

*SYMBOLIC HISTORY*  
*Through Sight and Sound*

**21. Milton: Mind's Dark Glory**

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**June 1995**

**Last Revised July 1996**

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- 1) *Rembrandt, c. 1629, Self Portrait in a Gorget, Mauritshuis, The Hague; with V details*  
1a) *Rembrandt, 1629, Self-Portrait, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59)*

Music: H.Schütz, 1629, Sinfonia from *Fili Mi Absalon*, Symph. Sac. I, 13  
Nonesuch H-1160

"The Egotism of such a man", said Coleridge, "is a revelation of spirit." He was not speaking of the Rembrandt of this 1629 Self-portrait, nor of the Schütz whose Lament for Absalon, of the same year, has a prelude for trombones; but of Milton — the youth Wordsworth imagined "with his rosy cheeks... And conscious step of purity and pride" — since childhood serious as his own Christ in Paradise Regained "to learn and know and thence to do/ What might be public good" — Milton, who in the "Nativity Ode," also of 1629, joined his "voice unto the Angel Quire" — his style, as he would say, "by certain vital signs it had... likely to live." What willful reason rays its god-space through the palpable obscure?  
(fade Schütz)

- 2) *Rembrandt 1661, Self-Portrait as St. Paul, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (CGB '59)*  
2a) *Same, detail (video then returns to whole)*

Thirty-two years later, Rembrandt, in age and increasing neglect, turned as often to his own deep-shadowed form — a lighted Gospel witness, himself the Apostle Paul.

While Schütz, in a Germany ravaged by thirty years of war, put off the lavish choirs and instruments of Venice, to deepen in his Passions the drama of solo song and choral motet:

Music: Schütz, 1664, Last recitative and Kyrie, close, St. Matthew Passion  
ARCHIV 3172

- a3) *Rembrandt, 1648, Supper at Emmaus, cropped; Louvre, Paris (video uses V a3)*
- b3) *Rembrandt, 1661, Risen Christ, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59); video: detail only, cf V b3*
- 3) *Rembrandt, 1660, St. Peter Denies Christ, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; first, V detail*  
(end Passion)

After the Civil War and its dangerous service, Milton ("eyeless in Gaza — under Philistian yoke"), returned from "they also serve who only stand and wait" to his old promise: "to celebrate in glorious and lofty Himns the throne and equipage of God's Almightinesse"; he wrote Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes — though as earth-betrayed as Rembrandt's Peter after the arrest of Christ.

- a4) *Rembrandt, 1658, Philemon and Baucis, National Gallery, Washington, DC (CGB '60)*
- 4) *Same, detail of group around the table (CGB '60); + closer video details*

Yet as Jove and Mercury graced the hut of the pious Philemon and Baucis in Rembrandt's pagan parallel for Christ's sacrament, Milton's dark house received the invocation to light: "Bright effluence of bright essence increate":

Music: John Jenkins, c. 1640(?), 6v. Fancy, beg. & end; Argo RG 73

...but thou

Revist'st not these eyes, that rowle in vain  
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;  
So thick a drop serene hath quencht thir Orbs,  
Or dim suffusion veild. Yet not the more  
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt  
Clear 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:

- 5) *Rembrandt, 1662-63, Homer Dictating (fragment), Mauritshuis, The Hague; + V detail*
- 5a) *Rembrandt, c. 1638, Landscape with Stone Bridge, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (which video follows with 6b below, Rembrandt's Mill — as if it were V 5b)*

nor sometimes forget

Those other two equal'd with me in Fate,  
 So were I equal'd with them in renown,  
 Blind *Thamyris* and blind *Maeonides*,

(This Homer, to whom Rembrandt also turned in his last decade.)

And *Tiresias* and *Phineus* Prophets old.  
 Then feed on thoughts, that voluntarie move  
 Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful Bird  
 Sings darkling, and in shadiest Covert hid  
 Tunes her nocturnal Note. Thus with the Year  
 Seasons return, but not to me returns  
 Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn  
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summers Rose,  
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
 But cloud in stead, and ever-during dark  
 Surrounds me, from the chearful waies of men  
 Cut off, and for the Book of knowledg fair  
 Presented with a Universal blanc  
 Of Natures works to mee expung'd and ras'd,  
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.

(fade Jenkins and skip)

- 6) *Rembrandt, 1661, St. Matthew and the Angel, Louvre, Paris; first, video detail*
- 6a) *Rembrandt 1629-30, Artist in his Studio, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*
- 6b) *Rembrandt, c. 1650, The Mill, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; while video takes lower left detail of waves, etc. (cf V66) — returning thereafter to a detail of 5a, Landscape with a Stone Bridge*

So much the rather thou Celestial light  
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
 Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence  
 Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell  
 Of things invisible to mortal sight.

As the angel to Rembrandt's Matthew, Milton's Heavenly Muse:

...dictates to me slumbring, or inspires  
Easie my unpremeditated Verse...

(Paradise Lost IX, 22-3)

If Baroque self is peculiarly a revelation of spirit, it is that from these Miltonic centers (as in Jenkins' fantasy on one theme) the tensile world orders itself in light and shade, like God's sensorium in Newton's Query.

(fade Jenkins)

Va7) *Georges de la Tour c. 1630-35, Mary Magdalen with a Night Lamp, Louvre, Paris (CGB '80)*

7) *Same, detail, Mary Magdalen with a Night Lamp*

7a) *George de la Tour, 1630-35, The Education of the Virgin, detail of Hand and Candle, The Frick Collection*

V76) *Same, whole of same picture, Frick*

So the tactile flows from the night-lighted Magdalen of Georges de la Tour, conceptual, as in the Meditations of Descartes:

...impossible to doubt that I am in this place, seated by this fire, clothed in a winter dressing-gown, that I hold in my hands this piece of paper...

Yet like others... I sleep... I have dreamed I was in this place, clothed and before the fire, when I was naked in my bed... Though now I am awake; it is with conscious deliberation that I extend this hand...

I see light, hear noise, feel heat. Suppose one says these sensations are false; it cannot be false that I think I perceive... Take this wax, just come from the hive; it has still the sweetness of honey, the smell of flowers; it is hard, cold, can be worked, when struck it sounds... Let it be placed near the fire... its flavor exhales, its odor evaporates, its color changes, it loses its shape, becomes liquid, struck it does not sound. Does the same wax remain? No one doubts it... Something remains, extended, malleable, moveable... an intuition of mind...

8) *Velasquez 1618, Kitchen scene with Christ, Mary, and Martha, National Gallery, London; first, video details, cf V8a*

Let me close my eyes, stop my ears, turn my senses from things, efface them as empty and false; so in inward gaze... I will seek little by little an awareness of what I am... I am a thinking being and possess in my-

self an idea of God... the thinking cause of my being... since what is cannot be produced by what is not...

Once I have discovered that God exists and that he is no deceiver, it follows that whatever I see clearly and distinctly must be true... With such clarity I see that the certainty and truth of all sciences rests on the knowledge of the true God.

As in Velasquez' kitchen scene with the picture-window of Christ, Mary and Martha, the daily is secured by the divine presence. We know from his first biographer, that even Descartes' Method had the seal of prophetic dreams.

- 9) *Velasquez, c. 1657-59, Las Hilanderas, Prado, Madrid; plus various video details, cf. V9a + b*
- 9c) *Velasquez, 1634-35, Surrender of Breda, Prado, Madrid; video: detail only*
- 9d) *Velasquez, c. 1620?, St. John in the Wilderness, Art Institute, Chicago*

Music: Frescobaldi, 1627, Aria, "La Frescobalda," Richard Stark

Again in Velasquez's Weavers, the richer by forty years, the foreground vibrates in the myth of the alcove, where helmeted Minerva (before a tapestry of Titian's "Europa") blights overweening Arachne. While in music the noble falls of Frescobaldi's Aria spread over Europe, (**close Frescobaldi**) swelling the cadences of the Spanish harp.

Music: Diego Fernandez de Huete, late 17th cent., Cancion Italiana from Archive 198-458

And in the rhyme-flexed grandeur of Calderon's La Vida es Sueño, 1635 ("My life stands in the level of your dreams"), substance is secured, as in Descartes, by a method of doubt which seems its negation. Like Beggar Sly taken in drink to be a lord, Sigismundo, oracle-haunted prince, who knows only a mountain prison, is conveyed in sleep to the palace as heir. He breaks into the predicted passions and is returned to wake in his rock fastness:

De todos era señor  
y de todos me vengaba.  
Sólo a una mujer amaba...  
Que fué verdad, creo yo.  
en que todo se acabó  
y esto solo no se acaba.

- a10) *Velasquez, c. 1649-51, The Toilet of Venus, National Gallery, London;  
+ V detail*
- b10) *Velasquez, 1656, Las Meninas, detail, right of center, Prado, Madrid*
- c10) *Same, from Las Meninas; detail of the artist*
- 10) *Same, Las Meninas, whole (video, lower spread only)*

I was lord of all  
and I took vengeance on all,  
I loved only one, a woman...  
And that was true, I believe,  
For the rest has faded away,  
This only does not fade. (CGB)

But it is just the conviction of insubstantiality —

What is life but a frenzy?  
What is life but a cheat?  
It is a shadow, a story,  
And the greatest goods are not great;  
For we dream that we are dreaming,  
In a life that is dream throughout — (CGB)

¿Qué es la vida? Un frenesí.  
¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión,  
una sombra, una ficción,  
y el mayor bien es pequeño;  
que toda la vida es sueño,  
y los sueños sueños son. —

which brings him (by a leap like Pascal's wager) to value and nobleness:

I say that I am dreaming,  
and that I wish to do well, since  
good deeds are not lost, even in dream — (CGB)

Que estoy soñando, y que quiero  
obrar bien, pues no se pierde  
el hacer bien, aun en sueños.

(fade Cancion Italiana)

Music: Diego Fernandez de Huete, cont. from Cancion Franzesa, ARCHIV-198-458

Fit, that Velasquez's masterpiece, alone in a small room in the Prado, can be viewed in a mirror; since the artist looks out, painting the real reflection in which the king\* turns as he leaves the room, another picture of him, with the queen, glowing, as in a lesser mirror; while the proud painter, before our eyes, lifts a peep-show court into world-subjectivity.                   \*[*Rather the marshal of the palace*]

*Va11) Velasquez, 1650, Entrance to the Grotto, Villa Medici, Prado, Madrid*

*11) Velasquez, 1650, Pavilion of Ariadne, Villa Medici, Prado, Madrid;  
+ V details*

Perhaps Velasquez's dream is most mysterious in the Villa Medici landscapes — that Cartesian dream of noble and reasoning substance, transforming the world into thought, as Milton's friend and colleague Marvel did in his poem on a Garden:

(Where) all the flowers and trees do close  
To weave the garlands of repose...

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,  
Withdraws into its happiness:  
The mind, that ocean where each kind  
Does straight its own resemblance find;  
Yet it creates, transcending these,  
Far other worlds, and other seas;  
Annihilating all that's made  
To a green thought in a green shade...

(end Cancion Franzesa)

*12) Rembrandt, 1630, Jeremiah foresees the Fall of Jerusalem, whole, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (CGB '59)*

*12a) Rembrandt, 1636, Samson Blinded by the Philistines, Städelches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt; then a video return to the figure of Jeremiah, from 12*

*12b) Again Jeremiah, close detail (from CGB '59, Pascal 55)*

From Roman villa to religious North: Milton's life and Latinate art vault that span. But it was the dark-light span of Europe: Rembrandt's Jeremiah foreseeing the fall of Jerusalem. So Calderon's Rosaura peers into the prison of Sigismund:

The door — or tomb-mouth rather —  
Stands agape, and from its center  
Night is born, of inner dark engendered... (CGB)



— desde su centro  
 nace la noche, pues la engendra dentro.  
 (*Chains' sound within.*)

Or Milton, of Melancholy:

Of *Cerberus*, and blackest midnight born,  
 In *Stygian* Cave forlorn...  
 Find out some uncouth cell,  
 Where brooding darknes spreads his jealous wings...

Here the phenomenal, later to appear the determinist outcast of Cartesian cleavage, is still felt, dreamed and held, an overflow of god-filled consciousness, its light and darkness palpable, its heightened oppositions reasoned and will-wrought into one.

13) *Poussin, 1629-30, Narcissus and Echo, Louvre, Paris (CGB '80); with three video details*

Such heroics of the tactile Baroque, the French share in a classical phase —

Music: Charles Mouton, pub. 1698, Allemande, "*La dialogue des graces sur Iris*" (lute), Turnabout TV 34137S

as when Poussin, in Rome, wills from Raphael and Titian tableaux Racine might stage, or French lutenists resound — a style to which Milton relates, in the Renaissance-love of his youth, at Horton, conjuring "Lycidas" from Latin, Greek, and Sannazaro:

Return Sicilian Muse,  
 And call the Vales, and bid them hither cast  
 Their Bels, and Flourets of a thousand hues.  
 Ye valleys low where the milde whispers use,  
 Of shades and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,  
 On whose fresh lap the swart Star sparely looks,  
 Throw hither all your quaint enameld eyes...

Bid *Amaranthus* all his beauty shed,  
 And Daffadillies fill their cups with tears,  
 To strew the Laureat Herse where *Lycid* lies...

14) *Poussin, 1630-33?, Cephalus and Aurora, National Gallery, London; + V detail, and again the whole*

Ay me! Whilst thee the shores, and sounding Seas  
 Wash far away, where ere thy bones are hurld,  
 Whether beyond the stormy *Hebrides*,  
 Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide  
 Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;  
 Or whether thou to our moist vows deny'd,  
 Sleep'st by the fable of *Bellerus* old,  
 Where the great vision of the guarded Mount  
 Looks toward *Namoncos* and *Bayona's* hold;  
 Look homeward Angel now, and melt with ruth.  
 And, O ye *Dolphins*, waft the haples youth.

(end Mouton)

Though in early Milton, as in all Baroque, the Classical

- a15) *Rembrandt, 1644, Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery, National Gallery, London; while V takes upper details from 15 to follow: Rembrandt, Presentation in the Temple (cf. Va15)*
- 615) *Again from 15 to follow, a close detail of Simeon and the Holy Family*
- 15) *Rembrandt, 1631, Presentation in the Temple, whole, Mauritshuis, The Hague; or wider variant, V15*
- V15a) *English Baroque (N. Stone), c. 1637, Portal of St. Mary's, High Street, Oxford (CGB '84)*
- 156) *Sir Cristopher Wren, 1673-1711, St. Paul's Cathedral, London (CGB '77)*

meets the contrary dark space of Rembrandt, the pedal organ of Scheidt.

Music: Samuel Scheidt, pub. 1624, *Modus Ludendi organo pleno pedaliter*, (close) from Vox: SVBX-5316

To love the high embowed Roof,  
 With antick Pillars massy proof,  
 And storied Windows richly dight,  
 Casting a dimm religious light.  
 There let the pealing Organ blow,  
 To the full voic'd Quire below,  
 In Service high and Anthems cleer,  
 As may with sweetnes, through mine ear,  
 Dissolve me into extasies,  
 And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.

Though what more suggests Rembrandt's 1631 Simeon temple — Oriental? Renaissance? Baroque? revaulted out of Gothic — comes later in Milton, when the fallen angels, by organ-pipe moulds, breathe such a temple from the gold-ribbed soil of Hell:

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...

**(end Scheidt)**

- Va16) Again St. Paul's Cathedral, Interior, Dome, painted by Thornhill c. 1710*  
*b16) Michelangelo and others, 1546-90, Interior, Dome, St. Peter's, Rome*  
*Vc16) Egypt, 19th Dyn. c. 1250 BC, Death Temple of Rameses II, Thebes*  
*16) Egypt, 19th Dyn. c. 1250 BC, Rock Temple columns of Rameses II as Osiris, dawn light, Abu Simbel*

What are the time-space reaches of Milton's "fabrick huge"? "Reason," he said, "is but choosing." His was the first to shape, as from "veins of liquid fire," an entire world — Creation to Judgment, with theology, philosophy, poem and plot, even the suspensions of syntax and light-and-shade deployments of style — from the sensorium of inner power, and in resonance with the dark might of his own time and personal trial. Symbolic History takes perspective in his words: Egypt:

Not *Babilon*,  
Nor great *Alcairo* such magnificence  
Equal'd in all thir glories...  
when *Ægypt* with *Assyria* strove  
In wealth and luxurie. (Paradise Lost I, 717 ff.)

Though the monuments for Milton lie under sacred shadow:

...*Locusts*, warping on the Eastern wind,  
That ore the Realm of impious *Pharaoh* hung  
Like Night, and darken'd all the Land of *Nile*...  
(Paradise Lost I, 341-3)

- 17) *Neo-Babylonian, 604-562 BC, Ishtar Gate of Babylon, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (video: upper-spread only)*

*V17a) Same, detail, lion, from the facade of the throne room*

So when Satan shows Christ the kingdoms of the world:

There *Babylon* the wonder of all tongues,  
As antient, but rebuilt by him who twice  
*Judah* and all thy Father *David's* house  
Led captive, and *Jerusalem* laid waste,  
Till *Cyrus* set them free... (P.R. III, 280-4)

In that palace



Where on the *Ægean* shore a City stands  
 Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,  
*Athens* the eye of *Greece*, Mother of Arts  
 And Eloquence... (Paradise Regained IV, 238-41)

It had been the goal of his travels:

When I was preparing to pass over into Sicily and Greece, the  
 melancholy intelligence which I received of the civil commotions in  
 England made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be  
 travelling for amusement abroad, while my fellow-citizens were  
 fighting for liberty at home — (Second Defence)

Recalled from that journey, he would address the Aereopagitica as to the assembly of free  
 Athens: "where books and wits were ever busier than in any other part of Greece." It is  
 always "Those Greeks

- a21) *Roman 1st cent. BC to 3rd cent. AD, Forum, through the Arch of Severus to  
 the Temple of Castor, Rome*  
 21) *Etrusco-Roman, c. 80 BC, The Orator Aulus Metellus, bronze, Archaeological  
 Museum, Florence; + V detail*  
 V21a) *Another view of the Roman Forum, through mist*

and Romans, the objects of our admiration."

Nor can it do more than heighten the Blakean puzzle of the poet's tie to Satan, that  
 the Tempter in Paradise Lost —

As when of old som Orator renound  
 In *Athens* or free *Rome*, where Eloquence  
 Flourishd, since mute, to som great cause addressd,  
 Stood in himself collected, while each part,  
 Motion, each act won audience ere the tongue,  
 Somtimes in highth began, as no delay  
 Of Preface brooking through his Zeal of Right —  
 (Paradise Lost IX, 670-7)

persuades Eve; since in the Second Defence, Milton so addresses the revolutionary world:

I imagine myself not in the forum or on the rostra, surrounded only by  
 the people of Athens or of Rome, but... from the columns of Hercules

to the Indian Ocean, I behold the nations of the earth recovering that liberty which they so long had lost...

- 22) *Roman (Philomelion), c. 30 AD, Bust of Tiberius, Louvre, Paris*  
 V22a) *Roman, c. 30 AD, Tiberius' Villa, ruins, Capri (CGB '80)*  
 22b) *Roman, 15-37 A.D., Cameo: "Gemma Augustea," Tiberius, after Panonian victories, greeted by the spirit of Augustus; Kunsthistorisches Museen, Wien*

Milton knew the complexity of that loss:

As cruel Tiberius would wish, "When I die, let the earth be rolled in flames." (Against Prelaty)

This Emperour hath no Son, and now is old,  
 Old, and lascivious, and from *Rome* retir'd  
 To *Capreæ*...

with purpose there

His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,  
 ...his Throne  
 Now made a styer... (Paradise Regained IV, 90 ff.)

Of which Christ tells the cause:

That people victor once, now vile and base,  
 Deservedly made vassal, who once just,  
 Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well,  
 But govern ill the Nations under yoke...  
 (Paradise Regained IV, 132 ff)

- 23) *Roman, 161-180 AD, Equestrian Marcus Aurelius, Bronze, Piazza del Campidoglio, Rome, (video: detail only)*  
 V23a) *Same, another view, closer detail*

Now it is Marcus Aurelius opposing Christian faith with pagan self-control, "Vain wisdom all, and false Philosophie":

The Stoic last in Philosophic pride,  
 By him call'd virtue; and his vertuous man,  
 Wise, perfect in himself... contemning all  
 Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life...  
 Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,  
 And how the world began, and how man fell  
 Degraded by himself, on grace depending...

(Paradise Regained IV, 300 ff.)

- a24) *Roman, 312-15, Head of Colossal statue of Constantine, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome*  
 V624) *Roman Christian, 4th cent., Genii among Grapes, vault mosaic, Santa Costanza, Rome*  
 24) *Roman-Christian, c. 320 ff, Lateran Baptistery, Rome*

But corruption had begun with the church itself, that "universal tetter of impurity"  
 Milton attacks in his Church-Discipline:

there is nothing wanting but Constantine to reign, and then Tyranny  
 herself shall give up all her citadels into your hands (aspiring  
 Bishops)... as if the heavenly City could not support itself without the  
 props and buttresses of secular Authority... with Constantine's wealth...  
 Antichrist began to put forth his horns... Formerly (saith Sulpitius)  
 Martyrdom by glorious death was sought more greedily, than now  
 Bishoprics by vile Ambition are hunted after...

On the Papal Empire Dante and Milton would blame, yet love its arts (this Lateran  
 Baptistery, often renewed, gilded Roman still),

- 25) *Russian Steppes, 6th-7th cent., Horseman?, silver-gilt, Historical Museum, Kiev; + V detail*

fell the Germans, pushed by the horse-Nomads of the Steppes:

A multitude, like which the populous  
 North Pour'd never from her frozen loyns, to pass  
 Rhene or the Danaw when her barbarous Sons  
 Came like a Deluge on the South, and spread  
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Lybian sands. (P.L. I, 351-5)



The Dark Age metaphor of hellish legions loud with the organ voice.

*Va26) French Gothic, 13th cent., West Facade, Reims Cathedral*

*V626) French Gothic, early 13th cent., North Window, Rose and Lancets, Chartres Cathedral (CGB '59)*

*26) Same, North Window, detail of Rose, with Kings of Israel and St. Anne*

Neither Milton nor his age thought much of Gothic Christianity, Babylonian idolatry of creed-captive grace:

Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous Wolves,  
Who all the sacred mysteries of Heav'n  
To thir own vile advantages shall turne  
Of lucre and ambition, and the truth  
With superstitions and traditions taint...

(Paradise Lost XII, 508-12)

The same "grim Woolf with privy paw" his youth had threatened with "that two-handed engine at the door" — though his art-soul espoused those "storied Windows" and "the studious Cloyster's pale".

*27) Rubens, 1635-40, Tournament in the Courtyard of a Castle, Louvre, Paris; + V details*

What he had treasured most from Gothic was Chivalry:

In Fable or *Romance* of *Uthers* Son  
Begirt with *British* and *Armoric* Knights...

(Paradise Lost I, 580-1)

From the Latin "Damonis" we know that around 1639 (when Rubens gathered this late fruit of the same vine), Milton's planned epic, in the vein of Ariosto and Spenser, was to have celebrated the matter later scorned in Paradise Lost:

Not sedulous by Nature to indite  
Warrs... heroic deem'd... or to dissect  
With long and tedious havoc fabl'd Knights  
In Battels feign'd...

*28) English, later 14th cent.(?), Old Radnor Church, South Wales (CGB '65)*

- V28a) *English, 13th-15th cent., York Minster from Southeast*  
 28b) *English, 14th cent., Merton College Library, Oxford (CGB '85)*

And of course it was within the late Gothic attested by almost any parish church of England (or Wales) that the humanization began which Milton ties to Chaucer's Parson and to the man who "after so many dark Ages" first broke "the huge overshadowing train of Error":

And had it not been the obstinate perverseness of our Prelates against the divine and admirable spirit of Wickliffe, to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Husse and Jerome, no nor the name of Luther, or of Calvin had ever been known: the glory of reforming all our neighbors had been completely ours.

(Areopagitica)

Since for Milton, even now "in the reforming of Reformation itself," what does God do "but reveal Himself... as his manner is, first to his Englishmen?"

- 29) *Florence, esp. 1300-1500, general view of the city, Italy (CGB '59)*  
 29a) *Brook in Vallombrosa, above Florence to the East (CGB '86)*  
 29b) *Dona Creti, 1711, The Astronomical Observations: The Moon, Vatican Collection*

At the same time, that other motion reached the height which made Renaissance Florence the Athens of the Western world. Milton writes of the 1638 visit, which produced his glowing Italian poems:

In that city, which I have always most esteemed for the elegance of its dialect, its genius and its taste, I stopped about two months...

(Second Defence)

It was fall. What memories later crowded upon him:

Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strow the  
 Brooks In *Vallombrosa*, where th' *Etrurian* shades  
 High overarch't imbowlr...

(Paradise Lost I, 302-4)

and:

...the Moon, whose Orb  
Through Optic Glass the *Tuscan* Artist views  
At Ev'ning from the top of *Fesole*.  
Or in *Valdarno* to descry new Lands,  
Rivers or Mountains in her spotty Globe.

(Paradise Lost I, 287-91)

30) *Mino da Fiesole, 1453, Piero de' Medici, Bargello, Florence; first, video detail*

No time will ever abolish the agreeable recollections which I cherish of  
Jacob Gaddi, Carolo Dati, Frescobaldo... and many others.

On his way home:

I got safe back to Florence, where I was received with as much  
affection as if I had returned to my native country...

Yet those men must have been politic shadows of the free humanity that spearheaded the  
Renaissance two centuries before.

31) *Bronzino, 1545, Grand Duke Cosimo I, detail, Medici Palace (from the Uffizi), Florence*

V31a) *Same, whole; though video crops it below*

Corruption had been swift. The Medici pawns of 16th century French and Spanish  
rule suggest the villanies of Jacobean drama: Revenger's Tragedy, The White Devil. Such  
the Neapolitan who protested that his civility had been restrained by Milton's speaking  
with so little reserve on matters of religion.

32) *Michelangelo, 1536-41, Last Judgment, Hell detail, Sistine Chapel, Rome;  
+ V closer detail (cf. V32)*

V32a) *Same, Last Judgment, detail, Resurrection of the dead*

Michelangelo had flexed his might against that slipperiness. How could Milton,  
before the Sistine Judgment, but catch the battle roll of his own "Heroic Verse," "ancient  
liberty recover'd...from the troublesome... bondage of Rimeing":

Rocks, Caves, Lakes, Fens, Bogs, Dens, and shades of death,  
 A Universe of death, which God by curse  
 Created evil, for evil only good,  
 Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds  
 Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,  
 Abominable, inutterable, and worse  
 Than Fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd,  
*Gorgons and Hydras and Chimeras* dire. (P.L. II, 621-8)

Though Milton is a century beyond Michelangelo in that Baroque loading which was gathering head

33) *Giotto, 1306, Last Judgment, detail of the Damned, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua*  
*(video: closer details only, below then above)*

from the Gothic precision of Giotto and Ars Nova (here Machault) —

Music: Guillaume de Machault, c. 1350?, Motet: Hareu!, Seraphim: SIC-6092

a clarity in which Dante's Hell-circles share (those sharp man-and-snake transformations in the bolgia of thieves — even the glowing mosques of the City of Dis incised, "red as if come from the fire")

(fade Machault)

Va34) *Rubens, c. 1620 (copy), Fall of the Damned, detail, lower right, Gallery, Aachen (CGB '74)*

634) *Same, whole (copy of CGB '74, slide 28 of Period Styles; of which Video here takes a lower detail)*

34) *Same, detail, middle right, with Hydra (CGB '74)*

— from that, to the cloud-swallowed depths of Rubens and Schütz —

Music: H. Schütz, 1625, *Heu mihi*, opening, Cantiones Sacrae, Nonesuch H-71062

that "darkness visible" King James rhetoric —

clouds they are without water, carried about of winds... Raging waves  
 of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is  
 reserved the blackness of darkness for ever — (Jude)

had prepared for Milton's "vast typhoean rage":

Seest thou yon dreary Plain, forlorn and wilde,  
 The seat of desolation, voyd of light,  
 Save what the glimmering of these livid flames  
 Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend  
 From off the tossing of these fiery waves...

(Paradise Lost I, 180-4)

(fade Schütz)

*Va35) Detail of 35, lower left, Martyrdom*

*35) El Greco, 1580-82, Martyrdom of St. Maurice, Escorial, Spain (video: lower section only)*

*35a) El Greco, c. 1579, Allegory of the Holy Name, detail, lower right, National Gallery, London (Video takes its detail from V35a)*

The energy climax before that thickening, marks the Spain of El Greco and Lope de Vega, bound in opposite likeness with Shakespeare's England. Against

that pitchy Cloud of infernal darkness, where we shall... never more  
 hear the Bird of Morning sing —

Milton lauds, in the closing prayer of his Church-Discipline, the felicity of "this Britannic Empire... with all her Daughter Islands about her,"

That we may still remember in our solemn Thanksgivings, how for us  
 the Northern Ocean even to the frozen Thule was scattered with the  
 proud Shipwrecks of the Spanish Armada, and the very maw of Hell  
 ransacked, and made to give up her concealed destruction, ere she  
 could vent it in that horrible and damned blast.

*a36) N. Hilliard, 1576, An Unknown Woman Aged 31, miniature, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (which video precedes with a detail of 36, Oliver's "Sydney")*

*b36) Robert Peale the Elder, 1603, Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales and Sir John Harington, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City*

*c36) English, c. 1580?, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Bodleian Library, Oxford*

*36) Isaac Oliver, c. 1584?, "Sir Philip Sydney," Royal Collection, Windsor*

Music: John Milton, 1601, — "Fair Orian, in the morn"; ARCHIV ST 2533  
 347

And indeed, beside Counter-Reformation Spain, there is an airy freedom to Elizabeth's England, where Milton's father wrote a madrigal for the Oriana triumphs of the Queen — though already the family humor seems moral: "What lives those ladies led!"

(fade Fair Orian)

Music: Wm. Byrd, c. 1580-90(?), from Six-Part Pavan, SAWT 9481-A Ex

"I was born," Milton wrote in the Second Defence, "at a time when the virtue of my fellow-citizens, far exceeding that of their progenitors in greatness of soul and vigour of enterprise... had succeeded in delivering the commonwealth from the most grievous tyranny, and religion from the most ignominious degradation."

The pose and face of Philip Sydney over Hampton Court should not impugn his fiery quality, nor the lightness of a Byrd Pavan its magnitude of soul.

*Va37) Elizabethan (Robert Smythson), 1568-80 and after, Longleat, Wiltshire, from far off (CGB '59)*

*37) Same, Longleat and Park, Wiltshire, nearer (CGB '59)*

*V37a) Same, close view of the building (CGB '59)*

Those great 16th-century mansions — Longleat in its Wiltshire park — carry their richness with a lightsome grace; and there is truth in what Milton wrote, even of the titan Shakespeare:

If... sweetest Shakespear fancies childe,  
Warble his native wood-notes wilde...

(fade Byrd)

Though there was a darkening around 1600, even for Shakespeare.

*38) Elizabethan and Stuart, early 17th cent?, Westwood House, near Droitwich, Worcestershire (CGB '59)*

*V38a) Same, closer view of Front (CGB '59)*

Music: T. Tomkins, 1610-20(?), Pavan in A minor, EA-0028

From the mansions that dot the Island, take any built or rebuilt under the Stuarts — this Westwood House, now broken into flats — the assertive portals and curves of

Milton's century creep in. And if we advance through the same years in a sequence of Pavans, we experience such a densening gravity of sound. Thus from Byrd to his pupil Tomkins — though we could cite as well Cooper, Dering, Ferrabosco.

*a39) Jacobean (Robt. Lyminge), 1607-11 & ff., South Front, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire (copy of 1600, slide 18; video draws from the original)*

*V639) Same, interior, The Marble Hall*

*39) Same, interior, The North Gallery*

*39a) Inigo Jones, 1638, Luminaria, Scene 1, Night, Trustees of Chatsworth Settlement, Derbyshire, England; lower center, detail, moon and reflection*

*39b) Formerly pre-Tudor, 1456-86; changed to Jacobean, 1603-08, by T. Sackville, Spangled Bedroom, Knole, Kent*

Towred Cities please us then,  
And the busie humm of men,  
Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,  
In weeds of Peace high triumphs hold,  
With store of Ladies...

Not only that "L'Allegro," but Milton's courtly masque, Comus, presented at Ludlow Castle in 1634, with parts taken by the Lady daughter and Viscount sons of the Earl, seats the poet in chivalric pride, as of Hatfield House and the stately pavan (**skip forward in Tomkins**) as surely as his early poetry mellows from Shakespeare:

The Sounds, and Seas with all their finny drove  
 Now to the Moon in wavering Morrice move,  
 And on the Tawny Sands and Shelves,  
 Trip the pert Fairies and the dapper Elves... (Comus)

As the Pavan in Tompkins receives a chromatic burden, (**music**) Milton suffuses Shakespeare's clear chalice with conscious touch.

Night hath better sweets to prove,  
*Venus* now wakes, and wak'ns Love —

(end Tomkins)

- 40) *Rubens, c. 1609, Self with Isabella Brandt, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59); first, video detail*
- 41) *Rubens, c. 1635, Helene Fourment and their Son, Alte Pinakothek, Munich; + V detail (CGB '59)*

Music: Scheidt, 1621, from Pavan in A, SAWT 9461-B

On the exposed Continent the baroque flexing is stronger. Against Oliver's Sydney, even the lightest early Rubens — 1609, the artist with his first bride — deploys formulable masses.

So the North German Scheidt concretizes the Pavanne. And in whatever gossamer of fabric and light the old Rubens wraps his young Helene and their son, we note, as with Scheidt's tonal rhetoric on the same chromatic motif, a weighty change of state, as from air to earth.

(fade Scheidt)

- Va42) *Inigo Jones, 1616-35, Queen's House, SE view, with Loggia front: Greenwich, London (CGB '74)*
- Vb42) *Again Queen's House, from the Thames with Wrenn & Webb, Naval Hospital (CGB '74); video detail only*
- 42) *Again the Queen's House, north front (CGB '74), + V detail*
- 42a) *Same, Queen's House, South Loggia (CGB '74); or from V42a (CGB '74)*

Meanwhile, in the London of Milton's youth, Inigo Jones, launching Palladio toward the proportionate hopes of 18th century, framed the perfection of the Queen's House in Greenwich. At the same time, English song, in quiet harmony with Caccini and Peri, moved from Dowlands' fullness of late Renaissance —



Music: Dowland, 1600, Flow my tears, A. Schøtz, HMV DB 5270 (fade)

to the word-matched Baroque of Lawes' Comus settings: "Harry whose tuneful and well measur'd Song":

Music: H. Lawes, 1634, Comus, close of "From the Heavens." M. Theriault & R. Stark (fade)

43) *Same, Queen's House, interior, Spiral Stair (CGB '74)*

V43a) *I. Jones and others, 17th cent., Queen's House, Naval Hospital, etc., from Greenwich Observatory (detail only of CGB '74 slide); then video returns to Spiral Stair*

Music: Jenkins, c. 1640(?), Fancy with continuo, beginning; Argo RG 73 (1st, side B)

With the ease of Inigo Jones' spiral stair, that England mounts from Renaissance past, toward Enlightened and Romantic future, as gradually as ground-bass harmony infilters the retrospection of the English viol fantasy — from Byrd and Gibbons, through William Lawes and Jenkins to Locke and Purcell, as great a body of music as exists. Jenkins most of all, quietly writing throughout Milton's life, sounds what is called for in "L'Allegro":

44) *English post-Gothic, c. 1630, Christ Church Stair, Oxford (CGB '59); first, video details*

And ever against eating Cares,  
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 linked 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.

And in the visual music of Christ Church stair at Oxford, the fan-vault of Tudor Gothic is revived for the palatial wreathing of 1630. (fade Jenkins) So William Lawes, killed fighting for the King against Milton's party, magnifies Taverner's "In Nomine."

- a45) Central detail, same Rubens as 45 (slide only)*  
*45) Rubens, c. 1615-17, Peasants with Cattle, National Gallery, London; while video begins and ends with the whole, shifting between to various details*

But in rugged boldness these six-part Consorts rival the expanse of Rubens:

Music: Wm. Lawes, c. 1625?, close of In Nomine, 6 pt. Consort No.I; ZRG-55 (end)

Even bookish Milton claimed that Brueghel earth:

While the Plowman neer at hand  
 Whistles ore the Furrow'd Land,  
 And the Milkmaid singeth blithe  
 And the Mower whets his sithe,  
 And every Shepherd tells his tale  
 Under the Hawthorn in the dale.

From polyphonic Rubens, organized all over the canvas, each part and detail a picture of its own,

- 1st 46) Rembrandt, 1638, Obelisk landscape, Gardner Museum, Boston; + V detail*

to the obelisk of Rembrandt, centered in the vortex of light against shade, is such a shift as Milton's, from the genial amble of "L'Allegro" to the controlled enormity of Paradise Lost, structured like a single sentence from opening theme to final vindication ("long is the way/ And hard, that out of Hell leads up to Light"), as glowing a clair-obscure as Milton's landscape metaphor, when the fallen angels break up their conclave:

As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds  
 Ascending, while the North wind sleeps, o'respread  
 Heavn's chearful face, the lowring Element  
 Scowls ore the dark'nd lantskip Snow, or showre;

- 1st 47) Ruysdael, c. 1660, Landscape, Uffizi, Florence; to which video adds a preview of 2nd 47, Ruysdael, Cornfield*

If chance the radiant Sun with farewell sweet  
 Extend his ev'ning beam, the fields revive.  
 The birds thir notes renew, and bleating herds

Attest thir joy, that hill and valley rings.

Yet in music, Baroque so blends polyphony and ground-bass, that Miltonic and tenebrist might attends both — thus a polyphonic fantasy by Mathew Locke:

*for 2nd 46) Rembrandt, 1639, Stormy landscape, Anton Ulrich Museum, Brunswick (which video has preceded with another detail from 1st 46, the Obelisk Landscape)*

Music: M. Locke, c. 1660?, D Minor Suite, Opening, West. WGS-8242  
(fade)

against a German ground-bass Sonata of about 1670 (with Ruysdael)

*2nd 47) Ruysdael, c. 1660?, Cornfield; Gallery, Aachen (CGB '74)*  
*V2nd 47a) Ruysdael, 1660's(?), Coup de Soleil, Louvre, Paris (here video adds from 1st 47: Ruysdael, Uffizi Landscape, a close detail)*

Music: German, c. 1670, from 1st mvt. Sonata for Viola d'Amore, AS-19  
(close)

"That which purifies us," says Milton, "is trial, and trial is by what is contrary."

*48) Veronese, c. 1580?, Annunciation, detail, National Gallery, Washington D.C. (CGB '75); first, video close-up of angel*

Contrary as a Puritan's sensuous love for Catholic art. From Tasso's Gabriel (time of this Veronese), who "shooke his wings with roarie May-dewes wet" (Fairfax), through Crashaw's Marini:

Heaven's golden-wingéd herald late he saw  
 To a poor Galilean Virgin sent:  
 How low the bright youth bowed, and with what awe  
 Immortal flowers to her fair hand present —

comes the messenger of Milton's "Nativity Ode":

With Turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing,  
 And waving wide her mirtle wand,  
 She strikes a universall Peace through Sea and Land.

49) *Carracci, c. 1598, St. Anthony tempted and saved, National Gallery, London;  
 + V details*

49a) *Salvator Rosa, 1660?, St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness, Art Gallery  
 and Museum, Glasgow*

V496) *Barocci c. 1590?, Rest on the Flight to Egypt, Vatican Museum, Rome*

Music: de' Cavalieri, 1600, *Rappresentazione di Anima et di Corpo*, III  
 (from "Il fuoco"), ARCHIV 2708 016

Dei Cavalieri's Oratorio of Soul and Body, saved and damned; Carracci's St.  
 Anthony tempted and blessed — where heaven fronts Tasso's opulent devils:

He lookt like huge Tiphoius loos'd from hell  
 Again to shake heav'ns everlasting frame;

as inflated by Marini:

His eyes the sullen dens of Death and Night  
 ...(where) a dark drove  
 Of Dragons, Hydras, Sphinxes, fill the grove —

("al foco")

to that Baroque contrast Milton, even before his Italian travels, gave its lushest cognate:

The lonely mountains o're,  
 And the resounding shore,  
 A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;  
 From haunted spring, and dale  
 Edg'd with poplar pale,  
 The parting Genius is with sighing sent,  
 With flowre-inwov'n tresses torn  
 The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

(skip in music)

Since:

Our Babe to shew his Godhead true.  
 Can in his swadling bands controul the damned crew...

- a50) *Caravaggio, 1594-96, Rest on the Flight to Egypt, whole, Doria Gallery, Rome; + V angel detail*  
 50) *Same, detail of Madonna and child, with landscape and pool*

And all about the Courtly Stable,  
 Bright-harnest Angels sit in order serviceable.

(fade dei Cavalieri)

There would be no Milton without such clandestine caress — Caravaggio, Marini, Monteverdi —

Music: Monteverdi, 1610, Vespers, Laudate Pueri, opening, SAWT 9501/2 A

the sensuous as never before: Eve, reflected in the pool:

...a murmuring sound  
 Of waters issu'd from a Cave and spread  
 Into a liquid Plain... I thither went  
 ...and laid me downe... to look into the cleer  
 Smooth Lake, that to me seemd another Skie...  
 A Shape within the watry gleam appeerd...

(Paradise Lost IV, 453 ff.)

Through art's soft Italian touch

- Va51) *Attr. Bernini, c. 1650?, Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici, Louvre, Paris*  
 51) *Bernini 1615-16, Monsignor Giovanni Batista Santoni, S. Prassede, Rome;  
 + V detail*

(as through Bernini's Monsignors) Milton sought the strength for which Wordsworth would invoke him:

(fade Vespers)

...thou shouldst be living at this hour:  
England hath need of thee —

on his tour declaring his faith to "the composed and wary magnanimity of the Italian."  
Chiabrera was writing of Columbus:

Great souls chosen for a glorious work  
In their elected labor take delight,  
Nor can the petty curb of common blame  
Deflect the noble from the path of fame. (CGB)

But it was safe to praise Columbus. What of Campanella, long in prison for a grandeur like Milton's own? —

Since power and knowledge cannot move  
But as love fire the will;  
That Trinity I praise and ever shall:  
The Primal One of Wisdom, Power, Love. (CGB)

*Va52) Bernini, c. 1637-38, Bust of Pope Urban VIII, over-life-size, Gallery Barberini, Rome (CGB '86)*

*52) Same, black and white, head, from another angle*

Urban VIII was Pope. Bernini carved him the year of Milton's visit. In the Aereopagitica the Italy of that face becomes an argument against censorship:

their learned men... did nothing but bemoan the servile condition into which learning amongst them was brought; that this was it which had damped the glory of Italian wits; that nothing had been there written now these many years but flattery and fustian. There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought...

*53) Rubens, 1622-23, Marie de' Medici at Marseilles, Louvre, Paris; first, video details: below, then above*

The Scots revolted against the Prayer Book, and Milton returned to an England where flattery of high Church and State swelled the new art of the balanced couplet. So the famous Waller — who attained as they said, "in his eighteenth year... a style which

will perhaps never be obsolete" — inflated Prince Charles' 1621 sea-danger to almost the height of fustian that Rubens bestowed on Marie de' Medici, Queen-Mother of France:

Now had his Highness bid farewell to *Spain*,  
And reacht the Sphere of his own Pow'r the Main.

Five Years later Waller hailed what proved a naval disaster:

Where-e'er thy Navy spreads her canvas Wings,  
Homage to thee, and Peace to all she brings...

In Milton's words: "the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite."

a54) *Van Dyck, 1621-22, Self Portrait, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59); video, detail only*

54) *Van Dyck, 1639, Sir Thomas Wharton, Hermitage, Leningrad; + V detail*

54a) *Vouet, c. 1634, Ceres, with Harvesting Cupids, National Gallery, London*

54b) *Van Dyck, c. 1635-40, James Stuart, Duke of Richmond and Lennox, The Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood*

Music: William Lawes, 1634, Triumph of Peace, Symphony, Nonesuch H-1153

Rubens' pupil Van Dyck was at the court painting Cavaliers ("Gather ye rosebuds while ye may"):

Shall I, wasting in despair,  
Die because a woman's fair...  
If she be not fair to me,  
What care I how fair she be?

and:

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?  
Prithee, why so pale?  
If when looking well can't move her,  
Looking ill prevail?...

Now the irony of "Lycidas":

Were it not better don as others use  
To sport with *Amaryllis* in the shade,

Or with the tangles of *Neaera's* hair?

turns in the pamphlets to attack: what "flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar Amourist."  
(end Lawes)

- 55) *Attributed to Rembrandt, 1645, A Man Reading, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts; first, video detail*
- 55a) *Double: (A) Botticelli (copy?) 1478, Giuliano de' Medici, Portrait Academy, Carrara; and (B) 1490, St. John the Baptist, detail, from Altar of Madonna, Saints and Angels, Uffizi, Florence*
- 55b) *Rembrandt, 1653, Faust in his Study, etching, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*
- 55c) *Rembrandt, 1631, Scholar in Lofty Room, National Museum, Stockholm; + V detail*

Music: Albert, 1640-50, Kirchenkantata, Ritornello, old Tinayre Album, Columbia 7073 D

Whether or not by Rembrandt, the searching Man with a Book defends (with Albert) the other side, Evangel against Cavalier, reenacting on the expanded stage the Florentine rift of a century and a half before, between Medici and Savonarolla.

(fade Albert)

And now Milton, with the prose he called his left hand, took up the trumpet to "blow a dolorous... jarring blast."

Read any books whatever come to thy hands, for thou art sufficient both to judge aright and to examine each matter... Truth is... a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. A man may be a heretic in the truth; and... though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds, becomes his heresy... Give me the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties...



- a56) *Rembrandt, 1642, Nightwatch, detail of man armed with a pike, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (CGB '59); + V wider view of same, from 56*  
 b56) *Same, vertical section left of center (CGB '59); video: upper part only*  
 56) *Same, whole (CGB '59)*  
 V56a) *Rembrandt, 1648?, Young Woman in Bed, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh*

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an Eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam: purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

Rembrandt also in his prime celebrated the Guard of his Dutch Republic, turning the usual portrait row into a sect-of-one search for the dissevered body of Truth. What blind gabbling it too must have occasioned for all who lacked the trust which is Milton's axiom of freedom: "Who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty?"

A faith hard to hold through the fury that greeted those pamphlets of free church, free state, free marriage.

- Va57) *El Greco, c. 1570, Christ Cleansing the Temple, National Gallery, Washington, DC*  
 57) *Rembrandt, 1626, Christ Drives the Money Changers from the Temple, Pushkin Museum, Moscow; + V detail*

The Cleansing of the Temple had become a symbol for Reform and Counter-reform: thus with El Greco, or with this 1626 Rembrandt. Compare the violence of Milton's sonnet:

I did but prompt the age to quit their cloggs  
 By the known rules of antient libertie,  
 When strait a barbarous noise environs me  
 Of Owles and Cuckoes, Asses, Apes and Doggs.  
 As when those Hinds that were transform'd to Froggs  
 Raild at *Latona's* twin-born progenie  
 Which after held the Sun and Moon in fee.

*Va58) Bosch, 1515-16, Christ Bearing the Cross, detail of Christ and mockers, Musée des Beaux Arts, Ghent*

*58) Same, closer detail: three mockers*

But this is got by casting Pearl to Hoggs;  
That bawle for freedom in their senceless mood,  
And still revolt when truth would set them free.  
License they mean when they cry libertie;  
For who loves that, must first be wise and good;  
But from that mark how far they roave we see  
For all this wast of wealth, and loss of blood.

But if men are such brawling hogs (as Bosch had painted them a century before Rembrandt), how is the temple to be cleansed? The Peasant War had led Luther from Christian Freedom to revolutionary reversal: "Reason must be deluded, blinded and destroyed."

*2nd 57) Again, Rembrandt, another detail of Money Changers*

So Hobbes, Milton's older contemporary, by a Machiavellian materialism of motive and a logic of atomic reduction, proves that men cannot, like bees, find natural agreement, but must snatch at artificial covenant against greed, hatred and "the condition of Warre... of every man against every man."

*2nd 58) Again, Bosch, Bearing the Cross, whole; video: details only, upper and lower right*

Thus nothing but the Satanic Leviathan of unquestioned tyranny prevents the contrary worst: "continual feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short."

But though Milton would repeat in Paradise Lost the passionate servitude of the fallen: "true Libertie/ Is lost, which always with right Reason dwells"; and in Paradise Regained, how "to free/ These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd?" — it did not undermine his search for

*a59) Durer, 1500, Self as Christ, Pinakothek, Munich*

- 659) *Wouwermans, 1646, Cavalry Making a Sortie from a Fort on a Hill, National Gallery, London*
- c59) *Samuel Cooper, c. 1650-55?, Portrait of Robert Lilburne, Victoria and Albert Museum, London*
- Vd59) *Cooper, 1655?, Oliver Cromwell, miniature, National Portrait Gallery, London*
- 59) *Cooper, c. 1657, Oliver Cromwell, Duke of Buccleuch Collection (video, detail only)*

"The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth." The Messiah of Paradise Regained has dreamed of liberation: "to subdue... proud Tyrannick pow'r/ Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd." Not all the Nimrod hunt of war — "On each hand slaughter and gigantic deeds... scattered.../ With Carcasses and Arms th' ensanguin'd Field" — estranged Cromwell's Latin Secretary from the cause. Only the manifest danger of freedom's turning on itself:

O citizens... if after being released from the toils of war, you neglect the arts of peace... your peace will be only a more distressing war... your very bowels will be continually teeming with an intolerable progeny of tyrants...  
(Second Defence)

and to Cromwell (here in Samuel Cooper's miniature):

if you, who have hitherto been the tutelary genius of liberty... should hereafter invade that liberty which you have defended... a most destructive blow will be levelled against the happiness of mankind...

Helpe us to save free Conscience from the paw  
Of hireling wolves whose Gospell is their maw.

Against the temptations of his place, Cromwell tried to deserve the praise of that sonnet: "our chief of men" — repeatedly exhorting Parliament in Miltonic words:

Is it ingenuous to ask liberty and not to give it? What greater hypocrisy than for those who were oppressed by the bishops to become oppressors themselves...

- 60) *Wrenn and others, 1694 & ff, Naval Hospital, through gate, Greenwich (CGB '75); first video detail of gate latch*
- V60a) *Same buildings, looking towards the gate (CGB '75); video shows only the building to the right*
- 60b) *Wrenn, 1672-79, interior, St. Stephen's, Walbrook, London*

Music: Purcell, 1692, Allegro of Symphony, Ode for St. Cecilia's Day, Vanguard SRV 286 SD

So ends what Thoreau would call "the last significant scrap of news" from England. Though much continued under the pomp of Restoration. Now the blind regicide, unhanged, returned to his lonely epic task. As if, through the Purcell of trumpet display, we should hear the dying falls of those *da gamba* fantasies with which his composing began;

(end Allegro)

- a61) *Rembrandt, 1660, Esther, Hanan & Ahasuerus, Pushkin Museum, Moscow*
- V661) *Rembrandt, 1661, The Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis, detail, National Gallery, Stockholm*
- c61) *Rembrandt, 1659, Moses with Tables of Law, Berlin-Dahlen Gemäldegalerie, Berlin*
- 61) *Rembrandt, 1650, Man with the Golden Helmet, Staatliche Museen, Berlin; + V detail*

Music: Purcell, 1680, opening, Fantasy 5, B flat minor, ARCHIV 3007

and be drawn back to the tenebrist weight of Rembrandt and of Milton — like his own Noah, "the only son of light in a dark age" — as Wordsworth would take it up:

Uttering odious truth,  
Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,  
Soul awful! if the earth has ever lodg'd  
An awful Soul.

(fade Purcell)

But did even Milton shun one truth: — that a God of the absolute, who reasons (as Pope would quip) "like a school divine" against the quest of knowledge claimed in the Aereopagitica, has no choice but to "retire... and put not forth his goodness" while Satan takes up the suppressed resolve, not to crook the servile knee and sing forced hosannahs:

What though the field be lost?  
 All is not lost: the unconquerable Will...  
 Fall'n Cherube, to be weak is miserable  
 Doing or Suffering...  
 Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n.

(Paradise Lost I, 105-6, 157-8, 330)

*For 2nd 60) Desjardins (Martin van den Bogaert), c. 1665(?), Bust of Mignard, Louvre, Paris*

The whole of Baroque exhibits wilful arrogation, and Milton overweens more than the vaunters of Bernini outwardness (as Heroic-couplet Dryden is reported: "This man cuts us all out, and the Ancients too.") No doubt he must pay the cost of proud command.

*For 2nd 61) Rembrandt, 1655, Self, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (CGB '59)*

But that he shares with Rembrandt, whom moderns more and more esteem; while everybody from Pound down knocks Milton, righteous pole of the Western big-top. It seems that, against Rembrandt,

62) *W. Faithorne, 1670, Milton, engraving, National Portrait Gallery, London; + V detail*

V62a) *Engraving of Hegel, c. 1820; then video returns to a detail of 62, Milton's face*

Milton suffered some repressive closure — as if the soul-body and moral war had made a battleground of his heart.

We have said he was the first to rear a universe from the immanence of Self. Was he not also the last? Since no one after could conceive himself, on every front, of thought, poetry, politics, an instrument of God's final purpose in the world. The later god-possessed, Goethe, Hölderlin, Hegel, Whitman, inherit divided realms: "The owl of Minerva flies only in the deepening dusk." But to control so much, and lose love's center, raises the "Gerontion" question: "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?"

Even the Aereopagitica grounds strength on the test of NO.

- Va63) Michelangelo, 1497, Bacchus, Bargello, Florence, (upper detail of slide)*
- b63) Same, whole view, from the front (video, upper half only)*
- Vc63) Same, profile; + V detail from a63*
- 63) Same, Head of Bacchus, full face*

He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain...

That denial becomes the crux of Milton's works.

Perhaps only Michelangelo, in the Florentine cleavage of Medici and Savonarola, had set abandonment so voluptuously against itself — this Bacchus of his youth fattening the soil for Comus ("To roule with pleasure in a sensual stie"):

Within the navil of this hideous Wood,  
Immur'd in cypress shades a Sorcerer dwels  
Of *Bacchus*, and of *Circe* born, great *Comus*...  
And here to every thirsty wanderer,  
By sly enticement gives his banefull cup...

How can Milton build but with the passion the restrainer, as Blake says, "stole from the Abyss"? Comus:

Wherefore did Nature powre her bounties forth  
 With such a full and unwithdrawing hand...  
 And set to work millions of spinning Worms,  
 That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk  
 To deck her sons...?

*1st 64) Titian, 1523, Bacchus and Ariadne, National Gallery, London (slide show crops the whole; video shows whole (from 2nd 64), + a closer detail)*

But all that energy —

Midnight shout, and revelry,  
 Tipsie dance, and Jollity.  
 Braid your Locks with rosie Twine  
 Dropping odours, dropping Wine —

subsists in Comus under the disapprobation and animadversion of "lean and fallow abstinence":

The wonted roar was up amidst the Woods,  
 And fill'd the Air with barbarous dissonance...

From the Bacchic art of Titian,

*1st 65) Utewael, 1607, Diana and Actaeon, copy of upper part, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (CGB '59) (video: whole, from 3rd 65)*

through the Mannerist ballet of 1600 (these nymphs of the chase at the transformation of Acteon),

*1st 66) Rubens, 1630-40, Diana and her Nymphs Suprised by Fauns, detail, left; Prado, Madrid, (video: whole, from 3rd 66)*

down to the fleshy rapes of Rubens,

*1st 67) Poussin, 1636-37, Bacchanalian Revel before a Herm, detail, left, National Gallery, London (video: whole, from 2nd 67)*

or Poussin's formality of touch — it is hard to find a foreclosure like Milton's — from the mild prudery of "Lycidas,"

Rough Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with clov'n heel,  
From the glad sound would not be absent long,

Va2nd 66) *Rubens, 1635-37, Slaughter of the Innocents, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59)*

62nd 66) *Same, lower right detail (CGB '59)*

2nd 66) *Again, Rubens, Nymphs Surprised by Satyrs, detail, right (video: left detail)*

to the Paradise Lost excoriations of Stuart licence:

And in luxurious Cities, where the noyse  
Of riot ascends above thir loftiest Towrs,  
And injury and outrage: And when Night  
Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons  
Of *Belial*, flown with insolence and wine.  
Witness the Streets of *Sodom*... (P.L. I, 497-503)

But drive farr off the barbarous dissonance  
Of *Bacchus* and his Revellers, the Race  
Of that wilde Rout that tore the *Thracian* Bard...

(P.L. VII, 32-4)

2nd 65) *Again, Utewael, Diana and Acteon, detail, lower right (video from 3rd 65)*

2nd 65a) *Rubens, c.1636?, Shepherd Scene, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59)*

Against that inversion set the Elizabethan: Weelkes' madrigal in the Oriana collection to which Milton's father had contributed. Whether this music belongs to the swirl of late Renaissance, or deploys (as might almost seem) the weight of Rubens' first Baroque — its force is life-affirming.

Music: Weelkes, 1601, As Vesta Was (Oriana), close, Argo ZRG-643

2nd 64) *Again, Titian, Bacchus and Ariadne, whole; + V close detail*

V2nd 64a) *A. Caracci, 1588-89, Venus and Adonis, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (CGB '59)*

3rd 65) *Again, Utewael, Diana and Acteon, whole, (CGB '59); video: center detail only*

Va3rd 66) *Rubens, 1636-40, Dance of the Peasants, Prado, Madrid*



- 3rd 66) *Again, Rubens, Nymphs Surprised by Satyrs, whole (video, right detail only)*  
 2nd 67) *Poussin, Revel before a Herm, whole (video details right then left)*  
 (close of Wheelkes)

The close of Comus tries to validate a festive joy:

To triumph in victorious dance  
 O're sensual Folly, and Intemperance.

But the staid lady and youths mince it in an "earth cumber'd... the wing'd air dark't with plumes."

- 68) *Blanchard, c. 1630, Angelica and Medoro, Metropolitan Museum, New York City (CGB '74); with video details*

In post-Renaissance Christendom, the conscious validation of flesh may overween — Shakespeare's "a green goose a goddess." As Blanchard, with Cartesian touch, strokes Ariosto's erring Angelica: Milton inflates the sensual as man's imparadising claim:

half her swelling Breast  
 Naked met his under the flowing Gold  
 Of her loose tresses hid: he in delight...  
 Smil'd with superior Love... (P.L. IV. 495-9)

nor turn'd I weene  
*Adam* from his fair Spouse, nor *Eve* the Rites  
 Mysterious of connubial Love refus'd:  
 Whatever Hypocrites austere talk...  
 Haile wedded Love... (P.L. IV, 741 ff)

The very angel glows rosy red when Adam asks how spirits mix by touch.

- Va69) *Coptic, 5th cent. A.D., Angel Contending with a Demonic Leda and the Swan, Coptic Museum, Cairo*  
 Vb69) *English Romanesque, early 12th c., Adam and Eve, fresco on Chancel wall, St. Botolph's, Hardham (Sussex)*  
 Vc69) *Gislebertus (Burgundian), c. 1120-40, Eve, St. Lazare, Autun*  
 Vd69) *Michelangelo, 1508-11, Temptation of Man, Sistine Ceiling, Vatican, Rome*  
 (slide show has combined Va, c and d69 into a single triple: a,c,d69)

69) *Mabuse, 1523-26, Adam and Eve, drawing, Albertina, Vienna; + V details*

Christianity had fought the brush fire of sex since before the Coptic relief of an Angel contending against Leda and the Swan. But neither in the Catacombs nor in the early Middle Ages (Pneumatic Eve deflated to angular skin-bags), nor in the dream-romance of that Eve at Autun, is the fall sexualized; even the force-forms of Michelangelo (Eve encroached athwart the conspicuous male) keep body clean. It seems to go with the Protestant-tending North that Mabuse's 1525 torrid Eve reaches for both fruits at the same time. But this is fabliau-comic; Milton's reason does not smile:

Against his better knowledge, not deceav'd,  
But fondly overcome with Female charm...  
As with new Wine intoxicated both  
They swim in mirth, and fansie that they feel  
Divinitie within them breeding wings  
Wherewith to scorn the Earth: but that false Fruit  
Farr other operation first displaid.  
Carnal desire enflaming... (*Paradise Lost* IX, 998 ff.)

70) *Rembrandt, 1639, Adam and Eve, etching, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; + V details*

In Rembrandt, touch raises the same danger. By a verism almost grotesque, he dodges; though the light on what Milton will call "those mysterious parts" flirts the bait the poet devours:

There they thir fill of Love and Loves disport  
Took largely, of thir mutual guilt the Seale,  
The solace of thir sin, till dewie sleep  
Oppress'd them, wearied with thir amorous play.  
(*Paradise Lost* IX, 1042-5)

71) *Rembrandt, 1636 (reworked 1650), Danae, Hermitage, Leningrad; + V details*

As Rembrandt knew, Jove's coming to Danae in a shower of gold had become a symbol of bought love, the same which Milton opposed to the hailed "connubial":

...not in the bought smile  
Of Harlots, loveless, joyless, undeard,

Casual fruition, nor in Court Amours... (P.L. IV, 765-7)

The leaning cupid Eliot would take up ("From which a golden Cupidon peeped out") weeps and wrings his hands. But the Olympian glow of the natural body, makes Adam's

To the Nuptial Bowre  
I led her blushing like the Morn... (P.L. VIII, 510-11)

mawkishly unclean. Was Milton's luck with Eros so poor?

- 72) *Sir Peter Lely, c. 1650-60?, Portrait of a Woman, Carrara Academy, Bergamo*  
 V72a) *Coques, c. 1670, Portrait of a Man, National Gallery, London (video: detail only)*  
 V72b) *Coques, c. 1680, Portrait of a Lady as St. Agnes, National Gallery, London (video: detail only)*  
 V72c) *Rubens, c. 1635, Bathsheba at Fountain, Gallery, Dresden (video: detail only)*  
 72d) *Rubens, c. 1615, Sampson and Delilah, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59)*

Let this unknown English lady take us back to 1643, when the poet left his house and pupils, to return with a seventeen-year-old wife from the Royalist stronghold of Oxford. She fled to her family in a few days. Milton wrote The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce:

it may yet befall a discreet man to be mistaken in his choice... The soberest and best governed men are least practised in these affairs... many who have spent their youth chastely... while they haste so eagerly to light the nuptial torch... may easily chance to meet, if not with a body impenetrable, yet often with a mind to all other due conversation inaccessible... nay, instead of being one flesh, they will be rather two carcasses chained unnaturally together; or, as it may happen, a living soul bound to a dead corpse...

Only when the Royalist cause was ruined, and Milton was in high place, did the girl, father and all, rejoin the household. It was long after Mary Powell's death that Adam lectures hapless Eve:

He never shall find out fit Mate, but such  
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake...  
Which infinite calamitie shall cause  
To Humane life, and houshold peace confound.

(Paradise Lost X, 899 ff.)

Or Sampson, Dalilah:

To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,  
 Then as repentant to submit, beseech...  
 If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men  
 Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me. thou alone could hate me  
 Thy Husband, slight me, sell me, and forgo me;  
 How wouldst thou use me now, blind...

Va73) *Charles Beale (English), c. 1650?, Young Girl, draped head, from his sketchbook, Morgan Collection, New York City; though video has shown first a detail of 73: Jane Myddleton*

73) *Samuel Cooper, c. 1665, Jane Myddleton, Beauchamp Collection, England*

Milton had a second wife. who died in childbirth after 15 months. This is not a portrait of her, though of that time. Already England could foreshadow the human immediacies of Jane Austen:

Methought I saw my late espoused Saint  
 Brought to me like *Alcestis* from the grave...  
 But O as to embrace me she enclin'd  
 I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night.

Despite the second wife, or the serviceable third, denial holds the center. Not only Comus is founded on the "yet abstain" of the Aereopagitica.

a74) *Double: [A] Blake, c. 1799-1800, Eve Tempted by the Serpent, Victoria and Albert Museum, London; & [B] Blake, 1807-08?, Paradise Regained: First Temptation, Collection T.H. Riches, Esq. (video takes these singly)*

74) *Blake, c. 1804 (copy of 1815), Title page to Milton, Rosenwald, Library of Congress; + V detail*

74a) *Guercino, c. 1650?, St. John in the Desert, National Gallery, Dublin (CGB '74); digital replaces this Guercino with V746 Rosa*

V746) *Rosa, c. 1660?, River Landscape with Apollo and the Sibyl, Wallace Collection, London*

74c) *Blake, c. 1808, Satan calling up his Legions, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (video detail only)*

In Paradise Lost it is Satan to Eve: "Die?...By the Fruit? it gives you life to Knowledge..."; in Paradise Regained, Satan to Christ: "All men are Sons of God... I also" — both trials requiring the pre-judged negative. Not even Samson can fulfill his mission without once more "fencing his ears" against "Dalilah's sorceries."

No wonder Blake had to revive that "ruin'd man" from the Polyp of Ulro, that he might "break the Chain of Jealousy from all its roots."

The glory of the great Baroque is also its "misplaced concreteness" — as if the radiant universe of besouled transcendence could be grasped in the spatial causality and fugal syntax of assertive non-contradiction. So Bacon, Locke and Newton deify (as Blake saw it) "the vegetable glass of nature." So (he wrote) "In Milton the Father is Destiny, the Son a Ratio of the five senses, and the Holy-ghost, Vacuum!" But of Milton only could Blake add (in warring identification): "he was a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it."

- a75) *Claude Lorrain, 1630-35, The Herdsman, National Gallery, Washington, D.C. (video: close detail, lower left only)*
- 75) *Claude Lorrain, c. 1635, Landscape with a Goatherd, National Gallery, London (video detail lower right only, with return to a landscape detail from a75, The Herdsman)*
- 75a) *same, Goatherd, lower section*
- V75b) *Lorrain, 1645-46, The Judgment of Paris, detail of landscape, right of center, National Gallery, Washington, DC; with return to Herdsman, left portion*

Music: Purcell, 1680, 5v Fantasy on one note (1st half), ARCHIV 3007

In Paradise Lost, in Claude, in Purcell, is it bondage or transcendence when thought, down tensile fields, gropes the new syntax of consciousness?

Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,  
 With charm of earliest Birds; pleasant the Sun  
 When first on this delightful Land he spreads  
 His orient Beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flour,  
 Glistening with dew; fragrant the fertile earth  
 After soft showers; and sweet the coming on  
 Of grateful Evening milde, then silent Night  
 With this her solemn Bird and this fair Moon,  
 And these the Gems of Heav'n, her starrie train:

(skip forward in music)

But neither breath of Morn when she ascends  
 With charm of earliest Birds, nor rising Sun  
 On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, floure,  
 Glistring with dew, nor fragrance after showers,  
 Nor grateful Evening mild, nor silent Night  
 With this her solemn Bird, nor walk by Moon,  
 Or glittering Starr-light without thee is sweet.

(Paradise Lost IV, 641-56)

(fade Purcell)

After Purcell's Fantasy on one Note, the polyphony of searching modulation finds a last controlled amplitude in the Ricercare the old Bach wrote on King Frederick's tune.

Music: J.S. Bach, 1747, 6v Ricercare from The Musical Offering, Westminster WL 5070

- Va76) *Rembrandt, 1631, His Mother as Prophetess Hannah, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (CGB '59)*
- Vb76) *Rembrandt, 1640, Holy Family, detail, Louvre, Paris*
- c76) *Rembrandt, 1634, Etching: The Angel Appearing to the Shepherds, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (with video details)*
- Vd76) *Rembrandt, 1665, Christ and Woman of Samaria, Staatliche Museen, Berlin*
- e76) *Rembrandt, c. 1639, The Entombment of Christ, Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow; video: detail only*
- Vf76) *Rembrandt, 1639, The Resurrection of Christ, Alte Pinakothek, Munich*
- 76) *Rembrandt, 1636, Christ's Ascension, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (CGB '59) video, upper detail only*

So the Miltonic simile reaches out and rounds on itself:

His Legions... Thick as Autumnal Leaves... in *Vallombrosa*... or  
 scatterd sedge Afloat, when... *Orion*... hath vext the Red-Sea Coast,  
 whose waves orethrew *Busiris* and his *Memphian* Chivalrie, While...  
 they pursu'd The Sojourners of *Goshen*, who beheld... Carkases And  
 broken Chariot Wheels, so thick bestrown Abject and lost lay these...

(Paradise Lost I, 301-312)

Thus the inversion and stretch of the opening sentence — "Of Mans First Disobedience" (with all hanging clauses and phrases:) "and... of... whose... into... and... with... of... till... and... Sing Heav'nly Muse..." — mirrors the long inversion and quest of

the poem, until the angel at the close melts history into Divine plan: "O goodness infinite... That all this good of evil shall produce... more wonderful Than that by which creation first brought forth Light out of darkness." And as Christ had said in Book III: "Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave," now all "the Starres of Morn... see him rise... fresh as the dawning light."

77) *Claude Lorrain, 1668, Hagar Expelled, detail, lower left, Alte Pinakothek, Munich, (CGB '59)*

78) *Same, Hagar Expelled, whole (CGB '59); while between 77 & 78, video mingles details of the two*

And as "Lycidas" after grief and blessing returns to today and tomorrow, calm:

Thus sang the uncouth Swain to th'Okes and rills,  
While the still morn went out with Sandals gray...  
At last he rose, and twitch'd his Mantle blew:  
To morrow to fresh Woods, and Pastures new.

so Paradise Lost settles from the deep passions of Rembrandt, into the elegiac peace of Poussin and Claude, which had always paired in Milton with tenebrist might — this late and luminous Claude — Hagar banished into silver-gray:

We may no longer stay: go, waken *Eve*;  
...from the other Hill...  
The Cherubim descended...  
Gliding meteorous, as Ev'ning Mist  
Ris'n from a River o're the marish glides...  
In either hand the hastning Angel caught  
Our lingring Parents, and to th' Eastern Gate  
Led them direct, and down the Cliff as fast  
To the subjected Plaine; then disappeer'd.  
They looking back, all th' Eastern side beheld  
Of Paradise, so late thir happie seat,  
Wav'd over by that flaming Brand, the Gate  
With dreadful Faces throng'd and fierie Armes:  
Som natural tears they drop'd, but wip'd them soon;  
The World was all before them, where to choose  
Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:  
They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow,  
Through *Eden* took thir solitarie way.

79) *Rembrandt, 1668-69, Return of the Prodigal Son, Hermitage, Leningrad*

- V79a) *Rembrandt 1636, Sampson Blinded by the Philistines, detail, State Museum, Frankfurt*  
 V79b) *Rembrandt, 1626, Tobit and his Wife, video detail of Tobit, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (CGB '59)*  
 79c) *Again, Return of the Prodigal Son, upper half*

Milton had always thought, along with the epic, of the drama, "wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign." And as Rembrandt in his last year felt his way into the Return of the Prodigal, Milton took up, like a suffering of his own, the blind trial and death-victory of Samson:

O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!  
 Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,  
 Dungeon, or beggery, or decrepit age!...  
 O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,  
 Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse  
 Without all hope of day!...  
 The Sun to me is dark  
 And silent as the Moon  
 When she deserts the night  
 Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

As in the Oedipus Colonos of Sophocles, the death of the hero leads the Chorus beyond tragedy:

Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
 Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,  
 Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,  
 And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

- Va80) *Rembrandt, Double: [A] 1629, Self Portrait in a Gorget; and [B] 1669, Last Self Portrait, both Mauritshuis, The Hague*  
 80) *Rembrandt, 1669, Last Self Portrait, Mauritshuis, The Hague (or V80)*  
 80a) *Faithorne, 1670, Portrait of John Milton, National Portrait Gallery, London (cf. slide 62)*  
 V80b) *Rembrandt, 1657, Self Portrait, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh*  
 80c) *Again 80, last self, detail*

As Spinoza knew, that is the only form Tragedy can take in the eternal rightness of Reason: "It is the nature of reason to conceive things under the species of eternity... that



is, intellectual love toward God is part of the infinite love with which God loves himself." But Spinoza's love, like the last self-portrait of the dying Rembrandt, may go beyond that egotism which, to add a word to Coleridge, is a somber revelation of Spirit. In the formulated pride of Baroque, where Rembrandt moved always to inclusion, did Milton, proudest of all, let selfhood exclude and foreclose?

Or had Eve's "Forsake me not thus, Adam," and true repentant tears besouled also for his blindness the great wheel of right? —

All is best, though we oft doubt,  
What th'unsearchable dispose  
Of highest wisdom brings about,  
And ever best found in the close...  
His servants he with new acquist  
Of true experience from this great event  
With peace and consolation hath dismiss,  
And calm of mind all passion spent.

(close Bach Ricercare)