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“Wand’ring this Woody Maze”: Deciphering the Obscure Wilderness of *Paradise Regained*

A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Literature and Language

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in English

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by

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May 2020

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Keywords: Paradise Regained, Milton, Forest, Wilderness, Ecology

ABSTRACT

"Wand'ring this Woody Maze": Deciphering the Obscure Wilderness of *Paradise Regained*

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The setting of Milton's great sequel is puzzling, being called a desert and a "waste wild" (IV. 523) repeatedly and at the same time including descriptions of protective oaks and woody mazes. These conflicting descriptions conjure up several questions: In which environment does the epic take place? Because Milton is so detailed in his adaptations of biblical narrative the inclusion of trees is quite perplexing. While he does tend to expand biblical narrative quite frequently – e.g. *Paradise Lost* – he rarely initiates a change without just cause. The crux of this particular change centers on what this just cause could be. How does the addition of a few trees change the overall effect of Milton's brief epic? This thesis thus attempts to find further meaning in *Paradise Regained*'s setting by exploring three possibilities for this just cause while uncovering what the concept of a tree/forest means in early modern England.

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DEDICATION

To those who continue to promote conservation efforts, striving to make Earth a second Eden.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the dedication and support of various individuals. While I extend a special thank you to each one of my committee members, graduate cohort, and the Literature and Language faculty for their assistance – both professional and personal – I would like to thank Dr. Josh Reid for seeing potential in me when I did not see it in myself, to Devin Salyers for constantly reminding me of the importance of self-care in the research and writing process, to Harley Mercadal and Charissa Lynne for their unwavering support and unconditional love throughout my university career, and finally, to my sister, Rachel Johnson, for always lending an ear when I needed to discuss thesis-related concepts.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Paradise Regained: The Brief Epic

Jeffery S. Theis opens his introduction to *Writing the Forest in Early Modern England* with these words: "A tree is not just a tree, and a forest is not merely a forest – especially in early modern England" (xi). This statement generates one particular question: what are they if not merely trees or forests? Luckily, Theis explicates further, "English forest history reveals the intricate connection between nature and culture and the difficult task of rendering the wood intelligible. Whether it be wildwood, managed coppices, or something in between, forests require a kind of compass" (xi). It is this combination of nature and culture – specifically literature – that allow for a navigable forest setting and vice versa. In short, this combination creates a cultural nexus, where nature and culture may blend and provide a deeper understanding of each other. While Theis's text mostly applies this notion of what Simon Schama calls the "cultural nexus" – that is using nature and culture as a "kind of compass" for one another – to the wilderness of *Paradise Lost* and Milton's *Ludlow Masque*, it is my belief that this claim can also be applied to *Paradise Regained*.

The setting of Milton's great sequel is puzzling, being called a desert and a "waste wild" (IV. 523) repeatedly and at the same time including descriptions of protective oaks and woody mazes. These conflicting descriptions conjure up several questions: In which environment does the epic take place? Is this the barren setting of the Judeo-Christian biblical account or the *selva oscura* of Dante's *Divine Comedy*? Is it a mix of both, allowing for the familiar setting of the desert, while also exploring the notion of the solitary wilderness? Because Milton is so detailed in his adaptations of biblical narrative the inclusion of trees is quite perplexing. While he does

tend to expand biblical narrative quite frequently – e.g. *Paradise Lost* – he hardly ever initiates a change without just cause. The crux of this particular change centers around what this just cause could be. How does the addition of a few trees change the overall effect of Milton's brief epic? This thesis thus attempts to find further meaning in *Paradise Regained*'s setting by exploring three possibilities for this just cause all the while uncovering what the concept of a tree/forest means in early modern England.

The Biblical Wilderness

Yet, before we delve into those just causes, we must first establish the differences between the biblical account and the poem at large. While the story of Christ's forty days and forty nights in the wilderness appears in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the last account is the most prevalent in Milton's poem. There are key differences in plot, especially where the three temptations are concerned; however, because we are focusing on the setting rather than the psychological warfare, we must concentrate on the first two verses. The text reads: "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days temped of the devil" (Luke 4:1-2). The use of the word *wilderness* is key here, because the word becomes rather loaded in translation. It stems from the Greek *erēmos*, referring to an isolated place; and yet, upon further exploration, there are a plethora of other near equivalents in the Greek and Hebrew, specifically in the Old Testament. There is *arabah*, which can be translated as both *wilderness* and *desert*; *midbar*, or desolate land; *chorbah*, land that lies waste; or *yeshimon*, which refers to waterless land (Rolston). Milton, being a man of many languages, would have known these translations, and the plethora of others, as well as the verses they came from therefore it is safe to assume that he took his word choice under consideration and perhaps embellished his setting forthwith.

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Wilderness is the word that Milton most often uses when describing the to the setting: "But first I mean / To exercise him in the Wilderness" (I. 155-56); "And now by some strong motion I am led / Into this Wilderness" (I. 290-91); "And now I know he hungers where no food / Is to be found, in the wide Wilderness" (II. 231-32); "Affecting private life, or more obscure / In savage Wilderness" (III. 22-23); "What dost thou in this World? the Wilderness / For thee is the fittest place" (IV. 372-73); and the list goes on. The word is always capitalized, one character does not use it more than any other, and likewise, every character refers to the setting as such at some point in the poem. The use of this word is sprinkled throughout the text, and is used at least once in every book. Satan tends to use it the most, as most of his tempting revolves around the Son being placed in the wilderness setting. For instance, the quote from book II above is spoken between Satan and Belial as Satan plans how he will tempt the Son. He chooses to use the Son's environment against him, as is shown in the set up for the banquet scene:

> Only in a bottom saw a pleasant Grove,
>
> With chant of tuneful Birds resounding loud.
>
> Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
>
> To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade
>
> High rooft, and walks beneath, and alleys brown
>
> The open'd in the midst a woody Scene;
>
> Nature's own work it seem'd (Nature taught Art)
>
> And to a superstitious eye the haunt

Of Wood Gods and Wood Nymphs; he viewed it round (II. 289-297).

Satan uses the wilderness, specifically the wood, as a weapon here in order to tempt the Son into consuming nature's fruit, in much the same way Satan tempted Eve. This "pleasant Grove" looks like a place of rest, but actually is one of great danger – in other words, it is a *locus amoenus*. The text even says that the Son is "determin'd there/ to rest at noon" and so the Scene Satan has created is clearly alluring, but then the word "seem'd" is introduced in line 295 and that is an indication to the reader as well as the Son that not all is as it seems. The Son ultimately sees through the ruse of the "woody Scene", but Satan does not leave the wilderness behind after this first failure – the wilderness continues to appear in the following temptations as well, even if only in spirit.

Aside from the fact that every gospel uses this word, the word itself makes the setting rather ambiguous because the *wilderness* can include any type of uncontrollable environment. It can be as barren as the desert or as lush as a forest – there is no division. Milton differs from the biblical accounts when he writes of "some ancient Oak / Or Cedar, to defend [the Son] from the dew" (I. 305-06) or when the Son is in contemplation and says in a moment of weakness, "Where will this end? four times ten days I have pass'd, / Wand'ring this woody maze" (II. 245-46). These are not the only instances in which trees are mentioned in this supposed desert setting, and yet they are present nevertheless. Why should trees ever be present in the desert setting and what does it mean when they are present?

Few have delved into these questions; criticism that does mention the wilderness setting of *Paradise Regained* barely does so beyond the first paragraphs. Jane Melbourne is perhaps the only critic to have previously written upon the inconsistency of the poem's setting in the vein of this thesis:

> Milton's description of the physical features of his wilderness is, in its inconsistency, true to its sources. It is sometimes a parched land and other times a woody maze, replete with tall trees and inhabited by wild beasts. It is, in fact, not a place, but the condition of being in a wilderness – "desert" connoting lack of sustenance, the feature Satan emphasizes (I.338-45); "wilderness" and "wast," the difficulty of finding one's way, either because of the desolation of the land or because of its too rampant, uncultivated growth. (137)

What Melbourne and other critics note is the further meaning behind the wilderness itself. Melbourne says it best, proclaiming, "*Paradise Regain'd* follows a long tradition in reading 'wilderness' as metaphor" (Melbourne 135). Specifically what this metaphor could be is up for debate; however, most see it as a metaphor for isolation and a location for self-improvement.

E. M. W. Tillyard most famously saw the wilderness as a metaphor for what he calls the "loneliness of the individual mind," explaining: "The dim wilderness stands for the loneliness of the individual mind, cut off from the experiences of every day and from the support of its fellows in its struggle for self-mastery, while the dreamlike and artificial brilliance of the spectacles that tempt the mind expresses at once the glamour of worldly success and its essential insubstantiality" (271). Through isolation and temptation, the wilderness prompts transformation. The individual is exposed to temptations in order to realize their fragility thus becoming the master of themselves.

Tillyard is not the only critic to see the metaphor of the wilderness in this way. In fact, one of the main aspects of the wilderness topos is that isolation incites self-mastery or the like. The Son seemingly has a dual goal in entering the wilderness: to find out more about himself and realize his destiny. N. H. Keeble takes the latter even further through his explanation of the wilderness metaphor by saying, "wilderness landscapes, and journeys through them, become the

context in which spiritual destinies are fulfilled" (89). While, technically, the pinnacle of the Son's development – his moment of anagnorisis in book IV – is only the beginning of his destiny's fulfillment, Milton clearly did not think this was the case. That moment of anagnorisis is the moment of the Son's spiritual fulfillment because it is the moment that regains Paradise through the anagnorisis in which the Son can then defeat Satan. Therefore, Keeble's statement is correct. By knowing that he is the Son of God and thus defeating Satan through that knowledge, the Son regains that "happy seat" that is Paradise (*Paradise Lost* XII 642).

The following thesis attempts to examine further reasons for the inclusion of trees beyond what these critics have already mentioned. To do so, however, we must first know of the cultural implications associated with the forest and its history primarily because Milton, like any author, must look back to those who came before him. Knowing the cultural milieu surrounding the forest, especially in the Middle Ages, can shed light upon many of Milton's probable just causes. Through a combination of nature and culture, this thesis thus seeks to find further meaning in the wilderness topos, especially where *Paradise Regained* is concerned, creating within it its own cultural nexus.

CHAPTER 2. FROM PAGAN TREE WORSHIP TO THE CHRISTIAN *HĀLIG TRĒO* AND BEYOND: THE METAPHORICAL CROSS

In beginning my discussion of the three just causes for Milton's inclusion of the forest in the desert setting we will look to past conceptions of the forest. In doing so, we thus turn to the medieval period, when trees are a symbol for the cross, both in the case of shifting religious practices as well as literary ventures. This chapter will pay particular attention to the Anglo-Saxon tradition as well as the assimilation and erasure of Pagan tree worship, the replacement ultimately being that of Christ and the cross. In the context of *Paradise Regained*, trees are an elusive feature. They are always present, but easy to forget about as well due to their sparsity. Despite this, trees continue to be described throughout the Son's temptations. It is my belief that those trees are deliberately elusive.

Indeed, critics have often speculated why this moment in the Son's life is *the moment* that supposedly regained all of Paradise and something more monumental, like the Passion, was not. Commentary on this choice has become customary in work exploring *Paradise Regained.* For instance, Barbara Lewalski writes, "Contemporary readers were no doubt surprised, as some modern critics have been, by Milton's choice of the temptation in the wilderness as subject rather than the Passion-Crucifixion narrative" (*The Life of John Milton* 511); E. M. W. Tillyard notes, "it is easy to see why Milton chose the Temptation rather than any other incident in the Gospels as summing up the life of Christ on earth. It was in the quiet of the wilderness that Christ gained the final dominion over his mind: once that was done, his right actions were inevitable and in a way subsidiary" (256); and Christopher Hill explains, "[The Son's] success where Adam failed was the triumph of reason over passion. This may in itself throw some light on Milton's choice of subject. Neither the incarnation nor the passion could be seen as reason's triumph" (414).

These three critics in particular have written some of the most read criticism on *Paradise Regained* and others have seemingly taken their lead, pondering and coming up with their own hypotheses as to why Milton chose the specific moment he did. Some, like Tillyard, have seen the isolation the wilderness provides as a means of self-mastery. Others, like Hill, have offered a more theoretical reason. I, however, posit that the passion is metaphorically present within *Paradise Regained* through the use of trees. When compared to the importance of trees in the Anglo-Saxon period, this inclusion gains a far greater meaning. The trees that are so connected to the cross during the Anglo-Saxon period and beyond are a reminder of that sacrifice to come at the end of the Son's journey through the passion. Thus, a more in-depth understanding of Anglo-Saxon and medieval symbolism concerning trees and the cross is necessary to understanding this just cause as well as the poem in itself.

From Partial Erasure to Full-Scale Assimilation

A crucial aspect to this symbolism is its origin in Pagan tree worship, which the Christian church saw as a threat. Thus began the process of erasure, and, when that failed, assimilation. As Della Hooke explains, "The association of trees with prophecy, or even with healing power, had to be reinterpreted as evil" (21). Tree worship was not the sole practice the Christian church sought to expunge from the cultural milieu. They sought to erase and change every aspect of religion that was not Christianity – where the abstract term of Paganism thus originates in order to be a catch-all term for any polytheist religion. The Christian church believed that those polytheistic gods were false gods and thus sought to eradicate them in order to spread their own monotheist religion. While tree worship was not the sole practice the church sought to eradicate, it became one of the hardest to completely eliminate. Perhaps this is why there is an unclear overlap when it comes to pre-Christian beliefs and superstition, as Hooke notes:

> It is not straightforward to try to distinguish between pre-Christian beliefs and continuing superstition, something that has remained strong throughout the Christian era but which may not necessarily always have ancient roots. Certainly, tree worship or superstitions which recognised a power of trees remained difficult to eliminate, and in the eighth century (c. 722) Boniface also felt compelled to chop down a particularly large sacred oak at Geismar near Frankfurt, which may have served as an assembly point for diviners and enchanters. (23)

Spiritual elimination was difficult, and therefore physical elimination was the method of choice at a certain point in the erasure process. Logically speaking, if there were no trees to worship, then the practice would simply disappear. Hooke expands upon this idea: "In addition to the destruction of such powerful national images, therefore, some such 'holy' trees had to be removed as the symbols of another religion that had to be vanquished and replaced" (23). At a certain point, the church realized that erasure was going to be impossible and thus began the process of assimilation. It strove towards assimilation because the act of worship and the devotion with which Pagans continued to worship was something the church wanted to replicate in its own contexts. Therefore, a slow assimilation process was going to be more successful than out-and-out erasure.

Symbolism within a transition period was how the church ultimately gained its new following. The church would take the Pagan practice, take the Pagan superstition, but would replace the object of "false" Pagan worship with one associated with the Christian religion, which Hooke thus explains: "Trees regarded as in some way sacred, like other places of pagan worship had to be rendered subordinate to new ways of invoking the supernatural" (23). This is

why there is a lack of clarity when it comes to pre-Christian overlap, especially in the medieval period when so many Pagan practices still remained engrained within the popular culture.

One such pre-Christian practice that was unclear during this assimilation process was the taking of wood from sacred trees in order to make religious objects: "In pre-Christian times the wood from sacred trees, although rarely taken, was believed to retain its magical powers when fashioned into other objects, whether idols, insignia, divining rods, lot-tokens or so forth" (Hooke 23). Another, one perhaps more familiar to modern Catholicism, was the pairing of saints to particular "Holy trees"; Hooke describes this practice as such: "'Holy' trees, subsequently sanctioned by the Christian Church, usually by associating them with a particular saint, have remained a feature in many European countries, especially those following the teachings of the Orthodox Church" (23). This particular description, while beneficial to the explanation of this saint-pairing process, also points out the divisions within the Catholic church and how those effect the transition of certain practices over time. Here, it is meant to connect past associations to modern thought; however, such divisions were present in the medieval period as well.

Roman Christianity was far crueler in their methods of assimilation. Erasure seemed to be coupled with assimilation, for, as Hooke explains:

> Christianity (at least Roman Christianity) was to expunge the tree regarded as 'sacred' in pre-Christian belief from virtually every Old English written record. In keeping with Pope Gregory's suggestion, in his letter to Mellitus, bishop of London, in 601, that centres of pagan worship should be adapted to Christian usage, efforts were made to offer an acceptable Christian alternative to the tree on many occasions, replacing it with the cross. (Hooke 24)

The cross was the most successful replacement for the tree. In fact, considering the other "replacements" made during the time of Pope Gregory, the transition from tree to cross was one of the tamest.

Transforming the Cross

The key to fully eradiating pagan tree worship was the transforming of those trees into the cross. Luckily, trees were already a powerful symbol within the scope of their religious teaching. Firstly, trees were a symbol of the evolution of divine life. G. A. Gaskell further explains this phenomenon:

> [A]s a diagram of the evolution of the Divine life, the growth from the seed, the sprout, roots, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit, typify the entire cosmic process, and serve to show how gloriously and wonderfully the Great Spiritual Universe, the archetype of the phenomenal cosmos, is contrived, envisaged, and sustained by the Master Builder – its Source and Centre. (766)

From a simpler concept, trees were also shown to be symbols cosmologically, as Hooke notes: "In the Bible, the tree is also used to express the kingdom of God" (26). The connections beyond these two examples were plenty and as time moved on, more were made in order to further assimilate pagan peoples.

Many of the Biblical stories also use tree symbolism; perhaps the most famous of these was a topic that Milton also wrote on: that of the Garden of Eden. Hooke describes the tree symbolism there as such:

> Some of the earliest tree symbolism in the Bible is found in the Old Testament. In particular, among the trees standing in the Garden of Eden, planted there by God, there

> were two (or the tree in two-fold form) in the midst of the garden that were of special significance: the Tree of life and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil . . . (26)

From the trees in Eden come a duality of good and evil that becomes present during the medieval period, and, it is this same duality that we see in *Paradise Regained* centuries later. Trees are portrayed with this same duality in *Paradise Regained*: they keep the Son safe but are also the setting for his temptation. *Paradise Regained* is simply another piece of literature in a long line of those that use this dichotomy.

Indeed, in Anglo-Saxon literature, Cynewulf's *Elene* continues this two-fold dichotomy, all the while using that precarious word "sacred": "They must keep paradise and the tree of life sacred with flaming sword" (X 755-757). The Old English *Genesis B* poem does the same thing but associates the Tree of Knowledge with death: "One was so pleasant, beauteous and bright, gentle and praiseworthy; that was the tree of life . . . Then the other was all black, gloomy, and dark; that was the tree of death; it bore much bitterness" (Genesis 467-468). While the dichotomy usually only figures one to two trees, the Cædmon Manuscript features three, a sign that the efforts made by the Christian church for the transition of tree symbology were working. Hooke explains:

> Illustrations in "The Cædmon Manuscript", compiled *c.* 1000 and containing part of the *Genesis* poem, frequently depict three separate trees in the Adam and Eve Eden scene with one in the centre (shown on one occasion bearing a cross) perhaps "prefiguring the redemption of mankind by the sacrifice of God". (28)

This tree's center placement as well as the one such occasion it bore a cross was a good sign for the Church, meaning that their efforts to assimilate were successful. This instance was only the

beginning, however. From this point on, the symbolism only expounds, "As an extension of the symbolism of the tree, the cross of crucifixion itself became the *hālig trēo*, 'holy tree', and Christ's death the means by which men could obtain eternal life in the 'hereafter'" (Hooke 28). Instead of trees being a point of connection and a place of worship for pagan gods, they became holy trees in themselves and virtually the same practice was done in relation to them. Christians still gathered around and worshiped the cross as a symbol of Christ's sacrifice, as Ælfric notes in one of his texts: "Through the tree death came to us, as Adam took the forbidden fruit, and through the tree came again life to us, and redemption, for Christ hung on the cross for our redemption" (136). The focus on the tree of death increased, if only so that it and Adam and Eve could be blamed for the introduction of sin into the world. Only through the combination of both trees could the cross redeem all of mankind:

> One of the trees of the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Knowledge, became *deaðes beam* 'the death-bringing tree', for it had been Adam's transgression that had brought death to the children of men. The living tree as a feature of delight was thus to be replaced by the dead tree in the form of the cross. (Hooke 28)

This union of trees ultimately becomes a moment of Christ typology, in which the Old Testament prefigures the events of the New Testament. Because the events in Eden occurred, Christ must then be sacrificed to right those wrongs. This was an ideological concept as well as a physical one, for as Hooke explains, "The replacement of the tree by the cross in the New Testament was to continue both in reality and in a literary context. The replacement of real sacred trees by a Christian cross seems to have been a deliberate way of replacing the old non-Christian beliefs" (Hooke 28). Once again the replacing of the old non-Christian beliefs was done through physical means, this time by replacing their holy trees with the "new and improved" Christian "holy tree."

This transition seeped into Old English as well, for as J. Blair notes, "The Old English word for 'cross' was not drawn from the Latin 'crux' as one would suppose, but rather appeared as *rōd*, *trēow*, or *bēam* – all translating to the word 'tree'" (227). The first of these Old English words is perhaps the most famous because of its use in the poem entitled "The Dream of the Rood," in which the speaker is the tree the cross was constructed out of and then used for Christ's Passion. Although the spelling in the title is different today, partially because that title is the product of editors rather than the original poet, the "rood" in the title is the same as the one mentioned above. To further the connections with the "Dream of the Rood" is the Ruthwell Cross, an Anglo-Saxon sculpture made of stone that has an inscription of the "Rood" carved into one of its sides. Before its destruction in 1642, it stood outside of the Ruthwell church in what was the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Northumbria, but is now the village of Ruthwell in Scotland. This piece of Anglo-Saxon art was not the only formation of a cross that was used as a marker outdoors:

> [Crosses] replaced trees at the sides of roads or crossroads, especially in Northumbria, although the ornamented stone crosses of eight-century Northumbria continued to be decked with foliage, jewels and hung with garments like pagan trees. Some were even soaked with blood, a familiar association with necromancy but changed here to represent the blood of Christ. (Hooke 29)

Those crosses in Northumbria show that the Anglo-Saxon cross was as much useful as a marker of Christian worship as it was for a symbol of Christian acknowledgement for Christ's Passion. It is ironic that once this transition is in full swing people continue to treat the crosses as they would their pagan trees, especially in the form of dressing them up. However, the Christian church did reach its goal in this way. As Pope Gregory said, "For if the shrines are well built, it

is essential that they should be changed from the worship of devils to the service of the true God" (qtd. in Flint 209). Trees were a kind of pseudo-temple for pagans, and so because there was nothing wrong with the trees themselves, the cross replaced them. This is the symbology that Milton was presented with when integrating trees into his brief epic.

Paradise Regained's Constant Reminder

Trees in *Paradise Regained* are a constant reminder of what is to come for Christ and a reason why this is the episode Milton chose as the regaining act, rather than the Passion. The Passion is still prevalent with the use of trees because of the connections explained thus far, but Milton did not need to focus solely on this small detail, instead focusing on the moral warfare between the Son and Satan in which the Son reigns supreme. Moments such as these not only allow Milton to include trees in this setting but also to creatively use historical contexts within the poem's action.

One such scene is found in book IV, when upon Satan's suggestion that the Son could rule earth through knowledge, the latter abolishes the knowledge and poetry of classical antiquity – equating it to the Psalms and thus changing its source in a way that is reminiscent of the assimilation of the Anglo-Saxon period:

> 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 imitated, 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 Epithets thick laid

As varnish on a Harlet's cheek, the rest,

Thin sown with aught of prophet or delight,

Will far be found unworthy to compare

With *Sion's* songs, to all true tastes excelling,

Where God is prais'd aright, and Godlike men,

The Holiest of Holies, and his Saints;

Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee (334-51)

The Son does here what those associated with the Catholic church did to pagans: he claims that the poetry of Greece and Babylon are mere imitations of poetry written in praise of God – i.e. the Psalms and similar biblical texts. Historically speaking, this is not true; and the same can be said for the symbology behind the cross. However, why the trees themselves are there still remains beyond this moment of assimilation, and that is the reminder that each tree provides.

The key to this reminder lies in the detail Milton uses in relation to these trees. He, as mentioned in the introduction, uses the world "wilderness" to describe the landscape most often, but when he is not doing that, he is referring to these trees by their specific genus. He names them: Oaks, cedars, junipers; they are never simply referred to as trees. This too is a deliberate

choice, lying in the folklore surrounding the construction of the cross beginning in the medieval period. The prime type of wood that supposedly was used to make the cross was that of the oak, as Evelyn explains:

> There has (as we know) been no little stir amongst learned men, of what material the Cross was made, on which our Blessed Saviour suffer'd . . . 'tis generally concluded to have been the oak; and I do verily believe it; since those who have described those countries, assure us there is no tree more frequent; which (with relation to several celebrations and mysteries under oaks in the Old Testament) has been the subject of many fine discourses. (111-12)

Oaks help shield the Son from the dew as he sleeps during his forty days and nights: ". . .each night / Under the cover of some ancient *Oak* / Or Cedar, to defend him from the dew . . . (I. 304-306, *my emphasis*). In addition, oaks are the genus most mentioned in the poem and Evelyn's explication of oaks sheds light on a reason why this is so. What this choice seems to be suggesting is that the very tree that protects the Son is the one he will perish upon. It is perhaps a depressing connection to make, and yet the connection is there. Despite whether or not this was what Milton truly intended, these connections and the background surrounding them give a certain flavor to the poem and give it more depth. These are the details Milton was known for and evidence that the poet of *Paradise Lost* was fully present when writing the "sequel" to his *magnum opus* despite the fact that the Passion was not his main focus.

CHAPTER 3. THE SOLITARY WILDERNESS AND THE *SELVA OSCURA*

While the first chapter focused on the Anglo-Saxon period, our focus must now turn to the later medieval period and one of its most famous texts: Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. In doing so, I must return to the three main questions posed in the introduction: in which environment does the epic take place? Is this the barren setting of the Judeo-Christian biblical account or the *selva oscura* of Dante's *Divine Comedy*? Is it a mix of both, allowing for a familiar setting of the desert, while also exploring the notion of the solitary wilderness? The last question is perhaps the most integral to this second possibility, specifically where the notion of the "solitary wilderness" is concerned as there seems to be some connection between loneliness – that is, being alone physically or metaphorically – and the forest setting. For this reason, this chapter will connect the Son's spiritual development throughout his journey to the "wilderness" of *Paradise Regained* as compared to the Pilgrim's similar journey and setting in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* using similar moments of anagnorisis in each poem.

The Forest as Developmental Setting

The question of setting is perhaps the most tumultuous within the scope of this section of study, because both the Son and the Pilgrim are almost constantly moving, and thus their settings tend to change with their location. As is often the case, Peter C. Herman's concept of the Miltonic "or" presents itself. There is a potential for the Son to wander a desert landscape *or* a wooded landscape; Milton never quite establishes one specific setting. Likewise, a constant setting is never established in the *Divine Comedy* either. There is an upward mobility that is crucial to the structure of Dante's cosmos, but the setting itself is constantly changing and often at a rapid pace. Yet, there are two all-important instances in which the forest setting most impactfully appears in the *Comedy*: the dark wood, or *selva oscura*, of *Inferno*'s first lines and

Eden, or *la divina foresta/selva antica,* of *Purgatorio*'s Canto XXVIII. While these are not the only scenes in which the forest setting appears, they are the most comparable to the Son's journey in *Paradise Regained*, as Dante experiences a type of anagnorisis upon his arrival to the summit of Mount Purgatory. Therefore, through the use of the first and second sections of the *Divine Comedy,* this chapter will explore the connection between the Pilgrim's spiritual progress and the state of nature from the first wood to the last. This reading can then be used to read the Son's development up to his moment of anagnorisis, thus providing the second just cause for Milton's use of trees in the forest setting.

In his comparison of the two forest settings, John Freccero notes, "The distinctive characteristic of the dark wood in Dante's poem is not that it is a *selva*, but rather that it is *oscura*" (11). In explanation, he goes on to compare a piece of text from each cantica that shows the development of the Pilgrim. Freccero thus focuses upon the metaphorical shade the forest casts upon the Pilgrim and how his journey up the mountain in *Purgatorio* presents him before the light of self-mastery. He goes on to write:

> Dante's descent into hell and his ascent of the mountain of purgatory bring him to a point from which he can begin his climb to the light, his entrance into sanctifying grace, without fear of the impediments that blocked his way before. That new point of departure, the garden of Eden, was the home of man before the fall. Through Adam's transgression, the prelapsarian state of man was transformed into the state of sin. In poetic terms, Adam transformed the *selva antica* into a *selva oscura*. (12)

This point ultimately connects the Pilgrim and the Son through the recapitulation of their two environments, *selva oscura* to *selva antica*, the wilderness to Eden. In doing so, each character also experiences an ultimate moment of anagnorisis where they reach their full potential. For the

Pilgrim, this is when he realizes he has outgrown Virgil and they part ways in Canto XXIX; whereas, for the Son, this is the moment he realizes he is the Son of God in book IV. The true significance of these moments lies in the setting with which they occur: *Purgatorio*'s Eden atop Mount Purgatory for the Pilgrim and the hill/Temple of Jerusalem for the Son. Both have an upward progression, and ultimately culminate in those moments of anagnorisis that signal self-mastery. While the moments themselves are crucial to each character's journey, the wilderness in which they take place is perhaps more crucial and should be discussed prior to each character's respective journey.

One of the most ambiguous, yet crucial, words Milton uses throughout the Son's experiences in *Paradise Regained* is the word "wilderness." It is used a total of twelve times, with a variety of meanings. The same questions tend to arise with the use of this word as with the setting: forest or desert? In the event the word "wilderness" is used to mean a forest-like setting why does it change from the biblical account? Milton does not tend to change circumstances in his adaptations of biblical texts unless there is a reason. Often that reason is to create tension, especially in a comparable text like *Paradise Lost*. The word "wilderness," when used in a biblical context – i.e. the Greek New Testament – stems from the word *eremos* or *eremia* meaning "an isolated place," as Holmes Rolston III notes:

> The wilderness figures at critical junctures in the life of Jesus. Jesus is baptized by John and then is driven by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days. The Devil is there, but so is the Spirit . . . This records a search for solitude, for self-discovery, for divine presence, but this process, crucially, seems to require the ambience of the natural environment. ("Midbar, arabah, and eremos – Biblical Wilderness")

This process Rolston describes is an exact summation of the narrative portrayed in *Paradise Regained*. The Son is led into the wilderness in book I, Satan is there and so is the Spirit, the epic then focuses on the Son's solitary transformation in order to discover himself and overpower Satan, thus regaining paradise. In this case, one must wonder: is there really a change in setting? Or is this adoptive use of the word "wilderness" just a means to ignite transformation within the Son during this process of self-discovery and restoration? Comparatively, the Son's circumstances are enriched through an understanding of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, as the Pilgrim, like Adam, is another Christ-figure that journeys through the wilderness.

The spiritual development that occurs in the *solitary wilderness* is especially important in the understanding of these two texts and the evolutions of the characters inhabiting them. This particular kind of development differs from other kinds in that the solitary state in which such changes occur cannot be replicated outside of nature. The Pilgrim's experience differs from the Son's in this way because he is always talking with someone in whatever realm he may inhabit and/or accompanied by a guide, whether that be Virgil or Beatrice. Alternatively, the Son is often alone – in fact, unless he is being tempted by Satan in some way, he is alone in quiet contemplation or sleeping.

Despite not technically being alone for the bulk of the *Divine Comedy*, the Pilgrim still develops similarly to the Son, albeit at a slower rate. For instance, the Pilgrim becomes more confident and assured in his discourse during *Purgatorio* as compared to his wavering nature in *Inferno*. He is more willing to have an intellectual sparring with others he and Virgil meet along their journey in the latter, especially as the pair get closer to the top of Mount Purgatory. What is more interesting, however, are the two instances in which Dante is unaccompanied by a guide and thus technically in solitude. Interestingly enough, both occur while Dante is occupying the

forest setting. Although their pathways to spiritual transformation may differ, Dante and the Son solitarily inhabit the wilderness during their most dramatic moments of spiritual transformation. Therefore, though Dante, and even the Son during his moment of anagnorisis, may not technically be alone throughout the bulk of his journey, connections between the wilderness and those moments of solitude are still present. These connections lead to questions about the effect solitude has in spiritual transformation. In order to answer those questions we must analyze each text and the character's journeys within them.

Purification of the Human Spirit

In the *Purgatorio*, the ways in which the forest manifests itself differ slightly. Rather than solely being a physical place of fear and disillusion, it is used metaphorically to portray the further development of the Pilgrim's moral soul. As the allegory of the dark, savage, harsh wood depicts his soul at its moral low, the woods of Earthly Paradise depict him at his moral height, that is until he moves on into the Empyrean, which is Paradise proper.

In Canto XXVIII, the Pilgrim finally enters Earthly Paradise, and while the descriptions do recall Canto I of the *Inferno*, this time the wood entered is full of pleasant sights and smells, even birdsong "among the leaves" (XXVIII.17) of what can be assumed is the surrounding foliage that make up the wood. There is no fear or anxiety of any kind. The Pilgrim feels free to wander here and finds no fault in his lack of a path (XXVIII.22-24). The wood is a calming setting, a place of relaxation and leisure, in other words a *locus amoenus*. The Durling translation uses words like "thick" and "alive" to describe the wood here, and the foliage is not the companion to darkness, but rather to light as this place introduces the new day to the Pilgrim: "Eager already to search within and about the / divine forest, thick and alive, which tempered the / new day to my eyes" (XXVIII.1-3). Even in these first few lines this metaphor of the state of

the Pilgrim's moral soul can be perfectly contrasted to the first lines of *Inferno*; however, the physical descriptions of the wood in Earthly Paradise are not the only aspect of these first few lines that are worth comparing as far as the idea of transformation is concerned. The contrasting mentalities are also important to note, as they show more transformation in the actual character of the Pilgrim rather than the setting on its own.

The transformation from existential angst to eagerness is the starkest difference between the mentalities the Pilgrim exhibits inter-cantically between these respective scenes. In Canto I of *Inferno*, the Pilgrim fears even returning to the dark wood in memory. This is not the case in Canto XXVIII. We are able to see this through the use of the word "eager," which is so important in the Durling translation that it is the first word of the canto and the first word associated with Earthly Paradise. A sense of eagerness is the last feeling the Pilgrim experiences when he first finds himself in the *selva oscura*. At the entrance of the *selva antica,* a kind of peace is portrayed within the Pilgrim. The steps from point A to point B have more to do with the learning and upward mobility the Pilgrim experiences through his journey up Mount Purgatory as well as through the depths of Hell. However, the similar settings of the catalyst and the earthly reward, both being portrayed within the setting of a forest, do not seem to be a coincidence. One calls attention to the other in order for that transformation to be meditated upon as a memento of sorts. Thus, the forests in the *Divine Comedy* are essentially used in comparison, for the benefit of the Pilgrim, but also for the reader as they are metaphysically journeying with the Pilgrim as that moral ineptitude becomes more and more nonexistent.

The Son of God

The Son that enters *Paradise Regained* in book I is drastically different than the one that overpowers Satan in book IV. He is amnesiac and has no vision for his purpose. The only thing

he knows is that he is being called to the wilderness and that God will provide: "And now by some strong motion I am led / Into this Wilderness, to what intent / I learn not yet; perhaps I need not know; / For what concerns my knowledge God reveals" (I. 290-293). Much of the Son's action in the first books could be described as a type of aimless wandering. Yet, this wandering is different from the Pilgrim Dante's and his overall trajectory of spiritual transformation. The Son has a certain confidence in God that the Pilgrim does not, or rather does not have the opportunity to have. When being tested by Satan, the Son is often "temperately" or "patiently" replying to Satan, showing an amount of poise and control that is not present in the Pilgrim. Thus, when comparing the two characters and their journeys, it is difficult to find certain similarities because they have different starting points, as they should. The Son is Christ and Dante is just a human; and yet, the trajectory of their respective journeys is similar.

Like Dante, the Son begins by entering the forest without the benefit of knowledge to guide him. In the end, their upward mobility spatially is also similar. As in *Purgatorio*, the Son moves upward spatially throughout the course of the final temptation. For instance, when Satan goes to find the Son the morning after the tumultuous storm, he finds him "walking on a Sunny hill [Satan] found, / Back'd on the North and West by a thick wood; / Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape" (IV. 446-449)." The Son begins this final temptation on the ground, in a forest even, but once the conversation between Satan and him reaches a crescendo, they fly upward to the top of the Temple in Jerusalem:

> So saying he [Satan] caught him up, and without wing
>
> Of *Hippogrif* bore through the Air sublime
>
> Over the Wilderness and o'er the Plain;

Till underneath them fair *Jerusalem*,

The holy City, lifted high her Towers,

And higher yet the glorious Temple rear'd

Her pile, far off appearing like a Mount

Of Alabaster, top't with golden Spires:

There on the highest Pinnacle he set

The Son of God (IV. 541-550)

This is where the Son has his anagnorisis moment, atop the highest pinnacle. When Satan tempts him to jump off and call the angels to his aid, he responds just as cool as ever, "To whom thus Jesus. Also it is written, / Tempt not the Lord thy God; he said and stood" (IV. 559-60). This is the moment in which the Son reaches the pinnacle of self-mastery. The knowledge that accompanies the Son's steadfastness is what crowns him lord over himself, instead of the poet's laurel the Son is given his name. Milton's use of "Jesus" in this quote indicates that transformation even though this is not the only time the Son's name is used in the poem. Likewise, Dante reaches the pinnacle of his transformation the moment Virgil crowns him lord over himself and disappears in Canto XXIX of *Purgatorio* and in much the same way, each character is ready to fully embark on their spiritual destinies: the Son into his ministry and later crucifixion, Dante into Paradise and on into his own brand of proselytizing through the writing of the *Divine Comedy*.

While the Son's circumstances do not directly correspond to the Pilgrim Dante's, the similarities are still present. The Son does discover his identity as the temptations progress, in

much the same as in *Purgatorio*, through an upward mobility that is both moral and physical. The final temptation on the temple, and the moment of anagnorisis reflects the Earthly Paradise of Canto XXVIII in that, in Milton's opinion, humanity's moral ineptitude is finally cast aside. As with the first possibility for Milton's just cause, the theme of renewal is at work. Old ways are cast aside for new ones, and yet, the progress in *Paradise Regained* still remains spiritual rather than physical or environmental. This scene, as with Dante's bookended woods, is a significant moment in the use of the wood in the poem. While the final scene itself occurs atop the Temple in Jerusalem, the episode begins with the Son and Satan's dialogue out of the wood: "[the Son] walking on a Sunny hill [Satan] found, / Back'd on the North and West by a thick wood; / Out of the wood [Satan] starts in wonted shape" (IV. 447-449). The sun is no longer shaded by the wood but ascends up to a "Sunny hill." By comparing these two environments, Milton would seem to suggest that the wood was a place of confusion and stifled knowledge, but the Son conquers that space by journeying into the light. Dante experiences the same movement from the dark wood of *Inferno* to the Eden of *Purgatorio* and on into Paradise.

The difference between light and dark are a stark metaphor of moral transformation in both of these texts and those metaphors are possible because of the use of the wood. This is the movement from *selva oscura* to *selva antica*. For Milton, it is ultimately this moment atop the Temple, which is simultaneously a key derivation from the biblical accounts of the temptations and one providing an inclusion of nature, that sets the Son on the right path, that ultimately saves humanity. The moment on the "Sunny hill" prefiguring that final temptation is the *selva antica* for the Son, and, likewise, for humanity itself.

CHAPTER 4. *PARADISE REGAINED*'S DESERT OF TREES

The just causes of previous chapters have read *Paradise Regained* through medieval texts and history. This chapter, however, will zero in on Milton's contemporary milieu and read *Paradise Regained*, not through another's work, but one of Milton's own: that of *Paradise Lost*. This frame is important, not only for the cultural history flourishing while Milton wrote *Paradise Regained*, but because these two texts, no matter how they may differ from each other, are a package deal. They, of course, can be read separately, but lead to a deeper, richer reading when consumed together. Thus, this chapter revolves around the typological connections between Adam/the Son and by proxy *Paradise Lost/Paradise Regained*, primarily using what Elizabeth Pope calls the "triple equation motif" in addition to the circular plot of the medieval romance genre. In order to make the appropriate connections to the forest of the Renaissance era, we must also discuss two of Milton's ecological forefathers: John Manwood and John Evelyn.

Much work has been done explaining why Milton's Eden is so lush and forest-like. In fact, critics like Jefferey S. Theis have made an entire career out of such explorations. For instance, Theis implores, ". . . it would behoove us to think more consciously about why Milton repeatedly describes paradise as a forest . . ." ("Milton's Eden" 231). Gardens, like deserts, do not characteristically contain large trees. However, Milton's Eden, just like Milton's desert, does contain them. Therefore, the same thought process Theis suggests should occur in relation to *Paradise Regained* because the inclusion of trees does impact the plot – after all from whence does the forbidden fruit stem? Theis expands upon the effect of the forest setting further, explaining:

> . . . ecocritically speaking, people act and think differently depending on the kind of environment they inhabit. As opposed to an open plain, the physical complexity of a

> wooded region forces one to engage and navigate it; thus, the forest is a particularly apt setting for Adam and Eve to explore their place in nature. ("Milton's Eden" 231-2)

The navigation element of these texts is a point of connection. Adam and Eve do not constantly navigate Eden like the Son wanders about the wilderness. Unlike the Son, Adam and Eve tend and cultivate their environment. At the quotidian level, their existences are completely dissimilar – after all they do inhabit different environments. The narratives begin to match up when looked at structurally though.

The temptations Satan employs are a connecting point within these narratives. It should be noted that Milton diverges from what Barbara Lewalski calls the "usual treatment" of these temptations in that Milton does not repackage the three biblical temptations of Christ (*Milton's Brief Epic* 223). Instead, he opts for the banquet-wealth-glory sequence. As Lewalski goes on to note, "Throughout the banquet-wealth-glory sequence Satan invites Christ to identify himself with and imitate the first Adam by giving way before these same temptations" (223). The banquet scene is thus a recreation of the sensual and carnal themes associated with the eating of the fruit: the wealth scene a recreation of Eve's temptation to avarice before and after her fall in book IX; the glory scene atop the temple a callback to Adam's journey through history in books XI and XII. These temptations are a major point of connection between the two epics. They thus provide a further reading of *Paradise Lost* and simultaneously round out the reading of *Paradise Regained*. They work together to complete each other in this way, two halves of a whole. That being said, what the similarity between temptations ultimately comes to show is the typological nature of Adam and the Son's characters in what is known as the "triple equation motif."

The Triple Equation Motif

In her book-length study of *Paradise Regained*, Barbra Lewalski rightly claims "The induction to *Paradise Regained* (I.1-293) has the function, among others, of establishing certain perspectives which control our reading of the entire poem" (133). The induction is perhaps the most crucial bit of text in the entire poem, for it, like the temptations, calls back to *Paradise Lost* in a prologue-like fashion. The induction begins:

> I who erewhile the happy Garden sung,
>
> By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
>
> Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
>
> By one man's firm obedience fully tried
>
> Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd
>
> In all his wiles, defeated and repuls't,
>
> And Eden rais'd in the waste Wilderness. (I.1-7)

One man rights another man's wrongs through obedience: this is the summation of *Paradise Regained*; and yet, this was always to be the case as we can see if we compare these first lines to those of *Paradise Lost*:

> Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit
>
> Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
>
> Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
>
> With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
>
> Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat . . . (I. 1-5)

The same message is placed before us. Adam, the disobeyer, loses Paradise only for the Son, the "greater Man," to restore us and, perhaps more importantly for the purposes of this paper, Eden. This turn of phrase, while poetically executed in both sections, does not stem from Milton, but from the multiple places in bible, Romans 5:14 and 19 read: "Adam . . . is the figure of him that was to come/ . . . For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." We can see the similarities between the triad of texts, that being the turning of obedience to its negation to show moral decline. Yet, Milton does change one all-important detail when he adapts these lines: not only does Christ recover man and regain "that blissful seat," he "recover[s] paradise" itself. This concept too is established through biblical text. For Isaiah 51:3 reads "He will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord." The Son transforms the "waste wilderness" into a flourishing, lush setting that is teeming with life rather than suffocating with drought. What is perhaps more important when discussing the forest setting when thinking about the transition from "waste wilderness" to "garden of the Lord" is the inclusion of trees in both poems and how those trees are inseparably tied to the Christ-type or, likewise, the "triple equation motif."

Elizabeth Pope's valuable work on the "triple equation" concept defines it as a "link between the temptations of Christ, Adam and Eve, and Everyman" (qtd. in "Theme and Structure" 192). This concept relates to the Adam/Christ typology through the aforementioned destruction/renewal process. When meditating on Pope's study, Lewalski confirms Milton's knowledge of Irenaeus' principle of the "recapitulation of Christ" all the while connecting it to the "triple equation" concept by saying:

> From his saturation in patristic literature, he [Milton] would be aware of Irenaeus' principle of the "recapitulation in Christ" – "When he [the Son of God] was incarnate and made man, he recapitulated [or summed up] in himself the long line of the human race" – a principle which seems to prepare directly for Milton's way of relating Christ to his types in *Paradise Regained*. (*Milton's Brief Epic* 168)

Iranaeus' principle is important to note because it further connects the typology of Adam/the Son to the third part of the equation: humanity. As previously noted in Romans, the primary reason for Christ's incarnation is to redeem man, while he does not recall doing so during *Paradise Regained*, the audience, familiar with *Paradise Lost*, knows of the Son's heroic sacrifice for mankind in book III. Lewalski further explains this concept in the final paragraph of her section on "Christ as the Second Adam" by connecting these concepts back to the temptations:

> In thus reversing Adam's experience in the temptations, Christ proves himself the true Second Adam. The Second Adam motif is to recur again (with much else) in the climactic learning temptation, which will incorporate and greatly refine the lures of pleasure, ambition, and glory, relating them to that paramount cause of Adam and Eve's fall, false wisdom. (*Milton's Brief Epic* 227)

The Second Adam motif, as Lewalski inadvertently points out, is a recurring motif in both *Paradise Regained* as well as Christ typology. One example that is crucial to the forest setting in *Paradise Lost/Regained* is the corresponding use of trees as an accessory to the destruction/renewal process: the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is what brings about destruction through the Fall, the trees present in the wilderness of *Paradise Regained* are what prepare the Son for the "holy Meditations" that lead to his moment of anagnorisis. The latter text reads:

One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading,

And with his deep thoughts, the better to converse

With solitude, till far from track of men,

Thought following thought, and step by step led on,

He enter'd now the bordering Desert wild,

And with dark shade and rock environ'd round,

His holy Meditations thus pursu'd. (I. 189-195)

It is only once the Son enters the "dark shades" alone that his mind begins to open and prepare itself for spiritual transformation, as we see in the text immediately following:

O what a multitude of thoughts at once

Awak'n'd in me swarm, while I consider

What from within I feel myself, and hear

What from without comes often to my ears,

Ill sorting with my present state compared. (1. 196-201)

The wilderness setting directly effects the Son's thoughts and he begins to find himself through his environment. He thus finds his identity, lost through the Fall, because of the wilderness setting – what one tree took away, others replace in the same way that the Christ-type gives and takes away.

Because Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the forbidden tree during the Fall, thus making an active choice, the Son can then enter the wilderness and deny Satan's temptation, making an inactive choice. The difference between action and inaction is paramount where Milton's authorship is concerned because he spent so much time in his early works contemplating vocation and the *Kairos* of inaction. By the time *Paradise Lost/Regained* are written, this choice of inaction is portrayed as a valiant one as well as one that is completed at the right time. That would not have been possible without the accessory of the tree and its role in the respective texts.

Paradise Regained tells the story of renewal, the Son overcoming the same temptations Adam and Eve fell for, especially that of false wisdom. If *Paradise Regained* is anything, it is a constant trial testing the Son's wisdom against Satan's temptations. Only once those temptations are overcome does the narrative return to where it began, Paradise lost becoming Paradise found. It is this return to the beginning narrative that conjures up the notion of the two epics forming the circular structure of the medieval romance genre.

The Medieval Romance Structure

The medieval romance genre has very rigid structure in which the hero, normally a knight-errant, sets out on an adventure to right a particular set of circumstances only to return back where he started by the closing lines. Unlike epics, which generally have a linear structure with a defined beginning and end, medieval romance more often than not ends where it begins. For instance, Odysseus always ends up back in Ithaca at the end of Homer's *Odyssey,* Sir Gawain back in King Arthur's court at Camelot, etc. This concept is especially interesting in the case of *Paradise Lost* and *Regained* because they are epics themselves – that is, when they are stand-alone texts. When they are read in conjunction with each other, however, they form two halves of the medieval romance narrative, as the typological Adam/Christ dynamic has shown.

Oddly enough, the singular unit of Adam/the Son resembles that of the knight-errant, on a mission to slay the "dragon," Satan. This imagery is so stark, many critics have noted it out of the context of the genre itself. Northrop Frye compares the Son's overpowering of Satan in book IV to "the romance theme of a knight-errant killing a dragon" (227). Barbara Lewalski too notes the similar imagery when discussing the Son's righting of Adam's uxoriousness and *Paradise Regained*'s mentioning of Malory's knights, saying, "Like Christ, these later knights-errant will undertake quests in the wilderness, but unlike him they will prove susceptible to the sensual allurements which overcame the first Adam" (*Milton's Brief Epic* 224). Biblically speaking, Satan transforms into a dragon in Revelation as well. Not only is the structure similar, but the plot is quite reminiscent of a medieval romance too.

How do these concepts connect with *Paradise Regained* though? Ultimately, the circular narrative and the "triple equation motif" lead to a renewal of the landscape as it once was in the same way that man is renewed through the Son's sacrifice. The trees that were an accessory to the Christ-type in the "triple equation motif," are renewed through the concept of the medieval romance structure: the Tree that leads to the Fall is one day the one that redeems humanity through Christ – equally as a setting and as a reminder of the Cross, where *Paradise Regained* is concerned. Thus, the there is a transformation of the environment.

Lewalski explains it best when she calls the "arid desert" setting of *Paradise Regained* "a kind of mock Eden, a diabolic parody of Christ's own mission to raise Eden 'in the waste wilderness'" (*Milton's Brief Epic* 226). As Milton notes in the inductions to his two great epics, man is not the only casualty of the Fall. The environment falls as well. This is why the landscape of *Paradise Regained* is littered with trees, but trees that are able to survive in the desert setting: junipers, oaks, cedars. For what other reason would he be so detailed in going so far as to name

each tree's genus? The only issue at the close is that the land cannot completely return to its original, prelapsarian form. Man may be able to find a "paradise within [him], happier far," but the environment is not given that same renewal. Note that the ending lines *of Paradise Regained* call back to man's paradise but say nothing of the physical paradise, Eden:

> . . . now thou hast aveng'd
>
> Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing
>
> Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise,
>
> And frustrated the conquest fraudulent:
>
> He [Satan] never more henceforth will dare set foot
>
> In Paradise to tempt; his snares are broke:
>
> For thou that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd,
>
> A fairer Paradise is founded now
>
> For Adam and his chosen Sons . . . (IV.606-14)

The "seat of earthly bliss" spoken of would seem to suggest exactly what has been previously stated: the physical environment is not able to return to its prelapsarian state. Eden is lost to us forever. Despite the prior talk of earthly renewal, that physical space remains "fail'd," the happier Paradise being within man himself. With the use of this structure the two epics show that Milton was not just attempting to redeem man, but the trees themselves. He could not do so without attempting to return to Eden in reality through what could be called "proto-concervationism."

Milton was not the only person concerned with what would now be termed as "proto-conservationism," however. There are key figures throughout the Renaissance period that lead to the type of writing present in *Paradise Lost/Regained.* The two we will now focus on are John Manwood and John Evelyn.

John Manwood's A Treatise of the Laws of the Forest . . .

The sixteenth century was a crucial one for England. The country was becoming a world power, consciously developing a history of its own, and was the seat of a fledgling new religion. Simon Schama describes the beginning of the century by contrasting it with the working-class myth of the "greenwood," the traditional setting for English outlaws like Robin Hood who lived in the wood as a form of monarchical resistance:

> The greenwood was useful fantasy; the English forest was serious business. At the same time that the Crown presented itself as the custodian of the old, free greenwood, it was busy realizing its economic assets. Under the Tudors, freed by the Protestant Reformation from any residual allegiance to Rome, England began to envision itself as an empire. It was at this time, in the first half of the sixteenth century, that court historians began to develop a literature of the "origins of Britain" and to emphasize the autonomous, peculiarly insular destiny of its history. Wholly mythical or semimythical figures like the Trojan "Brutus" and King Arthur began to feature prominently in such chronicles. (153)

Partly because of these advancements, England was developing its Navy, and in order to do so successfully, it had to use massive amounts of timber. Thus, deforestation soon became a serious issue. However, despite this being an issue, the Tudor, and later the Stuart, monarchy professed to still be the "guardians" of the forest, as Schama outlines, explaining:

> This was, of course, but another early instance of the debate over the forest that would repeat itself over and again in the history of the early modern state. Because of the crucial and urgent role played by timber in both the logistics and weapons of war, and the more general sense, developing at this time, that a powerful and growing economy was essential to military success, the forester-king was bound to be torn over exploitation and conservation. (154)

Another key issue was the fact that the Forest Law was slowly becoming more and more irrelevant. Instead of the government's punishing those who trespassed in the king's forests, caretakers were merely fining offenders or just ignoring their duties completely. This was the state that John Manwood observed. Yet, unlike others who turned a blind eye, he decided to do something about what was going on.

Robert Pogue Harrison describes Manwood thusly:

> Writing toward the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, at a time when the Forest Law was frequently abused and the forests of England were undergoing rapid degradation, John Manwood, who was a jurist, laid out in systematic fashion the ancient laws pertaining to the afforestation and preservation of the wilderness . . . One could say that Manwood undertook to defend those laws not so much because he was a monarchist but because he was a naturalist. Only the monarch, he thought, could save the wilderness from the ravages of human exploitation. (70)

Manwood's idea that only the monarch could save the wilderness was something that John Evelyn would later support as well, and for similar reasons: that he was more of a naturalist rather than a monarchist. All Manwood knew was that the Forest Laws had protected the

wilderness under the guise of the monarch's tradition. Likewise, Manwood's beliefs were another example of change in forest conceptions, for he saw the forest as a sanctuary, primarily because he saw the forest as a place of escape for the animals that resided there: "For Manwood a forest is a natural sanctuary. The royal forests granted wildlife the same sort of asylum that the Church granted criminals or fugitives who entered its precincts" (Harrison 73). The danger and fear that was once solely associated with the forest was almost nonexistent by the sixteenth century.

In fact, Manwood was so consumed with this idea of the forest as sanctuary that he thought the wild beasts, beings that once kept medieval peoples from entering the forest at all, as under the protection of the king as well as the woods themselves:

> Though the Word *Sylva* is often taken and translated for a forest, and so is the word *Saltus*, yet neither of them are proper words for a forest, but for a wood . . . [a forest is a] place full of woods . . . But it doth not follow from thence, that every wood is a Forest, though there are deer and other wild beasts there, unless the place is privileged by the king for the quiet and protection of the wild beasts there. (151)

Manwood's ideas were traditional at best. The world he saw and the way he interpreted it was at once revolutionary and outdated. For our purposes, the way he saw the forest life and the trees that formed it was revolutionary. Never before had one overlooked the dangers of the forest so blatantly, instead seeing the forests as sanctuary for animals. Milton includes wildlife in the wilderness of *Paradise Regained* in much the same way, the animals not harming the Son but rather coinciding with him:

> Among wild Beasts: they at his sight grew mild,

Nor sleeping him not waking harm'd, his walk

The fiery Serpent fled, and noxious Worm;

The Lion and fierce Tiger glar'd aloof. (1. 310-313)

The animals described here seem to be more afraid of the Son than confrontational, the latter being the usual expectation of animals in the wilderness setting. This was perhaps so because the Son was not hunting them, in the same way the foragers of Manwood's proposed forest would have left them alone.

Unfortunately this very ideal was part of the problem: Manwood's conservational method relied too much on Forest Law, which was highly outdated and clearly no longer functional due to corruption within the system that enforced it. Simon Schama discusses this when he talks of Manwood:

> . . . much of Manwood's text describes a system that existed only on paper. Writing in the last years of Queen Elizabeth, he assumed that in centuries gone by the provisions of the forest laws had been rigorously enforced and only recently fallen into neglect. But the records of the eyre courts, where they survive, tell a completely different story: of a system that was less an out-and-out tyranny and more of an officious interference in the busy world of the woods. The penalties recorded in their books far more commonly list fines than mutilation or the gibbet. (Schama 146)

This system of tyranny would become more and more apparent during the Stuart monarchy when those like John Winter would profit exponentially on the sale of afforested regions.

The anger associated with the flawed forest laws had been building long before the corruption in the Stuart monarchy, however. Many were exploited by the elite on behalf of the Forest Laws, and there was quite a bit of anger behind their resentment, as Schama notes: ". . . for much of the angriest hostility against the royal forest regime, especially under the Angevin monarchs, came not from the common people, who somehow improvised ways and means of living with it, but from the propertied elite" (Schama 147). This exploitation was not inflicted just upon the lower social classes either. Quarrels over the woods in the upper social classes had been a common occurrence since the thirteenth century. One particular event, what is known as the "Magna Carta of the woods," is discussed thoroughly in Schama's section on Forest Law:

> The quarrel that culminated in the Magna Carta of the woods – the Charta de Foresta of 1217 and 1225 – was not a simple matter of greenwood liberty defying sylvan despotism. It would be better thought of as a competition between two parties, *each* of which wanted to exploit the woods in their own way. (148)

Unsurprisingly, this event led to war, during which many perished in the name of greed and despotism while others simply starved. From this time, however, a familiar literary figure emerged, as Schama explains:

> After the wars associated with the Charta de Foresta, a new figure emerged – loosely based on actual events and an actual fourteenth-century man, Robert Hood. The tales of Robin Hood were a great source of comfort to the people of the time period, as Robin Hood was a figure who stood for justice and took up for the lower classes. These tales were so powerful that they led to festivities and celebrations surrounding the myth of Robin Hood, of which King Henry VIII participated in himself. (152)

These celebrations surrounding the myth of Robin Hood were a positive outcome to a horrendous situation. However, as we have already discussed, that despotism was not over with the invention of a judicial hero. The despotism surrounding afforestation would only expound in the seventeenth century, when Milton himself was writing.

Conceptions of the Forest in Seventeenth-Century England

Just as the sixteenth century saw drastic development in England as a nation, the seventeenth century too saw drastic change. The Elizabethan Age had come and gone, a great dynasty had ended and a new one had begun, and, unfortunately, civil war was on the horizon. While the Tudor monarchy had reigned during one of the most profitable times in the country's history and instituted countless advantageous regimes, those regimes were still in the process of development on into the seventeenth century. The continued development of the navy was one of these, and still, the forests were under threat – perhaps more than they had ever been. However, the navy was not the sole cause of this threat. The growing urban economy was as well, as Schama notes:

> So, just at the time when Robin Hood's Sherwood was appearing in children's literature, stage drama, and poetic ballads, the greenwood idyll was disappearing into house beams, dye vats, ship timbers, and iron forges. Stimulated further by a rapidly expanding population, the urban economy of England generated a new level of industrial need for timber. While trying to serve (and indeed profit from) that demand, Tudor and Stuart governments still pretended to stand as guardians of the woodland patrimony. (154)

Despite what John Manwood believed, the Forest Laws were breaking down further and further as time passed. It was during the Stuart monarchy that events became expounded upon, however.

The Laws were still present, but were being used for ill and profit rather than their intended use of decorum and traditional merriment:

> The Stuart genius for alienating virtually everyone reached right into the greenwood. For once they realized funds from the first wave of sales Charles actually went into reverse and *reafforested* some areas, even reviving the old forest courts. The point of this, though, was not to extend the royal shield over the woods, but simply to confine sales and leases to a clientele of his own choosing. (Schama 156)

Charles I was selling land intended for his personal use to "those of his choosing." While this was technically within his rights as king, it certainly was frowned upon – at least by those that were not profiting off of it themselves.

One such family profited more than any other. The Winters of Lydney profited the most from this scheme – John Winter, the most successful of them, became the "dominating contractor of the Crown in the Royal Forest of Dean" (Schama 156). His job was originally to protect those royal woods under the Forest Law, but he would instead sell timber and continue afforesting regions, as Schama explains in depth:

> Though he had been instructed to use only "dotards" – the superannuated trees that were useless for naval timber – for industrial charcoal, Winter immediately embarked on wholesale enclosures and clearances. Monopolizing all supplies in the greatest of all the royal forests, Winter was thus in a position to force woodland villagers (and even his own minors) to buy wood at exorbitant prices. The predictable result was a series of violent riots. (157-158)

The lower classes could no longer simply get by where the Forest Laws were concerned, they were being directly targeted now. Because wood was a necessity to live, they rioted. By the time the Civil War was in full swing, it was a free-for-all:

> The Civil War merely substituted the spoliation of the many for the spoliation of the few. The immediate result of the wholesale abolition of the royal forests during the Civil War was sylvan anarchy. After so many years of being fenced off by contractors, whether parliamentarian or royalist, the woods were simply invaded by great armies of the common people who whacked and hacked at anything they could find. (Schama 158-159)

While this was some sort of justice for those of the lower social classes, it still was not for the forest itself. This was the moment John Evelyn examined when his *Sylva* (1664) was published in the years following the Interregnum; however, and while Evelyn's work is drastically similar to that of John Manwood, *Sylva* ultimately resulted in another rescuing of the forest regions in England. It should also be noted that this was the state of the forests while Milton was in the process of writing *Paradise Lost* as well, and something that probably stuck with him when it came time to write *Paradise Regained*. The desolate English Forest more than likely resembled that of the wilderness of *Paradise Regained*: a sampling of trees overshadowed by wasteland. For this reason, it is crucial that we keep Milton in mind as we move forward with John Evelyn because they were contemporaries and each experienced the Civil War and Interregnum.

John Evelyn's Sylva

John Evelyn was a royalist, who even dedicated *Sylva* to the reinstated Stuart King, Charles II. However, instead of being a work glorifying the reinstated monarchy, it was instead a veiled plea to replant trees by describing their properties in great depth. Originally, it was a co-

authored work, which the Royal Society from the Crown assigned to four of its members, of which John Evelyn was one (Schama 159). However, by the end, Evelyn had gone rogue and continued writing the piece himself, which he ultimately presented to the King.

The result was the replanting of previously forested areas, specifically with Oak trees, as John Nisbet explains in his introduction to *Sylva*: "There is no doubt that *Sylva* was a work of national importance. Then, as now, England was dependent on her Navy. But the stock of Oak timber suitable for the requirements of the naval dockyards had become almost exhausted" (Nisbet 43). The true crime here lies in the importance of the oak in England. The English Oak, or *quercus robur*, was not only a symbol of England, it had been a celebrated tree going back to classical works such as the Aeneid, where Aeneas is described as an Oak in book IV while he is assailed by the tempests of Dido's rhetoric – much like Satan's assailing of the Son during his temptations. That particular genus was clearly an important tree to England, and in a quest for world power that bit of their history is abandoned, almost to the point of complete eradication. As Nisbet continues to explain, without *Sylva*, forested regions in England and Scotland would have been sparse or completely nonexistent:

> The publication of *Sylva* gave an enormous stimulus to planting in Britain, the benefits from which were subsequently reaped at the end of the XVIII and the beginning of XIX century, when during our war with France the supply of oak timber for shipbuilding almost entirely ran out . . . To the impetus then given to planting, many of the woods now growing in different parts of Britain, and especially in Scotland, owe their origin. (Nisbet 44)

John Evelyn's work may have resembled John Manwood's, but it was more successful. That being said, Evelyn's work might not have been so successful without Manwood's predating it

either even though *Sylva* was technically more successful. Regardless, both of these proto-conservationists as well as countless others saved the English forest. This was an impressive feat, and one that should not be taken lightly.

With these issues in mind, we arrive back at Milton's *Paradise Regained*, published a mere seven years after *Sylva*. While there is no concrete evidence that Milton ever read *Sylva*, both Evelyn and Milton knew Samuel Pepys, the Administrator of the English Navy and a parliament member during and after the Interregnum. Evelyn was close friends with Pepys, while Milton most likely did not associate with him because Pepys did become a Royalist after Charles II regained the throne. Despite these minor connections, there is no guarantee that Milton read or ever heard of *Sylva*, but it could have been possible simply because it did have a massive effect on England and their Navy.

Despite whether he read or did not read *Sylva*, conceptions of the forest at the time Milton was writing *Paradise Regained* were strained. Resources were clearly endangered, and discussions on this topic had to be circulating. Thus, works like those previously mentioned and *Paradise Lost/Regained* were written as a response. In many ways, this is the all-connecting point I wish to make in writing on this topic: the forest is that point of connection, that cultural nexus, wherein all cultures, all time periods convene. The proto-conservationist rhetoric is more than understandable in the twenty-first century when we are still fighting for nature. Works like *Paradise Lost/Regained* provide an origin story for ecology as much as they do for man and his condition and it can be better understood through historical and cultural concepts.

Not only is the Son an Adam-figure, *Paradise Regained* creates a circular, medieval-romantic narrative structure in conjunction with *Paradise Lost.* This gives an increased importance to the "sequel" because the reader is then given the opportunity to return to the

initial, prelapsarian state of being through the Son, at least in the mind. This would thus paint the setting of *Paradise Regained* as a dilapidated, postlapsarian version of Eden, giving a just cause for the inclusion of trees. While man is saved through the Son through concepts such as the "triple equation motif" and the medieval romance structure, *Paradise Regained* does not mention anything in relation to the physical paradise. In Milton's narrative, as in reality, the physical paradise will remain forever lost.

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APPENDIX: A Brief Catalogue of *Wilderness* in the Greek Old Testament

1. "midbar" (land that is desolate)

Joel 1:19-20

19 πρὸς σέ, Κύριε, βοήσομαι, ὅτι πῦρ ἀνήλωσε τὰ ὡραῖα **τῆς ἐρήμου**, καὶ φλὸξ ἀνῆψε πάντα τὰ ξύλα τοῦ ἀγροῦ· 20 καὶ τὰ κτήνη τοῦ πεδίου ἀνέβλεψαν πρὸς σέ, ὅτι ἐξηράνθησαν ἀφέσεις ὑδάτων καὶ πῦρ κατέφαγε τὰ ὡραῖα **τῆς ἐρήμου**.

Unto thee, O Lord, I cry.

For fire has devoured the pastures of the **wilderness**

and flame has burned

all the trees of the field.

Even the wild beasts cry to thee

because the water brooks are dried up

and fire has devoured

the pastures of the **wilderness**.

2. "arabah" (wilderness, desert)

Genesis 36:24

24καὶ οὗτοι υἱοὶ Σεβεγών· Ἀϊέ καὶ Ἀνά· οὗτός ἐστιν Ἀνά, ὃς εὗρε τὸν Ἰαμεὶν ἐν **τῇ ἐρήμῳ**, ὅτε ἔνεμε τὰ ὑποζύγια Σεβεγὼν τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ

These are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah; he is the Aiah who found the hot springs in **the wilderness**, as he pastured the asses of Zibeon his father.

Isaiah 35:1-2

ΕΥΦΡΑΝΘΗΤΙ, **ἐρημος** διψῶσα, ἀγαλλιάσθω **ἐρημος** καὶ ἀνθήτω ὡς κρίνον, 2 καὶ ἐξανθήσει καὶ ὑλοχαρήσει καὶ ἀγαλλιάσεται **τὰ ἐρημα** τοῦ Ἰορδάνου

The **wilderness** and the **dry land** shall be glad

the **desert** [of Jordan] shall rejoice and blossom;

like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly

and rejoice with joy and singing.

3. "chorbah" (land that lies waste)

Leviticus 26:31; 26:33

31 καὶ θήσω τὰς πόλεις ὑμῶν **ἐρήμους** καὶ **ἐξερημώσω** τὰ ἁγια ὑμῶν, καὶ οὐ μὴ ὀσφρανθῶ τῆς ὀσμῆς τῶν θυσιῶν ὑμῶν.

31. And I will **lay** your cities **waste**, and will **make** your sanctuaries **desolate**, and I will not smell your pleasing odors.

33 καὶ διασπερῶ ὑμᾶς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἐξαναλώσει ὑμᾶς ἐπιπορευομένη ἡ μάχαιρα· καὶ ἔσται ἡ γῆ ὑμῶν ἔρημος, καὶ αἱ πόλεις ὑμῶν ἔσονται **ἔρημοι**.

33. And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be **a waste**.

4. "yeshimon" (land without water)

Numbers 21:19-20; 23:28

καὶ ἀπὸ Βαμὼθ εἰς Ἰανήν, ἡ ἐστιν ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ Μωὰβ ἀπὸ κορυφῆς τοῦ λελαξευμένου τὸ βλέπον κατὰ πρόσωπον **τῆς ἐρήμου**.

. . . and from Bamoth to the valley lying in the region of Moab by the top of Pisgah which looks down upon **the desert**.

καὶ παρέλαβε Βαλὰκ τὸν Βαλαὰμ ἐπὶ κορυφὴν τοῦ Φογὼρ τὸ παρατεῖνον εἰς **τὴν ἔρημον**.

So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor that overlooks **the desert.**

Isaiah 43:19

19 ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ποιῶ καινὰ ἃ νῦν ἀνατελεῖ, καὶ γνώσεσθε αὐτά· καὶ ποιήσω ἐν **τῇ ἐρήμῳ** ὁδὸν καὶ **τῇ ἀνύδρῳ** ποταμούς.

Behold I am doing a new thing;

now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the **wilderness** and a way in the **desert**.

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