pieces, and they did not adopt the Italian madrigale spirituale.<sup>68</sup> The English went their own way, depending on the rhythm of their native language and the English sense of humor.<sup>69</sup> The English appreciated the sense of the poetry that was set to music but were not as concerned with the musical sounds of the words themselves as the Italians were. The music seems to become an end in itself, suggesting the influence of instrumental music.<sup>70</sup> English poetry did not have as great an influence on the madrigal as it had on the ayre and other forms.<sup>71</sup> Additionally, the English madrigal school was

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<sup>66</sup>Willi Apel, "Madrigal: The English Madrigal," Harvard Dictionary of Music (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1944), pp. 418-19.

<sup>67</sup>Grove's Dictionary, V, 497.      <sup>68</sup>Kerman, p. 7.

<sup>69</sup>Edward J. Dent, "The Sixteenth-Century Madrigal," New Oxford History of Music: The Age of Humanism, ed. Gerald Abraham (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), IV, 85. Hereafter cited as New Oxford History.

<sup>70</sup>Dent, p. 91.

<sup>71</sup>Kerman, p. 7.

not so extensive as the Italian school. Over a period of about twenty-five years approximately one thousand madrigals were published by twenty-seven known composers, few of whom issued more than one set. There is a close association of the madrigal with instrumental music, an association which kept the style from disappearing altogether in the later Stuart years, for by this time singers had turned to what Dent calls the "polyphonic form of ayre."<sup>72</sup>

The decline of the madrigal and the ascent of the ayre were partly a reaction against Petrarchan convention.<sup>73</sup> The ayre, a strophic song of homophonic construction, was intended for both solo and parts performance, as printed music of the period proves.<sup>74</sup> Just how much influence on this move from polyphony to homophony is a result of Puritan philosophy is open to debate. Probably the madrigal lost in popularity more because its time was past than from a philosophic desire for simplicity in music. Also there is an obvious relationship between the ayre and contemporary instrumental music, particularly consort songs and dance music. In fact, some of Dowland's ayres were made by adding words to dance music.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Dent, p. 95.

<sup>73</sup>Kerman, pp. 34-35.

<sup>74</sup>Nigel Fortune, "Solo Song and Cantata," in New Oxford History, IV, 202-03.

<sup>75</sup>Fortune, pp. 204-05.

Even when one considers the prominence of vocal secular music in the English Renaissance, one must admit that the true glory of the period lay in its instrumental music. This is particularly true of the later Renaissance. Comparatively little instrumental music was published before the seventeenth century, but a good deal existed in manuscript form such as the famous Fitzwilliam Virginal Book.<sup>76</sup>

Secular instrumental music of the period was chiefly lute music, viol music, virginal music, and music written for consorts of instruments. Lute music, according to Willi Apel, "forms an important repertory of early instrumental music, second only to that of the organ and harpsichord."<sup>77</sup> Apel also notes that the lute was the primary domestic instrument, occupying a position comparable to that of the piano today.<sup>78</sup> The viol rose in popularity later than the lute, reaching its peak in England during Milton's lifetime (the poet himself played the instrument), a period Apel calls the "Golden Age" of the viol.<sup>79</sup> The virginal is an instrument particularly associated with England because Elizabeth

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<sup>76</sup>Eric D. Mackerness, A Social History of English Music (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p. 64.

<sup>77</sup>Apel, "Lute Music," in Harvard Dictionary, p. 414.

<sup>78</sup>Apel, "Lute Music," p. 415.

<sup>79</sup>Apel, "Viol," in Harvard Dictionary, p. 795.

played it, although the name actually appears to have preceded the Virgin Queen by about half a century.<sup>80</sup> However, the virginal is not so important for its royal associations as it is for the wealth of compositions written for it by several of the most eminent English composers of the period, chief among them the great William Byrd.

Byrd's versatility in the madrigal and anthem, sacred and secular instrumental music, makes him the preeminent figure among English Renaissance composers. But others displayed considerable versatility as well. Thomas Morley and Thomas Weelkes were both madrigalists and virginalists as well as composers of church music, as were Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Tompkins, and others. Morley is also justly famous for his Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musick, the best known musical treatise of the day. The Plaine and Easie Introduction gives the modern reader a valuable insight into ordinary practices of the day.<sup>81</sup> In his address to the reader, Morley emphasizes that his is not a highly technical treatise but puts into writing what is known to the English chiefly through practice (a clear appeal to

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<sup>80</sup>Apel, "Virginal," in Harvard Dictionary, p. 806.

<sup>81</sup>For a discussion of performance of music in the seventeenth century, see Thurston Dart, Interpretation of Music (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), Chapter VI.

patriotism). The book is divided into three parts. According to the title page the first is instruction for singing prick-song; the second is concerned with descants and singing two parts on a ground (of plain-song); the third "entreateth of composition of three, foure, five or more parts . . . ." It is interesting that the second part of the treatise shows a transition from the horizontal to vertical concept of harmony, discussing concords and discords and permissible harmonies (for instance, he forbids parallel movement of parts).<sup>82</sup> One of the more important features of the book is Morley's extensive use of examples. There is some question as to just how much Morley is to be believed about the widespread accomplishment of sight-singing; nevertheless, there must have been a considerable interest and skill among the educated classes for him to have made such claims.

Thomas Ravenscroft, best known for The Whole Booke of Psalms (popularly Ravenscroft's Psalter), is important as a theorist and editor of works such as Pammelia (1609) and Deuteromelia (1609), both of which contain rounds and catches mostly of the traditional or popular

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<sup>82</sup>Thomas Morley, A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke (London: Peter Short dwelling on Breedstreet hill at the signe of the Starre, 1597; facsimile rpt. Amsterdam: DaCapo Press: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, Ltd., 1969), p. 72.

type but with a sprinkling of sacred tunes, and the treatise with the mind-boggling but descriptive title A Brief Discourse of the true (but neglected) use of Charact'ring the Degrees, by their Perfection, Imperfection and Diminution in Mensurable Musick, against the Common Practice and Custome of these Times (1614).

In addition to Morley's and Ravenscroft's treatises, others deserve mention here as works of some influence on English musical thought. Thomas Mace's Musick's Monument, published late in the seventeenth century (1676), reflects concerns of the earlier part of the period, with sections about the lute and viol, and a section on psalm singing, offering practical (and often amusing) suggestions for the improvement of church music. Like Morley, Mace includes music especially for the lute, instructions on the selection and care of the lute, less detailed ones for the viol, and even a plan for a music room. Charles Butler's The Principles of Musick (1636), written in Butler's personal and sometimes confusing phonetic alphabet, is dedicated to Charles I and cites the accomplishments of the English rulers in music and their patronage of music.

These and numerous other treatises concerning proper composition and performance along with the numerous song books are proof of the popularity of music. Additionally,

music is granted an important place in the education of the day, as shown in several of the most important educational treatises. In that patriarch of courtesy books, The Booke of the Courtier, Castiglione offers music as an example to illustrate the virtue of moderation and modesty and the virtue of "effortlessness" in demonstrating skill.<sup>83</sup> Music is declared a necessity, not merely an ornament for the courtier.<sup>84</sup> True to the fashion of the day, Castiglione, through Count Lodovico, cites the ancients' opinions of music and the idea of the music of the spheres ("our soul framed after the very same sort").<sup>85</sup> And Sir Frederico acknowledges the importance of simplicity when he declares:

But to sing to the lute is much better [than prick-song] because all the sweetness consisteth in one alone, and a man is much more heedful and understandeth better the feat manner and the air or vein of it, when the ears are not busied in hearing any more than one voice. . . .<sup>86</sup>

English writers are more cautious about music. In The Booke Named the Governour Elyot admits to the value of music (citing the ancients, of course) while

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<sup>83</sup>Baldassare Castiglione, The Booke of the Courtier, trans. Thomas Hoby (1561; rpt. New York: The National Alumni, 1907), pp. 41-42.

<sup>84</sup>Castiglione, p. 77.

<sup>85</sup>Castiglione, pp. 74-77.

<sup>86</sup>Castiglione, p. 77.



cautioning against immoderation (citing Nero).<sup>87</sup> He says:

It were therefore better than no musick were taughte to a noble man, than, by the exacte knowledge therof, he shuld have therin inordinate delite, and by that be illected to wantonnesse, abandonyng gravitie, and the necessary cure and office, in the publike weale, to him committed.<sup>88</sup>

Nevertheless, if a gentleman maintains an attitude of moderation and does not appear like a "common servant or minstrell," music is a valuable study, aiding the understanding of society.

Yet, notwithstanding he shall commende the perfect understanding of musike, declaringe howe necessary it is for the better attaynyng the knowledge of a publike weale: whiche, as I before have said, is made of an order of astates and degrees, and by reason therof, conteineth in it a perfect harmony.<sup>89</sup>

Roger Ascham in The Scholemaster sees the sciences (of which music was one in the classical curriculum) as injuring scholars by changing manners while sharpening the wits "overmoch." "Moderatelie mingled and wiselie applied to som good use of life" the sciences are good, but those scholars whose interest is exclusively in the sciences are "solitarie they be themselves, . . . unfit to life with others, and . . . unapte to serve in the world."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Thomas Elyot, The Booke Named the Governour (1531; rpt. London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1907), pp. 25-27.

<sup>88</sup>Elyot, p. 27.

<sup>89</sup>Elyot, pp. [28]-29.

<sup>90</sup>Roger Ascham, The Scholemaster in English Works, ed. Edward Arber (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1898), p. 76.

Elyot's and Ascham's reservations echo the popular sentiments about the powers music was thought to have to intoxicate human reason when improperly employed. This idea is closely tied to the Protestant emphasis on text over tune in sacred music.

There appears to have been some strictly practical concern over the lures of music at the universities. Prohibitions against playing instruments and like activities at Oxford indicate that students there had and used instruments for recreation,<sup>91</sup> probably to the detriment of their studies.

In Music in Medieval and Renaissance Universities, Nan Cooke Carpenter provides an excellent study of music both as discipline and recreation. There was a long tradition of academic music in England. Schools were established early by cathedrals, churches, monasteries, guilds, and even hospitals. Of course, many of these schools disappeared along with their sponsors, such as the guilds, and many were dissolved during the Reformation along with the monasteries, but a number survived under collegiate auspices.<sup>92</sup> In fact, music became an integral and important part of the English universities as compared

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<sup>91</sup>Nan Cooke Carpenter, Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), pp. 172-73.

<sup>92</sup>Carpenter, pp. 337-40.

to continental institutions. Carpenter states, "It cannot be emphasized too much that the English universities were the only institutions to confer the baccalaureate and doctorate in music, the only universities in which the art of music achieved the dignity of a separate faculty."<sup>93</sup> Cambridge awarded the first baccalaureate in music in 1463-64 and a doctorate (per saltem) to the same man in the same year,<sup>94</sup> while the earliest recorded Bachelor of Music at Oxford is 1502 (although evidence indicates earlier awards) and the first recorded doctorate is 1511.<sup>95</sup> The Bachelor of Music ranked high at Cambridge, above the B.A., and along with medicine, law, and theology degrees.<sup>96</sup> The importance given to the music curriculum at Oxford is evidenced by the fact that attendance was required of students at music lectures.<sup>97</sup> Music was important not only as an academic discipline, but also as recreation and in connection with the college chapels.

With such interest obvious in the universities and such widespread discussion in courtesy books, there is no doubt of the important part music played in the life of the educated Englishman of the Renaissance. It was long assumed, erroneously, that this traditional English love

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<sup>93</sup> Carpenter, p. 336.

<sup>94</sup> Carpenter, p. 200.

<sup>95</sup> Carpenter, pp. 159-61.

<sup>96</sup> Carpenter, p. 197.

<sup>97</sup> Carpenter, p. 153.

of music and touted amateur virtuosity did not extend to the Puritans. This misconception evidently began with the music histories written by Charles Burney and John Hawkins in the eighteenth century. Since theirs were the first systematic music histories, subsequent writers borrowed freely from them, and the idea became fixed. Fortunately, much has been done to dispel these myths, notably by Percy Scholes in The Puritans and Music and Henry Davey in History of English Music.

Scholes spends several pages quoting briefly from numerous books to show how widespread had become the belief that Puritans disliked music, pointing out many contradictions among the sources.<sup>98</sup> Much of the foundation for the belief in Puritans as music haters stemmed from their serious reservations about the place of music, particularly instrumental music, in religious services. Concerned as they were with a religion by reason (not necessarily achieved), they naturally feared the acknowledged powers of music to produce an ecstasy that would separate man, if only briefly, from his powers of reason. However, they did recognize music as a useful teaching tool and were lusty psalm singers. In their use of simple music for psalm singing, the English Puritans followed the

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<sup>98</sup>Percy Scholes, The Puritans and Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), pp. 91-103.

thinking of John Calvin, who in the Foreword to the Geneva Psalter advised the use of psalms as the best words for religious music, noting that the powers of music would help the absorption of the meaning of the words. He felt that music can move men to praise God more zealously. Throughout the Foreword runs the admonition that the power of music must be used with caution so as not to be abused.<sup>99</sup>

Following Calvin, the English Puritans held that singing was properly unison and syllabic (one note per syllable). Their chief source for congregational singing was the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter.<sup>100</sup> Psalm singing was strictly unaccompanied, and simplicity was generally the watchword for all music in the church. On March 21, 1641, a sub-committee of the House of Lords issued a recommendation that church music be "framed with less curiosity" and use only Scriptural texts,<sup>101</sup> and even earlier, in 1619, George Wither, in a pamphlet entitled A Preparation to the Psalter, while favoring instruments in church because of their presence in the book of Revelation, raised objections to the ornamentation used by many organists.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>John Calvin, in Source Readings, pp. 246-48.

<sup>100</sup>Scholes, pp. 253-54.

<sup>101</sup>Davey, p. 256.

<sup>102</sup>Scholes, pp. 223-24.

The organ seems to have been the chief target of musical reformation by the Puritans. The infamous destruction of organs during the Civil War has long been cited against Oliver Cromwell; however, in fact, most of the destruction took place prior to Cromwell's rise to power and the May 9, 1644, order for the destruction of "all organs, images, and all other matters of superstitious monuments. . . ." <sup>103</sup> Therefore, the actual destruction was the work of undisciplined and over-zealous soldiers in the grip of hysteria, rather than of Cromwell's disciplined army. <sup>104</sup> In fact, the opposition to organs had been present for many years. As early as 1536 organ playing was declared one of the "84 Faults and Abuses of Religion" by the Lower House of Convocation, and in 1550 the intention of removing organs was voiced. <sup>105</sup>

Even while church organs were being destroyed along with other trappings of the Anglican church, organs were maintained as recreational instruments. It is probable that some of the "destroyed" instruments were dismantled

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<sup>103</sup>Scholes, p. 232.

<sup>104</sup>The source of the account of the destruction is Bruno Rynes' Mercurius Rusticus; or the Countries Complaint of the Barbarous Outrages committed by the Secretaries of the late flourishing Kingdom, a Royalist and Anglican periodical issue which can hardly be considered a disinterested source; see Scholes, p. 231.

<sup>105</sup>Scholes, p. 230.

and removed from churches to private homes. It is known that Cromwell had the organ of Magdalen College removed to Hampton Court.<sup>106</sup> Percy Scholes speculates that "it was the suppression of the organs in church that led to the first real development of any sort of concert life in England."<sup>107</sup> Be that as it may, church music, particularly of the "high church" variety, suffered a serious blow during this period.

If church music suffered, music for non-religious pleasure and entertainment seems to have flourished during Puritan domination. Cromwell himself was a music lover, maintaining the organ at Hampton Court and retaining John Hingston, the chief of Charles I's music staff, as instructor for his daughters at a salary of £100 per year,<sup>108</sup> and having music performed at state dinners and receptions.<sup>109</sup> Colonel Hutchinson, one of the regicides, who was if anything more Puritan than Cromwell, was known to love music and taught music and dancing to his children.<sup>110</sup>

The Puritans treated musicians with respect, even those who had served the Stuarts. Hutchinson's music master, Charles Coleman, who had served Charles I and later served Charles II, was recommended for the Doctor

<sup>106</sup>Scholes, p. 236.

<sup>107</sup>Scholes, p. 244.

<sup>108</sup>Scholes, p. 142.

<sup>109</sup>Scholes, pp. 143-44.

<sup>110</sup>Davey, p. 268.

of Music by the committee sent by the government to reform Cambridge along Puritan guidelines.<sup>111</sup> The Puritan government actually paid some back salaries of Charles I's musicians and paid out-of-work musicians from the sale of bishop's lands.<sup>112</sup>

One interesting and important sidelight in any discussion of Puritan attitudes toward music is that music helped reopen the theatres in England. The Puritans prohibited spoken drama but permitted "opera" on stage in 1656 with "The First Day's Entertainment" and The Seige of Rhodes.<sup>113</sup>

The existence and performance of these "operas" underscore the intimate relationship between poetry and music and poets and musicians during the Commonwealth, a relationship which Davey emphasizes in his book. However, the time of the poet-musicians, such as Campion, was, Davey feels, past.<sup>114</sup>

This, then, was the musical heritage and climate into which John Milton was born and in which he spent both his formative and his mature years. It is at this point in the discussion that particular attention must be paid to

<sup>111</sup>Scholes, pp. 138-39.

<sup>112</sup>Scholes, p. 281.

<sup>113</sup>Davey, pp. 280-81.

<sup>114</sup>Davey, p. 247.



his background in and attitudes toward music as foundation for the study of the use of music in his poetry.

The best place to begin such a consideration is with John Milton the Elder, scrivener by trade, Puritan by choice, and musician by avocation. In John Milton the Elder and His Music, a good part of Ernest Brenneke's argument is designed to show how the talents of the father and the musical environment of the home influenced the son. In the introduction Brenneke states:

From the early lyric, At a Solemn Music, to the characterization of Manoa in Samson, the works of the poet, in both prose and verse, abound in passages that demand familiarity with the elder Milton and his music. Specifically, the important poem Ad Patrem receives its measure of appreciation only when it is read in its proper setting, that is, against the background of a knowledge of the poet's filial relationship.<sup>115</sup>

There is no doubt that the elder Milton was an accomplished amateur composer. In The Life of Mr. John Milton (1694), Edward Phillips, the poet's nephew, states:

. . . he sometimes found vacant hours to the Study (which he made his recreation) of the Noble Science of Musick, in which he advanc'd to that perfection, that as I have been told, and as I take it, by our Author himself [Milton, the poet], he composed an In Nomine of Forty Parts: for which he was rewarded with a Gold Medal and Chain by a Polish Prince, to whom he presented it. However, this is a truth not to be denied, that for several Songs of his Composition, after the way of these times, three or four of which are still to be seen in Old Wilby's set of Ayres [Morley's Triumphs of Oriana], besides

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<sup>115</sup>Ernest Brenneke, John Milton the Elder and His Music (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. x.

some Compositions of his in Ravenscroft's Psalms, he gained the Reputation of a considerable Master in this most charming of all the Liberal Sciences.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to contributing "Fair Orian" to The Triumphs of Oriana and three psalm settings to Ravenscroft's Psalter, two of the most important collections of the early part of the seventeenth century, the elder Milton is represented by four anthems in William Leighton's The Tears or Lamentations of a Sorrowful Soule (1614), and by a motet "Precamur, Sancte Domine" and several anthems in the impressively titled but never published Tristitiae remedium, cautiones selectissimae diversorum tum authorum argumentorum labore et manu exaratae Thomai Myriell (1616), which is extant in manuscript form.<sup>117</sup> None of the a cappella anthems for four or five voices, written by the elder Milton probably for musical gatherings at the Bread Street house in the period 1600-1632, is found in contemporary published sources (at least under his name).<sup>118</sup> The inclusion of pieces by Milton in collections indicates that he was probably acquainted with several of the musical notables of the time, as Brenneke speculates.<sup>119</sup> How much

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<sup>116</sup>Edward Phillips, in The Early Lives of Milton, ed. Helen Darbyshire (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1932), p. 51.

<sup>117</sup>Brenneke, pp. 82-83.

<sup>118</sup>LeHuray, pp. 269-70.

<sup>119</sup>Brenneke, pp. 63-64.

association the younger Milton would have had with them as a child is uncertain.

It is certain that the elder Milton saw to it that his only son's musical education was not neglected. H. F. Fletcher says, "The temper of the whole period of Milton's youth was musical, and all that any lad needed to become absorbed in musical studies and performances was some encouragement and enough musical ability to carry a tune."<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, how he got his musical education is something of a mystery. Probably his father was his primary teacher, although the Lawes brothers, Henry and William, and others have been proposed as his instructors.<sup>121</sup> His mentioning more than one master for his early education at home<sup>122</sup> would seem to indicate that someone other than his father might have been involved in his musical training. Biographers acknowledge that Milton learned the rudiments of theory and performance early and was familiar with both sacred and secular music.<sup>123</sup> Masson rhapsodizes about the young Milton's talents when he says:

Joining with his young voice in those exercises of his family [musical evenings], the boy became a singer almost as soon as he could speak. We see

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<sup>120</sup>Harris Francis Fletcher, The Intellectual Development of John Milton (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1956), I, 339.

<sup>121</sup>Fletcher, I, 340-41.

<sup>122</sup>Fletcher, I, 93.

<sup>123</sup>Fletcher, I, 342.

him going to the organ for his own amusement, picking out little melodies by the ear, and stretching his tiny fingers in search of pleasing chords.<sup>124</sup>

If the style of this passage is rather romantic, the content does correspond with the general acknowledgement of Milton's abilities both as a vocalist and instrumentalist (while ignoring the difficulties that would have been encountered by a small child attempting to play the organ). Fletcher believes that his chief interest was performance and his secondary theory<sup>125</sup> and even speculates that he had perfect pitch.<sup>126</sup>

Although specific evidence is lacking, it is probable that Milton's musical education continued when he entered St. Paul's School. Alexander Gill, the Younger, Master of Paul's during Milton's years there, was quite interested in music, following in the steps of Richard Mulcaster, his immediate predecessor, a strong advocate of the use of music in education.<sup>127</sup>

While at Cambridge, Milton maintained an active and considerable interest in music, although his activities were of a personal and recreational nature rather than an academic one. During his university years and especially

<sup>124</sup>David Masson, The Life of John Milton (London: MacMillan and Co., 1877-96), I, 54.

<sup>125</sup>Fletcher, I, 346.

<sup>126</sup>Fletcher, I, 342.

<sup>127</sup>Fletcher, I, 176.

in the period immediately following, which he spent at his father's country home in individual study, the chief source of musical influence was London. Early biographies<sup>128</sup> all make much of his excursions into London to purchase books on mathematics and music, his chief interests during his period of retirement. As Fletcher points out, Milton was constantly abreast of happenings in European music at this time, which indicates that he had paid no little attention to the subject during his college years.<sup>129</sup> Brenneke goes so far as to conjecture that he was associating with some musical Italian families then residing in England, and that the Emilia to whom the Italian sonnets of c. 1630 were written was a daughter of one of those families.<sup>130</sup>

It is probably at this time that his combined study of mathematics and music involved him more with theory than at any other time. None of his compositions, if indeed he actually wrote any, is extant, and it is doubtful that he pursued theory seriously after the Horton days. He did continue with performance, doing, as

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<sup>128</sup> John Phillips, Anthony a Wood, John Toland, found in The Early Lives of Milton.

<sup>129</sup> Fletcher, II, 356.

<sup>130</sup> Brenneke, p. 119.

Jonathon Richardson says, "Well on the Organ and Bas-Viol, and This was a great Relief to him after he had lost his Sight."<sup>131</sup>

Certainly music was among the most important attractions to Milton on his journey through Italy. At this time the change from polyphony to harmony was well advanced in Italy, more so than in England, and, as Fletcher states, Milton was one of a few travelers well aware of this fact.<sup>132</sup> Among his most famous encounters was the meeting with Leonora Baroni, who so charmed him with her singing at a concert sponsored by Cardinal Barbarini that he "could not help praising her in a sonnet."<sup>133</sup> But romantic as this encounter was, other influences were more important. Chief among them were opera and its immediate forebear, dramma per musica. In Milton and the Italian Cities John Arthos discusses Milton's possible attendance at operas and the influence of this musical genre on his later work. He devotes an entire chapter to "Milton and Monteverdi," tracing the influence of

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<sup>131</sup>Jonathon Richardson, "Life of the Author, and a Discourse on the Poem," Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton's Paradise Lost (1734), in The Early Lives of Milton, p. 204.

<sup>132</sup>Fletcher, I, 337.

<sup>133</sup>Letter to the King of France, August 23, 1642, in The Life Records of John Milton, ed. Joseph Milton French (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1949-1958), II, 75.

musical drama, particularly Monteverdi's, on Samson Agonistes. Monteverdi, at this time in his seventies, was still very active, publishing both sacred and secular music.<sup>134</sup> And certainly Venice, Monteverdi's city, was particularly attractive because of its famous organs and organists.<sup>135</sup>

If what Milton actually heard and whom he actually met are open to speculation, we have it on the authority of Edward Phillips that he sent back from Italy "a Chest or two of choice Musick-books of the best Masters flourishing about that time in Italy, namely, Luca Marenzo, Monte Verde, Horatio Vecchi, Cifa, the Prince of Venosa, and several others. . . ."<sup>136</sup> These books probably included some on theory.

This music was no doubt welcomed by the senior Milton, and probably, as Masson supposes, the younger man showed the volumes to his friend Henry Lawes,<sup>137</sup> his most important musical association. It had been largely Lawes' doing that had enabled Milton to enjoy a full tour of Italy, for Lawes, a court musician, had bypassed the Secretaries of State and the Privy Council to obtain from

<sup>134</sup>John Arthos, Milton and the Italian Cities (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), pp. 118-19.

<sup>135</sup>Arthos, p. 118.

<sup>136</sup>Phillips, in The Early Lives of Milton, p. 59.

<sup>137</sup>Masson, II, 79.

the Lord Warden, the Earl of Suffolk, a passport without prohibition against visiting Rome, a city ordinarily forbidden to Englishmen.<sup>138</sup>

The friendship of Puritan poet and Royalist musician was a long and fruitful one. Lawes, thirteen years Milton's senior, had appeared on the London scene around 1615 and had become connected with the circle of composers around the elder Milton, as well as with younger musicians. Both of these groups had connections with the Diodati circle, of which the poet was a part. Fletcher speculates that Milton and Lawes became acquainted around 1625, about the time of Milton's admission to Cambridge.<sup>139</sup> Through the years they encouraged each other and collaborated on at least two works. Lawes was probably the chief influence on Milton's composition of Arcades, for which he furnished music, to honor the Dowager Countess of Derby.<sup>140</sup> Not long after, Lawes furnished the music for A Masque (Comus), first presented on September 29, 1634. Settings for only five songs from A Masque survive, but there may have been several others circulated in manuscript.<sup>141</sup> Lawes' contribution to A Masque extended

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<sup>138</sup>Willia McClung Evans, Henry Lawes, Musician and Friend of Poets (New York: Modern Language Association, 1941), pp. 148-51.

<sup>139</sup>Fletcher, II, 357-59.

<sup>140</sup>Masson, I, 598-99.

<sup>141</sup>Masson, III, 464-65.



beyond providing music. An experienced writer and producer of this particular form of entertainment, he made some changes in Milton's libretto for the performance.<sup>142</sup> In 1637, Lawes, pestered for copies of the masque, had it published without Milton's name, although with his permission.<sup>143</sup> Unfortunately, Lawes' publication omitted much staging apparatus, which resulted in criticism of Milton for faulty dramatic technique.<sup>144</sup> Their friendship continued to flourish after this period of collaboration in the early 1630's and was probably at its most intimate in the years 1645-1646, when Milton lived near Lawes' patron, the Earl of Bridgewater (stepson of the Countess of Derby).<sup>145</sup> It was in January, 1646, that the edition of Milton's poems appeared which on the title page were said to be set to Lawes' music.

The sonnet "To My Friend Mr. Henry Lawes" ("To Mr. Henry Lawes on His Airs" in the 1673 edition) was composed in February, 1646.<sup>146</sup> Milton's respect for Lawes is most evident, and his praise, though controlled, is genuine, placing Lawes in the forefront of those English musicians who sought to fit words and music. Not only

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<sup>142</sup>Evans, pp. 99-100. For a lengthy discussion of the composition and performance of A Masque, see Evans, Chapter V.

<sup>143</sup>Masson, I, 640.

<sup>144</sup>Evans, pp. 140-41.

<sup>145</sup>Masson, III, 464.

<sup>146</sup>Masson, III, 465.

the poem itself, but the publication of it in 1648 when it was not exactly politic for a Puritan Parliamentarian to praise a Royalist musician, is proof of his esteem for the man and his music.<sup>147</sup>

During the Commonwealth Lawes remained active and maintained his friendship with Milton, although their period of collaboration was over and the times spent together few, probably not so much because of political differences, which had proved no deterrent before, but more because Milton's duties left him little free time. It is known that Milton's nephew, Edward Phillips, attended several musical events at Lawes' home during these years,<sup>148</sup> so it is not too far-fetched to suppose that Milton himself did also on occasions when his schedule permitted.<sup>149</sup> It is not known if they maintained contact after the Restoration when Lawes was restored to his position as court musician.<sup>150</sup> Lawes died in 1662, just two years after the return of the Stuarts, and several years too soon to see the publication of his friend's major poetic works.

Since the purpose of this paper is to study music imagery in Milton's poetry, it is necessary to consider

<sup>147</sup>Evans, pp. 180-181.

<sup>148</sup>Evans, p. 212.

<sup>149</sup>Evans, p. 214.

<sup>150</sup>Masson, VI, 452-53.

briefly how he used musical ideas in his prose, since the ideas which he discusses there theoretically he dramatizes in the poetry, fleshing them out with settings and characters. Milton wrote no musical treatises, and in his numerous works on religion and religious doctrine he does not mention music, either favorably or unfavorably, as so many other writers of the era did. "Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration" is an attack on Roman Catholicism in which Milton takes to task "idolatry" and the mass itself "wherein they adore their God under bread and wine";<sup>151</sup> however, he does not mention music as a form of idolatry, as one might expect, since music connected with the Roman Catholic rite might be considered false worship, analogous to stained glass and statuary.

More important, of course, than what Milton does not say about music is what he does say. What he does say is slight; nevertheless, the references are interesting. In "Of Education" Milton does not include music among the formal studies of languages, theology, and philosophy, but promotes its use as proper recreation, particularly after physical exercise and before meals. He recognizes here the reputed power of music "over

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<sup>151</sup> John Milton, The Works of John Milton, ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1938), VI, 173. All further references to Milton's works will be taken from this edition.

dispositions and manners, to smooth and make them gentle from rustick harshness and distemper'd passions."<sup>152</sup> He also sees music as an aid to sending his scholars back to their studies in the proper frame of mind after eating. It might seem curious that a person to whom music was so obviously important would have it play so small a part in his scheme of education. However, Milton seems to have treated music as an independent study for pleasure rather than an academic discipline. His own studies prove this, for he devoted time to music after his collegiate days when he was refining his knowledge and bringing the discipline of intellect gained from St. Paul's and Cambridge to bear upon another field of endeavor. His plan of education is aimed to provide the scholar with a disciplined intellect, which, after the period of formal training is past, is not only free to range over ever-widening interests, but also capable of assimilating new knowledge, discriminating between good and ill.

Music is far more important in the Second Prologue. In fact, it is the subject. In this shortest of the prologues, Milton defends the concept of the music of the spheres, that all-important notion which played such a vital role in man's view of his relationship to the divine order. William Riley Parker calls the Second

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<sup>152</sup>Milton, IV, 289.

Prolusion "a witty defense within a commonsense denial."<sup>153</sup> Milton discusses the unheard (by mortals) harmony of the heavens as first set forth by Pythagoras. He contends that while this harmony is not perceived, it nevertheless has considerable influence on the lives of both mortals and gods, and he makes the important point that the harmony is not perceived because man is not worthy to hear. Although the references in this work are strictly classical, one can feel undertones of the Christian idea of the loss of harmony with the Fall. Don Cameron Allen in The Harmonious Vision states that

Milton is also suggesting that virtue is the way to harmony and that harmony is the center of the golden age. In time he turns this prose into verse and associates in the "Nativity Ode" the ninefold harmony with a fanciful return to the Eden of Adam's first hour.<sup>154</sup>

The "Nativity Ode" is the Christian dramatization of the classical argument of the Second Prolusion.

One final prose piece deserves attention here, not because of its musical content, but because of its title.

"Tetrachordon" comes from the name of the succession of four descending tones, the first three separated by two whole tones, the third and fourth separated by a semi-tone, which is the basis of Greek musical

<sup>153</sup>William Riley Parker, Milton: A Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), I, 106-07.

<sup>154</sup>Don Cameron Allen, The Harmonious Vision: Studies in Milton's Poetry (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1954), p. xiv.

theory. Milton uses four biblical passages in his discussion of marriage in "Tetrachordon." The four passages can be thought of as corresponding to the four tones of the tetrachord as the basis for Milton's theory of matrimonial harmony.<sup>155</sup>

The preceding view of the musical milieu of the English Renaissance and of the musical education of John Milton has been designed as an introduction to the analysis of the use to which Milton puts musical imagery in his poetry. The discussion in the following chapters will consider more specifically musical types and ideas about music that were a part of the musical knowledge of the educated Englishman of the seventeenth century, the audience for which Milton wrote.

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<sup>155</sup>Parker, Biography, I, 281, states that "Tetrachordon" comes from the name of a Greek lyre. However, standard sources, Apel's Harvard Dictionary and Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, do not recognize a Greek lyre so named. Parker likens the four passages to the strings of the lyre, but the true importance of the title lies in its reference to a series of tones, a harmonic relationship.

### CHAPTER III

#### SPECULATIVE MUSIC AND HEARD HARMONY

The associative or symbolic value of the music images in Milton's English poetry will be examined in this chapter. A workable system of classification will be evolved and an analysis made of the significance of the images as they function in the poetry.

Basically, a music image is a passage which describes or evokes a musical sound or refers to some theory of music, to a musical instrument, or to a musical form.<sup>1</sup> Even images which are "noise" images fall into the class, since they are, like "proper" music images, descriptions or evocations of sounds, lacking in harmony, and are often dependent on their contrast with true music for

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<sup>1</sup>The image as defined in Caroline Spurgeon's Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935) is the basis for analysis in this chapter: "It is a description or an idea, which by comparison or analogy, stated or understood, with something else, transmits to us through the emotions and associations it arouses, something of the way the writer views, conceives, or has felt what he is telling us" (p. 9). Spurgeon's ideas cover the content, form, and function of images, although she states that an image is really determined by its content rather than by an established form. This is certainly true of Milton's music images, for they range from simple references of a few words to elaborate descriptions of epic-simile proportions; they can be evocative or richly detailed.

their meaning. In "New Approaches to Milton," Rosamund Tuve emphasizes the associative value of his imagery, calling the imagery the "evaluative functioning of figurative speech," going on to say that "it is the meanings of narratives that figurative language assists."<sup>2</sup>

The organization of image types will fall into speculative and practical as outlined by Morley:

Speculative is that kinde of musicke which by Mathematical helpes, seeketh out the causes, properties, and natures of soundes by themselves, and compared with others proceeding no further, but content with the onlie contemplation of the Art. Practical is that which teacheth all that may be knowne in songs, eyther for the understanding of other mens, or making of ones owne. . . .<sup>3</sup>

The music of the spheres is the most abstract of speculative music, and harmony such as set forth by theorists like Zarlino effects a bridge between purely speculative and purely practical, combining philosophy with humanly perceived sound. It is with these types of music that this chapter will be concerned.

Milton's music imagery is not highly technical. He seldom reverts to terminology meant only for the educated

<sup>2</sup>Rosamund Tuve, "New Approaches to Milton," Essays by Rosamund Tuve: Spenser; Herbert; Milton, ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 257.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Morley, A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practical Musicke (London: Peter Short dwelling on Breedstreet Hill at the signe of the Starre, 1597; facsimile rpt. Amsterdam: DaCapo Press; Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, Ltd., 1969), pp. 9-[9].



musician. From the images, however, a person with some musical background, the background of the well-educated seventeenth-century Englishman, could make what technical associations his education made possible and thereby enrich his understanding of the poetry. Both speculative and practical images run throughout the poetry, from the early, highly idealistic poems to the great epics which, although they deal with themes of far greater import, are notable for a more realistic attitude on the part of the poet toward the human condition.

Nan Cooke Carpenter notes that "as far as his use of music is concerned, Milton is all of a piece. His handling of musical imagery, in fact, deepens the picture of Milton the conscious artist . . . all the important musical images and ideas found in L'Allegro and Il Penseroso occur again in the later writings."<sup>4</sup> Carpenter's assertion that Milton's use of music is "all of a piece" is perhaps a bit misleading, for while the ideas of the early works certainly do appear in the works of his later years, they do show development of thought as well as change in style necessitated by the different themes.

The concept of the music of the spheres was an important one, both philosophically and poetically, long

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<sup>4</sup>Nan Cooke Carpenter, "The Place of Music in 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,'" University of Toronto Quarterly, 22 (1952-53), 363.

before Milton's time, and even with the rise of the new astronomy of Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler, when the idea of a universe of geocentric spheres disappeared from the world of science, the myth retained its potency.<sup>5</sup> Its importance lay in the fact that "Speculative music dealt with the nature of sound, with the position and function of music in the entire system of human knowledge, and with music's usefulness to man."<sup>6</sup>

Milton certainly uses the music of the spheres to good advantage. William Grace states that "We may go so far as to say that the succession of allusions to the music of the spheres reaches a high point in Milton's poetry."<sup>7</sup> The sources that Milton could draw upon were numerous, including most importantly Aristotle and Boethius, as well as many literary works. His chief concern is with the ethical significance of the idea rather than with technical considerations. Furthermore, it can be noticed that references to the music of the spheres are not entirely consistent, depending on his purpose.

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<sup>5</sup>John Hollander, The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry: 1500-1700 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1970), p. 39.

<sup>6</sup>Gretchen Finney, Musical Backgrounds for English Literature, 1580-1660 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1962), p. ix.

<sup>7</sup>William Grace, Ideas in Milton (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 64.

Images involving the music of the spheres appear throughout his poetry, but the most significant ones, upon which future references seem to be based, appear early, in the "Nativity Ode" and "At a Solemn Music."

In the "Nativity Ode" several references to the music of the spheres appear, the most important of which are found in Verse IX and especially Verse XIII of the hymn. Verse IX combines obvious reference to the harmony of the spheres with references to angelic choirs and instrumentalists echoing the harmony produced by the movement of the spheres. Verse XIII provides one of the best poetic descriptions of the idea:

Ring out ye Crystall Sphears,  
Once bless our humane ears,  
    (If ye have power to touch our senses so)  
And let your silver chime  
Move in melodious time:  
    And let the Base of Heav'ns deep Organ blow,  
And with your ninefold harmony  
Make up full consort to th'Angelike symphony.<sup>8</sup>

Milton takes the figure of the crystal spheres from Aristotle's De Caelo, which tells of the sound produced by the rubbing of the spheres.<sup>9</sup> Aristotle is not alone in

<sup>8</sup>John Milton, "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" (ll. 125-32), The Works of John Milton, ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1938), I, Pt. 1, 6. All further references to the poetry will be identified by line number and book, if relevant, in the text.

<sup>9</sup>Aristotle, De Caelo, trans. J. L. Stocks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), II, ix. Aristotle goes on to refute the idea that the movement of the spheres produces harmony. In the Second Prolusion Milton takes Aristotle to task for this refutation.

the idea of sound produced by motion; it is the basis of Boethius' theory of musica mundana in De Institutione Musica.<sup>10</sup> This motion results in "ninefold harmony," the ultimate in unheard sound. It is obvious in lines 126 and 127 that Milton refers to the idea found in the Second Prolusion that man in his postlapsarian state can no longer hear the music of the spheres. However, the advent of the Nativity, often called the advent of the second Adam, which brings to men the opportunity for the complete remission of their sins, also brings the opportunity for the newly sinless men to hear again the music of the spheres.

Reference to the time when man was able to hear the music of the spheres is also the focal point of speculative music imagery in "At a Solemn Music":

That we on Earth with undiscording voice  
 May rightly answer that melodious noise;  
 As once we did, till disproportion'd sin  
 Jarr'd against natures chime, and with harsh din  
 Broke the fair musick that all creatures made  
 To their great Lord, whose love their motion sway'd  
 In perfect Diapason, whilst they stood  
 In first obedience, and their state of good.  
 O may we soon again renew that song,  
 And keep in tune with Heav'n, till God ere long  
 To his celestial consort us unite,  
 To live with him, and sing in endles morn of light.  
 (ll. 17-28)

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<sup>10</sup> Boethius, from De Institutione Musica, in Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity through the Romantic Era, ed. William Oliver Strunk (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1950), pp. 84-85. Hereafter cited as Source Readings.

Here Milton likens the music of praise uttered prior to "disproportion'd sin" to the music of the spheres which could then be heard and which governed mortal action. It is in this passage that the relationship of Boethius' musica mundana and musica humana or the harmony of body and reason is evident. "Disproportion'd sin" breaks the "fair musick" of mortal praise to the Creator, separating the body (man) from the reason (God). Balachandra Rajan points out that the idea of concord was a widely accepted Renaissance belief, and the beauty of ordered creation such as that expressed in this image would be taken for granted by a typical reader.<sup>11</sup>

Gretchen Finney interprets this passage to mean that the "final accomplishment of music is to make the nature of man celestial, to restore man to original purity, to make him one with celestial music."<sup>12</sup> This interpretation seems too mystical to be applied validly to Milton. It is hard to believe that he could believe that man's final end is to be made "one with celestial music," and that such a union is accomplished by music. To say that man will "answer that melodious noise" [italics mine] with "undiscording voice" is one thing, but to interpret these

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<sup>11</sup>Balachandra Rajan, Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 56-57.

<sup>12</sup>Finney, Musical Backgrounds, pp. 36-37.

lines as indicating an obviously mystical union is quite another. Finney's mistake lies in forgetting that harmony depends on the simultaneous sounding of several different tones. "Undiscording voice" does not mean the same voice; in fact, if the voice and the "melodious noise" were to become one, harmony would be lost. In other places in the poetry Milton uses the concept of musically induced ecstasy, but he does not go so far as to advocate a complete oneness with the celestial music.

"Accades" provides another early image in which the music of the spheres is used:

But els in deep of night when drowsines  
 Hath lock't up mortal sense, then listen I  
 To the celestial Sirens harmony,  
 That sit upon the nine enfolded Sphears,  
 And sing to those that hold the vital shears,  
 And turn the Adamantine spindle round,  
 On which the fate of gods and men is wound,  
 Such sweet compulsion doth in music ly,  
 To lull the daughters of Necessity,  
 And keep unsteddy Nature to her law,  
 And the low world in measur'd motion draw  
 After the heavenly tune, which none can hear  
 Of human mould with gross unpurged ear;  
 (ll. 61-73)

Here the classical origins of sphere-music are more evident than in the previous images. In the "Nativity Ode" and "At a Solemn Music" the frame of reference is obviously Christian, especially in "Solemn Music" in which Milton uses a Greek philosophical doctrine to illustrate a Christian concept. This passage, however, is not overtly Christian, although it is easy to make Christian inferences from the

ideas expressed. The power of this music maintains the order of the physical universe, "unsteddy Nature" and the "low world," and can "lull the daughters of Necessity," the Fates. This power is analogous to the harmony between God and man in the prelapsarian state which is embodied in sinless man's ability to perceive the music of the spheres.

A Mask (Comus) uses a classical frame of reference in calling Echo "Daughter of the Sphear" who can "give re-sounding-grace to all Heav'ns Harmonies" (ll. 229-42). This figure is interesting because an echo, although reflected sound, is not itself produced by human or animal and can therefore be compared to the music of the spheres, which is beyond mortal hearing.

In the later poetry there are proportionately fewer references to the music of the spheres, unheard harmony, than to the harmony of heard sounds. Two specific and obvious speculative music images found in Paradise Lost V are tied by content to the images of the earlier poems. In lines 175-79 Milton connects the music of the spheres to the seven celestial bodies (Moon, Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn) of ancient astronomy, which supposedly revolved around the earth:

Moon, that now meetst the orient Sun, now fli'st  
 With the fixt Starrs, fixt in thir Orb that flies,  
 And yee five other wandring Fires that move

In mystic Dance not without Song, resound  
 His praise, who out of Darkness call'd up Light.  
 (ll. 175-79)

In The Praise of Music John Case discusses Pythagorean theory, which he says gives a sphere to each Muse (the seven celestial bodies plus the firmament), these making up eight sounds in due proportion (a full octave) and in time giving rise to an "harmony or concert."<sup>13</sup> Milton's image, with its reference to the number seven and to the "mystic" dance, contains overtones of occultism, which, as Gretchen Finney points out, in England was connected with the mathematics of music.<sup>14</sup> This is not to say that Milton here dips into the occult but that he knew the associative value of the reference, pointing out God's supreme power over the forces of Darkness.

The mystical power of harmony is also used in Paradise Regained when Satan tempts Christ with the power of occult knowledge, the knowledge of the ancients, not the enlightenment of the Christian:

There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power  
 Of harmony in tones and numbers hit  
 By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,  
Æolian charmes and Dorian Lyric Odes,  
 (IV.254-57)

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<sup>13</sup> John Case, The Praise of Music (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, Printer to the University, 1586), pp. 52-53.

<sup>14</sup> Finney, Musical Backgrounds, pp. 36-37.



Since Milton's audience knew something of the workings of witchcraft, he could employ this image of harmony misused as part of Satan's temptation.

The mystical dance of the planets is again connected with the music of the spheres later in Book V of Paradise Lost:

That day, as other solemm dayes, they spent  
 In song and dance about the sacred Hill,  
 Mystical dance, which yonder starrie Spheare  
 Of Planets and of fixt in all her Wheelles  
 Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,  
 Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular  
 Then most, when most irregular they seem,  
 And in thir motions harmonie Divine  
 So smooths her charming tones, that Gods own ear  
 Listens delighted. . . .

(ll. 618-27)

In this passage Milton makes clear the connection between the dance of the angels and the dance of the planets, both ordered and intricate, beyond the understanding of most men. This passage shows the influence of Kepler's ideas in Harmonices Mundi. Not only did Kepler believe that the mathematics of planetary order was analogous to musical harmony, he also went to far as to set up a system of musical notation to describe planetary motion.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted here that Milton works the reference of "thir" in "thir motions" so that the pronoun can refer to both the dancing angels and the wheeling planets,

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<sup>15</sup> Johannes Kepler, Harmonices Mundi, V, trans. Charles Glenn Wallis, in Great Books of the Western World (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), XVI.

indicating the close connection of the music of the spheres with the new astronomy and the heavenly choir.

Although in "Some English Poems in Praise of Music" James Hutton states that "after the Nativity Hymn Milton in his verse never returned unequivocally to the concert between the spheres and the angels,"<sup>16</sup> these images in later poems do present a clear connection between them, showing that Milton did not abandon the concept.

The dance is very much a part of early images which are not so much images of the music of the spheres as images of heard harmony. In "Il Penseroso" Milton speaks of the Muses circling Jove's altar:

And joyn with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,  
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,  
And hears the Muses in a ring,  
Ay round about Joves Altar sing.  
(ll. 45-48)

He echoes the Second Prologue and what he there refers to as a story prevailing "from the very beginning of things" about the muses dancing.<sup>17</sup> Nan Cooke Carpenter believes that singing and dancing is "an idea which receives more and more prominence throughout Milton's work: the idea of a universal music and a universal dance being inseparably a part of universal harmony."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup>James Hutton, "Some English Poems in Praise of Music," English Miscellany, II (1951), 47.

<sup>17</sup>John Milton, The Works of John Milton, VI, 173.

<sup>18</sup>Carpenter, "The Place of Music," pp. 360-61.

In "Il Penseroso's" companion poem, "L'Allegro," there is found an image which, while not specifically mentioning dance in connection with harmony, does, through description of a song, provide the reader with a sense of movement leading to a reference to harmony:

Lap me in soft Lydian Aires,  
 Married to immortal verse  
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce  
 In notes, with many a winding bout  
 Of lincked sweetness long drawn out,  
 With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,  
 The melting voice through mazes running;  
 Untwisting all the chains that ty  
 The hidden soul of harmony.  
 That Orpheus self may heave his head  
 From golden slumber on a bed  
 Of heapt Elysian flowers, and hear  
 Such streins as would have won the ear  
 Of Pluto, to have quite set free  
 His half regain'd Eurydice.  
 (ll. 136-50)

This image, overtly the description of an aria, which will merit further examination later, is highly evocative of motion which will free the "hidden soul of harmony." In the context of celestial harmony and the movement of the spheres, this passage takes on a meaning beyond the vividness of the description. Here again, the frame of reference is classical rather than Christian. The image does not make the connection between man's sinful state and his inability to hear the music of the spheres. Rather, the poet emphasizes the power that harmony produced by this motion could have had over the god of the underworld. The similarity between the description of the music in this

image and the description of the dance of the angels and the planets in Paradise Lost V, lines 616-27, should be noted.

The harmony of heard sounds is quite important in images in Milton's epics, particularly Paradise Lost, which is more "musical" than Paradise Regained, containing more images, both in actual number and in proportion to the length of the poem. The harmony of sound produced by the angelic choirs runs throughout Paradise Lost, appearing as both vocally and instrumentally produced sound and symbolizing the harmony of purpose among the angels and between the angels and God. In Paradise Lost VII, lines 557-68, angelic harmony has the power to suspend the motion of the planets, which after all, are part of the work of the six days of creation:

Up he rose  
 Follow'd with acclamation and the sound  
 Symphonious of ten thousand Harpes that tun'd  
 Angelic harmonies: the Earth, the Aire  
 Resounded, (thou remember'st, for thou heardst)  
 The heav'ns and all the Constellations rung,  
 The Planets in thir station list'ning stood,  
 While the bright Pomp ascended jubilant.  
 Open, ye everlasting Gates, they sung,  
 Open ye Heav'ns, your living dores; let in  
 The great Creator from his work return'd  
 Magnificent, his Six days work, a World.  
 (ll. 557-68)

This passage has been read by Sigmund Spaeth with "angelic harmonies" meaning the general system of celestial music and "sound / Symphonious of ten thousand Harpes" referring

to the concord of harps.<sup>19</sup> There is more connection between these two figures than Spaeth admits, for the harps are productive of the angelic harmony, and are tuned to be so productive. Burden in The Logical Epic contends that the stars sing;<sup>20</sup> however, it seems more logical to read

. . . the Earth, the Aire  
Resounded, (thou remember'st, for thou heardst)  
The Heav'ns and all the Constellations rung,

as an echo of the harmony of the angelic harps resounding in the created universe.

Harmony, motion, and creation are again linked in Paradise Lost VII, lines 205-09:

. . . Heav'n op'nd wide  
Her ever during Gates, Harmonious sound  
On golden Hinges moving, to let forth  
The King of Glorie in his powerful Word  
And Spirit coming to create new Worlds.

This particular image is one possibly having a specific source. E. E. Duncan-Jones, in an article in Notes and Queries, points out the parallel between it and Saint-Amant's Noyse Suave (1653) in which the gates of heaven move on hinges making "un bruit melodieux." Duncan-Jones believes that Saint-Amant is not Milton's source, but that

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<sup>19</sup>Sigmund Spaeth, Milton's Knowledge of Music (1913; rpt. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 64.

<sup>20</sup>Dennis H. Burden, The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of Paradise Lost (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 20.

they had a common source, as yet undiscovered.<sup>21</sup> The importance of the image is not, however, in its "lost" source, but in the idea it conveys that harmony accompanies creative acts and is itself created by motion.

An image which uses similar reference is found in Book III of Paradise Lost:

Then Crown'd again thir gold'n Harps they took,  
Harps ever tun'd, that glittering by thir side  
Like Quivers hung, and with Præamble sweet  
Of charming symphonie they introduce  
Thir Sacred Song, and waken raptures high;  
No voice exempt, no voice but well could joine  
Melodious part, such concord is in Heav'n.  
(ll. 365-71)

Here also is reference to the tuning of the angelic harps and to "symphonie" produced by them. Cassiodorus defines "symphony" as the "fusion of a low sound with a high one or of a high sound with a low one, an adaptation effected either vocally or by blowing or striking." He lists six symphonies and their ratios,<sup>22</sup> only one of which, diapason (ratio 2:1--an octave), as Spaeth points out, is actually named by Milton; Spaeth also contends that Milton is dependent entirely on the classics for his concept of harmony and concord. For Spaeth, Milton's references to harmony are "an adjustment or fitting together of parts,"

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<sup>21</sup>E. E. Duncan-Jones, "Musical Hinges: Milton and Saint-Amant," Notes and Queries, NS 11 (1964), 337.

<sup>22</sup>Cassiodorus, Institutiones, in Source Readings, p. 89.

with "part" denoting a scale or system,<sup>23</sup> holding with the "old" system of musical composition, the horizontal method. This passage with its reference to "symphonie" and "concord," however, implies a more complex frame of reference than Spaeth recognizes. Morley defines concord as "a mixt sound compact of diverse voyces, entering with delight in the ear, and is either perfect or unperfect." Perfect is "that which may stand by itself, and of itself maketh a perfect harmony, without the mixture of any other." Perfect concords are unisons, fifths, and "their eights."<sup>24</sup> It would appear that Milton's reference here and to the harmony of voices or instruments in other places is not entirely classical, but mixed, since the references rely on the associative value of both classical and Renaissance theory.

Likewise, the reference to "full harmonic number" in the following image shows the influence of Renaissance theorists such as Zarlino who held that proper harmony was the "full body of consonance and harmony whose extreme sounds are divided by intermediate sounds":<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Spaeth, p. 63.

<sup>24</sup>Morley, pp. 70-71.

<sup>25</sup>Gioseffo Zarlino, The Art of Counterpoint: Part Three of Le Istitutioni Harmoniche, 1558, trans. Guy A. Marco and Claude V. Palisca (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 68.

. . . , how often from the steep  
 Of echoing Hill or Thicket have we heard  
 Celestial voices to the midnight air,  
 Sole, or responsive each to others note  
 Singing thir great Creator: oft in bands  
 While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk  
 With Heav'nly touch of instrumental sounds  
 In full harmonic number joind, thir songs  
 Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven.  
 (Paradise Lost IV, ll. 680-88)

The phrase "responsive each to others note" seems to imply  
 Zarlino's "proper harmony" rather than the simple sym-  
 phony of diapason of Spaeth's theories.

A less pleasant image involving harmony is found in  
Paradise Lost VI, lines 56-68:

So spake the Sovran voice, and Clouds began  
 To darken all the Hill, and smoak to rowl  
 In duskie wreathes, reluctant flames, the signe  
 Of wrauth awak't: nor with less dread the loud  
 Ethereal Trumpet from on high gan blow:  
 At which command the Powers Militant,  
 That stood for Heav'n, in mighty Quadrate joyn'd  
 Of Union irresistible mov'd on  
 In silence thir bright Legions, to the sound  
 Of instrumental Harmonie that breath'd  
 Heroic Ardor to advent'rous deeds  
 Under thir God-like Leaders, in the Cause  
 Of God and his Messiah. . . .

Here the harmony is not a paeon to God, but symbolizes the  
 purpose of the angelic forces, united against Satan and his  
 band of rebellious angels. Unlike some images discussed  
 previously, in which harmony is created by movement which  
 appears irregular but which is in fact completely orderly,  
 the harmony in this image inspires a movement that is  
 orderly in both appearance and reality.



In Paradise Lost harmony in Heaven is linked with motion and purposeful action, while harmony in Hell is associated with a lack of action:

. . . Others more milde,  
Retreated in a silent valley, sing  
With notes Angelical to many a Harp  
Thir own Heroic deeds and hapless Fall  
By doom of Battel; and complain that Fate  
Free Vertue should enthral to Force or Chance.  
Thir Song was partial, but the harmony  
(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)  
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment  
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet  
(For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense,)  
(II, ll. 546-56)

Here the praise is turned inward, since the fallen angels sing of their own deeds, resulting in a "partial song" rather than the "full harmonic number."<sup>26</sup> John Broadbent comments that "harmony is as dangerous as any ideal, as we saw when Milton admired the devils' concord."<sup>27</sup> Milton does not admire this harmony; he makes that quite clear by the term "partial." Milton's editorial comment--"for Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense"--is quite a strong one concerning the proper use of music, which is to praise God in full harmony expressed with both voice and verse. The fallen angels are overtaken by ecstasy on the basis of a partial song, one lacking both text and full harmony.

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<sup>26</sup>See also Paradise Lost II, ll. 26-27 and 496-505 for less overtly musical references to concord in Hell.

<sup>27</sup>John Broadbent, Some Graver Subject: An Essay on Paradise Lost (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960), p. 160.

The theory and use of dissonance were readily known to Milton and his Renaissance audience. In the Middle Ages Franco of Cologne in Ars cantus mensurabilis discussed perfect discords, two sounds which disagree, and imperfect discords, two sounds which agree to a certain extent but are still discordant.<sup>28</sup> Morley's definition of discord is much the same: "a mixt sound compact of diverse sounds naturallie, offending the ear, and therefore commonlie excluded from musicke."<sup>29</sup> Both Morley and Zarlino recognized the value of dissonances used correctly in composition to emphasize the pleasing quality of consonances and to bring about a cadence.<sup>30</sup> Zarlino also sees the use of dissonance in passing from one consonance to another.<sup>31</sup> In "Music in the Culture of the Renaissance," Edward Lowinsky points out that the use of dissonances was gradually liberalized from a passing note as the "composers' preoccupation with the expression of passionate texts" grew.<sup>32</sup> The discords that Milton uses in his images are harsh, even brutal, and unresolved.

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<sup>28</sup>Franco of Cologne, Ars cantus mensurabilis, in Source Readings, p. 153.

<sup>29</sup>Morley, p. 71.

<sup>30</sup>Morley, p. 73.

<sup>31</sup>Zarlino, p. 53.

<sup>32</sup>Edward Lowinsky, "Music in the Culture of the Renaissance," Journal of the History of Ideas, 15 (1954), 533.

Images of concord or harmony are associated with creation, order, and praise; images of discord or dissonance, similarly, are associated with destruction, disorder, and disruption. In the "Nativity Ode" Milton uses discord/noise images to emphasize the confusion of the pagan deities caused by the Incarnation. Stanza XIX of the hymn and the ones following in particular create an unpleasant musical picture:

The Oracles are dum,  
 No voice or hideous humm  
 Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.  
Apollo from his shrine  
 Can no more divine,  
 With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.  
 No nightly trance, or breathed spell,  
 Inspires the pale-ey'd Priest from the prophetic cell.  
 (ll. 173-80)

In this image the power of the Incarnation has silenced the discordant sounds associated with pagan ritual.

In the invocation to Book VII of Paradise Lost Milton again employs the concept of discord associated with paganism:

But drive farr off the barbarous dissonance  
 Of Bacchus and his revellers, the Race  
 Of that wilde Route that tore the Thracian Bard  
 In Rhodope, where Woods and Rocks had Eares  
 To rapture, till the savage clamor dround  
 Both Harp and Voice . . . .  
 (ll. 32-38)

The adjectives employed here are telling: "barbarous dissonance" and "savage clamor."

In Book II, during Satan's journey through Chaos, one finds what is perhaps the ultimate discord/disorder image:

. . . Rumor next and Chance,  
 And Tumult and Confusion all imbroild,  
 And Discord with a thousand various mouths.  
 (11. 965-67)

Since there is no order, even enforced order, in Chaos, there can be no harmony, even partial. Instead of angelic choirs singing and harping in perfect harmony of praise or the planets creating harmony by their ordered movements, there are the "thousand various mouths" of Discord, personified here along with other names for disorder.

There is discord in Heaven, of course, when Satan and his band rebel. The account of the War in Heaven is characterized by contrasts in music images, such as in the following passage:

. . . whereat Michael bid sound  
 Th' Arch-Angel trumpet; through the vast of heaven  
 It sounded, and the faithful Armies rung  
Hosanna to the Highest: nor stood at gaze  
 The adverse Legions, nor less hideous joyn'd  
 The horrid shock: now storming furie rose,  
 And clamour such as heard in Heav'n till now  
 Was never, Arms on Armour clashing bray'd  
 Horrible discord, and the madding Wheelles  
 Of brazen Chariots rag'd; dire was the noise  
 Of conflict; over head the dismal hiss  
 Of firey Darts in flaming volies flew,  
 And flying vaulted either Host with fire.  
 (Paradise Lost VI, 11. 202-14)

The trumpet call of Michael produces an answering Hosanna of praise to God, an image of harmonious, if not peaceful

purpose. It is followed immediately by "clamour," "Horrible discord," and "dire" noise. Movement here is of "madding Wheelles" and flaming arrows that hiss, a distinctly unmusical sound symbolizing the confusion of battle.

The hiss appears again in Book X when Satan returns to Hell to report the success of his temptation of Eve. His praise is not the "universal shout and high applause" (l. 505) but a "dismal universal hiss" (l. 508). This is the final punishment of the fallen angels for the double crime of rebelling against God in Heaven and tempting His created beings. There appears to be no precedent for Milton's use of the hiss as a musical figure, but it is included in this discussion because it symbolizes the final loss of angelic glory on the part of Satan and his followers. Now they do not produce even partial song but only a completely atonal sibilant.

Returning from dissonance to images of harmony once more, one should note the images of harmony connected with the humans in the Garden. In Book VIII Adam employs an analogy of harmony when he asks God for a companion of his own kind:

Let not my words offend thee, Heav'nly Power,  
My Maker, be propitious while I speak.  
Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,  
And these inferiour farr beneath me set?  
Among unequals what societie

Can sort, what harmonie or true delight?  
Which must be mutual, in proportion due  
Giv'n and receiv'd . . . .

(ll. 379-86)

William Grace in Ideas in Milton notes that man is a micro-cosm reflecting universal harmony and that the secret of virtue is a knowledge of proper proportions.<sup>33</sup> This image shows Adam in harmony with God as His "substitute" in the Garden and as a reasoning being a "little lower than the angels," essentially alone and therefore in need of a being like himself in order for there to be harmony in the Garden. The harmony that Adam desires and that he finds with Eve, as expressed in Paradise Lost VIII, lines 605-06, "Harmonie to behold in wedded pair / More grateful then harmonious sound to the eare," is symbolic of Boethius' musica humana, the harmony of body and reason.<sup>34</sup>

A perversion of the idea of harmony among equals appears in Book X of Paradise Lost when Satan is greeted on his return from earth by his daughter, Sin:

For I no sooner in my Heart divin'd,  
My Heart, whith by a secret harmonie  
Still moves with thine, join'd in connexion sweet,  
That thou on Earth hadst prosper'd . . . .

(ll. 357-60)

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<sup>33</sup>Grace, p. 62.

<sup>34</sup>To readers familiar with Milton's marital problems this image has a particular poignancy, echoing ideas found in the divorce tracts.

The harmony between Satan and his daughter is perverted, since theirs is an incestuous relationship, not the natural relationship of Adam and Eve.

Milton uses images of harmony, both the unheard music of the spheres and the harmony of heard sounds, to represent order and right relationships between God and the heavenly host, among the angels themselves, between God and man, and among humans. Partial harmony symbolizes the situation of the fallen angels who have cut themselves off from God. The completion of their separation from God is represented by complete loss of harmony and the ability to produce musical tones. Images of discord appear in connection with beings who do not have the right relationship with God--the pagan deities and the fallen angels--and with Chaos, in which discord represents the total lack of order, an order that is found in the harmony images of heavenly descriptions.

As is evident from the images used for illustration of harmony, Milton often combines references to speculative music, particularly those of heard harmony, with references to practical music. This combination adds to the depth of the images, allowing the reader to perceive the theory behind the practice. Although consideration of the music imagery in Milton's poetry has been separated into two divisions for the purposes of this study, it is

well to remember that the types do not occur in isolation in the poetry itself.



## CHAPTER IV

### PRACTICAL MUSIC IMAGERY

Images of practical music, Morley's "all that may be known in songs," will be the focus of this chapter. Milton uses practical music images for the purposes of illustrating both good and evil as he also uses images of speculative music. Practical music encompasses a wider range of images than does speculative music, for it includes images of all kinds of music that can be perceived by the human ear. Practical music images fall into three basic divisions: natural, the songs of birds and inanimate sounds such as those produced by water and wind; vocal, both angelic and human; and instrumental. Types of musical compositions and the modes form subdivisions in both vocal and instrumental music.

Because of the greater number of music images appearing in the poetry, it appears that Milton found a wider range of possibilities for heard sounds than he did for theories of sound. The actual number of practical images does not make them more important than speculative images, however, for each type serves its purpose, and often speculative and practical images are combined within longer images or used to complement or contrast with each

other. Generally, there are proportionately more images of practical music in the later poetry. This can be accounted for by Milton's more realistic and less idealistic and theoretical view of the human situation in the later poems.

In this chapter, as in the preceding one, the general pattern of organization will be to trace each division of images, natural, vocal, and instrumental, through the poems in roughly chronological fashion, pointing out both changes and consistencies in the use of the imagery.

Natural images appear early in Milton's career in "Il Penseroso":

Hide me from Day's garish eie,  
While the Bee with Honied thie,  
That at her flowry work doth sing,  
And the Waters murmuring  
With such consort as they keep,  
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep;  
And let som strange mysterious dream  
Wave at his Wings in Airy stream,  
Of lively portrature display'd,  
Softly on my eye-lids laid.  
And as I wake, sweet musick breath  
Avoce, about or underneath,  
Sent by som spirit to mortals good,  
Or th'unseen Genius of the Wood,  
(ll. 141-54)

In this image he combines the hum of the bee with murmuring waters to produce an image suggestive of tranquility. The quiet sounds are monotonous and somnifacient, the natural equivalent of the ethereal music of the spirit the poet hears at his moment of waking. This juxtaposition

of bee's hum and the sound of a brook appears again in

Paradise Regained:

There flowrie hill Hymettus with the sound  
Of Bees industrious murmur oft invites  
To studious musing; there Ilissus rouls  
His whispering stream . . .

(IV, ll. 247-50)

Here again the image is suggestive of tranquility and the pleasures of the reflective intellect.

The sound of the fly in "Lycidas," lines 27-28--  
" . . . and both together heard / What time the Gray-fly  
winds her sultry horn"--is not so overtly suggestive of  
the pleasures of the intellect, but the adjective "sultry"  
does suggest tranquility and the soporific quality of mid-  
day heat as the poet leads the reader through the sheperds'  
day.

Milton changes the quality of insect sounds from  
pleasant to disturbing in Paradise Lost when the fallen  
angels gather at Pandæmonium for their council:

Thick swarm'd, both on the ground and in the air,  
Brusht with the hiss of rustling wings. As Bees  
In springtime, when the Sun with Taurus rides,  
Pour forth thir populous youth about the Hive  
In clusters . . .

(I, ll. 767-71)

In this image the sound is a hiss, an unmelodic sibilant,  
similar to the sound discussed in Chapter III in connection  
with images of dissonance, as opposed to the hum or murmur,  
a melodic sound.

Water is associated with inspiration in Paradise Lost III, lines 26-32:

Yet not the more  
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt  
Cleer Spring, or shadie Grove, or Sunnie Hill,  
Smit with the love of sacred Song; but chief  
Thee Sion and the flowrie Brooks beneath  
That wash thy hallowd feet, and warbling flow,  
Nightly I visit . . .

Although the poet draws his song from the Muses, here residing at springs, he draws even more inspiration from the waters of Sion. This image can be used to illustrate the importance of biblical associations with Milton's imagery. References to water in the Bible are legion. It is an agent of deliverance in Exodus, of salvation in the New Testament, and (as flowing, fresh streams) of inspiration throughout, most especially in the Psalms, the most famous example being the Twenty-third Psalm. Perhaps more pertinent to this image is Psalm XLIV:4; "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

Murmuring waters lead to a more complex image of bird song and the sound of wind-blown leaves and then to the concept of supernatural sound, of which natural music is a manifestation, in Paradise Lost IV, lines 260-68:

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<sup>1</sup>All biblical quotations are taken from the King James version of the Bible.

. . . mean while murmuring waters fall  
 Down the slope hills, disperst, or in a Lake,  
 That to the fringed Bank with Myrtle crown'd,  
 Her chrystal mirror holds, unite thir streams,  
 The Birds thir quire apply; aires, vernal aires,  
 Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune  
 The trembling leaves, while Universal Pan  
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance  
 Led on th'Eternal Spring.

This image is analogous to the idea of heard harmony being the manifestation of the unheard music of the spheres.

Bird song as image is of great importance throughout Milton's poetry. It serves as a device for heralding the day in "L'Allegro":

To hear the Lark begin his flight,  
 And singing startle the dull night,  
 From his watch-towre in the skies,  
 Till the dappled dawn doth rise;  
 (ll. 41-44)

While the Cock with lively din,  
 Scatters the rear of darknes thin.  
 (ll. 49-50)

in Paradise Lost:

. . . which th'only sound  
 Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,  
 Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill Matin Song  
 Of Birds on every bough . . .  
 (V, ll. 5-8)

and in Paradise Regained:

Thus wore out night, and now the Herald Lark  
 Left his ground-nest, high towring to descry  
 The morns approach, and greet her with his Song. . . .  
 (II, ll. 279-81)

In "L'Allegro" one finds a wild bird, the lark, connected with the domestic cock, both of which are well known morning birds. The lark provides the association with

nature in its pure state while the cock maintains the bucolic frame of reference which is at the heart of the poem. In Paradise Lost Adam is wakened by the "shrill Matin Song" of a number of unnamed birds. The lark, identified again by name, reappears in Paradise Regained as a herald of the morning.

The most important bird in Milton's poetry is the nightingale. Nan Cooke Carpenter notes the frequent references, commenting that the nightingale "always brings associations of chaste, romantic love, whether youthful passion . . . or married bliss."<sup>2</sup> This is true except for "Il Penseroso," where such a reading is necessarily allegorical, signifying the poet's passion for contemplation which he finds during the night when the nightingale sings:

The Cherub Contemplation,  
 And the mute Silence hist along,  
 'Less Philomel will deign a Song,  
 In her sweetest, saddest plight,  
 Smoothing the rugged brow of night,  
 While Cynthia checks her Dragon yoke,  
 Gently o're th'accustom'd Oke;  
 Sweet Bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,  
 Most musical, most Melancholy!  
 Thee Chauntress oft the Woods among,  
 I woo to hear thy Even-Song.  
 (11. 54-64)

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<sup>2</sup>Nan Cooke Carpenter, "The Place of Music in 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,'" University of Toronto Quarterly, 22 (1952-53), 362-63.

In A Mask the nightingale appears first in a song addressed to Echo:

Sweet Echo, sweetest Nymph that liv'st unseen  
 Within thy airy shell  
 By slow Meander's margent green,  
 And in the Violet imbroider'd vale  
 Where the love-lorn Nightingale  
 Nightly to thee her sad Song mourneth well,  
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle Pair  
 That liketh thy Narcissus are?  
 O if thou have  
 Hid them in som flowry Cave,  
 Tell me but where  
 Sweet Queen of Parly, Daughter of the Sphear,  
 So maist thou be translated to the skies,  
 And give resounding grace to all Heav'ns harmonies.  
 (ll. 229-42)

The poet here emphasizes both the beautiful song of the nightingale and the function of an echo by calling upon the concept of doubled beauty: the original song and the exact repetition produced by inanimate means. The image reinforces and is reinforced by the allusion to Narcissus. Milton's early idealized concept of romantic love is nowhere plainer than in this image. In Paradise Lost the nightingale appears in connection with Adam and Eve, chaste, idealized lovers, but the nightingale/Echo/Narcissus figure is not repeated. Milton no longer images one lover being strictly a reflection of the other; rather, they are complementary. Even though Adam and Eve are idealized to a certain extent, they cannot be idealized to the extent of the image presented in the mask.

Later in A Mask the Attendant Spirit likens the Lady to a nightingale:

I was all ear,  
 And took in strains that night create a soul  
 Under the ribs of Death, but O ere long  
 Too well I did perceive it was the voice  
 Of my most honour'd Lady, your dear sister,  
 Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear,  
 And O poor hapless Nightingale thought I  
 How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!  
 (ll. 559-66)

The connection of the Lady and the nightingale foreshadows the connection of the bird with Adam and Eve, particularly with Eve, also the "poor hapless Nightingale" so "near the deadly snare." Continuing the comparison, one can see Milton's changed view of human nature: the Lady is not caught in the snare; the far more human Eve is.

"Sonnet I" deals with the nightingale as a symbol of love. Milton here uses a well-known medieval tradition that the nightingale was a good sign for the lover, the "shallow Cuckoo," the "rude Bird of Hate," a bad sign. This sonnet falls into the Renaissance love-poetry tradition, more so than any other of Milton's poems. Here, more clearly than anywhere else, the poet plays the love-lorn lover pleading for the early song of the nightingale, which will assure him of the success which has so far eluded him.

O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy Spray  
 Warbl'st at eeve, when all the Woods are still,  
 Thou with fresh hope the Lovers heart dost fill,  
 While the jolly hours lead on propitious May,



Thy liquid notes that close the eye of Day,  
 First heard before the shallow Cuckoo's bill  
 Portend success in love; O if Jove's will  
 Have linkt that amorous power to thy soft lay,  
 Now timely sing, ere the rude Bird of Hate  
 Foretell my hopeles doom in som Grove ny:  
 As thou from year to year hast sung too late  
 For my relief; yet hadst no reason why,  
 Whether the Muse, or Love call thee his mate,  
 Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

Milton links love and poetry through the bird, the mate of the Muse. The nightingale reappears in the function in the invocation of Book III of Paradise Lost:

Then feed on thoughts, that voluntaire move  
 Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful Bird  
 Sings darkling, and in shadiest Covert hid  
 Tunes her nocturnal Note.

(ll. 37-40)

The special connection of the nightingale with silence is emphasized in Paradise Lost IV, lines 600-04:

Silence accompanied, for Beast and Bird,  
 They to thir grassie Couch, these to thir Nests  
 Were slunk, all but the wakeful Nightingale;  
 She all night long her amorous descant sung;  
 Silence was pleas'd . . .

and Paradise Lost V, lines 38-41:

Why sleepest thou Eve? now is the pleasant time,  
 The cool, the silent, save where silence yields  
 To the night-warbling Bird, that now awake  
 Tunes sweetest his love-labor'd song . . . .<sup>3</sup>

The connection between the nightingale and silence here and in "Il Penseroso" comes from the Procne-Philomela

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<sup>3</sup>It is interesting that here Milton uses the masculine pronoun for the nightingale, when elsewhere he uses the conventional feminine.

legend of Greek mythology, in which the mute sister, Philomela, is transformed into a swallow, while the sister with speech, Procne, is transformed into the nightingale, to sing forever her mourning song for the son she killed. According to Edith Hamilton, the Romans reversed the roles, and the English continued to use the name Philomela for the nightingale.<sup>4</sup>

The various images quoted here establish the nightingale as a symbol of contemplation, as well as of love, while the lark and the cock symbolize action.

Perhaps the most inclusive bird-song image is found in Paradise Lost VII, lines 433-46:

From Branch to Branch the smaller Birds with song  
 Solac'd the Woods, and spread thir painted wings  
 Till Ev'n, nor then the solemn Nightingale  
 Ceas'd warbling, but all night tun'd her soft layes:  
 Others on Silver Lakes and Rivers Bath'd  
 Thir downie Brest; the Swan with Arched neck  
 Between her white wings mantling proudly, Rowes  
 Her state with Oarie feet: yet oft they quit  
 The Dank, and rising on stiff Pennons, towre  
 The mid Aereal Skie: Others on ground  
 Walk'd firm; the crested Cock whose clarion sounds  
 The silent hours, and th'other whose gay Traine  
 Adorns him, colour'd with the Florid hue  
 Of Rainbows and Starrie Eyes.

Here Milton provides the reader with what amounts to a summation of the importance of birds. The "smaller birds" (presumably including the lark) represent day, while the

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<sup>4</sup>Edith Hamilton, Mythology (1940; rpt. New York: Mentor Books--New American Library, 1952), pp. 270-71.

nightingale symbolizes the night. The smaller birds are seen as well as heard, but the nightingale is only heard, and this quality of seemingly disembodied sound aids the use of the bird as a symbol of contemplation. The cock also appears in its function as herald of the morning. Milton completes the image with the inclusion of two more birds having symbolic significance in his era, the swan and the peacock. They contrast with the function of the song birds, however, for the swan is by legend mute until the moment of its death, and the peacock's vocal qualities do not match its beautiful plumage. Including them in the image serves to strengthen the significance of the song birds for Renaissance readers aware of the general significance of the mute birds.

Milton uses natural music images generally in connection with action and contemplation, as well as conventionally with love. Although Renaissance poetry is not usually considered "nature poetry" as much Romantic poetry is, nevertheless, imagery of nature is obviously important for Milton as evidenced by the natural music images just discussed. Both in number and importance, however, natural music images are eclipsed by vocal and instrumental images, images of man-made music. Milton makes good use of the wider range of possibilities open to him with vocal and instrumental music.

The voice was held in high regard by both classic and patristic sources because it is the first and natural instrument of man. Also, since it is capable of producing words as well as tone, it was particularly highly regarded, for words are for the Christian the highest vehicle of praise.

Since vocal images can be categorized in many ways and since most images fall into more than one category, there will be no attempt to place them in rigid classifications such as solo, choral, angelic, human, aria, hymn, psalm, et cetera. Rather, the function of the image will determine the category.

Images of angelic vocal music are used to praise God and to extol His grace as well as His majesty. Images of human vocal music in the prelapsarian state have the same function. As is to be expected, images of vocal music connected with the fallen angels are perversions of the proper function of music. Images of vocal music in man's postlapsarian state are also often perversions, with notable exceptions in some of the early poems when Milton's subject is not consideration of man's current sinful state.

Milton's first use of vocal imagery is connected with the Incarnation, in the "Nativity Ode" most importantly, and also in "Upon the Circumcision" and "The

Passion." "Upon the Circumcision" presents rather conventional imagery of angel song heard by sheperds, and "The Passion" joins the poet's voice, his "muse," with the angelic choirs.

Ye flaming Powers, and winged Warriours bright,  
That erst with Musick, and triumphant song  
First heard by happy watchful Sheperds ear,  
So sweetly sung your Joy the Clouds along  
Through the soft silence of the list'ning night;  
(*"Upon the Circumcision,"* ll. 1-5)

Ere-while Musick, and Ethereal mirth,  
Wherewith the stage of Ayr and Earth did ring,  
And joyous news of heav'nly Infants birth,  
My muse with Angels did divide to sing.  
(*"The Passion,"* ll. 1-4)

It is in the "Nativity Ode" that Milton makes best use of the angelic voices. In early lines these voices are joined by human song, "Have thou the honour first, thy Lord to greet, / And joyn thy voice unto the Angel Quire" (ll. 26-27), inspired by the "heav'nly Muse" as a gift for the Holy Infant:

Say Heav'nly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein  
Afford a Present to the Infant God?  
Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemm strein,  
To welcome him to this his new abode.  
(ll. 15-18)

As the poem continues, the angelic song is expanded into one of surpassing beauty, transporting the souls of the sheperds:

When such musick sweet  
Their hearts and ears did greet,  
As never was by mortal finger strook,  
Divinely-warbl'd voice

Answering the stringed noise,  
 As all their souls in blissfull rapture took:  
 The Air such pleasure loth to lose,  
 With thousand echo's still prolongs each heav'nly close.  
 (ll. 93-100)

As pointed out earlier, much of the objection to music in the church was to the use of instruments. As Gretchen Finney points out, reformers contended that instrumental music was popish and was not commanded by the gospels, employing the notion that that which is not expressly commanded is forbidden.<sup>5</sup> Such is not the case with this image, however, for the use of stringed instruments is here obviously good. It is not a case of singers needing accompaniment to keep in tune, a practice advocated by Mace in Musicks Monument,<sup>6</sup> but a pleasant association of perfectly tuned voice and perfectly tuned instrument working together for greater beauty than either alone could produce. Milton has precedent for the use of instruments in sacred settings. Philo in De Somniis says that heaven as the archetype of instruments was tuned to accompany hymns sung in honor of God.<sup>7</sup> Prophetic

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<sup>5</sup>Gretchen Finney, Musical Backgrounds for English Literature, 1580-1660 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1962), p. 61.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas Mace, Musicks Monument (Cambridge, 1676; facsimile rpt. Paris: Editions du Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, 1958), pp. 5-7.

<sup>7</sup>James Hutton, "Some English Poems in Praise of Music," English Miscellany, II (1951), 14.

experiences were often accompanied by instrumental music.<sup>8</sup> In Milton's own day, Case interpreted Justin Martyr's dictum against instruments in the church as not being against instruments per se, but against instruments fit for children.<sup>9</sup> The fact that the Elizabethan anthem and service and sacred music of the seventeenth century require instrumental accompaniments, while pre-Reformation music did not,<sup>10</sup> indicates that Milton had in mind contemporary music when composing these images.

The real importance of the image from the "Nativity Ode" lies not in the fact that the song is accompanied, but in its connection with ecstasy, expressed in the comment "As all their souls in blissfull rapture took." The Puritans, who prided themselves on a rational theology, had reservations about just such religious music as found in this image, accompanied song, which, following the medieval concept that music has the power to induce ecstasy, they feared. Proper music for them subordinated tune to text. Nonetheless, this image bears no disapproving comment such as found in regard to the fallen

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<sup>8</sup>See II Kings 3:15 and I Samuel 10:5.

<sup>9</sup>John Case, The Praise of Music (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, Printer to the University, 1586), pp. 118-19.

<sup>10</sup>Peter LeHuray, Music and the Reformation in England: 1549-1660 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 217.

angels' "partial song": "Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense." Musical ecstasy was not regarded by all as entirely bad. St. John Chrysostom, for instance, said that "Nothing so raises the soul and gives it wings and frees it from the bonds of flesh and makes it philosophize . . . as music and the rhythm of divine song."<sup>11</sup> Case interprets Herophilus' and Aristoxenus' idea of the soul as "musical motion, caused by the nature and figure of the whole body" to mean that music had power to ravish since it was identical to the soul.<sup>12</sup>

In the image from the "Nativity Ode" musical ecstasy is used properly, to praise God, while in the image from Paradise Lost it is perverted by beings praising their own deeds. This difference in purpose calls to mind Milton's comment in Areopagitica: "a wise man, like a good refiner, can gather gold out of the drossiest volume, and . . . a fool will be a fool with the best book."<sup>13</sup>

The image from the "Nativity Ode" is a particularly lush one, appropriate to the rapture produced in the hearers. Milton uses the term "warbl'd," which indicates

<sup>11</sup>St. John Chrysostom, Exposit in Ps 41, as quoted in Hutton, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup>Case, p. 41.

<sup>13</sup>John Milton, Areopagitica, The Works of John Milton, ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1938), IV, 314.



a complex musical line of runs and trills and the idea of multiple echos extending the sound despite the "close" or cadence ending it. Perhaps the very lushness of the image can be explained as a youthful flight of fancy. Certainly music references connected with the Nativity in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained are far more restrained, even spare:

His place of birth a solemn Angel tells  
 To simple Shepherds, keeping watch by night;  
 They gladly thither haste, and by a Quire  
 Of squadrond Angels hear his Carol sung.  
 (Paradise Lost XII, ll. 364-67)

At thy Nativity a glorious Quire  
 Of Angels in the fields of Bethlehem sung  
 To Shepherds watching at their folds by night,  
 And told them the Messiah now was born,  
 Where they might see him, and to thee they came,  
 (Paradise Regained I, ll. 242-46)

"Sweet" and "divinely-warbl'd" are replaced by adjectives such as "solemn" and "glorious." The shepherds are not induced to "blissfull rapture" but inspired to haste to the stable, a very reasonable action.

The total image ending with "Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense" (Paradise Lost II, ll. 546-56), which has already been discussed with regard to harmony, is important as a vocal image also. It presents the fallen angels, their luster dimmed, still retaining their angelic form and engaging in the angelic activity of singing. Here, in contrast to the angelic songs in

heaven, they praise "Thir own Heroic deeds" rather than the glory of their creator.

The songs of heaven present quite another picture. Milton uses specific types of sacred music to provide his readers with a frame of reference. There are various references to hymns, by which Milton may mean not only the verse hymns that are familiar today but also the metrical psalms, which were still the dominant form of congregational music in his day, although hymns were in use, having been sanctioned for the service during Elizabeth's reign.<sup>14</sup> In some cases the references also call to mind the non-metrical psalms set to Anglican chant.

Among the instances of hymning in Paradise Lost is Raphael's description of the activities of the angels in Book V:

Th'Angelic throng  
Disperst in Bands and Files thir Camp extend  
By living Streams among the Trees of Life,  
Pavillions numberless, and sudden reard,  
Celestial Tabernacles, where they slept  
Fannd with coole Winds, save those who in thir course  
Melodious Hymns about the sovran Throne  
Alternate all night long . . . . .  
(ll. 650-57)

The term "alternate" can refer to the antiphonal performance of the psalms, such as mentioned by Case in

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<sup>14</sup>Willi Apel, "Hymns, English," Harvard Dictionary of Music (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1944), p. 217.

The Praise of Music.<sup>15</sup> Such antiphonal singing was an established practice, employed more freely by the Anglicans than the Puritans.

The hymn as an appropriate vehicle for praise of God's greatness is found in Paradise Lost III, lines 144-49:

O Father, gracious was that word which clos'd  
Thy sovran sentence, that Man should find grace;  
For which both Heav'n and Earth shall high extoll  
Thy praises, with th'innumerable sound  
Of Hymns and sacred Songs, wherewith thy Throne  
Encompass'd shall resound thee ever blest.

The importance of this image lies in the idea of "innumerable sound" which encompasses the throne. Again, as in the "Nativity Ode," Milton presents an image in which the sound does not end. Instead of echoes prolonging the sound through repetition, as in the Ode, the songs of praise are infinite in number.

Hymning is again employed as a vehicle for praise in Paradise Lost VII, when the angels praise God after the first day of creation, accompanying themselves on their harps:

Thus was the first Day Eev'n and Morn:  
Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung  
By the Celestial Quires, when Orient Light

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<sup>15</sup>Case, pp. 109-10. LeHuray (p. 217) comments that the metrical psalms and devotional songs of Sternhold's Certayne Psalms (1549) and Tye's Acts of the Apostles (1553) needed only alternatim performance to create simple verse anthems.

Exhaling first from Darkness they beheld;  
 Birth-day of Heav'n and Earth; with joy and shout  
 The hollow Universal Orb they fill'd,  
 And touch'd thir Golden Harps, and hymning prais'd  
 God and his works, Creatour him they sung,  
 Both when first Eevning was, and when first Morn.  
 (ll. 252-60)

In Paradise Regained the heavenly response to God's declaration that His incarnate son would overcome Satan involves hymns:

So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven  
 Admiring stood a space, then into Hymns  
 Burst forth, and in Celestial measures mov'd,  
 Circling the Throne and Singing, while the hand  
 Sung with the voice, and this the argument.  
 (I, ll. 168-72)

These hymns are obviously accompanied, and the angels move while singing. Not only does this motion remind one that motion is associated with the music of the spheres, but also it calls to mind religious processions, which have biblical precedent, and which were a part of festal services in the English as well as the Latin church.

Several other images have as a frame of reference sections of the Anglican service. Puritan though Milton was, he was aware of the symbolic value of the service to his readers, both Puritan and Anglican.

In "Il Penseroso" Milton makes specific reference to the Anglican service:

There let the pealing Organ blow,  
 To the full voic'd Quire below,  
 In Service high, and Anthems cleer,  
 As may with sweetness, through mine ear,

Dissolve me into extasies,  
 And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.  
 (ll. 161-66)

"Service high" is clearly a reference to the "Great Service," the richer, more elaborate form of the communion, for which such greats of English music as Tye, Tallis, Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, and others created settings. Here Milton creates an image of the service with organ, choir, and anthem, rather than Puritan congregational psalm singing. Here again is a specific reference to musically induced ecstasy, an ecstasy enabling the poet to transcend earthly matters and experience heaven. Milton could count on the readers of this early poem being familiar with the rich, complex musical style of the service itself and with the style of the anthem, which at the date of "Il Penseroso" was most popularly a contrapuntal verse anthem for choir and solo voices. Such richness would be especially apparent in a collegiate church of the earlier Stuart period where superbly trained musicians performed. The music here joins with the setting of the "studious Cloysters pale" (ll. 155-60) to form an image representative of the contemplative life.

Although rigid Puritans would not have approved of this sort of church music, it had its defenders, such as

Peacham, who defended it by reference to Hebrews' music and to the church fathers.<sup>16</sup>

Milton uses images which appear to be based on specific sections of the Anglican service in several places. In Book III of Paradise Lost he employs an image which calls to mind the "Gloria" and the "Sanctus":

No sooner had th'Almighty ceas't, but all  
 The multitude of Angels with a shout  
 Loud as from numbers without number, sweet  
 As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heav'n rung  
 With Jubilee, and loud Hosanna's filld  
 Th'eternal Regions: lowly reverent  
 Towards either Throne they bow, and to the ground  
 With solemn adoration down they cast  
 Thir Crown inwove with Amarant and Gold,  
 (ll. 344-53)

Then Crown'd again thir gold'n Harps they took,  
 Harps ever tun'd, that glittering by thir side  
 Like Quivers hung, and with Præamble sweet  
 Of charming symphonie they introduce  
 Thir sacred Song, and waken raptures high;  
 No voice exempt, no voice but well could joine  
 Melodious part, such concord is in Heav'n.  
 (ll. 365-71)

One term is of particular importance here: "symphonie." As discussed earlier, in connection with harmony, Cassiodorus defined "symphony" as the "fusion of a high with a low sound." However, in the early seventeenth century the term (sometimes "sinfonia") was used to designate

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<sup>16</sup>Henry Peacham, The Compleate Gentleman, ed. Virgil B. Heltzel (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press for Folger Shakespeare Library, 1962), pp. 109-10.

introductory instrumental pieces.<sup>17</sup> Since Milton uses the term in context with "Harps ever tun'd," designating pitches, the "Præamble sweet," indicating an introductory passage, he here plays upon the two meanings of "symphonie," classical and contemporary.

Once again he introduces, in a favorable context, the idea of ecstasy, "raptures high." The comment in the last two lines, "No voice exempt, no voice but well could joine / Melodious part, such concord is in Heav'n," reminds the reader of Morley's famous story about the value placed on the ability to sing parts, and the less famous discussions of other writers concerning the training of singers. Milton may be playing on the patriotism of his readers, who, as Englishmen, prided themselves in their ability to sing well. This ability was not new with the Renaissance, but was a national heritage. In the twelfth century Giraldus Cambrensis said:

The Britons do not sing in unison, like the inhabitants of other countries, but in many different parts. So that, when a company of singers among the common people meets to sing as is usual in this country, as many different parts are heard as there are performers, who all at length unite in consonance, with organic sweetness.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Apel, "Sinfonia," in Harvard Dictionary, p. 681.

<sup>18</sup>Giraldus Cambrensis, Descriptio Cambriae, in The Book of Musical Documents, ed. Paul Nettl (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), p. 27.

It is possible that Milton meant to draw a comparison between his countrymen and the angels. It is equally possible that the comment in Paradise Lost is his reaction to some bad singing which had offended his sensitive ears.

Patrides has commented on the appropriateness of this particular passage, specifically lines 344-49, saying, "Milton could hardly have chosen a more eloquent method of affirming the essential goodness of the created order in continuing loyalty to the order of the universe."<sup>19</sup> The glory of the song uttered by the angels and its unanimous nature are indicative of the loyalty of the angelic host to their creator.

There are other images which also have reference to the Anglican service. Paradise Lost VII, lines 182-88, obviously refers to the first part of the "Gloria," which declares the glory of God and proclaims peace to men:

Glorie they sung to the most High, good will  
To future men, and in thir dwellings peace:  
Glorie to him whose just avenging ire  
Had driven out th'ungodly from his sight  
And th'habitations of the just; to him  
Glorie and praise, whose wisdom had ordain'd  
Good out of evil to create . . . .

Paradise Lost VI, lines 882-88, refers to the second part of the "Gloria," which praises the son of God:

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<sup>19</sup>C. A. Patrides, Milton and the Christian Tradition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 44.



To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood  
 Eye witnesses of his Almighty Acts,  
 With Jubilee advanc'd; and as they went,  
 Shaded with branching Palme, each order bright,  
 Sung Triumph, and him sung Victorious King,  
 Son, Heir, and Lord, to him Dominion giv'n,  
 Worthiest to Reign . . . .

Another important musical image incorporates the "Halleluiah," used by Milton in its Hebrew form rather than the Latinized "alleulia," thus emphasizing the biblical origins of the term, which means "praise ye the Lord." The Halleluiah has been an important part of the Judeo-Christian religious music from the very beginning. In the early Baroque period, which overlaps Milton's later years, it came into use as the text for extended final sections of works in fugal style,<sup>20</sup> and it is safe to assume that he had early examples of this use in mind when he closes the song of praise following the sixth day of Creation with an Halleluiah:

So sung they, and the Empyrean rung,  
 With Halleluiahs: Thus was Sabbath kept.  
(Paradise Lost VII, ll. 633-34)

Halleluiah was also used as an opening for anthems. This is the case in Paradise Lost X, lines 641-48:

He ended, and the heav'nly Audience loud  
 Sung Halleluia, as the sound of Seas,  
 Through Multitude that sung: Just are thy ways,  
 Righteous are thy Decrees on all thy Works;  
 Who can extenuate thee? Next, to the Son,  
 Destin'd restorer of Mankind, by whom

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<sup>20</sup>Apel, "Halleluiah," in Harvard Dictionary, p. 316.

New Heav'n and Earth shall to the Ages rise,  
Or down from Heav'n descend. Such was thir song.

The lines beginning "Just are thy ways" are the text for the anthem praising God and Christ for their mercy. This theme was a popular one for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century anthems, and Milton probably could have counted on his readers making the association between his text and some anthem on the same theme with which they were familiar.

As a form of praise Halleluiahs are a part of the homage rightly paid to God by his angels. Even His Son joins the angels to sing "Unfained Halleluiahs" to the Father:

Then shall thy Saints unvixt, and from th'impure  
Farr separate, circling thy holy Mount  
Unfained Halleluiahs to thee sing,  
Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.  
(Paradise Lost VI, ll. 742-45)

However, Satan, whose reason is distorted, does not wish to praise God. He regards the homage paid to God as subjection and the Halleluiahs as "forc't."

. . . and to his Godhead sing  
Forc't Halleluiah's; while he Lordly sits  
Our envied Sovran. . . .  
(Paradise Lost II, ll. 242-44)

Satan has tried to be equal with his creator, and having failed, sneers at the angels who freely praise

God in song.<sup>21</sup> Satan has destroyed his right relationship with God through disobedience and is no longer able to perceive his duty.

In Paradise Regained, Milton uses the figure of angelic choirs singing anthems to celebrate Christ's victory over Satan's temptations:

. . . Angelic Quires  
Sung Heavenly Anthems of his victory  
Over temptation, and the Tempter proud.  
(IV, ll. 593-95)

Here as in other instances, the anthem is used for praising God and Christ.

In "Lycidas" the angelic choirs sing not an anthem but the "unexpressive nuptial Song, / In the blest Kingdoms meek of joy and love" (ll. 176-77). "Unexpressive" does not indicate that the song is without words and meaning but that it is too beautiful to be described with words. The term also appears in the "Nativity Ode":

And sworded Seraphim,  
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displaid,  
Harping in loud and solemn quire,  
With unexpressive notes to Heavn's new-born Heir.  
(ll. 113-16)

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<sup>21</sup>Malcolm Ross, Milton's Royalism: A Study of the Conflict of Symbol and Idea in the Poems (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1943) also tends to distort God, calling him "despotic . . . the sick man's dream of strength, the poetic sublimation of anger, frustration, and vengeance" (p. 100). Like Satan, Ross forgets that in the scheme of Paradise Lost God is the supreme entity, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent.

Music is a vehicle of praise for use by mortals as well as immortals. Case comments that the proper use of music is not "to obtaine remission of sinnes and life eternal" as Jews, heathen, and hypocritical monks and friars use it but "that the Lord might decently be praised."<sup>22</sup> That is just how Adam and Eve before the fall use song. In Book V they praise God with voices "more tuneable then needed Lute or Harp" (l. 151). Although angels use accompaniment, prelapsarian man does not, indicating that instruments were the property of immortals and were not to be used by man in his state of first obedience, man being a little lower than the angels. In Paradise Lost V, lines 144-52, Milton places emphasis on the words uttered by Adam and Eve, describing the words as "prompt eloquence." Their song is not repetition from one day to the next but appears in "various style":

Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began  
 Thir Orisons, each Morning duly paid  
 In various style, for neither various style  
 Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise  
 Thir Maker, in fit strains pronounc't or sung  
 Unveditated, such prompt eloquence  
 Flowd from thir lips, in Prose or numerous Verse,  
 More tuneable then needed Lute or Harp  
 To add more sweetness, and they thus began.

A question arises concerning the ethics of Milton's use of man-made accompanied music. If man, in his

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<sup>22</sup>Case, pp. 133-34.

prelapsarian state, had no need to accompany his song, how could Milton make specific and favorable references to sections of the service that were accompanied? His images of vocal music are quite concrete, unlike those of speculative music, referring to the unheard, purely philosophical music of the spheres, and he must have a frame of reference for his readers. Therefore he uses images based on what he feels is the best imitation created by flawed man. He reminds his readers through images such as the one just discussed that his images of angelic song are only what one can imagine starting from the best of the type that are actually perceived.

Mortal vocal music is, however, not always used for religious purposes. In A Mask the Attendant Spirit reveals the power of song to induce ecstasy of a non-religious type. His song raises the shepherd boy to ecstasy, an ecstasy produced by the music upon a mind made receptive by love:

He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing,  
Which when I did, he on the tender grass  
Would sit, and hearken even to extasie. . . .  
(ll. 622-24)

Milton had a wealth of literature on love from which to draw his ideas. As Gretchen Finney points out, love, and not only romantic love, had been closely associated

with music from ancient times.<sup>23</sup> The shepherd's ecstasy at the Attendant Spirit's song is a sign of his love for the ideal. The Spirit's song has been defined earlier by the Elder Brother when he says that his

. . . artful strains have oft delaid  
The hudling brook to hear his madrigal,  
And sweetn'd every muskrose of the dale.  
(ll. 493-95)

The song can charm both shepherd boy and nature. Milton here uses "madrigal" to invoke thoughts of a polyphonic form which was fast losing ground in popularity to the homophonic ayre. The more complex style of the madrigal would lend itself to the inducement of ecstasy.

In "Sonnet XX" Milton speaks of a rainy day spent in the homely comforts of a simple meal and song. Pleasure arises from "the Lute well toucht, or artful voice / Warble immortal Notes and Tuskan Ayre" (ll. 11-12). The term "Tuskan Ayre" presents something of a puzzle, since the ayre is a peculiarly English form, a strophic song in homophonic style. The close association of the lute with the English ayre strengthens the probability that Milton is referring to that form and not using "ayre" in reference to an Italian form of song or as a generic term. It is possible that he intended the Italian adjective as aid in maintaining the pastoral frame of reference.

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<sup>23</sup>Finney, Musical Backgrounds, pp. 76-77.

Milton does use "aire" as a generic term in "L'Allegro," in one of his most famous music images, when he gives a full description of "Lydian aires":

Lap me in soft Lydian Aires,  
 Married to immortal verse  
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce  
 In notes, with many a winding bout  
 Of lincked sweetness long drawn out,  
 With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,  
 The melting voice through mazes running;  
 Untwisting all the chains that ty  
 The hidden soul of harmony.  
 That Orpheus self may heave his head  
 From golden slumber on a bed  
 Of heapt Elysian flowres, and hear  
 Such streins as would have won the ear  
 Of Pluto, to have quite set free  
 His half regain'd Eurydice.  
 (ll. 136-50)

This image, which closes "L'Allegro," matches the church music image closing "Il Penseroso." Most noticeable here is the lushness and detailed account of the form. It is this detail which leads one to believe that Milton is describing an Italian aria rather than an English ayre. The notes "of lincked sweetness long drawn out" and "melting voice through mazes running" are descriptive of long and complicated runs which are not characteristic of the ayre. Carpenter cites as internal evidence that "Lydian Aires" refers to an Italian coloratura aria and to the complexity of the music described and as external evidence Milton's acquaintance with Italian musicians

and the Italian soprano to whom he wrote several sonnets.<sup>24</sup> It is entirely possible that Milton had in mind a specific work when he composed this image. A number of early Italian operas were based on the Orpheus-Eurydice myth, most notably Monteverdi's Orfeo (1607). Milton may have attended a performance of one of them during his Italian travels. How much Milton could depend on his English audience knowing about Italian opera is questionable, but he could rely on their knowing about the Orpheus-Eurydice myth and making the proper connections between description of the song and the legend.

There have been several analyses of "Lydian." Gretchen Finney believes that Milton follows Cassiodorus' idea that the Lydian mode has the power to dissipate care, disagreeing with H. F. Fletcher who believes that Milton follows Butler (Principles of Musick) in regarding Lydian as sharpening wit and leading to desire of heavenly joy.<sup>25</sup> In The Poets and Music, Naylor says that the Lydian mode is languorous and sentimental.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Carpenter, "The Place of Music," pp. 355-56. See also the first chapter of this study.

<sup>25</sup>Gretchen Finney, "Music and Mirth," in Reason and Imagination: Studies in the History of Ideas, ed. J. A. Mazzeo (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 150-52.

<sup>26</sup>Edward Naylor, The Poets and Music (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1928), pp. 59-60.



Case describes the "modus Lydius" as "amorous and delightful."<sup>27</sup> In view of the general theme of "L'Allegro," and of the closing couplet immediately following this image, it would appear that Finney is correct and that Milton follows Cassiodorus directly.

The description of the song and the meaning of "Lydian" are not the only important aspects of this image. The phrase "Married to immortal verse" has a double meaning; first, it refers to the myth itself, and second, and more important for the Renaissance, it describes the appropriateness of music and text to each other. Milton is here probably playing also on the double meaning of "Aire," which in seventeenth-century treatises (Morley, Mace, Butler) was used to mean "key" or "mode" as well as a type of song.<sup>28</sup>

Another example of Milton's employment of double meaning occurs in the closing music image of "Lycidas," a poem whose musical structure will be discussed later.

Thus sang the uncouth Swain to th'Oakes and rills,  
 While the still morn went out with Sandals gray,  
 He touch'd the tender stops of various Quills,  
 With eager thought warbling his Dorick lay.  
 (ll. 186-89)

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<sup>27</sup>Case, p. 55.

<sup>28</sup>Apel, "Ayre," in Harvard Dictionary, p. 64.

"Dorick lay" has reference both to the Dorian mode, which, according to Case is grave and staid, suitable for chaste and temperate subjects,<sup>29</sup> and to the fact that Theocritus used the Doric dialect.<sup>30</sup> Both meanings add to the reader's appreciation of the elegy. Here Milton uses "lay" as a generic term for song and not in its proper sense, as a medieval French love song.

As shown above, Milton generally uses vocal music, both choral and solo, and both angelic and human, even, in the cases of the early poems, human vocal music produced by man in his postlapsarian state, to symbolize good. The proper use of music, especially vocal music, which has text as well as tune, is the praise of God. Music praising God is most prominent in the epics, but figures prominently in early poems like the "Nativity Ode" as well. It is also a symbol of good in the "secular" poems such as "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso."

In the later poetry Milton uses music created by mortals in a less than favorable context at times. In Book IV of Paradise Lost Milton contrasts the love of Adam and Eve in Eden with love after the fall, through a music image:

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<sup>29</sup>Case, p. 55.

<sup>30</sup>Sigmund Spaeth, Milton's Knowledge of Music (1913; rpt. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 67.

Here Love his golden shafts imploies, here lights  
 His constant Lamp, and waves his purple wings,  
 Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile  
 Of Harlots, loveless, joyless, unindeard,  
 Casual fruition, nor in Court Amours  
 Mixt Dance, or wanton Mask, or Midnight Bal,  
 Or Serenate, which the starv'd Lover sings  
 To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.  
 (ll. 763-71)

He uses the convention of the "starv'd Lover" singing to the object of his affections and receiving only disdain in return. Many Renaissance songs and poems have unrequited love as their theme, but the love of Adam and Eve is genuine, natural in contrast to the "Mixt dance, or wanton Mask, or Midnight Bal" (all events involving music), which are false and unnatural.

Vocal music in the postlapsarian world which Michael shows to Adam has been turned inward to become a means of self-praise rather than being used properly in praise of God. In Book XI Michael presents a "Beavie of fair Women" who sing "Soft amorous Ditties" to the accompaniment of harps and who lure men "though grave":

. . . they on the Plain  
 Long had not walkt, when from the Tents behold  
 A Beavie of fair Women, richly gay  
 In Gems and wanton dress; to the Harp they sung  
 Soft amorous Ditties, and in dance came on:  
 The Men though grave, ey'd them, and let thir eyes  
 Rove without rein . . . .

(ll. 580-86)

Adam, still in a state of relative innocence, is favorably impressed by the scene of "Songs, Garlands, Flours, / And

Charming Symphonies" (ll. 594-95) and is duly reproved by Michael who reminds him that these women are "Bred onely and completed to the taste / Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance" (ll. 618-19). Like the fallen angels, they have forgotten their purpose and have perverted music.

Music used for the wrong purpose also appears in Samson Agonistes in pagan ritual (as it did in Paradise Lost I, ll. 432-49) when the revelers, "Drunk with Idolatry," are heard "Chaunting thir Idol" (ll. 1670-72).

It is perhaps in Paradise Regained that Milton makes his definitive statement about the right and wrong uses of music:

Or if I would delight my private hours  
 With Music or with Poem, where so soon  
 As in our native Language can I find  
 That solace? All our Law and Story strew'd  
 With Hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscrib'd,  
 Our Hebrew Songs and Harps in Babylon,  
 That pleas'd so well our Victors ear, declare  
 That rather Greece from us these Arts deriv'd,  
 Ill imitate, while they loudest sing  
 The vices of thir Deities, and thir own  
 In Fable, Hymn, or Song, so personating  
 Thir Gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.  
 Remove their swelling Epithetes thick laid  
 As varnish on a Harlots cheek, the rest,  
 Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,  
 Will far be found unworthy to compare  
 With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,  
 Where God is prais'd aright . . . .

(IV, pp. 331-49)

In this passage Milton relies on his audience's knowledge of the Judeo-Christian musical tradition. He parallels the hymns, psalms, and "Hebrew Songs" from biblical sources

which praise God with pagan music which imitates Judeo-Christian, but which in praising the "vices of thir Deities, and thir own" makes the gods appear "ridiculous" and the singers "past shame." Again, Milton makes evident the difference between music used properly and music perverted from its proper use. The difference here is much the same as the difference between music used by the angels to praise God and music used by the fallen angels to praise their own deeds.

Vocal music imagery is used by Milton to illustrate both good and evil, in heavenly and earthly contexts. The third basic type of music imagery, instrumental, is used in the same manner. Instrumental imagery is the most artificial of the types because it has reference to sounds created by artificial means and to the "machinery" that creates the sounds. Milton wrote at an important time in the history of instrumental music, for in the Renaissance instrumental music came into its own with the development of forms for instruments only.<sup>31</sup> Spaeth is incorrect in asserting that Milton says little of instrumental music. He also errs in saying that there were few forms of purely instrumental music in Milton's day

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<sup>31</sup>Edward Lowinsky, "Music in the Culture of the Renaissance," Journal of the History of Ideas, 15 (1954), 552.

and that when instrumental music was not used to accompany the voice it was usually dance music.<sup>32</sup> It is certainly true that instrumental music evolved from dance music, but by Milton's day much instrumental music was in "pure" form and not intended as accompaniment for dance or song. As Ernst Meyer says, "England occupied a unique position in the development of free instrumental music, in that she evolved at an early date . . . a much more independent instrumental style than the other schools and countries. Emancipation from vocal music had already progressed comparatively far by 1570."<sup>33</sup>

Spaeth does acknowledge that Milton used different instruments for different situations to produce certain effects, for the poet knew the quality and effects of the various sounds.<sup>34</sup> He says that for Milton instruments are "organisms inspired with life of a universal reality."<sup>35</sup> In these contentions Spaeth is certainly correct. Milton follows the concepts of decorum in fitting instruments to situations. Within the convention of decorum, moreover, he is able to use his images to fullest advantage.

<sup>32</sup> Spaeth, pp. 43-44.

<sup>33</sup> Ernst H. Meyer, "Concerted Instrumental Music," New Oxford History of Music: The Age of Humanism, ed. Gerald Abraham (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), IV, 561.

<sup>34</sup> Spaeth, p. 38.

<sup>35</sup> Spaeth, p. 55.

Conventionally, the woodwind instruments are associated with pastoral scenes and poetry. In A Mask the Attendant Spirit completes his disguise as Thyrsis with a pipe of Pan:

. . . But first I must put off  
 These my skie robes spun out of Iris Wooff,  
 And take the Weeds and likenes of a Swain,  
 That to the service of this house belongs,  
 Who with his soft Pipe, and smooth dittied Song  
 Well knows to still the wilde winds when they roar,  
 And hush the waving Woods . . .  
 (ll. 82-88)

The pipe family produced gentle, sad tones, which traditionally had the power to tame the passions and produce calm.<sup>36</sup>

The image is changed at the entrance of the Lady when she compares the revels of Comus' troop to the pagan activities inspired by reeds:

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,  
 My best guide now, me thought it was the sound  
 Of Riot, and ill manag'd Merriment,  
 Such as the jocund Flute, or gamesom Pipe  
 Stirs up among the loose unletter'd Hinds,  
 When for their teeming Flocks, and granges full  
 In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,  
 And thank the gods amiss. . .  
 (ll. 169-76)

Here Milton uses the association of pipes and flutes with the god Pan and the woodland revels connected with his followers to illustrate his point.

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<sup>36</sup>Spaeth, p. 39.

At this point distinction should be made between "flute" and "pipe." "Pipe" refers to the pan-pipes, hollow reeds of different lengths, bound in a raft-like form, and played by blowing across their open ends. "Flute" is a recorder, not the modern transverse flute whose ancestor was a military instrument like a fife, used for marching music, not concert playing. Milton sometimes uses the terms interchangeably, while at other times he is very obviously referring to one specific type. The distinction is clear in the context.

When the brothers search for the Lady in the deep woods, they regard the familiar sound of shepherds' pipes as a comforting sound, one which would give them solace in this strange place and calm their fears:

. . . might we but hear  
 The folded flocks pen'd in their watted cotes,  
 Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,  
 Or whistle from the Lodge, or Village Cock  
 Count the night watches to his feathery Dames,  
 'Twould be som solace yet, som little chearing  
 In this close dungeon of innumeros bowes.  
 (ll. 342-48)

The most striking examples of Milton's use of the pipes occur in "Lycidas." This use is only natural since the poem is a pastoral elegy, sung by a shepherd, who would also play the pipes. When he describes the joys that he and Lycidas experienced together, he turns to a music image for illustration:



Mean while the Rural ditties were not mute,  
 Temper'd to th'Oaten Flute,  
 Rough Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with clov'n heel,  
 From the glad sound would not be absent long,  
 And old Damætas lov'd to hear our song.

(ll. 32-36)

The "Oaten Flute," a pan-pipe, played by these shepherds, inspired merriment among Satyrs and Fauns, who, especially the Satyrs, were noted for their uncouth manners.<sup>37</sup> The traditional connection between the god Pan and the half-man woodland creatures would not have been lost on Milton's audience who could appreciate the power of the "Oaten Flute" to inspire innocent merriment.

In lines 85-88 Milton makes reference first to the Greek spring of the Muses and then to a Roman stream associated with Vergil, whose poem was of a "higher mood." But he returns to the pastoral by referring to his "Oat," the shepherd's pipe:

O Fountain Arethuse, and thou honour'd floud,  
 Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds,  
 That strain I heard was of a higher mood:  
 But now my Oat proceeds. . . .

In the section inveighing against the corruption of the clergy, Milton again employs the shepherd's pipe, but this time the pipes are harsh, poorly made as they are, and symbolize the low state to which the shepherds

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<sup>37</sup>Footnotes in many texts point out that these lines refer to Cambridge undergraduates and identify "Old Damætas" as probably a fellow of Christ College.

have sunk, as much as the fact that they hardly know how to hold a sheep hook does:

And when they list, their lean and flashy songs  
Grate on their scrannel Pipes of wretched straw.  
(ll. 123-24)

The onomatopoeia of "scrannel" has much to do with the effectiveness of the image, as much as the meaning of the word, which, incidentally, Milton here gives its first recorded use in literature.<sup>38</sup>

In Paradise Lost I, Milton makes reference to the transverse military flute and to recorders in an image that has inspired a good deal of source hunting:<sup>39</sup>

. . . Anon they move  
In perfect Phalanx to the Dorian mood  
Of Flutes and soft Recorders; such as rais'd  
To hight of noblest temper Hero's old  
Arming to Battel, and instead of rage  
Deliberate valour breath'd, firm and unmov'd  
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat,  
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage

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<sup>38</sup>"Scrannel," OED (1933).

<sup>39</sup>Fred Jones, "Paradise Lost I, 549-62," Modern Language Notes, 49 (1934), 44-45, argues for Plutarch's "Life of Lycurgus"; Paul Turner, "The Dorian Mood (A Note on Paradise Lost I, 549-61)," Notes and Queries, NS 4 (1957), 10-11, also sees Plutarch as the source, noting that "plananx" appears in both works; he also believes that Milton relies on his readers' knowledge of Plutarch, who says that God is on the side of the marchers, to see the irony in the passage that seems to glorify the fallen angels; John M. Patrick, "More on the Dorian Mood in Paradise Lost," Notes and Queries, NS 4 (1957), 196-97, believes that the source is the Res Gestae of Ammianus Marcellinus, in the victory of Julian the Apostate at Ctesiphon (AD 363) and the irony of Julian's army crossing the Parthian desert, a "terrestrial Hell," a few weeks later.

With solemn touches, troubl'd thoughts, and chase  
 Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain  
 From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they  
 Breathing united force with fixed thought  
 Mov'd on in silence to soft Pipes that charm'd  
 Thir painful steps o're the burnt soyle . . . .  
 (ll. 549-62)

The significance of the image does not depend on association with an exact source; rather it comes from the well known traditional properties of the Dorian mode, gravity and solemnity, and the concept that the sound of the flute could inspire calmness, determination, and what Spaeth refers to as "nobility of mind."<sup>40</sup> Hutton points out that traditionally the Spartans marched to the flute,<sup>41</sup> a practice probably known to Milton's audience more than specific sources would have been.

The power of the pipe to calm is shown in its logical extreme when Milton contrasts the wakeful Cherubim with Argus in Paradise Lost XI, lines 128-33:

. . . four faces each  
 Had, like a double Janus, all thir shape  
 Spangl'd with eyes more numerous than those  
 Of Argus, and more wakeful than to drouze,  
 Charm'd with Arcadian Pipe, the Pastoral Reed  
 Of Hermes, or his opiate Rod . . . .

Hermes' pipe had power over Argus, putting all hundred eyes of the giant to sleep. The image here emphasizes the watchful alertness of the cherubim and their superiority over the pagan Argus.

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<sup>40</sup>Spaeth, p. 39.

<sup>41</sup>Hutton, pp. 9-10.

In Paradise Regained I, lines 465-92, Milton uses reference to the pleasing qualities of the sound of pipes in a marvelously deceptive speech by Satan. Satan contrasts the rigors of following the ways of truth with the ease of speaking of it:

Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,  
Smooth on the tongue discourst, pleasing to th'ear,  
And tuneable as Silvan Pipe or Song.  
(ll. 478-80)

There is some dramatic irony present here, for the tuning of a set of pan-pipes is set by the length of each pipe and cannot be adjusted by the player. Satan implies that truth is changeable, tuneable, and easily spoken of, when in reality truth does not change. The reader knows of the unchanging nature of truth, but Satan does not.

The pleasing sound of pipes appears again in Paradise Regained II, lines 362-67, in an image discussed previously in connection with harmony. Here Milton employs the adjective "charming" to signify the seductive quality of the sound.

Not only reed instruments, but also stringed instruments figure prominently in Milton's poetry, as they do in much other Renaissance verse. Their popularity as instruments for performance is well documented by the sizeable amount of extant music written for strings, whether bowed like the viol, plucked by hand like the

lyre, or plucked mechanically like the virginals. A Renaissance reader could be depended on to know not only the quality of sound of the instruments but also the traditions and lore behind them. John Case comments that a "Harpe is to be preferred before the whistling pipe or pshalms, because it leaves a rουμε for the voice, whereas the other possessing the whole wind and breath of man dispossesse him of that service."<sup>42</sup> Not only did wind instruments prevent their players from singing, but they were also more difficult to tune than strings. Castiglione notes that "all instruments with frets are full of harmony, because the tunes of them are very perfect and with ease a man may do many things upon them that fill the mind with the sweetness of music."<sup>43</sup>

In the Renaissance view man was often associated with a stringed instrument. Case emphasizes the sympathetic properties of both man and instrument, for if one string is struck, "the rest of that tone also gives a certaine kind of sound," and if anything please or hurt one part of the body, the rest feels it.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Case, p. 12.

<sup>43</sup>Baldassare Castiglione, The Booke of the Courtier, trans. Thomas Hoby (1561; rpt. New York: The National Alumni, 1907), pp. 107-08.

<sup>44</sup>Case, p. 120. For a poetic consideration of man as a stringed instrument, see Thomas Campion, "When to her Lute Corrinna Sings."

In the early poetry Milton makes conventional use of strings. In "L'Allegro" he uses the rebeck, a medieval member of the violin family, the country cousin of the viol:

Some times with secure delight  
The up-land Hamlets will invite,  
When the merry Bells ring round,  
And the jocond rebecks sound  
To many a youth, and many a maid,  
Dancing in the Chequer'd shade.  
(ll. 92-96)

The rebeck is more primitive than the viol, having fewer strings (three instead of six) and therefore less versatility. Consequently, by Milton's day the viol had become a concert instrument with much serious music written for it, and the rebeck had been relegated to the countryside as accompaniment for country dances. It is certainly a fit instrument for Milton to use in "L'Allegro," which praises rustic pleasures. Spaeth says that Milton was not fond of "such primitive popular music."<sup>45</sup> He probably did have some fondness for it--this is a most pleasant image--but his fondness was much overshadowed by his love of more serious music, as his delight in the rustic pleasures of "L'Allegro" is eclipsed by his desire for the contemplative pleasures of "Il Penseroso."<sup>46</sup>

<sup>45</sup>Spaeth, p. 42.

<sup>46</sup>Also included in this image is a reference to bells. Naylor, in Poets and Music, speculates that Milton knew the secret of the "bell-ringers mystery,"

In "Il Penseroso" the reference to a stringed instrument is in a classical rather than a rustic context:

Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing  
Such notes as warbled to the string,  
Drew Iron tears down Pluto's cheek,  
And made Hell grant what Love did seek.  
(ll. 105-08)

The image recalls the ancient myth and the power of love and music. It is an image reflecting knowledge and intellect, contrasting with "L'Allegro's" image of youthful gaiety, not mindless, but certainly not intellectual.

In "Lycidas" the lyre is used to emphasize the connection of the poem with classical poetry:

Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well,  
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,  
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.  
(ll. 15-17)

This image relies not only on classical associations, but also on the reader's knowledge of the quality of sound produced by certain playing techniques. When the poet calls for the Muses to "somewhat loudly sweep the string," he calls to mind a rough, discordant sound, produced by

ringing bells from highest tone to lowest over and over again. The ringers stand in a circle and pull their ropes going around the circle (pp. 60-61). Ringing bells in an order is peculiarly English and is known as "change ringing" (Apel, Harvard Dictionary, p. 129). Milton may also be referring to the fact that "ringing" requires the bells be swung in full circle as opposed to "chiming" when the bell is swung just enough for the clapper to strike it lightly (Apel, "Bells," Harvard Dictionary, pp. 83-84). The greater sound produced by ringing would be suited to an invitation and would also fit the "ring round" idea in the poem.

drawing the plectrum across the strings, a very different sound from the soft, distinct tones of individually plucked strings. Such a sound is in keeping with the image of the harshness of untimely death begun with the image of shattered leaves in line 5. Later in the poem Milton uses the more conventional image of the plucked strings: "He touch'd the tender stops of various Quills" (l. 188). This quiet and melodic sound is symbolic of the shepherd's acceptance of his grief.

In Paradise Lost Milton again connects the lyre with the Orpheus legend in the invocation to Book III:

With other notes then to th'Orphean Lyre  
 I sung of Chaos and Eternal Night,  
 Taught by the heav'nly Muse to venture down  
 The dark descent, and up to reascend,  
 Though hard and rare . . . . .  
 (ll. 17-21)

As a Christian poet his inspiration is not the same as that of Orpheus, but is the "heav'nly Muse."

The lute, the most popular of Renaissance stringed instruments, figures prominently in several images. Hollander points out that the lute/lyre figure was a symbol for music and poetry<sup>47</sup> and that it became a conventionalized love instrument, which was transformed to

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<sup>47</sup>John Hollander, The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry: 1500-1700 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1970), p. 47.



the love of God in metaphysical devotional poetry.<sup>48</sup>

Spaeth believes that Milton uses the lute conventionally, as the contemporary equivalent of the ancient lyre, less the "instrument of polite society" than the "descendant and true copy of the primitive combination of thongs and tortoise shell to which immortal strains were sung."<sup>49</sup>

In Sonnet XX Milton has reference both to the contemporary popularity of the lute and to its ancestry:

What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,  
 Of Attick tast, with Wine, whence we may rise  
 To hear the Lute well toucht or artfull voice  
 Warble immortal Notes and Tuskan Ayre?  
 (ll. 9-12)

The setting of the sonnet is contemporary and the lute popular accompaniment for contemporary songs. But when Milton uses "immortal Notes" the reader recalls the songs of the classical poets, sung to the sounds of the lyre. The lute was also used as a solo instrument, and the "Lute well toucht" brings to mind solo performances such as those which inspired Mace to write: "No LANGUAGE is of greater Force to me, / Than is the Language of Lute's Mysterie."<sup>50</sup>

In "The Passion" Milton combines the lute with another popular instrument in Renaissance England, the viol:

<sup>48</sup>Hollander, pp. 130-34.

<sup>49</sup>Spaeth, pp. 31-32.

<sup>50</sup>Mace, p. 38.

These latest scenes confine my roving vers.  
 To this Horizon is my Phœbus bound,  
 His Godlike acts; and his temptations fierce,  
 And former sufferings other where are found;  
 Loud o're the rest Cremona's Trump doth sound,  
     Me softer airs befit, and softer strings  
 Of Lute, or Viol still, more apt for mournful things.  
   (11. 22-28)

In these lines Milton compares his poetry to that of Vida (1480-1566), author of the Christiad (1535), who was born in Cremona. Milton's verse is like the lute or viol, soft, or as Castiglione says, "the music of a set of viols doth no less delight a man, for it is very sweet and artificial."<sup>51</sup> Vida's verse was "Loud o're the rest" like the violin, "Cremona's Trump." Milton here takes advantage of the fact that Vida came from Cremona and that Cremona was the center of violin making, even as early as the date of "The Passion," although the great Stradivari and Guarneri were not yet working. At this time, English ears were not accustomed to the violin's brilliant tone, which might seem "loud" and harsh compared to the tone of the viol, which Meyer describes as "tender, slightly thin and somewhat nasal."<sup>52</sup> The viol was at its peak of popularity, while the violin did not become popular until about 1660.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Castiglione, p. 108.

<sup>52</sup>Meyer, p. 584.

<sup>53</sup>Apel, "Viol," in Harvard Dictionary, pp. 794-95.

The most important stringed instrument in Milton's poetry is the harp. The harp is the Judeo-Christian equivalent of the Greek lyre, and as such is used in connection with angelic song, most frequently in Paradise Lost. It also appears in the amusements of the fallen angels, and on earth after the fall. Milton has specific biblical reference for the use of harps with psalms of praise, perhaps nowhere more vividly than in Psalm XC.

The harp differs from the lyre in that it is strung in a plane vertical to the sound board while lyres and other stringed instruments have their strings parallel to the sounding board. It is doubtful that Milton makes this technical distinction when using one instrument or the other; he is more interested in the associations of the instruments with different cultures.

In the "Nativity Ode" Milton tells of the "Divinely-warbl'd voice / Answering the stringed noise" (ll. 97-98), not naming the instrument, but relying on the reader to make the harp-angelic choir association.

In "The Passion" the poet uses the harp as his accompanying instrument as befits one telling of a Christian event, "For now to sorrow must I tune my song, / And set my Harp to notes of saddest wo" (ll. 8-9), as opposed to the use of the lyre in "Lycidas," which, although a Christian poem, is set in a classical framework.

Paradise Lost has numerous references to harps. The angelic choirs accompany their praises with harp music. In Book III the harps are, as in other places, described as being golden:

Then Crown'd again thir gold'n Harps they took  
 Harps ever tun'd, that glittering by thir side  
 Like Quivers hung, and with Præamble sweet  
 Of charming symphonie they introduce  
 Thir Sacred Song and waken raptures high.  
 (ll. 365-70)

Unlike ordinary harps, these are "ever tun'd" and, like angelic songs, are representative of the harmony existing in Heaven. Another interesting aspect of this image is the comparison of the harps to quivers, prompting one to think of the angels as armed with song, having exchanged their arrows from the war in Heaven for music.

Later in Book III, the harp is personified in the angels' declaration that "never shall my Harp thy praise / Forget, nor from thy Fathers praise disjoine" (ll. 414-15). All of heaven joins to praise God, the inanimate instruments reacting sympathetically to their players' emotions.

The first day of Creation is celebrated in song accompanied by golden harps:

. . . with joy and shout  
 The hollow Universal Orb they fill'd,  
 And touch't thir Golden Harps, and hymning prais'd  
 God and his works, Creatour him they sung,  
 Both when first Eevning was, and when first Morn.  
 (Paradise Lost III, ll. 256-60)

The songs begin at evening after God's work is finished and continue through the night until the next morning. The sixth day begins with "eevning Harps and Mattin" (VII, l. 450), showing the continuity of music through the night to the office of Matins, sung before sunrise; and the completion of Creation is celebrated with

. . . the sound  
Symphonious of ten thousand Harpes that tun'd  
Angelic harmonies . . . .  
(VII, ll. 558-60)

Milton employs the harp in other settings as well as in Heaven. The fallen angels accompany their partial song with harps as they had accompanied full song in Heaven. In the postlapsarian state men used stringed instruments. In Book XI Jubal, called in Genesis 4:21 "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ," restores the "shadow of music to men."<sup>54</sup>

. . . others, whence the sound  
Of Instruments that made melodious chime  
Was heard, of Harp and Organ; and who moovd  
Thir stops and chords was seen . . . .  
(ll. 558-61)

These lines, combining harp and organ, contain the only mention of the harp used by itself and not in connection with voices. Men, in their sinful state, are not using the instrument correctly, although playing with skill. A few lines farther on men again misuse the harp, this

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<sup>54</sup>Hutton, p. 59.

time as an accompanying instrument for "Soft amorous Ditties" (ll. 583-87) used by women to lure men from the worship of God. In these two images Milton shows how man has strayed from his duty as he shows in the "partial song" and hissing images how Satan and his followers have strayed from theirs.

In Paradise Regained Milton makes clear the association of harps with the Judeo-Christian tradition:

All our Law and Story strew'd  
With Hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscrib'd,  
Our Hebrew Songs and Harps in Babylon,  
That pleas'd so well our Victors ear, declare  
That rather Greece from us these Arts deriv'd,  
(IV, ll. 334-38)

This image recalls the prophecies of the Babylonian captivity, particularly those of Daniel, whose interpretations of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams led to his advancement.

Milton's use of a number of stringed instruments in images indicates the importance that they had as symbols for him. He had more different types of instruments to choose from within the string family than in any other type of instrument, and he uses all to full advantage. The lute, viol, and rebeck have contemporary significance, the lyre symbolizes the classical background of much of his work, and the harp is associated with the biblical origins of his poetry.

Turning from stringed instruments to other types, one can see that the trumpet as well as the harp has biblical associations. References to the trumpet in the Bible are numerous, where it is used, as it is in Milton's poetry, primarily as a herald. The trumpet was held in high regard in Renaissance England, primarily because of its heraldic functions.

In the "Nativity Ode" Milton relies on the trumpet's function as a herald of battle to give meaning to the image of the trumpet's silence as an image of peace:

The idle Spear and Shield were high up hung,  
The hooked Chariot stood  
Unstain'd with hostile blood,  
The Trumpet spake not to the armed throng.  
(ll. 55-58)

Later the trumpet is the herald of the Day of Judgment:

Yet first to those ychain'd in sleep  
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep.  
(ll. 155-56)

The verb "thunder" is indicative of the volume and penetrating tone quality produced by a trumpet, sufficient to rouse the dead.

Milton had precedent for the use of the trumpet in a war-like context. Probably the best known biblical use of the trumpet is in the battle of Jericho (Joshua 6). Boethius asked, "Is it not evident that the spirit of

warriors is roused by the sound of the trumpets?"<sup>55</sup> The first mention of trumpets in Paradise Lost has the flavor of battle.

[Satan] Then strait commands that at the warlike sound  
Of Trumpets loud and Clarions be upheard  
His mighty Standard; that proud honour honour claim'd  
Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:

. . . . . all the while  
Sonorous mettal blowing Martial sounds:  
At which the universal Host upsent  
A shout that tore Hells Concave, and beyond  
Frighted the Reign of Chaos and old Night.  
(I, ll. 531-43)

Satan counts on the sound of the trumpet to rouse his legions from their despondency by awakening memories of their past glory. This image precedes by a few lines the famous flutes in the "Dorian mood," and together the images serve to symbolize Satan's determination to continue his rebellion against God from Hell.

This determination is carried on through the building of Pandæmonium and reinforced when Satan proclaims the council at his capital, using the trumpet as signal:

Mean while the winged Haralds by command  
Of Sovran power, with awful Ceremony  
And Trumpets sound throughout the Host proclaim  
A solemn Council forthwith to be held  
At Pandæmonium, the high Capital  
Of Satan and his Peers . . . . .  
(I, ll. 752-57)

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<sup>55</sup>Boethius, from De Institutione Musica, in Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity through the Romantic Era, ed. William Oliver Strunk (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1950), p. 83.



In Book II Satan strengthens his position as leader of the fallen angels with his plan to seek out Eden and wreak vengeance on God by corrupting His created beings. Satan is acclaimed leader at the close of the council by the sound of the trumpet:

Then of thir Session ended they bid cry  
 With Trumpets regal sound the great result:  
 Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim  
 Put to thir mouths the sounding Alchymie  
 By Haralds voice explain'd: the hollow Abyss  
 Heard farr and wide, and all the host of Hell  
 With deafning shout, return'd them loud acclaim.  
 (ll. 514-20)

Milton shows the falseness of the acclamation by the use of the term "sounding Alchymie," which indicates that the sound of the trumpet transforms their base purpose into a high-minded one, as alchemy proposes to transform base metal into gold.

In Heaven, as in Hell, the first mention of trumpets is involved with matters military at the beginning of the war in Heaven:

So spake the Sovran voice, and Clouds began  
 To darken all the Hill, and smoak to rowl  
 In duskie wreathes, reluctant flames, the signe  
 Of wrauth awak't: nor with less dread the loud  
 Ethereal Trumpet from on high gan blow:  
 At which command the Powers Militant,  
 That stood for Heav'n, in mighty Quadrate joyn'd  
 Of Union irresistible, mov'd on  
 In silence thir bright Legions, to the sound  
 Of instrumental Harmonie that breath'd  
 Heroic Ardor to advent'rous deeds  
 Under thir God-like Leaders, in the Cause  
 Of God and his Messiah. . . .  
 (VI, ll. 56-58)

The heavenly legions are inspired to resolute purpose as were the legions of Hell, for they are all angels and would respond to the same sounds, as the "instrumental Harmonie" reference shows. Here the trumpet is "Ethereal," although still "loud."

The trumpet sounds again just after Abdiel has struck the first blow of the war against Satan:

. . . whereat Michael bid sound  
 Th'Arch-Angel trumpet; through the vast of Heaven  
 It sounded, and the faithful Armies rung  
 Hossanna to the Highest: nor stood at gaze  
 The adverse Legions, or less hideous joyn'd  
 The horrid shock: now storming furie rose,  
 And clamour such as heard in Heav'n till now  
 Was never, Arms on Armour clashing bray'd  
 Horrible discord, and the madding Wheelles  
 Of brazen Chariots rag'd . . .  
 (VI, ll. 202-11)

In this instance the trumpet serves as an announcement of a triumph and signal for praise as well as a call to arms. As a call to arms it begins an image of noise on a cosmic scale characterized by "clamour," "clashing bray'd," and "horrible discord."

The third trumpet call in the war is a far pleasanter image than those preceding it:

Now when fair Morn Orient in Heav'n appeerd  
 Up rose the Victor Angels, and to Arms  
 The matin Trumpet Sung: in Arms they stood  
 Of Golden Panoplie, refulgent Host,  
 Soon banded; others from the dawning Hills  
 Lookd round, and Scouts each Cost light-armed scoure,  
 Each quarter, to descrie the distant foe.  
 (VI, ll. 524-30)

This image does not carry the resolve or introduce the clamor of the previous two. Rather, its context is peaceful; it is the "matin Trumpet," whose sound is a singing tone. Milton is here deliberately deceptive. The peaceful legions of faithful angels, calmly confident from the previous day's victory, are soon to be routed by the "devilish Enginrie" (VI, l. 553), which Satan has built while they rested.

Milton continues to use the military associations of the trumpet when he writes of the Creation. When he recounts the gathering of the waters into the oceans he uses this image:

. . . as Armies at the call  
Of Trumpet (for of Armies thou hast heard)  
Troop to thir Standard, so the satrie throng,  
Wave rowling after Wave, where way they found.  
(VII, ll. 295-98)

Since the reader has already been exposed to the gathering of both heavenly and hellish legions at the sound of the trumpet, he has an excellent frame of reference for this simile, as does Adam to whom the aside is addressed.

The trumpet call gathering the heavenly host to hear God's pronouncement of judgment on Adam and Eve foretells two other trumpet soundings important to the future of man, the Giving of the Law and the Day of Judgment:

He ended, and the Son gave signal high  
To the bright Minister that watchd, hee blew  
His Trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps

When God descended, and perhaps once more  
To sound at general Doom. Th' Angelic blast  
Filld all the Regions . . . . .

(XI, ll. 72-77)

Naylor calls this trumpet the Dies Irae trumpet after a common instrumentation of the Dies Irae section of the requiem mass.<sup>56</sup>

The only time the trumpet is heard on earth is at the Giving of the Law:

God from the Mount of Sinai, whose gray top  
Shall tremble, he descending, will himself  
In Thunder Lightning and loud Trumpets sound  
Ordain them Lawes . . . . .

(XII, ll. 227-30)

As in its biblical source, Exodus 19:16-20:21, this passage has the trumpet sounding in Heaven and only heard on earth, being sounded by heavenly powers, not man.

Since in the Renaissance the trumpet was reserved for the use of nobility and played only by official court trumpeters until the seventeenth century,<sup>57</sup> Milton's audience would have grasped the significance of this series of trumpet images in Paradise Lost. There are trumpets in Heaven and Hell, but not on Earth. God is the king supreme, and Satan is tyrant of Hell; aping God's kingship. Men, however, before and after the Fall do not aspire to the kingship of their Creator.

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<sup>56</sup>Naylor, p. 63.

<sup>57</sup>Apel, "Trumpet," in Harvard Dictionary, p. 77.

In Paradise Regained the trumpet is still the property of royalty, sounding to announce the birth of Christ, not to men, the usual figure, but to Satan:

. . . of thy birth at length  
Announc't by Gabriel with the first I knew,  
And of the Angelic Song in Bethlehem field,  
On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.  
(IV, ll. 503-06)

The far reaching sound of this trumpet, to the very depths of Hell, serves to symbolize the close ties between man and his tempter, for they hear the same notes.

Milton uses the trumpet only once in Samson Agonistes, as herald of the great festival at which Samson is to be displayed:

Mess. Occasions drew me early to this City,  
And as the gates I enter'd with Sun-rise,  
The morning Trumpets Festival proclaim'd  
Through each high street . . .  
(ll. 1596-99)

The immediate context of this image is pleasant, but it heralds Samson's revenge on his captors by pulling the temple down. The larger context reminds one of the third trumpet call of the war in Heaven, the "matin Trumpet."

The trumpet is important as a figure in Milton's poetry, for it is used consistently as a herald, signaling important events or pronouncements.

Although not mentioned as often as the trumpet or stringed instruments, the organ has considerable importance in Milton's music imagery. Spaeth, considering references

in both poetry and prose, believes that the organ was Milton's favorite instrument.<sup>58</sup> As was mentioned in Chapter I, biographers made special mention of Milton's talent at the organ.

The organ had long been associated with England. In the twelfth century Giraldus spoke of English organ playing, emphasizing the virtuosity of the performers and the complexity of the music.<sup>59</sup> As shown in the discussion in Chapter I, the organ was the subject of no little controversy in Reformation England. Some of the finest music of the English Renaissance was written for it, but it became an instrument banned from churches and destroyed by religious zealots, while many of those same zealots maintained it for private recreation.

The organ had been likened by religious writers of the Middle Ages to the expression of the Word and man's praise of God, the Gospel. With its multiplicity of pipes it became symbolic of mankind. Its tone was likened to the human voice, and the instrument itself was associated with the angelic choirs.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Spaeth, pp. 28-31.

<sup>59</sup> Giraldus, p. 28.

<sup>60</sup> Edmund A. Bowler, "The Symbolism of the Organ in the Middle Ages: A Study in the History of Ideas," in Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Birthday Offering to Gustav Reese, ed. Jan LaRue (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1966), p. 35.

Milton associates the organ with angelic choirs and the music of the spheres in the "Nativity Ode":

Ring out ye Crystall sphears,  
Once bless our humane ears,  
    (If ye have power to touch our senses so)  
And let your silver chime  
Move in melodious time;  
    And let the Base of Heav'ns deep Organ blow,  
And with your ninefold harmony  
Make up full consort to th'Angelike symphony.  
  (ll. 125-32)

In this image the reader is reminded of the capabilities of the organ to produce a far wider range of tone quality and pitch and a greater volume of sound than any other instrument. These capabilities make it a fitting instrument to be coupled with the "Crystall sphears," producers of the unheard music of the spheres.

In "Il Penseroso" the organ of the final image (discussed previously with vocal imagery) is the organ of a collegiate church. At the time "Il Penseroso" was composed, the order for the destruction of organs had not been issued, and the "pealing Organ" was often heard in the context of the service, providing Milton with a current reference for the image. The organ combines with the choir to produce a sound capable of elevating the mind to the ecstatic contemplation of heaven.

Milton uses the organ only a few times in Paradise Lost, but he uses it in complex and important images. In Book I the organ is used as a symbol for Pandæmonium:

A third as soon had form'd within the ground  
 A various mould, and from the boyling cells  
 By strange conveyance fill'd each hollow nook,  
 As in an Organ from one blast of wind  
 To many a row of Pipes the sound-board breaths.  
 Anon out of the earth a Fabrick huge  
 Rose like an Exhalation, with the sound  
 Of Dulcet Symphonies and voices sweet,  
 Built like a Temple, where Pilasters round  
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid  
 With Golden Architrave . . .

(ll. 705-15)

Helen and Peter Williams find the "blast" in line 708 a revulsive figure, comparing the rush of wind to the activities of the fallen angels.<sup>61</sup> Naylor points out the technical details in the passage. The "conveyance" is the pipe which carries the wind to the pipes in the organ case. The "sound-board" has holes in which those pipes stand, with the wind chest below, so that when the stops are open air flows into the pipes.<sup>62</sup> The description of the temple is very much like that of an organ, with the visible pipes as Doric columns, and the organ case made of pilasters, ornately decorated. This description actually fits a Continental organ better than an English one of the seventeenth century, for Continental instruments were far more ornate.

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<sup>61</sup>Helen Williams and Peter Williams, "Milton and Music; or the Pandaemonic Organ," Musical Times, 107 (1966), 762.

<sup>62</sup>Naylor, pp. 63-64.



The preceding rather technical image is built on the organ alone. In Book VII, the organ appears as only one instrument in a complex image involving several instruments and vocal music:

. . . the Harp  
 Had work and rested not, the solemm Pipe,  
 And Dulcimer, all Organs of sweet stop,  
 All sounds on Fret by String or Golden Wire  
 Temper'd soft Tunings, intermixt with Voice  
 Choral or Unison: of Incense Clouds  
 Fuming from Golden Censers hid the Mount.  
 Creation and the Six dayes acts they sung.  
 (ll. 594-11)

This is the music of the seventh day, the day of rest which is not kept in silence, but celebrated with joyous music of all kinds. Milton again reminds the reader of the capabilities of the organ, for here the sound of "sweet stop" blends with the other instruments and the voices.

A third organ image appears in Michael's revelation of the future to Adam in Paradise Lost, Book XI:

He lookd and saw a spacious Plaine, whereon  
 Were Tents of various hue; by some were herds  
 Of Cattel grazing: others, whence the sound  
 Of Instruments that made melodious chime  
 Was heard, of Harp and Organ; wind who moovd  
 Thir stops and chords was seen: his volant touch  
 Instinct through all proportions low and high  
 Fled and pursu'd transverse the resonant fugue.  
 (ll. 556-63)

In this image it is not the organ itself that is important, but the type of composition described. Hadow calls this image "simply the best description of a fugue ever written," all the more remarkable because of the date.

The great writers of organ fugues, Fux and Bach, were yet to come. Hadow speculates that Milton gained his knowledge from the works of the Gabriellis, Frescobaldi, and Froberger.<sup>63</sup> Spaeth agrees with the possible Frescobaldi connection and believes that the complexity of the composition within mathematical order was pleasing to Milton.<sup>64</sup>

Of Renaissance fugal polyphony, a "free, unified, and complex contrapuntal organism," Lowinsky states:

[it is] free because it is not tied to a cantus firmus, unified because the same thematic substance penetrates all parts, complex because each part presents the theme at a different time while the other voices go against contrapuntally, avoiding simultaneity in rhythm and meter. This results in a tonal structure unified harmonically, diversified rhythmically and metrically.<sup>65</sup>

Lowinsky's commentary is an excellent exposition of Milton's brief, though evocative, description. Milton outlines the structure of a fugue, leaving his readers to fill in with music they had heard. The use of "resonant" as modifier for "fugue" suggests the setting of a large church in which the sound of the organ would resonate.

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<sup>63</sup>William Henry Hadow, "Milton's Knowledge of Music," Milton Memorial Lectures, 1908, ed. Percy W. Ames (London: H. Frowde, 1909), pp. 19-20.

<sup>64</sup>Spaeth, pp. 47-48.

<sup>65</sup>Lowinsky, p. 531.

The three images discussed above show Milton at his best, matching instrument and image. The organ, the most complex of all instruments, although the Renaissance organ certainly does not match the instruments of the Baroque and Romantic eras, is featured in very complex images, often with other instruments. Such a combination is fitting, because the organ has features of several other instruments. It is an instrument whose sound is produced by wind, but which is played by means of a keyboard, leaving the player free to use his voice if he wishes.

The final instruments to be studied are percussion instruments, which are used consistently in connection with evil. Although they are mentioned in the Bible as legitimate instruments for worship (see Psalm CL), by Milton's day they had become associated with pagan religious rites. In the "Nativity Ode" cymbals are used in an attempt to rouse Moloch:

And sullen Moloch fled,  
Hath left in shadows dred,  
His burning Idol all of blackest hue;  
In vain the Cymbals ring,  
They call the grisly King,  
In dismal dance about the furnace blue.  
(ll. 205-10)

Anthems to Osiris are accompanied by timbrels:

Naught but profoundest Hell can be his shroud,  
In vain with Timbrel'd Anthems dark  
The sable-stoled Sorcerers bear his worshipt Ark.  
(ll. 218-20)

Both attempts to call upon these gods are in vain since they have retreated to Hell at the Nativity. In neither of these images is there a suggestion of melody, only noise. The "Anthems dark" sung to Osiris bear little resemblance to the anthems sung by the angelic choirs in praise of God.

In Paradise Lost worship of Moloch is again accompanied by percussion:

First [came] Moloch, horrid King besmear'd with blood  
Of human sacrifice, and parents tears,  
Though for the noyse of Drums and Timbrels loud  
Thir children's cries unheard . . . .  
(I, ll. 392-95)

Both "noyse" and "loud" appear in images of vocal worship directed to God, but the effect is totally different from the one here. Again, there is no suggestion of melody, and "noyse" is not merely a synonym for "sound," but it is totally unpleasant and cacophonous, drowning out the cries of sacrificial victims.

In Samson Agonistes, Samson is paraded before the Philistines to the accompaniment of pipes and timbrels:

. . . Immediately  
Was Samson as a public servant brought,  
In thir state Livery clad; before him Pipes  
And Timbrels, on each side went armed guards,  
Both horse and foot before him and behind  
Archers, and Slingers, Cataphracts and Spears.  
At sight of him the people with a shout  
Rifted the Aire clamouring thir god with praise,  
Who had made thir dreadful enemy thir thrall.  
(ll. 1614-22)

The use of pipes with the timbrels suggests melody is present in the procession along with the striking of the percussion instrument. The reference reminds one of the flutes in the "Dorian mood" image in Paradise Lost. These are not the shepherd's pan-pipes, but the military flutes.

Like "noyse" and "loud," "shout" is a term often used in images of heavenly vocal worship. However, here the connotation of joy is absent, and the shout "Rifted" the air "clamouring" the praise, not singing, reminiscent of the shout that "tore Hells Concave" (Paradise Lost I, l. 530). It is a sound of triumph, but a triumph for the wrong reasons, addressed to the wrong god, celebrating a triumph which is soon turned into disaster.

Images of practical music appear throughout Milton's poetry, increasing in number and importance in the later works. The earlier poetry is more idealistic, and the proportion of speculative music is greater in them. Paradise Lost abounds in images of practical music and of heard harmony, the bridge between purely speculative music, the music of the spheres, and practical music. Paradise Regained has comparatively few music images, predominantly of practical music. Samson Agonistes has still fewer images, none of which fall into the speculative classification.

Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained are dramatic poems, dealing in narrative with events that Milton saw as being very real. He needed to employ images which his readers could relate to real perceptions in their experience. The earlier poems, dealing with subjects of a more personal nature, are often more idealistic, and the music imagery is more idealistic, often more elaborate, considered in proportion to the works in which they appear. Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, dealing with subjects of greater import and conceived on a cosmic scale, are less idealistic, reflecting Milton's experiences during the years spent as apologist for the Puritan cause and as Cromwell's Latin Secretary of State. The music imagery in the later poems reflects his more realistic attitude, being proportionately more practical and less speculative.

This examination of the symbolic significance of Milton's music imagery is preparation for consideration of the use he makes of the imagery in the structure of the poetry, which is the next object of this study.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Two poems having important musical reference have not yet been considered. Sonnet XIII, the dedicatory poem to Milton's good friend, Henry Lawes, and "At a Solemn Music" are in a special class. They do not just include music imagery; they depend solely upon music imagery. Since these poems depend so very much on music, they will be discussed fully in the section dealing with the structural significance of music imagery.

## CHAPTER V

### THE STRUCTURAL FUNCTION OF MUSIC IMAGERY

As has been pointed out, Milton uses music imagery to convey meaning through the associative value of the images. He also uses the images within the overall structure<sup>1</sup> of the poems for various effects. In a few poems music imagery is the controlling symbol of the poem, admitting of no other, or few other, types of imagery, such as in "At a Solemn Music" and Sonnet XIII. In other poems music images are used in conjunction with other types of images, as sub-types of a larger class, complementing each other. "Lycidas" provides a good example of such use. The larger class of imagery is pastoral, and the music images complement the plant/flower images within the larger class. Obviously, such uses are suited for the shorter poems, for the sheer size of the epics renders impractical the exclusive use of one type of image, like music, or even a larger class of imagery, such as pastoral. The continued use of similar figures throughout the epics provides an element of unity.

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<sup>1</sup>For the purpose of this study structure means the design of the poem and not the verse type. Imagery does not determine the form of a poem, and it has little effect on the prosody.

The symbolic function of the images is a basis for their structural function. The images are important to the design of the poem not only because they are a specific type of image, providing unity through their common references, but also because their specific meanings function to give unity to the poem or to provide contrast with other images.

The design of Milton's poetry has bearing on its philosophical import. Certainly he follows the Renaissance concept of decorum in fitting verse and subject, using the epic form for the great subjects of disobedience and redemption, while confining single events, such as the Nativity, to a shorter verse form. Decorum also governs the structural use of image types, since one, or a few types, can be employed in shorter poems with limited subjects, while the epics call for a wide variety of images.

This is not to say that the longer works lack unity, which can be provided by a series of closely related images. In "Strength and Isolation," John Wain notes Milton's power to build and sustain large structures in "homogeneous style" and his ability to strike and hold tone for great length.<sup>2</sup> A. S. P. Woodhouse, too, comments on the structure of

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<sup>2</sup>John Wain, "Strength and Isolation: Pessimistic Notes of a Miltonalater," in The Living Milton: Essays by Various Hands, ed. Frank J. Kermode (London: Routledge and Paul, 1960), pp. 7-8.



Milton's poetry. He finds that the patterns of the various genres share a "highly structural character" and that the "pattern of the whole is woven upon a firm structural framework." These patterns are "dynamic and progressive," giving "momentum and direction" to the poems.<sup>3</sup>

Imagery plays an important part in the development of that "homogeneous style" and aids the building of the framework of the poems. Therefore it will be well to keep Wain's and Woodhouse's ideas in mind while examining the role that music imagery plays in the design of Milton's poetry. A beginning point for the discussion of the structural function of imagery seems to lie logically with the poems having music as controlling symbol, for the role of music is most evident in these poems and hence most easily examined, providing foundation for consideration of the more difficult works.

"At a Solemn Music" is probably the most completely musical of all Milton's poems. It is formed of a series of musical images, both speculative and practical, which express the poet's desire that man regain the state of "first obedience" that will enable him to hear again the music of the spheres and to sing with the angelic choir. To accomplish this reunion, man must invoke the aid of

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<sup>3</sup>A. S. P. Woodhouse, Milton the Poet (Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1955), p. 5.

the "Blest pair of Sirens, . . . / Sphear-born harmonious Sisters, Voice, and Vers" (ll. 1-2).

The organization of "Solemn Music" is a fairly simple one. Basically it contains two sentences, composed of lines 1-24 and lines 25-28. The first sentence contains two sections, dividing at the end of line 16. The first sixteen lines contain the invocation to Voice and Vers to create for man heavenly music, "That undisturbed Song of pure concent" (l. 6). Lines 17-24 are commentary on man's present unmusical state. Milton employs many individual images in the first section, beginning with an image juxtaposing the concept of the music of the spheres and the high regard in the Renaissance for a combination in vocal music of text and melody. He progresses to a series of images describing the music found in Heaven, a music made imaginable through the powers of voice and verse. The figures he uses are ones which become almost stock items throughout his poetry: the "Saintly shout" of joy (Milton's angelic choirs express joy and triumph always in fortissimo); the rows of seraphim playing trumpets; the vast numbers of cherubim with golden harps. To these is added a group that does not figure in Paradise Lost, where the figures just mentioned are repeated, "those just Spirits that wear victorious Palms" (l. 14), the souls of men whose faith has earned their places in Heaven. This

last group is engaged in singing hymns and psalms as they presumably did on Earth.

The second section describes the state of living men who do not have the powers of the "just Spirits." Again Milton employs figures found in other poems: the "harsh din" (l. 20) created by "Disproportion'd sin" (l. 19) which destroyed the "perfet Diapason" (l. 23) between God and man. The current state is discordant and unnatural. That there are in this section no concrete images describing man's present state as there are images in the first sixteen lines describing music in Heaven is a telling point. There is currently no true music on Earth; therefore the poet must confine himself to describing what happened to the answer to the "melodious noise" (l. 18) that existed before the Fall.

The second sentence voices the plea that man's song may be restored on Earth, so that man may be prepared to join the "celestial consort" and "sing in endles morn of light" (ll. 27-28). Milton here combines a wish for harmony between God and living men like the harmony between God and the "just Spirits," with the hope that the singers will enter Heaven, where their music will continue.

The idea behind the poem is one which Milton uses frequently: man's desire to regain the right relationship with God. The use of a single conventional type of image

is appropriate. The poem is short, and the theme has obvious associations with music. Milton's concern for man's loss of the ability to hear the music of the spheres as a result of his disobedience appears in prose form in the Second Prolusion, and appears in other poems as well, but it is perhaps in "At a Solemn Music" that it receives its most intense and most obvious treatment.

The other most obvious music poem in the corpus of Milton's work is Sonnet XIII, "To Mr. H. Lawes, on his Aires." In this complimentary verse Milton deftly combines a contemporary musical setting with references to mythology to show how his friend's talents rise above all others'.

The octave describes Lawes' place in contemporary music, while the sestet elevates him to legendary status. Milton begins squarely in English music, stating unequivocally that Lawes' compositions accomplish the Renaissance ideal of fitting words and music properly so that they compliment each other. This ideal was propounded by musical theorists such as Zarlino, and probably expressed most poetically by Campion, who "chiefly aymed to couple . . . Words and Notes lovingly together."<sup>4</sup> The allusion to the ass's ears Midas acquired for preferring Pan's pipes to Apollo's music gives the reader a good idea of Milton's

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<sup>4</sup>"To the Reader," Two Bookes of Ayres, in The Works of Thomas Campion, ed. Walter R. Davis (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1969), p. 55.

opinion of the ability of many contemporary song writers to fit words and music together. The second quatrain of the octave does not refer directly to music until the last line, when Milton uses "aire" to name specifically the type of music he believes is Lawes' forte. That Milton was aware of some of the difficulties attendant on setting English verse to music is evident in his use of "humor" as the verb in line 8. His knowledge of Italian music and poetry and his own facility in Italian as well as his mastery of his native tongue help him to form the comment implicit in these lines.

The sonnet's sestet moves away from a dependence on English music to honor Lawes in a broader context as priest of the Muses and superior to Dante's singer. The setting is now in legend rather than the mid-seventeenth century. True, Milton refers to Midas' ears in line 4, but he is only comparing the skills of those whom Lawes has surpassed to the obviously faulty skills of that hapless king, and he does not yet move out of the contemporary frame of reference.

To sum up the effect that the music imagery has on Sonnet XIII, one can say that the imagery expands the poem as its frame of reference expands from the contemporary English scene to the world of musical legend.

Music imagery in two other sonnets was noted in the discussion of the symbolic function: Sonnet I and Sonnet XX. The music imagery in "Sonnet XX" is a part of the metaphor of a day spent in simple leisure. As such it is incidental to the design of the poem, adding more detail to the theme but not governing the structure.

On the other hand, "Sonnet I" depends completely on the contrast between nightingale and cuckoo and all their associations. The nightingale's song receives more attention than the cuckoo's, since the poem is, after all, addressed to the nightingale. The poet uses several words and phrases to refer to the song: "warbl'st," "liquid notes," "soft lay," as well as "sing" and "sung." The cuckoo's song is allowed only "shallow" and "rude" as indirect description. The poem is organized quite unconventionally for a sonnet composed within the Italian rhyme scheme. There are three sections, with divisions falling in the middle of the seventh line and the middle of the twelfth. The first section recounts the medieval legend that a lover hearing the nightingale first in spring will have success in love while one hearing the cuckoo will have none. The second section is a plea for the nightingale to sing first since the cuckoo has sung first for many years, dooming the speaker. The third

section poses the question of why this has been so, since the speaker serves both the Muse and Love with whom the nightingale is associated.

The first section contains more specific references to the birds' songs than the other two do, with "warbl'st" and "liquid notes" for the nightingale and "shallow" for the cuckoo. The second section has only "soft lay" for the nightingale, in addition to "sing," and "sung" and "rude" for the cuckoo. This equalizing in the second section is in keeping with the plea expressed and the description of the speaker's woe which contrasts with the hopeful description of lines 1-7a. The final section has no music imagery at all, except for a conventional reference to the Muse. This would appear to be a pattern in keeping with the movement from hopeful description to plea to question.

While these shorter poems have interesting, if simple, patterns of music imagery, one must study longer works to find the full effect of music imagery on the structure of the poems.

"The Passion," left unfinished by the youthful poet when he found it "to be above the yeers he had, when he wrote it," as he says in the epigram, presents an interesting study. Since the poem is unfinished, it is difficult to judge the structure of the imagery. One

is left to wonder if more music imagery would have been used and what part it would have played in the finished fabric of the poem. It is tempting to speculate that since Milton begins with a music image celebrating the Nativity he would have finished with one celebrating the Resurrection. Such ideas, however, must remain only speculation.

Like the poem as a whole, the music imagery remains unfinished. The opening stanza presents the familiar image of Heaven and Earth resounding with angelic song at Christ's birth. There is an obvious reference here to the "Nativity Ode," to which "The Passion" was probably intended as a companion piece. It is, nevertheless, probably not valid to connect the two poems on the basis of this single image.

In stanza I the poet reminds his reader that he is a bard, singing the tale, through references to his muse, which, he says, sang with the angels at the Nativity. This idea carries through into stanza II when he shifts the mood of the poem to sorrow. Using the harp as proper accompaniment for the Christian poet, he turns to "notes of saddest wo" (l. 9). From these two images it would almost seem that Milton is using music imagery as a controlling symbol for the poem. The third image in Stanza IV strengthens this point of view:



Lour o're the rest Cremona's Trump doth sound;  
 Me softer airs befit, and softer strings  
 Of Lute, or Viol still, more apt for mournful things.  
 (ll. 26-28)

More than in any other work, in "The Passion" Milton reveals a struggle for control of his poem. In others he invokes his muse, then proceeds; here he seems to be struggling to define the bounds of his subject. He compares his poem's limited subject to the viol, an instrument particularly suited for chamber music, and the scope of Vida's Christiad to the violin, whose more brilliant sound is more suitable for the larger concert halls.

Milton unfortunately never comes to terms with the subject, and after what can be described as floundering through four more stanzas, abandons the project. In stanzas V-VII he uses no music images, perhaps having decided that they cannot provide the kind of unifying device he is seeking. It is something of a relief when considering the finished perfection of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained and "Lycidas" to remember that Milton was not always in full control of his chosen art.

It is true that "The Passion" is an early poem, but Milton was definitely in control of the subject matter of other early poems, such as the shorter ones discussed earlier, and of "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," the earliest of the longer English poems and perhaps inspiration for "The Passion."

The "Nativity Ode" marks the first appearance of celestial music in Milton's poetry, a first appearance that heralded many others. A. E. Barker remarks that from the "Nativity Ode" to "Lycidas" Milton could hardly write on a serious subject without mentioning music.<sup>5</sup> Spaeth notes that Milton's sense of sound is evident in the "Nativity Ode" and points out the musical divisions of the poem and the transitions accomplished by means of various sounds.<sup>6</sup>

An interesting analysis of the "Nativity Ode" is found in John Demaray's Milton and the Masque Tradition. Demaray finds the description of events in the poem would have been associated with masque figures and scenery by Milton's audience, familiar with the dramatic genre,<sup>7</sup> and notes especially the treatment of divine harmony in stanzas X and XII of the Hymn.<sup>8</sup>

Barker also sees a fusion of traditions in the "Nativity Ode," the fusion of biblical and Greek. For

<sup>5</sup>Arthur E. Barker, "The Pattern of Milton's Nativity Ode," University of Toronto Quarterly, 10 (1940-41), 179.

<sup>6</sup>Sigmund Spaeth, Milton's Knowledge of Music (1913; rpt. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1963), pp. 90-92.

<sup>7</sup>John G. Demaray, Milton and the Masque Tradition: The Early Poems, Arcades, and Comus (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 31-34.

<sup>8</sup>Demaray, pp. 37-39.

instance, the connection between angelic song and the music of the spheres (stanzas XII and XXIII of the Hymn) fuses Job 37:7 and Pythagorean doctrine.<sup>9</sup> This fusion enables Milton to use both speculative and practical music to best advantage.

The entire fabric of the poem depends on music imagery, from the invocation of the "Heav'nly Muse" in line 15 to the announcement of the ending of the "tedious Song" in line 239. Music is constantly present in the poem, manifest in frequent references to song, angelic choirs, trumpets, the music of the spheres. It also underlies the poem because the Nativity is the manifestation of perfect harmony, that harmony destroyed by men's disobedience and restored now by God's grace. As Barker says, "Christ is the reason for the angelic music and the source of the music of the spheres, which, at his birth, should harmonize with the choir and produce in men the harmony of their first perfection. These harmonies are not only described but echoed in Milton's verse."<sup>10</sup> Christ, as God Incarnate, is the source of the music of the spheres because He is the perfect harmony between God and men.

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<sup>9</sup>Barker, "Pattern," p. 177.

<sup>10</sup>Barker, "Pattern," p. 177.

The introduction to the Hymn provides setting and invocation, preparing for the Hymn, the "humble ode" which is presented to the Christ child before the arrival of the gift-bearing kings. In stanzas III and IV of the introduction the muse is urged to join the angel choir, fusing heavenly music with the poet's offering. From these verses, there is left no doubt that the hymn to follow has been inspired by heavenly powers.

In the hymn the first music image is of silence, the silence of peace created by the absence of the trumpet sounding the call to battle. Silence is again notable in stanza XIX when the "hideous humm" and "hollow shriek" associated with the oracle at Delphos are heard no more.

The music of the angelic choirs is first heard in stanza XI, after the scene is described in the first eight stanzas. Stanzas IX through XV describe the music heard by the shepherds. It is music that "never was by mortal finger strook" (l. 95) heard "when of old the sons of morning sung" (l. 119). Between these statements lies a full description of the song, capable of taking the souls of the shepherds by rapture and of making nature think that the physical world's time was over. These "unexpressive notes" (l. 116) sound the harmony

that nature knew could hold Heaven and Earth in "happier union" (l. 108) than could her reign.

Stanza XIII is perhaps the most important musically of the hymn, for it brings together the music of the spheres, heard again by man at the Nativity, and the "Angelike Symphony" (l. 132). Together they are a complete harmony, a fusion of biblical and Greek, of God and men.

Stanzas XIV and XV continue to describe the music and the reaction to it, with sin, vanity, and Hell itself overcome, while Truth and Justice return to govern men on Earth as they did in the prelapsarian state.

Stanzas XVI and XVII provide the transition from the heavenly song to the cacophony of the defeated pagan gods. Milton uses a music image, the "wakeful trump of doom" (l. 156) as transition. Unlike the silent trumpet in stanza IV, this one thunders to wake the dead, as the trumpet on Sinai sounded at the Giving of the Law, and to shake the Earth at the Day of Judgment. Thus Milton ties together the giving of the Law, the Nativity, and the Day of Judgment with two music images featuring the same instrument.

Stanzas XIX through XXVI recount the vanquishing of the pagan gods. Stanzas XIX, XX, XXI, XXIII, and XXIV rely on music images, more specifically images of discord,

to tell the story. Stanza XIX, as mentioned earlier, is built on the absence of sound, unpleasant sound. Stanzas XX and XXI use images of mourning sounds, weeping and moaning by the followers of the pagan gods, which contrast with the joyous sounds of song described in stanzas IX and XI. The cymbals and timbrels of stanzas XXIII and XIV are balanced by the "stringed noise" and "silver chime" of stanzas IX and XIII.

Milton's use of corresponding images in the different sections of the hymn serves to remind the reader of the joyous event of the Nativity during the description of the agonies of the pagan gods and their followers. The contrast between the sets of images serves to emphasize the joy of the Christian event and the joylessness of pagan worship. The reader can easily notice the association of light and harmonically pleasing music and the association of darkness and shadow with discordant sounds. This association was, as Barker points out, a seventeenth-century poetic commonplace and not personally significant for Milton.<sup>11</sup> However, Milton's skillful handling of a popular tradition makes this poem unique. Light and harmony are associated with order, as expressed in the orderliness of Creation in stanza XII, with the

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<sup>11</sup>Barker, *Pattern*, p. 176.

"well-balanc't world on hinges hung" (l. 122), and the  
 "weltring waves their oozy channel keep" (l. 124).

Harmony is based on numerical order ("ninefold harmony"--  
 l. 131--and "Move in melodious time"--l. 129). There is  
 no such order connected with the inharmonious images. In  
 stanza XXIII Milton speaks only of "Cymbals ring" (l. 208)  
 and "dismal dance" (l. 210) without mentioning rhythm or  
 the numerical relationships of sounds.

Barker sees the "Nativity Ode" and its musical  
 metaphor with its "perfect adequacy and complete control"  
 as the expression of a new and profound religious exper-  
 ience which confirmed Milton's idea of his calling. This  
 experience was essentially aesthetic and demonstrated  
 "not only . . . the personal significance of the Incarna-  
 tion, but also . . . its relationship to the classical  
 and humanistic doctrines of harmonious perfection  
 symbolized by the music of the spheres."<sup>12</sup> The poem  
 thus provides a perfect introduction to Milton's future  
 as a poet, launching his use of music imagery.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Barker, "Pattern," p. 180.

<sup>13</sup>"Upon the Circumcision" also echoes the music  
 imagery of the "Nativity Ode" in its opening lines.  
 Milton does not undertake a subject of the magnitude of  
 the Passion and is therefore able to control his poem.  
 The music imagery here is beautiful and well constructed,  
 evidently intended to remind the reader of the "Nativity  
 Ode," but it is used only for introduction and is not  
 carried through the poem.

The companion poems "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" have had a success that is denied to the "Nativity Ode" and "The Passion" as companions. Carpenter sees "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" as "both timeless and for the moment because of a skillful blending of symbolism and realistic objectivity grounded in seventeenth-century England--nowhere brought out more clearly than in the musical references."<sup>14</sup>

Milton sets forth the two sides of his character, the two temperaments found in most persons. Each poem is fully capable of standing on its own merit, but together they form a balanced whole. Milton's adherence to the doctrine of decorum can be illustrated no better than by reference to these two poems, in which he parallels imagery, maintaining the proper frame of reference for each theme. Perhaps the best single consideration of these poems is Rosamund Tuve's "The Structural Figures of L'Allegro and Il Penseroso," in Images and Themes in Five Poems by Milton, in which she examines the significance of various structural figures employed in the poems.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Nan Cooke Carpenter, "Spenser's 'Epithalamion' as Inspiration for Milton's 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,'" Notes and Queries, NS 3 (1956), 292.

<sup>15</sup>Rosamund Tuve, Images and Themes in Five Poems by Milton (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957).



The structure of "L'Allegro" has been described by Nan Cooke Carpenter as a "perpetuum mobile" with a "beautifully symmetrical form."<sup>16</sup> Carpenter analyzes the structure of the poem, saying that it

opens in the underworld, mounts to Olympus for the genealogy of Mirth, goes through a typical (idealized) country day, turns at night to the artistic entertainments of the city, reaches a peak with a rhapsody on the Italian aria, and, with this music as a transitional point, moves on to Orpheus and thence back to the underworld.<sup>17</sup>

In the opening lines one finds images of discordant music in the "shrieks" of line 4 and the night-Raven's song of line 7. These unpleasant images change to the implied dance music accompanying the "light fantastic toe" (l. 34) and then to the bird songs. The night-Raven sings in "brooding darkness," only adding to the blackness. By contrast, the lark's song has the power to "startle the dull night" (l. 42), which is finally driven away by the "lively din" of the cock (ll. 49-50). The day continues musically, in a sense, with the sounds of hounds and horn (l. 53) and the song of the milkmaid (l. 65). The everyday tasks are interrupted by "merry Bells" (l. 93) inviting the milkmaid and other rural

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<sup>16</sup>Nan Cooke Carpenter, "The Place of Music in 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,'" University of Toronto Quarterly, 22 (1952-53), 356.

<sup>17</sup>Carpenter, "The Place of Music," p. 356.

workers to dance to the sound of the "jocond rebecks" (l. 94). This rustic dance is held during the daylight hours in the shade. After the day's work and play, these workers retire to tell tales of fairies and to be whispered to sleep by the winds. Up to this point the frame of reference has been rural, almost bucolic, but Milton needs to show the more sophisticated side of Mirth and so turns to the city night-revels, from the whispering winds to the "busie humn of men" (l. 118). As earlier he used the lark and the cock to balance the night raven, he here balances the country dance with "mask, and antique Pageantry" (l. 128) which involve music and dance of a different sort.

The description of the Italian aria, the "soft Lydian Aires" (ll. 136-44), is different from earlier music references. In the rural section of "L'Allegro" Milton appears content with brief music images that are more suggestive than descriptive, simple statements sparsely modified. Here, however, he describes the aria fully. "Winding bout / Of lincked sweetness long drawn out" (ll. 139-40), "wanton heed, and giddy cunning" (l. 141) are in sharp contrast to "singeth blithe" of the milkmaid (l. 65). The contrast points up the difference between the artful aria and the simple song of the milkmaid, while maintaining the proper decorum.

Another aspect of the contrast between the rural and urban aspects of the poem is that there are more sounds heard in the rural section, particularly those of birds, while the complexity of a single musical experience is greater in the urban setting.

This complex music image draws the poem back into the mythological setting from which it started. With the reference to harmony Milton brings in the Orpheus legend, with comment that music such as the aria would have completely conquered Pluto, god of the dark underworld. Carpenter sees this underworld ending as providing a transition to "Il Penseroso."<sup>18</sup> Certainly the mood here is different from that of the opening lines where the Stygian cave is "forlorn" and the darkness is "brooding."

"Il Penseroso," like "L'Allegro," begins with words of banishment, but here not for Melancholy but for "vain deluding joys" (l. 1). There are, however, no sounds associated with the worthless joys as there were with Melancholy. The first mention of music is of the Muses singing about Jove's altar. This image helps to maintain the scholarly mood of the poem. Although not referring specifically to the music of the spheres,

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<sup>18</sup>Carpenter, "'Epithalamion' as Inspiration," p. 289.

Milton nevertheless is keeping within the realm of theory rather than heard sound.

When he turns from silence to natural sound, it is to the song of the nightingale, with all its classical connections. Not content with a short image here, Milton expands upon the meaning of the nightingale's song, maintaining carefully the classical context. The nightingale also helps him to maintain the shaded mood of the poem, which he began by veiling Melancholy's too-bright face with the black veil of Wisdom (ll. 13-16). He can say that the bird "shunn'st the noise of folly" (l. 61) because it sings at the quiet time of the day when the sounds of work and commerce are stilled.

Other night sounds follow that of the nightingale. The poet hears the curfew bells sound (l. 74), the cricket chirp (l. 82), and the town crier decree that all is well (ll. 83-84). These sounds are muted; the curfew is heard from a distance over the sound of waves, a natural music image of a sort; the cricket sound is, while shrill, not loud; and the crier's call is muffled.

The entertainments of "Il Penseroso" are quiet ones: contemplating the stars, philosophizing about immortality, attending a performance of a tragedy, the noblest form of drama. The decorum between the music images and the entertainments is apparent. Milton uses the drama to

lead to a reference to the Orpheus legend (ll. 105-08), which, as discussed earlier, has musical connections.

The day is ushered in with the image of an industrious bee humming at work (ll. 142-43) while the poet retreats to a shady spot to listen to bee and brook (ll. 144-46), muted sounds inducing sleep. The poet hears ethereal music on waking, the music of the wood-spirits (ll. 151-54).

This music, however, is not sufficient for the contemplative intellect which turns to the "studious Cloysters pale" (l. 156) where the music of the Great Service inspires to ecstasy (ll. 161-66). This is a complex image, combining instrument, choir, service, and musical form, preparation for the attainment of "Prophetic strain" (l. 174) in old age. Carpenter says that the ending of the poem "trails off diminuendo, morendo."<sup>19</sup> The quiet setting of "mossy cell" (l. 169), apart from human endeavor, does contrast with the final music image of "pealing Organ" and "full voic'd Quire" (ll. 161-62). Still, they are quite compatible because of the inspirational and intellectual character of the music.

Both poems employ natural music, birds and winds. "L'Allegro's" birds are associated with day and the beginning of activity, their songs startling the night

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<sup>19</sup>Carpenter, "The Place of Music," p. 358.

or scattering darkness. In "Il Penseroso" the bird is the nightingale, legendary night-singing creature whose song smooths the brow of night. The winds are of less importance than the birds but still noteworthy. In "L'Allegro" they lull the rural revelers to sleep; in "Il Penseroso" they usher in the daylight, "Piping loud" (l. 126). The sound of the bee as well as the cricket is prominent in "Il Penseroso" (ll. 142-43), combined with a murmuring brook, but the counterparts of these sounds do not occur in "L'Allegro," which at first strikes one as odd, since "L'Allegro" is the more rural of the poems. It is not really odd, however, since the mood of "L'Allegro" is active, leaving little time for appreciating such quiet sounds, while the relaxed, contemplative mood of "Il Penseroso" is conducive to listening to small sounds and considering their sources.

Man-created music is more important in the overall scheme of the poems than is natural sound. Since it is created, as well as heard, by men it is even more indicative of mood than the natural sounds which are only heard. The sounds of bells rung by men are heard in both poems, as "merry Bells" ringing "round," inviting to the dance in "L'Allegro" and as curfew "swinging slow" in "Il Penseroso." The impressions left by the same

instrument differ greatly from one poem to the next--cheery and inviting in one, muffled and "sullen" in the other.

The most interesting comparison of man-created music can be drawn between the longest images in each of the poems. The notable "Lydian Aires" image and the "Service high" image are by far the most complicated images in their respective poems. In "L'Allegro" Milton employs an image of a solo song, highly descriptive of the musical line and the voice of the performer. The image in "Il Penseroso" describes a more complex performance, involving an accompanied choir and the entire service, including anthem, but does not describe the music itself in detail. It is as if he intended to leave more to the imagination of his readers in "Il Penseroso," having opened to them the pleasures of Melancholy, of quiet contemplation, of the truly active mind. In "L'Allegro" the poet pleads for the music to "Lap me in soft Lydian aires," indicating no real reaction. In "Il Penseroso" the music has the power to "Dissolve me into extasies, / And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes" (ll. 165-66), indicating an active intellectual and emotional response. In "To Attain to Something like a Prophetic Strain," Ivy Dempsey comments that the music in "L'Allegro" begins in country dances and reaches its height in seductive

Lydian airs, while in "Il Penseroso" it moves from a cultural awakening to end in a "personal consciousness fully developed for a prophetic understanding."<sup>20</sup> And John Lawry points out that the secular song of "L'Allegro" "unlocks the hidden chains of harmony," while the sacred music of "Il Penseroso" transports man to heaven.<sup>21</sup>

The reference to the Orpheus legend is musically important in both poems. In The Harmonious Vision Don Cameron Allen closes an examination of the music in "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" by saying that "the uninterrupted flow of harmonious sound between the two poems is personified and differentiated by the sundered emphasis on the Orphic legend."<sup>22</sup> In "L'Allegro" Orpheus is a passive figure, listening to the Lydian airs. In "Il Penseroso" Orpheus is active, singing and playing his lyre. Carpenter sees Orpheus as the point of resolution for all the important themes of the poems and makes note of the fact that he is passive in the active poem and

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<sup>20</sup>Ivy Dempsey, "To Attain to Something Like Prophetic Strain," in Papers on Milton, ed. Philip M. Griffith (Tulsa: University of Tulsa Press, 1969), p. 15.

<sup>21</sup>John S. Lawry, The Shadow of Heaven: Matter and Stance in Milton's Poetry (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 44.

<sup>22</sup>Don Cameron Allen, The Harmonious Vision: Studies in Milton's Poetry (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1954), p. 19.



active in the passive poem.<sup>23</sup> However, as discussed above, in terms of the intellect "L'Allegro" can be considered the passive poem and "Il Penseroso" the active poem. From this point of view the Orpheus figure in each poem is not at all paradoxical.

The importance of music imagery in Milton's poetic designs is readily apparent in "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." In these poems music is important not only within each poem, but also because it links the poems through parallel images. But the importance of the imagery does not stop with the poems. Nan Cooke Carpenter remarks, "Most of the musical images which heighten the beauty of the twin lyrics occur again in Milton's writings, giving a certain consistency and permanence to the ideas in his mind."<sup>24</sup> In demonstrating the veracity of this statement, one can take no better starting point than the Orpheus legend and its use in "Lycidas."

The Orpheus legend is employed far differently in "Lycidas" than in either "L'Allegro" or "Il Penseroso." Milton turns from the better known part of the legend, the singer-poet's nearly successful attempt to rescue his beloved Eurydice from the underworld through the

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<sup>23</sup> Carpenter, "'Epithalamion' as Inspiration," p. 290.

<sup>24</sup> Carpenter, "The Place of Music," pp. 359-60.

persuasive powers of his song, to his untimely and gruesome death. Obviously, this reference is more appropriate in a poem mourning the untimely death of a poet than a reference to the powers of song (poetry) to conquer the god of the underworld, but anyone familiar with the legend cannot fail to remember Orpheus' music, for which reason this reference is associated with music imagery.

"Lycidas" is something of a paradox. Its musical qualities have been noticed and commented upon at length by various scholars, yet it contains relatively little music imagery, especially when compared to "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," and the "Nativity Ode." Milton is discussing the early death of a poet and the loss to the world of the poems that he might have written, hence the appropriateness of the death-of-Orpheus figure.

William Riley Parker comments in a general manner on the musical qualities of the poem, calling it "one of the most musically satisfying poems in English," having "the noblest harmonies of all the minor poems." In discussing the overall structure, he says that the "tonal harmony flows from the separate line through the verse paragraph, and from the paragraph through the poem as a whole."<sup>25</sup> Parker is not asserting that "Lycidas" has

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<sup>25</sup>William Riley Parker, Milton: A Biography (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), I, 166.

a specific musical form but that it gives an impression of musical form. Frank Prince<sup>26</sup> and Gretchen Finney,<sup>27</sup> however, do liken the form of "Lycidas" to an Italian canzone. Finney also discusses the resemblance of "Lycidas" to Italian musical drama: dramatic character, three divisions, solos, and choruses.<sup>28</sup> She also sees the middle section as suggesting an oratorio-like "static drama."<sup>29</sup> If Milton was indeed consciously imitating a musical form when writing "Lycidas," the music images by association then have more importance in the structure than their actual number would suggest.

"Lycidas" admits of a number of interpretations. On the literal level it is an elegy in honor of Edward King. It is also the lament of a young man confronted by the death of a contemporary and trying to come to terms with the experience. By virtue of being about a poet, it is a poem concerned with poets and poetry, much in the vein of "October" of Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar. And it brings in the problem of contemporary corruption

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<sup>26</sup>Frank Prince, The Italian Element in Milton's Verse (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), pp. 72-73.

<sup>27</sup>Gretchen Finney, Musical Backgrounds for English Literature, 1580-1660 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1962), p. 195.

<sup>28</sup>Finney, Musical Backgrounds, pp. 207-08.

<sup>29</sup>Finney, Musical Backgrounds, pp. 208-09.

in matters of faith. All of these threads are contained within the three divisions of the poem, thesis, anti-thesis, and synthesis, and Milton uses the music imagery of the pastoral to link them.

Conventionally, the deceased is presented as a shepherd, one who "knew / Himself to sing" (ll. 10-11), and who, with his friend the current singer, played his "Oaten Flute" (l. 33) for the amusement of Satyrs and Fauns. Lycidas is mourned in terms of the loss of sound, of his "soft layes" (l. 44), and his "loss to Shepherds ear" (l. 49) is compared to the ravages of canker, taint-worm, and frost (ll. 45-47).

The speaker, tempted to move from the announced pastoral frame into tragedy (ll. 85-86), returns to pastoral by referring to his "Oat" (l. 88), the proper instrument for a shepherd.

Milton maintains the pastoral mood in the middle section when inveighing against the corrupt clergy by references to sheephooks and again to the shepherds' pipes, this time "scrannel Pipes of wretched straw" (l. 124), which accompany their "lean and flashy songs" (l. 123) so unlike the soft layes and the "Rural ditties . . . / Temper'd to th'Oaten Flute" (ll. 32-33) produced by Lycidas.

In the final section the singer expresses the acceptance of his loss and acknowledges the better state Lycidas has found in song: "He touch'd the tender stops of various Quills, / With eager thought warbling his Dorick lay" (188-89). The change from shepherds' pipes to the lyre brings the tribute to a higher level than could be achieved through the pipes which amused satyrs and fauns. It places the shepherd's song on a level of inspiration with that of the Muses, the "Sisters of the sacred well" (l. 15), whom he has implored to "somewhat loudly sweep the string" (l. 17). The acceptance of the loss no longer needs the discordant effect of harsh glissando but is best expressed by soft, precise plucked notes.

Thus the poem is framed by strings with images of shepherds' pipes and the Orpheus legend between. Milton uses music imagery as an aid in his control over the pastoral, keeping it within its allotted boundaries.

Like "Lycidas," A Mask has a musical structure and pastorally oriented music imagery, and, like "Lycidas," A Mask contains fewer overt music images than might be expected. Unlike "Lycidas," however, A Mask contains actual songs that were set to music. Rosamund Tuve emphasizes the importance of the music which Lawes provided for the songs and the importance of actually

hearing that music for a full appreciation of A Mask,<sup>30</sup> an advantage comparatively few modern readers have.

Although A Mask is firmly in the tradition of the English mask, Gretchen Finney sees also the influence of the Italian dramma per musica in the use of Christian terminology and the use of pagan elements interpreted as Christian allegory. She speculates that Milton may have intended his mask as an entirely sung production, like the dramma per musica. She postulates La catena d'Adone (Ottavio Tronsarelli and Domenica Mazzocchi, 1626) as a source for A Mask on the basis of similarity in "plot, setting, allegory, and details of structural plan."<sup>31</sup>

If the relationship of the structure of the mask to musical drama is fairly easy to discern, the part of music imagery in the structure is not. The references to pastoral music are obvious--the Attendant Spirit completes his disguise as a shepherd with "soft Pipe and smooth dittied Song" (l. 86); the Lady identifies the sounds of Comus' troop as those of ignorant rustics praising pagan gods for their bounty (ll. 170-76); the brothers, lost in the wood, long for the familiar sound

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<sup>30</sup> Tuve, Images and Themes, pp. 114-15.

<sup>31</sup> Finney, Musical Backgrounds, pp. 178-80.

of "pastoral reed" (l. 344), and the Attendant Spirit claims to have been practicing his "rural minstrelsie" (l. 546) when he heard the noise of Comus' troop. These references, however, do not provide a control for the work as the pastoral images do in "Lycidas."

In A Mask Milton uses reference to the music of the spheres and to the ravishing effects of music in a more subtle way than in other earlier poems. Comus' reference to himself and his troop is ironic, implying their kinship with the heavenly bodies, the spheres, producing the music no longer heard by sinful man:

We that are of purer fire  
 Imitate the Starry Quire,  
 Who in their nightly watchfull Sphears,  
 Lead in swift round the Months and Years.  
 (ll. 111-14)

Son of immortals that he is, he is nevertheless cast in a completely corporeal mold, being representative of man's basest instincts and the control of mind by flesh.

In her song to Echo the Lady refers to Echo as "Sweet Queen of Parly, Daughter of the Sphear" (l. 240), who gives "resounding grace to all Heav'ns Harmonies" (l. 242). Echo, being entirely disembodied, is the true representative of sphere-music. The purity of the song can affect even Comus, who questions the power of any human to produce such "Divine enchanting ravishment" (ll. 243-44). It is even more affective than the song

sung by his mother Circe and the sirens. The Attendant Spirit also speaks of the affective power of the song, calling it "strains that might create a soul / Under the ribs of Death" (ll. 560-61).

A final reference to the music of the spheres is at the very end of the mask:

Mortals that would follow me,  
Love vertue, she alone is free,  
She can teach you how to clime  
Higher then the Spheary chime;  
Or if Vertue feeble were,  
Heav'n it self would stoop to her.  
(ll. 1017-22)

This image again calls to mind the Lady's song and its appeal to Echo as "Daughter of the Sphear" who will "give resounding grace to all Heav'ns Harmonies."

The sphere-music imagery of A Mask, with the Lady's song as a pivotal point, provides a structural referent, but alone it is not developed enough to provide a frame for the entire work. It is not the imagery itself in A Mask which is structurally important, but what John Hollander calls a "complicated metaphoric fabric"<sup>32</sup> that uses the affective properties of music, an intricate combination of theoretical and actual music drawn from the images of pastoral music, sphere music, and natural music.

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<sup>32</sup>John Hollander, The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry: 1400-1700 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1970), p. 319.



As has been demonstrated in the foregoing analysis, the early poems are rich in music imagery, showing that Milton was well aware of the effectiveness of sound and of associations of sound with ideas and musical forms before he lost his sight, an occurrence which undoubtedly increased his sensitivity to and dependence on sound. With this knowledge of how well music could work in shorter forms he was prepared to employ it to advantage in the large works of his later years. Paradise Lost is especially rich in music imagery, while Paradise Regained is less so. Samson Agonistes, on the other hand, contains few music images.

The structural importance of a single type of imagery in a work as large as Paradise Lost can be indicated in a variety of ways, especially since the images fall into a number of subclasses. In this analysis two approaches will be taken. First, the imagery will be examined book by book, then important types of imagery will be traced through the entire work.

Book I contains a number of music images, most of them involved with description of the fallen angels and their activities. The first music images, however, are not connected with the hellish hosts, but are part of the invocation. Beginning in line 6 the poet invokes the aid of the heavenly muse, who inspired David, "That

Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed" (l. 8), thus aligning himself as a singer with the singer of psalms, the most renowned of biblical musicians. In line 13 he asks for aid for "my adventrous Song" which will soar "Above th'Aonian Mount" (l. 15), home of the classical muses. With these references Milton establishes the structure and content of his poem. It will be a classical epic, "adventrous," and will take inspiration from the sacred writings of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Music imagery is dropped after the invocation and reappears nearly four hundred lines later in the account of Moloch, first of the fallen angels to be catalogued. The image is unpleasant, "the noise of Drums and Timbrels loud" (l. 394), drowning out the cries of sacrificial victims.

The next pagan gods to have music connected with their worship are Astoreth (Astarte) and Thammuz. Unlike bloody Moloch, their worship does not include noisy percussion but rather the songs of virgins and damsels. Astoreth, love/moon goddess, is honored by the nightly songs of virgins, even in Zion. Thammuz (Adonis) is also worshipped by women who sing "Amourous dittyes" (l. 449) at his festival. There is great contrast between Moloch and Astoreth/Thammuz, one demanding human sacrifice and discordant percussion, the others seductive songs.

The most important music figures are used in the last 250 lines of the book, when the frequency of use also increases. Images of martial music are used to symbolize the base purpose of the fallen angels. The opening image of this group involves the sounding of the trumpet to call the host together (I, ll. 531-34). The image also serves as a prophecy because the shout inspired by the "Sonorous Mettal blowing Martial sounds . . . frighted the Reign of Chaos and old Night" (ll. 540, 543). Later Satan will travel through Chaos on his mission to Eden, a mission that will frighten the universe.

Milton maintains the sense of purpose with the famous image of "flutes in the Dorian mood" (I, ll. 549-62). In this passage not only is the reference presented, but is also elaborated upon at some length. The emphasis on purpose and order is increased in the last lines:

Thus they  
Breathing united force with fixed thought  
Mov'd on in silence to soft Pipes that charm'd  
Thir painful steps o're the burnt soyle . . .  
(ll. 559-62)

The music serves to turn their thoughts away from the physical pain of their situation by uniting them in purpose as they had been united in heaven. Since Milton is dealing with known subject matter and his readers knew what was to come, these images take on added seriousness.

Something of the aura of purposefulness carries over to the image of the organ used to describe Pandæmonium (I, ll. 707-15). Again the sounds described are soft, "Dulcet Symphonies and voices sweet" (l. 712), like the sound of the flutes. Also, the workings of this intricate instrument, described in brief detail in lines 707-09, require precision in operation to produce the sound, a precision symbolizing purpose and cooperation among individuals.

The trumpet reappears to call the hosts together again for council in their newly built capital (ll. 752-57). The first trumpet call heralds the beginning of organization; this second one confirms the organization. Between the two soundings the fallen angels have turned their thoughts away from the pain of their situation and have joined forces. The second herald symbolizes accomplishment and deepens the ominous mood Milton is building.

Closely following the trumpet image, Milton uses an image of swarming bees, with their "hiss of rustling wings" (l. 768). Earlier he has listed a great number of fallen angels, with names and characteristics; however, this image does far more than any list to emphasize the vast numbers of the hosts of Hell.

The final image of Book I returns to pleasant music, the "jocund Music" (l. 784) of the elves which charms the

peasants, while they dance. This image is part of a simile describing the minuteness to which the fallen angels have reduced themselves in order to fit their great numbers into Pandæmonium. The image ends with the comment, "At once with joy and fear his heart [the peasant's] rebounds" (l. 788). This reaction to the scene and the music is indicative of the affective powers of music. Thus Milton closes the book, as he opened it, connecting music with inspiration.

Book II contains far fewer music images than Book I, three of which relate directly to the activities of Satan's followers, while two others are associated with Chaos. In his reply to Belial's counsel that their best course is patience and reliance on God's forgiving nature, Mammon reminds his fellows that any return to God's good graces would involve returning to worshipping Him. Mammon, his reason distorted by pride and disobedience, speaks of "new Subjection" (italics mine; l. 239) embodied in "Forc't Halleluiahs" (l. 243). Distaste for such activity is also evident in "warbl'd Hymms" (l. 242), a sneering reference to the majestic music of Heaven.

The second music image again involves a trumpet call, this time not gathering the host but announcing the result of their conclave. To strengthen his position as leader Satan "nobly" volunteers to seek out created

Earth, at great personal risk, and gain revenge on God by subverting men. The importance of this decision is underlined by the use of a trumpet to announce it, yet, by describing the call as "sounding Alchymie" (l. 517), Milton shows that the purpose here is as base as that of the other schemes.

A few lines farther music imagery is again used in connection with the fallen angels while they wait for Satan's return. Still angelic in form, they sing like angels and accompany their songs on harps. But their songs are songs of self-praise and self-pity, turned inward. The songs are partial, lacking true harmony and proper text, but they charm the sense, "ravishing" the fallen angels. If their reason were not perverted, such a partial song would not charm them so.

These songs, still retaining some angelic qualities, are in contrast to the music images used in association with Chaos. Lines 919-24 of Book II describe "noises loud and ruinous" (l. 920) which greet Satan as he enters Chaos from Hell. Here there is no order, even the enforced order of Hell, and no hint of harmony or text with the music. Instead, Satan meets "Discord with a thousand various mouths" (l. 967). The suggestion of a multiplicity of sounds aids Milton in describing a place which defies description because of its complete disorder.

The invocation to Book III reminds the reader of the discord of Chaos when Milton says "I sung of Chaos and Eternal Night" (l. 18). In this invocation the reader is again reminded of the purpose and subject matter of the poem through the reference to the heavenly muse and the comment that the poet has sung "With other notes then to th'Orphean Lyre" (l. 17). The invocation continues with the image of the warbling brooks washing Sion's feet (ll. 29-31) as source of inspiration. Milton also uses a music image to describe his plans for the verse: "thoughts, that volontaire move / Harmonious numbers" (ll. 37-38). He then compares the process of this voluntary movement to the singing of the nightingale, which is heard in the darkness and not seen. It is interesting that his first reference to the song of a bird is to the song of the nightingale in association with his blindness and the blindness of ancient poets and prophets.

Book III contains the first direct appearance of God the Father and the Son. The Father's first pronouncement is of grace and forgiveness to fallen man. The Son's first words praise the Father's munificence in a reference to the music of praise:

. . . both Heav'n and Earth shall high extoll  
 Thy praises, and with the innumerable sound  
 Of Hymns and sacred Songs . . .  
 (ll. 146-48)

This image makes reference to hymns and songs of praise, but the music itself does not actually appear at this point, and, after the Father has gone on to ask for a volunteer for incarnation to redeem man, "the Heav'nly Quire stood mute, / And silence was in Heav'n" (ll. 217-18). But after the Son expresses his desire for this service and the Father praises him and expounds on His duties and honors, songs of praise burst forth from the heavenly hosts (ll. 345-49, 365-71). Milton provides full images here, telling of "blest voices, uttering joy," "loud Hosanna's," "gold'n harps . . . ever tun'd," "charming symphonie." The lines "No voice exempt, no voice but well could joine / Melodious part, such concord is in Heav'n" (ll. 370-71) remind one of Mammon's "forc't Halleluiahs" in Book II, showing just how wrong Mammon's ideas are. The text of the angel's praises follows the description of the song, ending with the statement "never shall my Harp thy praise / Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoine" (ll. 414-15).

At this point in Book III Milton ceases using music imagery, turning attention from Heaven to the created universe where Satan stalks alone, searching for Eden. The historical catalogue of woes in the postlapsarian state, Milton's attack on the Roman church, and Satan's deception of Uriel are not associated with music. The



absence of music imagery in this part of the book indicates a clear separation of heavenly activities and those resulting from Satan's deception.

Music imagery does not appear in Satan's long soliloquy in Book IV in which he moves from angelic regret to fiendish purpose. Milton's description of Eden is, for the most part, a visual one, "A happy rural seat of various view" (l. 247). Music imagery finally appears in association with a brook, "murmuring waters" (l. 260), birds, and breezes, "aires, vernal aires" (l. 264) which "attune / The trembling leaves" (ll. 265-66). Milton refers to "Universal Pan / Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance" (ll. 266-67). This "universal" Pan leads into a series of references to classical gods and other gardens, eclipsed by the superiority of Eden.

Music imagery does not appear in the descriptive passages about Adam and Eve or in the speeches in which Satan firms his resolve against them. It reappears at nightfall with a natural music image of the nightingale (ll. 600-04). The image, telling of the "amorous descant" (l. 603) of the nocturnal bird, serves to introduce the dialogue between Adam and Eve in which Adam explains the rightness of day and night and their places in human life. Adam closes his explanation by reminding Eve of the other music they hear at night, the celestial

voices of angels singing while on night watch (ll. 680-88). These voices are accompanied by the "Heav'nly touch of instrumental sounds" (l. 686) and inspire the human pair to thoughts of Heaven. The prominent reference to the harmony of the angelic voices, which "Divide the night" (l. 688), serves to keep the reader mindful of the harmony existing between Earth and Heaven.

Once again Milton uses music images as a frame. The nightingale image is simple and earthly, while the closing image of celestial music is far more intricate, indicating the pattern of the conversation they frame. Adam begins his speech on a practical note--night was created as a time of rest after the labors of the day--and closes, answering Eve's question about the stars, on a philosophical note--the stars hold total darkness at bay, and even at night God's glory is beheld by the "spiritual Creatures" who praise His works without pause.

The song of the nightingale is used again at the close of Milton's editorial pronouncements on the joys of "connubial Love" (ll. 763-73). This natural song is contrasted in the image with the "serenate" of the "starv'd Lover" to illustrate the difference between the natural, undefiled love of Adam and Eve and the state to which love has fallen. This image serves to bring to a close the section of Book IV which is concerned

exclusively with Adam and Eve and returns the reader to the watchful angels, most specifically to Gabriel, who was the last to speak before this love song began and the first to speak at its close. Although Gabriel is traditionally associated with the trumpet, it would be entirely inappropriate to use trumpet images to frame a passage in which Adam lovingly "educates" his spouse on the merits of night and in which their pure love is celebrated. The nightingale, associated with success in love (see Sonnet I) and also with sorrow, is appropriate here, enforcing the idea of pure love and portending the anguish which is to come.

The final music images of Book IV match the initial ones of the music of angelic praise. Satan, caught leaving Eden by the angel guards, praises his own leadership and courage by sneering at the practices of his former comrades:

Whose easier business were to serve thir Lord  
High up in Heav'n, with songs to hymne his Throne,  
And practis'd distances to cringe, not fight.  
(11. 943-45)

Stan's view of the hymns and songs of heaven is far different from that of the angels who burst into songs of praise when the Son volunteers for incarnation. Milton builds a contrast between the Son's selfless action and Satan's selfish one, reminding his readers of the

spontaneous songs of praise in Book III through this mocking reference near the close of Book IV.

Book V combines natural, vocal, and speculative music images. The book opens with dawn in Eden, heralded by

. . . th'only sound  
Of Leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,  
Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill Matin Song  
Of Birds on every bough . . .  
(ll. 5-8)

The waking Eve recalls that the voice in her troubling dream tempted her to leave the bower and explore the night where the "night-warbling Bird . . . / Tunes sweetest his love-labor'd song" (ll. 40-41). Knowing her curiosity, Satan has tempted her with the song of the nightingale. The birds heralding the dawn do so with "shrill Matin Song" while the nightingale "Tunes sweetest his love-labor'd song." Although the adjective "shrill" does not here have an unpleasant connotation, it nevertheless does contrast with "sweetest" in the second image. "Shrill" indicates activity while "sweetest" is seductive, the differences emphasizing the contrast in the purpose of the matin birds and the being who spoke of the nightingale in Eve's dream.

Music imagery figures importantly in both the introduction to Adam and Eve's morning hymn and in the hymn itself. The introduction features a description of the hymn: "various styles" (l. 146), "Prompt eloquence"

(l. 149), and "More tuneable then needed Lute or Harp" (l. 151), describe the spontaneous hymn. Within the hymn are found images which set forth God's glory in musical terms. First is a reference to angelic songs (ll. 160-65) sung by beings who actually see God. Second is a speculative music image, telling of the movement of the planets "In mystic Dance not without Song" (ll. 175-79). Third is a long image including breathing winds, warbling brooks, singing birds, and singing humans (ll. 192-204). This image moves from incorporeal, to inanimate, to animate, to human, excluding only instrumental music in the area of practical music. Thus within the hymn are found images of musical praise of God created by the angels, by the firmament, and by both inanimate and animate members of the created world.

Most of the part of Book V, in which God sends Raphael to warn Adam of the tempter and to tell him of his free will, is free of music images. Milton brings in music again when Raphael has finished his words and Adam replies:

Thy words  
 Attentive, and with more delighted eare,  
 Divine instructor, I have heard, then when  
 Cherubic Songs by night from neighbouring Hills  
 Aereal Music send . . .

(ll. 544-48)

This comparison calls to mind the images of heavenly music in the morning hymn, explaining Adam's attitude toward Raphael's revelation through reference to his earlier perception.

Raphael's reference to the mystical dance of the angels which resembles the movement of the planets (ll. 616-27) reminds the reader of the image of the "mystic Dance not without Song" in the morning hymn. Again Milton reinforces Adam's ability to make true perceptions, indicating that he has been endowed with reason, like the angels. The implication that like the angels he too is subject to using that reason wrongly is implicit in Raphael's report of Satan's envy and pride.

Raphael precedes his introduction of the problem of Satan with an account of angelic hymns of praise (ll. 650-57), an activity Satan has disparaged several times. Thus Milton reinforces what Raphael will say about Satan by reminding the reader of the attitudes Satan has expressed.

The music images in Book VI are used as a device to carry forward the account of the war in Heaven. There is, appropriately enough, a greater concentration of openly martial references in this book than in others, and the references which are not openly martial are closely associated with martial activities.

The initial image (ll. 56-58) is openly martial, featuring the "Ethereal Trumpet" (l. 60) calling the militant heavenly angels into ranks which then move to "Instrumental Harmonie that breath'd / Heroic Ardor to advent'rous deeds" (ll. 65-66). The order and purpose of the angels which this image describes is reinforced by Raphael's comment about the strangeness of angel warring with angel (ll. 91-98) in the second music image. The music reference here is to the happier hours when angels used music as a means of praise, "Hymning th'Eternal Father" (l. 96). The memory of hymns of praise is interrupted by the "shout / Of Battle" (ll. 96-97). The third image (ll. 164-70) expresses Satan's now well-known opinion of the activities of angels. He mocks the loyal angels, accusing them of serving out of sloth, "train'd up in Feast and Song" (l. 167) and sneers at the armed "Minstrelsie of Heav'n" (l. 168), implying comparison between them and court musicians and jesters.

Satan soon discovers that he has misjudged the loyal angels:

. . . Michael bid sound  
 Th'Arch-Angel trumpet; through the vast of heaven  
 It sounded, and the faithful Armies rung  
Hosanna to the Highest: nor stood at gaze  
 The adverse Legions, no less hideous joyn'd  
 The horrid shock: now storming furie rose,  
 And clamour such as heard in Heav'n till now  
 Was never, Arms on Armour clashing bray'd

Horrible discord, and the madding Wheelles  
 Of brazen Chariots rag'd; dire was the noise  
 Of conflict . . .

(11. 202-12)

In this image are combined instrumental music in the sound of the trumpet and vocal music in the Hosannas which contrast with the "clamour" and "Horrible discord" of battle. The purpose expressed in the initial music image of the book is here put to the test, giving lie to Satan's sneering taunts at the "Minstrelsie of Heav'n." The trumpet again sounds to herald the second day of battle (11. 524-28), which is to prove somewhat more successful for Satan's band.

The third day of battle is not opened with a trumpet call but with words from the Son, who has been appointed to drive the rebels from Heaven. His reply to the charge given him by the Father is closed with a music image, telling how the loyal angels will praise him when the victory is won:

Then shall thy Saints unmixt, and from th'impure  
 Farr separate, circling thy holy Mount  
 Unfained Halleluiahs to thee sing,  
 Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief.

(11. 742-45)

The change in type of image signals a change in the war. Previously it was war between equals, angel against angel, but now with the Son in the fray it is creator against created; the rebels are simply overpowered.



This victory accomplished alone by the Son is celebrated by the angels in jubilee, praising Him as "Victorious King" (ll. 882-88). As the Son praises the Father, so He is praised by the angels through music.

In Book VII, as in Books I and III, Milton begins with the invocation of the heavenly muse, this time calling her Urania. He questions the use of the name of the Greek muse, remembering how the muse could not save her son Orpheus from Bacchus' followers (ll. 33-38). Milton calls on his muse to protect him from the "barbatous dissonance / Of Bacchus and his revelers" (ll. 32-33), asking her to do what Orpheus' mother could not. "For thou are Heav'nlie, shee an empty dream" (l. 39). Once again Milton uses music imagery to assert the superiority of his subject and inspiration over those of classical poets. In "Lycidas" the same allusion is made to mourn the death of a poet; here it is part of a plea that the poet not suffer the same fate (figuratively speaking, of course) as Orpheus, whose song the "savage clamor dround" (l. 36). Earlier in the invocation the poet reminds the muse that of his song "Half yet remains Unsung" (l. 21), but his voice is "unchang'd / To hoarce or mute, though fall'n on evil days" (ll. 23-24).

Since Book VII deals with Raphael's account of the creation of the universe, most of the music images are associated with the praise accorded to God by the heavenly hosts for His greatness. The others deal mainly with describing His created world.

The images of praise begin with a passage sung by the hierarchies when God declares His intention of creating the world (ll. 180-82). This hymn is descriptive of a part of the Anglican service, the Gloria, and it follows the pattern Milton has established for praising God in music.

The very beginning of the creative act is accompanied by music, when God moves to the edge of Heaven to look over the abyss of Chaos where He will place His created world:

. . . Heav'n op'nd wide  
Her ever during Gates, Harmonious sound  
On golden Hinges moving, to let forth  
The King of Glorie in his powerful Word  
And Spirit coming to create new Worlds,  
(ll. 205-09)

When the first day's creation is finished, it is "Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung / By the Celestial Quires" (ll. 253-54). This passage is more musically descriptive than the one celebrating God's announcement, telling of angelic voices filling the "Hollow Universal Orb" (l. 257) with "joy and shout" (l. 256) and accompanied

by "Golden Harps . . . hymning prais'd / God and his works" (ll. 258-59). This celebration is carried on through the heavenly night until the first Earth morning. By contrast, the work of the second day is celebrated with a spare image: "So Eev'n / And Morning Chorus sung the second Day" (ll. 274-75). Since the images are only a few lines apart, it can be assumed that Milton intended the description to carry over from the first and tells his readers only of the duration of the singing. The third day is "recorded" (l. 338), the fourth "crownd" (l. 386), the fifth "solemniz'd" (l. 448), and the sixth "accomplished" (l. 550).

The activities of the third day contain Milton's first image descriptive of creation. When God separates the seas and the dry land the waters gather "as Armies at the call / Of trumpet" (ll. 295-96). The martial image contrasts with the long bird image of the fifth day in which the songs of the smaller birds "Solac'd the Woods" (l. 436) and the cock's "clarion sounds / The silent hours" (ll. 443-44). The actual sounds made by the creatures describe them, whereas the movement of the waters is described by a simile involving a music reference.

The sixth and final day of creation is begun with a music reference reminding the reader of the nightlong

musical celebrations which follow each day's accomplishments: "The Sixt, and of Creation last arose / With Eevning Harps and Mattin . . ." (ll. 449-50). It ends with a full description of the celebration, as the first day ended with a full description:

. . . Up he rode  
 Followd with acclamation and the sound  
 Symphonious of ten thousand Harpes that tun'd  
 Angelic harmonies: the Earth, the Aire  
 Resounded, (thou remember'st for thou heardst)  
 The Heav'ns and all the Constellations rung,  
 The Planets in thir station list'ning stood,  
 While the bright Pomp ascended jubilant.  
 Open, ye everlasting Gates, they sung,  
 Open, ye Heav'ns, your living dores; let in  
 The great Creator from his work returnd  
 Magnificent, his Six days work, a World.  
 (ll. 557-68)

Again there is the sound of harps, and the angelic voices cause the air to resound and the heavens and constellations to ring, ideas which closely parallel those of the image closing the first day. The praise continues with another long image:

. . . and from work  
 Now resting, bless'd and hallowd the Seav'nth day,  
 As resting on that day from all his work,  
 But not in silence holy kept; the Harp  
 Had work and rested not, the solemn Pipe,  
 And Dulcimer, all Organs of sweet stop,  
 All sounds on Fret by String or Golden Wire  
 Temper'd soft Tunings, intermixt with Voice  
 Choral or Unison: of incense Clouds  
 Fuming from Golden Censers hid the Mount.  
 Creation and the Six dayes acts they sung,  
 Great are thy works, Jehovah, infinite  
 Thy power; what thought can measure thee or tongue  
 Relate thee . . .

(ll. 591-604)

To voices and harps are added references to pipe, dulcimer, and organ. "Silence holy" is not suitable for praise of this great accomplishment.

The closing music image of Book VII is brief: "So sung they, and the Empyrean rung, / With Halleluiahs: Thus was the sabbath kept" (ll. 633-34). The brevity of the image does not prevent it from being another revelation of angelic activity: the keeping of the Sabbath.

The organization of Book VII is fairly easy to analyze. The invocation to the heavenly muse, here called Urania, declares the poet's powers sufficient to finish the second half of his appointed task and calls upon the muse to protect him from those who would impede his progress, rather conventional declaration and request. The structural subdivisions of the book are clearly indicated by music. God's declaration of intent is celebrated with music, the harmonious sound of the hinges of heaven's gates opens the act of creation, and the first and sixth days of creation are celebrated with music. Milton declines to produce full musical images for the intervening days, counting on his readers to remember how the first day was celebrated and assume that the others are celebrated in like fashion. To repeat music images at the close of each day would be entirely too mechanical. It is, however, appropriate

to close the sixth day and to celebrate the cumulative accomplishment with full music images.

Music imagery is a particularly appropriate structural device for Books VI and VII since they are both organized in a strict time frame: the three days of the war in Heaven and the six days of creation followed by the Sabbath. Music is the temporal art, for sound exists in time more than in space. It is said that music "fills" a certain space, but its existence in space is limited by its volume and its existence in time. This fact deepens the implications of the music imagery in these books in which the temporal divisions are outlined by music images and implications of music images.<sup>33</sup>

Book VIII has fewer music images than the preceding books, and the images are not so important to the structure. Raphael uses an image of noise "other than the sound of Dance or Song" (l. 243) to illustrate his journey toward Hell on the day of Adam's creation. His account of the sounds issuing from Hell leads one to believe that the journey occurred before the fallen angels were called together by Satan and developed their resolve. The

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<sup>33</sup>In The Metaphoric Structure of Paradise Lost (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), Jackson Cope advances space as the controlling metaphor of Paradise Lost, ignoring the multitude of aural images and the temporal structure of the poem as a whole and especially of Books VI and VII.

accounts of their musical utterances after that are in contrast with Raphael's report.

Two other images in Book VIII are closely related to each other. Both are references to harmony and compare heard harmony to the right relationship between man and woman. In asking God for a companion of his own kind, Adam reminds his creator that harmony occurs between equals:

Among unequals what societie  
Can sort, what harmonie or true delight?  
Which must be mutual, in proportion due  
Giv'n and receiv'd . . .  
(ll. 383-86)

God, seeing the rightness of Adam's request, provides Eve as his companion. The union is admirable, as expressed in the second harmony image, which declares that harmony in a wedded pair is "More grateful then harmonious sound to the eare" (l. 606). The structure of this book is not governed so much by time as was the structure of the two preceding books; hence music imagery is less necessary, although what does appear is important.

Book IX features the fewest music images of all the books in Paradise Lost. After brief references to tragic notes and heroic song in the invocation, only one music image appears in Book IX. When Adam and Eve wake they join "thir vocal Worship to the Quire / Of Creatures wanting voice" (ll. 198-99). This reference to their morning hymn

is only a fraction of that accorded to it in Book V. Milton relies on his readers to recall the earlier full description rather than repeating it himself.

The absence of music imagery in Book IX is significant. The one real image, although brief, occurs before the Fall which results in the destruction of the harmony between God and man, and after which, as Milton has revealed in several places, man can no longer hear the music of the spheres. Milton reminds the reader of this loss by avoiding the use of music imagery after the fateful act.

Harmony is the subject of the first music image in Book X, this time the "secret harmonie" (l. 358) which moves Sin's heart in "connexion sweet" (l. 359) with that of Satan her parent/spouse. Now that Satan has accomplished his "magnific deeds" (l. 354), true harmony between man and God and between man and woman has been destroyed, but this perversion of the concept remains.

The next two images, set in Hell, show what hellish harmony really is, a "dismal universal hiss, the sound / Of public scorn" (ll. 508-09) which Satan hears instead of "Thir universal shout and high applause" (l. 505) when he reports his triumph to his band. Satan too suffers the fate of his followers. The shouts and songs of praise they intend are atonal, inharmonic, wordless sibilants.



Milton carries the hissing concept forward as the fallen angels are transformed into serpents, thus completing their own fall by corrupting man:

Down fell both Spear and Shield, down they as fast,  
 And the dire hiss renew'd, and the dire form  
 Catcht by Contagion, like in punishment,  
 As in thir crime. Thus was th'applaue they meant,  
 Turn'd to exploding hiss, triumph to shame  
 Cast on themselves from thir own mouths. . . .

(ll. 543-47)

No trace of their angelic form and glory remains, and they are incapable of producing even partial song as they had done in Book II.

In direct contrast to these images is the angelic song praising God following his declaration of his Son's eventual triumph over Sin and Death:

He ended, and the heav'nly Audience loud  
 Sung Halleluia, as the sound of Seas  
 Through multitude that sung: Just are thy ways,  
 Righteous are thy Decress on all thy Works;  
 Who can extenuate thee? Next, to the Son,  
 Destin'd restorer of Mankind, by whom  
 New Heav'n and Earth shall to the Ages rise,  
 Or down from Heav'n descend. . . .

(ll. 641-48)

The angels sing halleluias to the Father and the Son, praising their deeds with words set to music. The obvious superiority of song over hiss is illustrative of the fact that God's deeds will in time render Satan's void, once again proving that for all his pride and self-esteem Satan is no match for God. Milton balances the scenes skillfully through these contrasting images.

The final music image of Book X is in Adam's lament over his present state, recalling happier days:

O Woods, O Fountains, Hillocks, Dales and Bowrs,  
 With other echo late I taught your Shades  
 To answer, and resound farr other Song.  
 (ll. 860-62)

The allusive nature of this image does not recall in detail Adam's earlier songs. Again Milton leaves it to the reader to remember, as Adam is doing, for actual song is part of praise, not lamentation, and Adam and Eve's section of Book X is lamentation.

In Book XI are images of music with heavenly associations and images of music to be heard on earth in the future as it is presented to Adam by Michael. The first image involves the trumpet summoning the angels together to hear God's declaration of judgment against Adam and Eve:

He ended, and the Son gave signal high  
 To the bright Minister that watchd, hee blew  
 His Trumpet, heard in Oreb since perhaps  
 When God descended, and perhaps once more  
 To sound at general Doom . . . .  
 (ll. 72-76)

This trumpet is not only summons, but it is also prophecy of things to come in human history: the Giving of the Law and the Day of Judgment.

God's pronouncement is not this time followed by a hymn of praise, but by the Archangel Michael's departure for Eden. His companions, cherubim, are described through music imagery which compares their wakefulness to that of

Janus, who was charmed by "Arcadian Pipe, the Pastoral Reed / Of Hermes, or his opiate Rod" (ll. 132-33). This particular image, though a very effective one, calling upon the reader's knowledge of Greek mythology, is incidental to structure, having no function other than to describe the cherubim.

The remaining images of Book XI are associated with events in human history. The first, the image of the organ fugue (ll. 558-63) is emblematic of Jubal's "invention" of music, actually the restoration of music to men, and the first instance of humans using instruments, since Adam and Eve did not need them. The second describes music used by wanton women as part of their seduction of the "Just men" (ll. 580-97). Here Milton uses songs sung to harp accompaniment for purposes other than praising God. Adam's admiration for these songs is based on his reaction to the sound and not on his knowledge of their meaning or the intent of their singers. In the prelapsarian state Adam knew naturally how to use music, but here he is taken in. These songs are sung during the day and carried on into the night, while Adam and Eve sang God's praises in their morning hymn and retired silently at night to use the darkness hours for rest. This image of night-time revelry reminds one of Adam's lecture to Eve concerning proper use of the darkness hours and their

morning hymn of praise to God, a custom which is not observed in the future as Michael presents it.

The final book of the epic contains only two music images, but both are connected with the most important events of human history: the Giving of the Law and the Nativity. The Giving of the Law is heralded by the trumpet (ll. 227-30) in a brief image which reminds one of the trumpets calling together the hosts of Heaven and the hosts of Hell. The image associated with the Nativity is also a brief one:

His place of birth a solemn Angel tells  
To simple Shepherds, keeping watch by night;  
They gladly thither haste, and by a Quire  
Of squadrond Angels hear his Carol sung.  
(ll. 364-67)

The contrast between this image and the ones of the "Nativity Ode" is striking. The image as used here, however, is quite appropriate, for the Nativity is in Paradise Lost a future event. The Incarnation has been much discussed in Heaven, but the actual event of the Nativity is not so important as the concept of the Incarnation. Since the giving of the Law and the Nativity are of such paramount importance, both events of promise, one the establishment of order for the Judeo-Christian tradition and the other redemption for mankind, the prophecy of Book XII turns on them. It is therefore only fitting that they be illustrated with the only music images in the book.

Also they are perhaps the only events worthy of images of heraldry and praise.

Milton closes his epic with a moment of poignancy, when Adam and Eve leave Eden hand in hand. There is no musical accompaniment; they sing no songs. Music is lost to them and to their descendants until Jubal rediscovers it, and then it develops along different lines from those the first humans followed. The absence of music here enforces the open feeling of the ending. There is no cadence, no coda. The reader has been shown the panorama of human history and knows that the expulsion marks the beginning of the panorama.

To say that music imagery is the chief structural control in Paradise Lost would be an exaggeration. A work of the scope of Paradise Lost admits of a number of controlling devices. But repeated imagery can help bring unity and continuity to a long work, and this is certainly the case with the music imagery Milton employs. Certain figures come to be associated with certain characters or with events of a particular type. The repetition of an image helps the reader recall a previous event and thus add another dimension to the meaning of the event he is currently reading about. Several of these repeated images would be obvious from the preceding book-by-book discussion of the music imagery.

Probably the most obvious of the recurring figures is the hymn or song of praise sung by the angels to celebrate God's actions or decrees. This image appears first in Book III after God's declaration of grace to fallen man (ll. 144-49). The second such image appears two hundred lines later, after the Son has declared his intention of interceding for man (ll. 344-52). The song of praise to the Son extends for some length, featuring notably the harp references in lines 365-71 and lines 410-17.

Adam and Eve hear this song in Book IV, lines 680-88, and refer to it in their morning hymn in Book V, lines 160-65. Adam refers to angelic song when he declares to Raphael that his words about free will are sweeter than the songs he has heard at night (V, ll. 544-49).

In Book VI the angelic songs of praise are superseded in the earlier sections by more martial images, but they appear later to celebrate the triumph of the Son over Satan and his crew. In fact, the Son predicts these songs of celebration (ll. 742-45). The actual song (ll. 882-88) is directed toward the Son after the victory, showing his oneness with the Father, putting the reader in mind of God's declaration of the Son's place and power in Book V (ll. 599-615), a declaration which does not please all the heavenly hosts. This announcement is

followed by the mystical dance of angels and planets, a music image that does not fit exactly the celebration-song mold, but which reinforces the importance of music in the angel's existence.

The celebration song is found several times in association with the account of creation in Book VII. The angels greet God's declaration of intent with "Great triumph and rejoicing," singing a Gloria-like hymn (ll. 188-92). The first day's work is celebrated with a lengthy image (ll. 252-60) as is the sixth day's (ll. 557-640), with implied songs at the end of each intervening day. These songs remind the reader of the songs in Book III, which in chronological order actually follow those of Book VII. In Book VII God creates the beings to whom He gives grace and on whose behalf His Son will intervene. These images serve to bring the events separated by four books into closer conjunction. The fact that Adam and Eve hear celestial songs, as related in Books IV and V, brings them into a closer relationship to the act by which they were created and to the future fact of their redemption through God's grace and the Son's intervention.

In Book X the celebration-song image follows God's declaration of the victory of the Son over Sin and Death (ll. 641-48). This image also ties in with those of

Book III. In Book III God extends grace to sinful men, and the Son declares his intention to intervene on behalf of men. In Book X the concepts are repeated, drawing dramatic importance from the events that have been related in Books IV through IX.

The final image of the poem celebrates the Nativity in angelic song (XII, ll. 364-67). The shepherds, descendants of Adam, are privileged to hear the song which Adam once heard but which all generations between have not been able to perceive. The night setting of the angelic songs of Books IV and V is repeated in Book XII. The song ties in not only with those Adam heard but also with those of Book III when the Incarnation, whose earthly beginning is marked by the Nativity, is planned.

Roughly parallel to the images of angelic song is the less frequent reference made by the fallen angels to servile songs. First voiced by Mammon in Book I, the image is of song grudgingly uttered, contrasting with the spontaneity obvious in the images previously mentioned. Caught by the angels guarding the bower in Eden, Satan speaks in a music image of the "easier business" of the loyal angels (IV, ll. 941-45) as compared to his perilous flight through Chaos. In Book XI Satan speaks in derision of the "Minstrelsie of Heav'n" as "servility" which will contend with "freedom" in battle (ll. 164-70).



This image reminds one of the enforced concord in Hell, resulting from the desire for revenge on a fate justly deserved. There is repetition of phrasing in the "servile offerings" that Mammon sees as condition of God's possible forgiveness and Satan's mocking "Servility with freedom to contend." The irony in Mammon's statement--is their present condition free?--is strengthened by Satan's idea that the loyal angels are servile while he and his followers are free. Satan's statement is voiced earlier, and Mammon's repetition reveals how their reason is warped and how their values perverted when compared to those of the loyal angels who sing spontaneous praises and "unfained Halleluiahs."

A third figure which gains importance over the length of the poem is the trumpet image. The first mention of the trumpet occurs in Hell, when Satan assembles his crew (I, ll. 531-34). The trumpet sounds again to call the fallen angels to the council at Pandæmonium (I, ll. 752-57). In Book II Satan again employs the trumpet to announce his sovereignty and celebrate his plan for the corruption of man (ll. 511-20). Heavenly trumpets appear in Book VI when the sound of the trumpet assembles the heavenly hosts (ll. 56-68, 202-11, 524-30). As with Satan's and Mammon's images of forced servile songs, it is necessary again to remember the time sequence. The

trumpet calls in Books I and II occur chronologically after those of Book VI and sound as a result of events recounted in Book VI. Although the Creation is heralded with song and not trumpets, Milton uses the trumpet figure to describe the ordering of the seas in Book VII (ll. 295-98). The use of the figure here gives the reader a frame of reference by which to measure the vastness of the hosts of Heaven and Hell called together by the trumpet. The trumpet in Book XI (ll. 72-77) calls together the heavenly hosts to hear God's judgment on man. The purpose behind this sounding parallels that behind the sounding in Book I, lines 752-57, calling together the council at Pandæmonium. The purpose is necessitated as a result of the decisions made in the council in Hell: to corrupt man in order to take revenge on God. That decision has been implemented, and God now takes action against disobedient and fallen mankind. This figure is also prophetic, telling of other trumpet soundings important in human history, at the giving of the Law and the Day of Judgment. The trumpet sounding at the Giving of the Law appears in Book XII, lines 227-30, but the trumpet of the Day of Judgment never appears, leaving it for the future.

As with the images of angelic song, the trumpet images are echoic, reminding the reader of events

previously narrated but occurring later in time. Milton uses recurring music images to reinforce the echoic structure of the poem. The beginning in medias res of the epic provides the base for a double echoic structure; the reader hears echoes of previously employed images, yet knows that the events illustrated by those images actually occurred later in the chronological sequence than the image which has brought the earlier-told ones to mind. After the tenth book, when the narration turns to future events, the echoes appear in chronological order. Books I-V deal with narration of present events; Books VI and VII return to the past to give causes for the actions of the preceding books; Books VII-X again deal with the present; and Books XI and XII tell of the future. The use of music imagery as a unifying device is philosophically appropriate in a poem whose structure is dependent on time. Music exists in time as the poem exists in time.

Time also figures in Paradise Regained, but not so importantly as in Paradise Lost. The shorter epic covers a much briefer time span, having as its chief subject the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. It begins in medias res at the time of Christ's baptism and moves back in time to tell of his birth and childhood. This poem, however, lacks the prophetic sections of Paradise

Lost, ending with Christ returning to his mother's home after vanquishing Satan. The structure of this poem is not so echoic as that of Paradise Lost; although some images do recall earlier ones.

There is far less music imagery in Paradise Regained than in Paradise Lost; in fact, overall there is less imagery, due in part to the shorter length of the later poem and also to the basically simpler setting. The setting is the wilderness where Christ faces Satan, with brief excursions into exotic settings created by Satan as part of the temptations, not the lush garden of the pre-lapsarian world, Heaven, and Hell. It is therefore reasonable that music imagery is reduced as other imagery is reduced.

Beginning with a rather perfunctory declaration of intent instead of the long invocation of Paradise Lost, Milton nevertheless retains the conventional reference to singing as the means of narration:

I who e're while the happy Garden sung,  
By one mans disobedience lost, now sing  
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind.  
(I, ll. 1-3)

The first real music image compares the voice of John the Baptist to the sound of the trumpet, urging repentance (I, ll. 18-21). This voice/trumpet call is also herald of the Messiah to Satan.

The next music image found in Book I follows God's declaration that Christ will overcome Satan, who will fail again as he failed with Job:

So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven  
Admiring stood a space, then into Hymns  
Burst forth, and in Celestial measures mov'd,  
Circling the Throne and Singing, while the hand  
Sung with the voice, and this the argument.  
(ll. 168-72)

The close relationship of this image with the celebration-song images of Paradise Lost is obvious, as it is obvious that this is a far less elaborate image than those in the great epic. The song of the angelic choir appears again in Book I in Mary's retelling of the Nativity:

At thy Nativity a glorious Quire  
Of Angels in the fields of Bethlehem sung  
To Shepherds watching at their folds by night,  
And told them the Messiah now was born.  
(ll. 242-45)

This image resembles more the final image of Paradise Lost (XII, ll. 364-67) in its restraint than it resembles the more elaborate images of the "Nativity Ode."

Milton turns from images associated with the heavenly choirs to one used by Satan in his dissembling speech to Christ. He describes the words of truth as "pleasing to th'ear, / And tuneable as Silvan Pipe or Song" (ll. 479-80). This change in type of image from heavenly to earthly is appropriate for the change in subject from divine decree and holy birth to devilish warped reasoning.

In Book II the first two music images are natural ones, and the third is placed in association with nature. The first is to the sound of the wind in the reeds and willows: "winds with Reeds, and Osiers whisp'ring play" (l. 76). The sound enforces the sorrow and doubts of the disciples at the absence of their leader. The phrase "whisp'ring play" parallels the description of the fishermen as they "Their unexpected loss and plaints out breath'd" (l. 29). In both cases the impression is one of quiet sound, restrained emotion. The second image is of the "Herald Lark" greeting the morning (ll. 279-81) followed in a few lines by the "chaunt of tuneful Birds resounding loud" (l. 290). These are the sounds that wake Christ from his night of dreaming of food after forty days of fasting. These sounds of wild birds are all that he hears, reinforcing the fact that he is alone in the wilderness, for there is no domestic cock to accompany the lark in its morning song. The final image of Book II is of "Harmonious Airs," "Chiming strings," and "charming pipes" (ll. 362-63), which are used in association with "Flora's earliest smells" (l. 365), giving the flavor of natural music to the instrumental sounds. Satan provides accompaniment for the sumptuous table he sets before Christ. With this image Milton maintains the "wilderness"

decorum he has established with the setting of the fast and by the earlier music images.

By contrast Book III is entirely devoid of music imagery. It is a book governed by numerous geographical and historical references, structured as debate between Satan and Christ. There are instances when one would expect sound images, for instance in a battle description (ll. 310-46), but the description is entirely visual, silent.

In Book IV are found several music images, spanning the range from natural to celestial. The first image, with a classical setting, "the Olive grove of Academe" (l. 244), combines several types of natural images in a passage reminiscent of the Eden passages of Paradise Lost. Milton uses the "Attic Bird" trilling her "thick-warbl'd notes" (l. 245), the sound of "Bees industrious murmur" (l. 248), and the whisper of a stream (ll. 249-51) combined with Satan's temptation of Christ with fame for his wisdom (ll. 221-22). This temptation is continued with Satan reminding Christ of

. . . the secret power  
Of harmony in tones and numbers hit  
By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,  
Aeolian charmes and Dorian Lyric Odes,  
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,  
Blind Melesigines thence Homer call'd  
Whose Poem Phoebus challeng'd for his own.  
(ll. 254-60)

Satan here uses the occult associations of harmony as enticement. Not only is the reference to harmony itself, but also to the powers of heard music and by extension to the power of Homer, greatest of epic "singers." Milton maintains the classical frame through reference to Homer as well as "Aeolian charmes and Dorian Lyric Odes." But all the power of classical music and the works of the Greek poets cannot tempt Christ, for he knows the superiority of his own culture. Milton changes the frame of reference from the classical to the Judeo-Christian in Christ's reply to Satan in lines 331-49. Christ praises the hymn and psalms and Hebrew songs and shows the inferiority of pagan songs which "loudest sing / The vices of thir Deities" (ll. 339-40). Sion's songs, which praise God in proper fashion, remind the reader of the angelic songs in Book I, lines 168-72.

The second angelic song of Book I, the song celebrating the Nativity (ll. 242-46), is echoed in lines 503-06 of Book IV. This time it is Satan who tells of hearing the song, not Mary. A reference to Gabriel's trumpet in line 504 echoes the "trumpet" voice of John the Baptist in Book I, lines 18-21. Here as in Paradise Lost the time sequence of the epic beginning plays an important role in structure. Gabriel's trumpet occurred first in time, but John's proclamation appears first in



in the narrative. The reader is reminded of the chronology when Satan tells of following Christ's life from birth through childhood and youth to early manhood up to the time of his baptism by John (ll. 507-13).

The final music image of Paradise Regained again is of the angelic choir singing "Heavenly Anthems of his victory / Over temptation, and the Tempter proud" (ll. 594-95). This image echoes two earlier ones. In Book I the angelic choir bursts into hymns at the close of God's declaration that Christ will not yield to Satanic temptation (ll. 168-72). Now they praise in anthems the fulfillment of that declaration. In Book II Satan tempts Christ with a banquet accompanied by "Harmonious Airs . . . / Of chiming strings, or charming pipes and winds" (ll. 362-63). The setting of the final music image of Book IV is the banquet prepared by the angels for the victorious Christ (ll. 581-93).

As is apparent from this examination of the music imagery in Paradise Regained, the structural function of that imagery is much the same as it is in Paradise Lost, although on a much reduced scale in the shorter and sparer epic. The music images tie together events widely separated in the narrative and separated in time. The illustrative functions of the images are much the same in both works; the celebration song of the angels

appears repeatedly to laud actions and declarations of both Father and Son. The trumpet figure is repeated to herald important actions or declarations and to call assembly. The fact that the types of images that appear in the two epics are so very similar serves to point up parallels between them. When reading Paradise Regained one recalls similar images used in Paradise Lost in analogous situations.

In sharp contrast to Paradise Lost and in lesser degree to Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes is a most unmusical work. There are very few images of any kind. In keeping with the tradition of classical tragedy, Samson is spare, not admitting of decorative devices. As Milton declares in his explanation of the form, tragedy

hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other Poems: therefore said by Aristotle to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such like passions, that is to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirr'd up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated.<sup>34</sup>

If, according to Aristotelian precepts, pity and fear are to be imitated in tragedy, a particular tone must be maintained throughout. Whatever imagery is used must be selected carefully to fit the mood.

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<sup>34</sup>John Milton, The Works of John Milton, ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1938), I, 331.

The chorus comments that all the wise sayings urging patience in affliction seem to the afflicted "a tune, / Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint" (ll. 661-62). Manoah and the chorus speak of the sound of the falling temple in terms of "hideous noise" (l. 1509) and "universal groan" (l. 1511). The latter two of these references establishes a sense of foreboding, leading to the news of Samson's last act.

Within the messenger's account are found two instrumental images, one of the trumpet proclaiming the festival (ll. 1598-99), the other describing the procession bringing Samson before the Philistines to the sound of pipes and timbrels (ll. 1616-17). There is further description of the festivities in the semichorus' commentary, where the pagans are said to have been "Chaunting thir Idol" (l. 1672). These images, appearing within the space of a hundred lines, are used to reinforce the repulsive nature of the pagan rites that are meant to further humiliate Samson.

In his final speech Manoah uses a brief image which matches an early brief reference by Samson. Manoah speaks of the monument he will build to Samson, the hero-deliverer of his people:

. . . there will I build him  
A Monument, and plant it round with shade  
Of Laurel ever green, and branching Palm,

With all his Trophies hung, and Acts enroll'd  
 In copious Legend, or sweet Lyric Song.  
 (ll. 1733-37)

In lines 202-04 Samson has asked

. . . tell me Friends,  
 Am I not sung and proverb'd for a Fool  
 In every street . . . ?

These two references, although brief, sum up the change that has taken place in the drama, Samson's movement from captive to deliverer. They are the only music images of any real structural importance for the poem, for the instrumental references, all contained in the account of a single event, are used for reinforcing mood and, having no counterparts in connection with other events, do not provide unity.

The preceding consideration of the music images in Milton's poetry as structural devices has shown how the poet used music to provide unity in the poems, to "frame" the poems, and to reinforce meaning through referential function. This chapter has built upon the symbolic interpretations of music imagery from Chapters III and IV to show how music is used in the structure of the poems. In some of the shorter poems music is the controlling symbol. Music imagery is the only imagery that Milton uses in poems such as "At a Solemn Music" and Sonnet XIII, "To Mr. H. Lawes on his Aires." In the middle length poems music serves to maintain the

decorum of the poem or to "frame" the narrative. The pastoral decorum of "Lycidas" is maintained by the use of pastoral music imagery, using that imagery to aid in a return to the pastoral when the poet tends to stray. In "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" music images are paralleled, connecting the twin poems. In "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" Milton uses corresponding images to connect sections of the poem. Music is one of a number of types of imagery that serve a structural function in the epics. It is one that allows Milton to make the most of the chronological framework of the epic form. In Samson Agonistes, the music imagery, meager though it is, provides a frame for the narrative by referential beginning and ending images.

The symbolic and structural functions of music imagery in Milton's poetry are related. Without studying the symbolic meaning the structural significance could not be interpreted, and without studying the structural function the full import of the symbolic function would not be apparent. The purpose of this chapter has been to show the importance of the structural function by using knowledge gained from the study of the symbolic function. The concluding chapter will consider the overall achievement of the study.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

As has been made apparent in the preceding chapters, Milton lived in a musical age. Musical training was important in the humanist program for full development of the human potential. Furthermore, music had an important philosophic base. Although Milton cannot be counted among the poet-musicians such as Thomas Campion, his musical education was solid, and he was a good amateur performer. Most important for the purpose of this study, he realized the value of music imagery for poetry. He could count on his audience, educated Englishmen, having much the same knowledge as he, so that the music imagery he employed could be readily understood.

The early part of this examination focused on the musical developments of the Renaissance in general, especially two important aspects of the period: the development of the vertical method of composition, inspired by the growing sense of tonal harmony, and the idea that text and music should be appropriate to each other. It also acknowledges the continued use of classical concepts, such as the music of the spheres. It is clear from this

analysis that the musical context of Renaissance England provides a frame for Milton's own musical development. The uses to which Milton puts his musical knowledge in his poetry cannot be fully appreciated without a realization of the degree to which he is immersed in the musical heritage of his time.

Milton's employment of music imagery is more extensive, more subtle, and more sophisticated than can be assumed on the basis of previous studies. The fragmentary nature of these studies, which focus primarily on individual images or include Milton in works considering the Renaissance generally, has not demonstrated that Milton used any organized pattern in his employment of music images. This study demonstrates that Milton did organize his imagery, both in terms of symbolic function and in terms of structural function.

Working with the traditional Renaissance concepts of speculative and practical music, Milton builds symbolic frames of reference through his images. Speculative music includes images of the music of the spheres and images of the harmony of heard sounds. These images are used generally to symbolize the harmony between God and prelapsarian man, between God and the heavenly host, and between Adam and Eve in their state of first innocence. Images of discord symbolize the broken relationship between

God and fallen angels and as such are used primarily in connection with references to pagan gods. These patterns of association begin in the early poetry, most notably in the "Nativity Ode" and "At a Solemn Music." In these poems Milton refers to man's ability to hear the music of the spheres during that time prior to his "first disobedience." Sphere music is also associated with the music of the heavenly choirs. In Paradise Lost this association is quite evident, as is the ability of Adam and Eve to hear the heaven-produced sounds. In the "Nativity Ode" the shepherds hear heavenly music at the time of the Nativity, as they do in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. Images of the harmony of heard sounds occur frequently in conjunction with images of the music of the spheres, demonstrating the connection between the concept of perfect harmony and that which man can actually perceive.

Images of discord, like images of harmony, form a pattern of reference. Milton employed discord extensively in the "Nativity Ode" to show the confusion of the pagan gods at the event of the Nativity. Images of discord also appear in Paradise Lost in connection with the fallen angels who are known to men as pagan gods.

Practical music, the music of heard sounds, natural, vocal, and instrumental, looms large in Milton's poetry. He uses practical music images to distinguish between good



and evil and to add another dimension of thought to the ideas that the images illustrate. He relies on his readers' familiarity with sounds and contemporary musical forms as well as familiarity with the classical associations of some references. More of the practical images have a contemporary frame of reference than a classical one.

Practical music forms the greater part of the music imagery that Milton uses. There is a proportionately greater number of practical images in the later poetry. Because practical music encompasses all types of sounds that may be perceived by the human ear, Milton had a greater range of possibilities for images in it than in speculative music. The earlier poems rely more heavily on speculative images than do the later works, a reliance which is appropriate because the early poems are more idealistic, while the later poems demonstrate a greater awareness of the realities of the human situation, an awareness arising from the years Milton spent as Latin Secretary of State and apologist for the Puritan cause.

In much the same way that images of speculative music have particular associations throughout the body of Milton's poetry, images of practical music appear repeatedly in similar contexts. Natural music images symbolize both action and contemplation and love. The most important and most frequently used natural image is that of the song

of the nightingale, which appears as symbol of love, both human and divine, and as symbol of contemplation because of the nightingale's associations with darkness and silence.

Vocal music images are extremely important since they represent the Renaissance ideal of coordinated text and melody. Milton uses song in Heaven and on Earth to symbolize the right relationship between God and His creatures, angelic and human. The songs of the angels and the songs of man rightly praise God. Such a function is most obvious in the "Nativity Ode" and Paradise Lost. Milton uses the image of song turned to self-praise in Paradise Lost to symbolize the fallen angels' perversion of their relationship to their creator. Some of the early poems, most especially A Mask and "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," employ vocal music outside a strictly religious context. It can be said that in these poems vocal music symbolizes the achievement of men correctly motivated, producing an elevation of thought in performer and hearer.

Instrumental music imagery provided Milton with a variety of associations with which his readers would have been familiar. Generally woodwind instruments are associated with pastoral scenes and pastoral poetry, the trumpet with martial and heraldic functions, and the pipe organ with the complexity of man's person and thought. The stringed instruments used in the poetry have associations

ranging from the classical and pastoral to biblical to contemporary. Milton uses all these instruments in favorable contexts, which is to be expected of a music lover, schooled in both classical and contemporary musical thought. What is somewhat unusual is that he often uses instruments, particularly the plucked strings, as accompaniment for religious song, a practice frowned upon by his Puritan contemporaries.

While Milton uses instrumental music in favorable contexts as a general rule, he makes exceptions with percussion instruments, which are used to symbolize evil. Percussion images are associated with the pagan gods in both early and late poetry and form the smallest body of any of the types of instrumental images. As symbols of evil they are eclipsed in number and importance by images of discord.

Although the organized study of the symbolic function is interesting and provides important insights into Milton's use of music images, the most significant finding of this study is that music images often provide a structural base for the poetry. It is in this area that previous scholarship is most deficient. No studies have been devoted exclusively to the problem. Indeed, little attention has been accorded to music as a structural device within works concerned generally with the

structure and organization of Milton's poetry. Milton uses music images to provide unity for, to "frame," and to maintain decorum in his poems. These uses are especially effective in the epics, particularly in Paradise Lost because of the great length of the poem. The shorter poems also benefit from the use of music as a structural device. In the case of "At a Solemn Music" and the sonnet to Henry Lawes, music imagery is the central focus of the poems. They depend solely on the use of extended music imagery for unity and continuity. In the "Nativity Ode" music imagery is an organizational device, indicating the divisions of the poem through different types of images. "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" benefit immensely from the use of images, building from simple to more complex concepts through images progressing from simple to complex references. More important, Milton employs parallel or corresponding music images to provide links between the poems. He appears to be attempting such links between the "Nativity Ode" and "The Passion." Since he abandoned "The Passion" without completing it, it is impossible to determine if the poems would have been linked as successfully as "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso."

"Lycidas" and A Mask contain fewer music images than other early poems, but they depend heavily on those images. Although the musical qualities and musically

based form of "Lycidas" have been noted by scholars, the imagery itself has received little attention. Milton maintains the pastoral decorum of the poem through music. By framing the poem with images of stringed instruments he raises the shepherd-poet's tribute to his lost companion to a level with the songs of the Muses.

Music imagery is important in the epics, especially Paradise Lost, as a unifying device. Images of all types appear with frequency throughout the poem. They provide unity for individual books--for example in Book VI the images are martial ones, trumpet images predominantly, maintaining the decorum of the War in Heaven, while Book VII relies on music images, mostly brief, allusive ones, to indicate the divisions of the days of Creation. But the most important use Milton makes of music imagery in Paradise Lost is throughout the entire fabric of the work. Images are used to echo earlier images, creating a double echoic effect. Because of the epic beginning in medias res, images used earlier in the narrative actually occur later chronologically. Since the epic as a form, and Paradise Lost in particular, are heavily dependent on time, the use of music imagery in a time-function is especially appropriate since music is the temporal art. Milton uses music imagery in Paradise Regained for this same function, although the number of images is fewer

and the reliance not so extensive. The length and scope of Paradise Regained are far more restrained than in Paradise Lost, requiring fewer links to provide the necessary unity.

Samson Agonistes has the fewest music images of the longer works, too few to provide a musical framework such as that found in Paradise Lost and to a lesser degree in Paradise Regained. Nevertheless, Milton does frame the poem with music images, having the final image echo the first, thus drawing attention to Samson's development in the drama.

This study has shown how much a product of Renaissance Humanism Milton was by examining his extensive employment of music imagery. The symbolic function of the imagery, which has been discussed in fragmentary fashion by scholars, shows the extent of the musical education of a well-educated non-musician of seventeenth-century England. It is, however, through the examination of the structural function of music imagery in the poetry that one can gain a fuller appreciation and understanding of Milton as a consummate poet, in whose works we can see the culmination of the learning of the Renaissance.

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