

Manuscript: “Sanctifying rites in Milton’s *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634*”<sup>1</sup>

Published in *Christianity & Literature* 2019, Vol. 68(2) 193–212

Reading Stanley Fish’s chapters on *Comus* in *How Milton Works* is a hermeneutical challenge not unlike reading Milton himself. Fish’s picture of the Lady is the crux of his approach, and it is a picture whose edges seem to shift depending on the reader’s stance. This may be intentional, a portrayal of the “double perspective” which for Fish is the poem’s basic narrative technique: “The form of these questions is ‘either-or,’ but the answer in every case is ‘both-and’: the earth is both a pinfold and a gem, depending on whether you are tied to it by ‘low-thoughted care’ or live, at least in spirit, in ‘Regions mild of calm and serene Air’ (6, 4).”<sup>2</sup> As such, misreading Fish may be identical to misreading Milton.<sup>3</sup> So that the reader may judge, I want to begin by briefly developing what I understand to be Fish’s argument.

Picking up at the point where *Comus* has immobilized the Lady and left her with nothing by way of outside support, Fish writes: “Yet, as it turns out, she is left with everything—*everything that matters*. This is what is meant when she says to *Comus*, ‘Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind’ (663), or, in other words, ‘All of this—my weakness, your strength, the entire situation as it seems to be—is beside the point. I may be imprisoned in every sense you can conceive, but in truth I am free.’”<sup>4</sup> What primarily matters is how one inhabits Nature and the natural self; “Temperance, then, is a positive and liberating action” and Nature’s value “is a function of your relationship to it—a prison if you allow yourself to be confined within its

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to David Aers, Matthew Smith, and the anonymous readers and editorial staff of *Christianity and Literature* for their helpful input on earlier drafts of this essay.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Fish, *How Milton Works*, (Cambridge, Mass., 2003) 155, 153.

<sup>3</sup> Fish at least indicates that objecting to this model makes one an “anti-Miltonist,” 168.

<sup>4</sup> Fish, 152.

confines, a temple if, as you move within it, you continually look ‘to Heav’n’) (777).”<sup>5</sup> This Heavenward gaze is, paradoxically, an inward gaze, since “One gazes *at* something from which one is necessarily (and fatally) distinct; but the light within the Lady’s breast, the ‘something holy’ (246) that lodges there, her virgin purity, her chastity, is not something she apprehends but something she moves within and therefore *is*.”<sup>6</sup> The Lady’s self-regard worships the Creator: “The virtuous narcissist is, without contradiction, Narcissus *and* Echo, at once self-absorbed and responsive, as Echo is, only to the voice of the Other.”<sup>7</sup> Her completeness is such that her imprisonment only highlights her freedom, she is “a mind—spirit, animus—and she might have added that by immobilizing her [Comus] has done her the service of framing the strength (hidden, inner, and masculine) that sustains her, a strength he cannot touch.”<sup>8</sup> *Frames*, not forges. As we view *Comus*, our ears are educated; the Lady, like the Son in *Paradise Regained*, does not need to be taught: “There is nothing to measure her or her progress *against*, because there is no background in relation to which she can stand out as a figure. She is her own background, and thus the perfect emblem (and rescuer) of chastity, whose unblemished form is unblemished even to the extent of not being set off by some other form that gives it shape.”<sup>9</sup> The teleology of the Lady’s test, then, culminates in a celebration of a world which is “always a repetition of the same; ... displaying at every point the deep serenity that is the reward of becoming one with its dance, a world without seams, where surface and depth are indistinguishable and everything is ‘In unsuperfluous even proportion’ (772).”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Fish, 156.

<sup>6</sup> Fish, 166.

<sup>7</sup> Fish, 171.

<sup>8</sup> Fish, 172.

<sup>9</sup> Fish, 178.

<sup>10</sup> Fish, 182.

My primary intention is not to contradict Fish's reading (on the contrary, I will continue to rely on him below). I do believe that the young Milton's *Masque* is deeply indebted to a *theotic* tradition in which the pious soul shares a mystical union with God and thus participates now in her teleology. Milton cites Spenser as a greater teacher even than Aquinas, and he could have found this concept in either.<sup>11</sup> But I want to challenge an assumption which seems to be present in the phrase "One gazes *at* something from which one is necessarily (and fatally) distinct." Why is distinction necessarily fatal? We have no reason to think that, in 1634, Milton was already a monist; we have every reason to think him a fervent conforming churchman with an artist's eye for the "beauty of holiness" and unremarkable views on the Nicene Creed.<sup>12</sup> For a Trinitarian, disjunction is fatal, but distinction (between the persons of the Godhead, between God and man) is necessary for relationship. And even in regards to Milton's later work, it would seem a stretch to paint an eschatological dance of static indistinguishability. Fish's reading might be more appropriate for a prototypical court masque like Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum*, performed for/by Charles I and his queen just a few months previously.<sup>13</sup> But I am unconvinced

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<sup>11</sup> *Areopagitica* (1644), 939. All references to Milton's works are from *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed. Kerrigan, Rumrich, and Fallon, (New York, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> See Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*, (Oxford, 2008), 63.

<sup>13</sup> In Carew's masque (in which Milton's "Lady" Alice Egerton was a dancer), the failure of the old gods has left the heavens empty. Queen Henrietta Maria's eyes must take the place of the fallen stars while she remains enthroned in Britain: "Looke up, and see the darkened Spheare / Depriv'd of light, here eyes shine there" (ll. 916-17). While the three united kingdoms' worry, "How can the shaft stay in the quiver, / Yet hit the marke?" (ll. 996-7), Genius assures them that the Caroline court's "Fame shall flye / From hence alone, and in the Spheare / Kindle new Starres, whilst they rest here" (ll. 993-5). Quoted in Jennifer Chibnall, "The function of the Caroline masque form," in *The Court Masque*, ed. David Lindley, (Manchester, Eng., 1984), 78-93, at 89-90. Chibnall contrasts Carew's masque to Milton's vision. For further discussion of the relationship between *Comus* and the court masque genre, see Lauren Shoet, *Reading Masques: The English Masque and Public Culture in the Seventeenth Century*, (Oxford, 2010), 38 – 56; Leah Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth*, 209-210; David Norbrook, "The reformation of the masque" in *The Court Masque*, 94-110.

by the claim that neither the Lady nor her brothers grow in knowledge or virtue; their test seems to mature them in both. In place of stasis, or Fish's borrowed phrase "jumping up and down in one place," I want to posit ritual or even liturgical movement.<sup>14</sup> By that, I mean a movement in which the celebrants are not quite actors, but rather costumed members of the audience's family, who constantly break the fourth wall to draw congregants in, whose performance includes and invokes spiritual descent and ascent, prayer (spoken and sung), exhortations, benedictions, and sacraments, and for whom both movement and time are cyclical, linear, and ultimately upward.<sup>15</sup>

In the *Masque*, philosophy and her attendant scenery of Hellenic mythology have been drawn into the service of a thoroughly Christian humanism. Milton's mode is more Spenser or Dante than Chaucer here; I see no attempt to work out what 'unaccommodated woman' might do on her own strength and virtue.<sup>16</sup> That question is explicitly raised at the *Masque's* end, but we have had the answer from the beginning: Heaven stoops to help even the most innocent, the most

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<sup>14</sup> Fish, 168.

<sup>15</sup> The Pauline image of the Christian life as an athlete running a race (1 Corinthians 9:24) may describe a densely populated circular track as felicitously as an individualist cross-country marathon. "Circular" and "linear" are not contradictions. Campbell and Corns also link the poem to the Laudian church, but see synergism or semi-Pelagianism in Milton's understanding of virtue, where I am inclined to see a more subtle understanding that the sheer *givenness* of formal worship is a form of prevenient grace through which virtue may be received (Campbell and Corns, 83-84). Leah Marcus, while she reads Milton as already anti-Charles and thus anti-Laud's personal power, argues that the masque upholds the ceremonial norms of the established church: "As William B. Hunter, Jr., noted ten years ago, *Comus* is steeped in the liturgy for its festival occasion, the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels." For the masque's participants and viewers, who would likely have attended services that day, "the [thematic] parallels would have been unmistakable and would have encouraged them to perceive the masque as an extension of the liturgical lessons" (Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth*, (Chicago, 1986), 201). For an opposing argument that Milton's masque is "actively shaped by Milton's developing Puritan sympathies," see Maryanne McGuire's *Milton's Puritan Masque* (Athens, Georgia, 1983), quoted from page 5.

<sup>16</sup> While this is admittedly a different approach from William Shullenberger's argument that Milton's masque is a "founding and still challenging gesture of early modern liberal feminism," his interest in public ritual passage and his claim that for the Lady the masque "is not only representational, but performative" and indeed "transformative" are stimulating. See Shullenberger, *Lady in the Labyrinth: Milton's Comus as Initiation*, (Madison, New Jersey, 2008), 19, 15-16.

noble, the best educated of God's children. Grace precedes virtue. The *Masque* dramatizes the testing of temperance or chastity by a figure of sensuality. But—and here Milton is more Dante than Spenser—the persons tested are not allegories. They are listed in the *dramatis personae* as “The Lord Brackley, Mr. Thomas Egerton his brother, and The Lady Alice Egerton” alongside their alter-egos of “1. Brother,” “2. Brother,” and “The Lady.” These are not simply actors playing roles: the Attendant Spirit, played by the music master Henry Lawes, *is* the music master, “That to the service of this house belongs, / Who with his soft pipe and smooth-ditties song, / Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar ...” (85-87).<sup>17</sup> At the *Masque*'s denouement the triumphant children will be presented as “Three fair branches of your own” “timely tried” by Heaven to their parents the “Noble Lord, and Lady bright” of Bridgewater (967-970). Milton ranked temperate chastity high among the virtues throughout his career as a writer, but from his early poetry we see these virtues in an ecclesiastical and sacramental context.<sup>18</sup> The “Lady” and her brothers were baptized Alice, John, and Thomas Egerton when their parents and their parish called “upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous mercy hee will graunt to these children that thing which by nature they cannot

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<sup>17</sup> The introduction to the *Masque* in the Kerrigan, Rumrich, and Fallon edition is helpful on this point.

<sup>18</sup> Compare this to the opening canto of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* Book II, where the Knight of Temperance Sir Guyon nearly attacks the Knight of Holiness St. George, but immediately stops and reverences him when he recognizes the Red Cross, “the sacred badge of my Redeemer's death,” painted on George's shield (II.i.27). Embraced by Holiness (the distinctively Christian idea of being set apart for communion with Christ, cf. Hebrews 10:10), Temperance may proceed on his quest. Quoted from Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton et al., (Longman, 2007). Joseph Warykow demonstrates that this idea of ‘union with Christ’ is fundamental to Aquinas' understanding that the Christian receives the great theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, followed by infused moral virtues (like temperance) which replace the old natural habits, through a relationship with Jesus Christ: “To live authentically is to live on the basis of Christ and to grow into Christ.” Warykow, “Jesus in the Moral Theology of Thomas Aquinas,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 42, (2012), 13-33, at 22. As the recent volume *Aquinas Among the Protestants*, ed. Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen (Hoboken, New Jersey, 2017) has demonstrated, there is nothing oxymoronic in the idea of a Protestant virtue ethic, as has sometimes been claimed.

haue, that they may be baptized with water and the holy Ghost, and received into Christes holy Church, and be made lively membres of the same.” Their battle against Comus is an example of “manfully” fighting “under [Christ’s] banner against sinne, the world, and the devil” by themselves forsaking “the vaine pompe and glory of the world, with all the couetous desires of the same, and the carnall desires of the flesh.”<sup>19</sup> This is not to say that Milton is uninterested in the virtue ethics of Aristotelian philosophy (in his later treatise on educating children he makes it quite clear that he is), but it’s an Aristotle baptized into Christianity by Thomas Aquinas and into the English church by the likes of Edmund Spenser.<sup>20</sup>

Milton displays this (high) ecclesial way of thinking in his roughly contemporaneous poem on the contemplative life, *Il Penseroso*, in which “Melancholy” has a “saintly visage” colored “Wisdom’s hue.” She is united to “the spirit of Plato” and to “immortal mind,” as well as to the Muses, “Jove’s altar,” “gorgeous Tragedy,” “the tale of Troy divine” and the myth of Orpheus. When Milton calls her into England, however, she is a young acolyte:

Come pensive nun, devout and pure,  
Sober, steadfast, and demure,  
All in a robe of darkest grain,  
Flowing with majestic train,  
And sable stole of cypress lawn,  
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.  
(31-34)

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<sup>19</sup> The baptismal rite of the 1604 *Book of Common Prayer*.

<sup>20</sup> See, for instance, Milton’s advice that young men spend the day studying classical ethics, history, and philosophy, followed before bed by the Old and New Testaments, in *Of Education* (1644), 976. Stephen Fallon, looking almost exclusively at Milton’s later work, argues that in Milton’s mind virtue was something that came naturally and habitually to him without the need for grace. While Milton indisputably moved away from reformed orthodoxy as he aged, it is at least possible that the mature Milton assumed he had clearly expressed that holiness flows from grace in his earlier work. Stephen M. Fallon, “Milton and Literary Virtue,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 42, (2012), 181-200.

Given the thoroughgoing Protestant attack on monasticism and the dissolution of the English convents roughly a hundred years previously, Milton's images here are strikingly ecumenical.<sup>21</sup> Not only is Melancholy identified with Roman Catholicism, but her majestic robe and stole, the kind of 'popish' symbolism so abhorred by Puritans, receive four lines. He continues, urging her to keep her gaze heavenward:

Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:  
There held in holy passion still,  
Forget thyself to marble, till  
With a sad leaden downward cast,  
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.  
(40-44)

She recalls the great woman mystics of late medieval England, who sought passionate union and even "commerce" with the Lord, who lived in earthly chastity to enable a divine marriage with Christ.<sup>22</sup> She may also point toward the Catholic and Neoplatonic icon Henrietta Maria. She in return calls Milton to her way of life. Milton concludes:

But let my due feet never fail,  
To walk the studious cloister's pale,  
And love the high embowèd roof,  
With antique pillars' massy proof,  
And storied windows richly dight,  
Casting a dim religious light.  
There let the pealing organ blow,  
To the full-voiced choir below,  
In service high, and anthems clear,  
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,  
Dissolve me into ecstasies,  
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.

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<sup>21</sup> Not a particularly Puritan trait. The high sacramentalist Suffolk rector Robert Shelford wrote a few years earlier: "Let Protestants love the Papists because they have kept the holy oracles and sacred mysteries for them, and let Papists love the Protestants because they are descended from them, wear the badge of covenant with them and by a light and oblique dissent provoke them to better life and more refined learning." Quoted in Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1640*, (Oxford, 1987), 55-56.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Richard Crashaw's poems on St. Teresa of Avila—"A Hymn to Sainte Teresa," "An Apologie for the fore-going Hymne," and "The Flaming Heart."

(155-166)

Compare this to the words of Calvin's successor at Geneva, Theodore Beza, who preached that the house of God is not a building "that we enter to see the beautiful shapes of vaults and pillars ... Nor is it a place that we visit in order to fill our ears with the singing of choirs and the music of organs. Rather it is a place where the pure Word of God is clearly preached."<sup>23</sup>

So where is Milton when the nun's influence leads him back to her Laudian chapel? In the woods, attended by spirits: "And as I wake, sweet music breathe / Above, about, or underneath, / Sent by some spirit to mortals good, / Or th' unseen Genius of the wood" (151-154). The only reality that the philosophical, classical, and musical spirits are part of, then, is that of the Christian church. The forest may be a secular sphere—the nun's upward gaze comes sadly down to earth—but the boundaries between sacred and secular are malleable. The worshipper re-enters the cloister with the cyclical regularity of morning and evening prayer, and sweet guardians attend her when she leaves. Similarly, in the circa 1632 poem *At a Solemn Music*, "Voice and Verse" are a "Blest pair of sirens, pledges of Heav'n's joy" which lift us to "the sapphire-colored throne," recall the Edenic "perfect diapason," and foretell the day when "we soon again renew that song, / And keep in tune with Heav'n, till God ere long / To his celestial consort us unite, / To live with him, and sing in endless morn of light" (25-28). Spoken and sung poetry is an agent to unite us to God's celestial consort—the church in glory, which self-consciously sacred architecture and ritual seek to make present before the worshipper's eyes.

It is not surprising, then, that the Attendant Spirit who enters the *Masque* into the "wild wood" of "low-thoughted care" descends from a heaven full of Greek mythological images, Platonic forms, virtues and ethereal saintliness (*Masque* 1-18). He has been sent to help the

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609*, (Oxford, 2012), 37.

children who, despite their brave words as the masque progresses, are identified from the start as frail and vulnerable. The offspring of the island's noble peer (Lord Egerton), on the way to "attend their father's state, / and new-entrusted scepter" (Egerton had just been made lord lieutenant of several counties)<sup>24</sup> must make their way through

the perplexed paths of this drear wood,  
The nodding horror of whose shady brows  
Threats the forlorn and wand'ring passenger.  
And here their tender age might suffer peril,  
But that by quick command from sov'reign Jove  
I was dispatched for their defense and guard.  
(35-42)

As it was for Spenser's Guyon, the primary test to the children's virtue will be Circean; that witch's son Comus lurks in the woods to offer travelers "orient liquor in a crystal glass," which when accepted turns "their human count'nance, / Th' express resemblance of the gods" into "some brutish form" of "perfect . . . misery" (65-73). There are elements here that encourage the kind of *animus-over-matter* reading which Fish leans toward, and which recalls Calvin's use of the classic Platonist image of the body as a "prison-house."<sup>25</sup> Jove is "sov'reign," men are "frail," sin is "misery," Comus' victims "roll with pleasure in a sensual sty," and the Attendant Spirit records his strong distaste for soiling his "pure ambrosial weeds / With the rank vapors of this sin-worn mold" (77, 16-17). And yet the children, "favored of high Jove," are also seeking to "lay their just hands on that golden key [Virtue] / that opes the palace of eternity" (78, 13-14). Hands, not minds; a key, not concepts. Moreover, the "express resemblance of the gods" is the human face (68-69). Milton balances Platonic spirituality with the steady pursuit of Virtue "by due steps" (12); prevenient aid for the helpless but "favored" (perhaps even *elect*, as Jove will

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<sup>24</sup> Campbell and Corns, 76.

<sup>25</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, (Peabody, Mass., 2008), I.15.2.

later be named “Providence” by the Lady) with the “crown that Virtue gives / After this mortal change, to her true servants” (9-10); disdain for “the smoke and stir of this dim spot” with the admission that these carnal children look divine.<sup>26</sup> This sounds like the poetry of a young Cambridge-educated Arminian planning on a career in the ceremonial and sacramental Caroline church.<sup>27</sup>

The Spirit, now in the form of a shepherd-musician, flees at the sound of Comus’ “hateful steps,” explicitly contrasted to the “due steps” of all the virtuous and the soon-to-be-heard “chaste footing” of the Lady (92, 146). For Fish, Comus makes Nature a prison (as opposed to a temple) by allowing Nature to confine him. This seems correct, but correct in a very specific way. Comus is not simply a sensualist, nor is his chalice a straightforward symbol of alcoholic debasement. His invitations to “joy,” “feast,” “Midnight shout, and revelry, / Topsy dance, and jollity”—since “Venus now wakes, and wakens Love”— sound like mere sins of the flesh, but he soon moves us to a deeper order of perversion (102-104, 124):

Come let us our rites begin,  
’Tis only daylight that makes sin,  
Which these dun shades will ne’er report.  
Hail goddess of nocturnal sport,  
Dark-veiled Cotytto, t’ whom the secret flame  
Of midnight torches burns; mysterious dame  
That ne’er art called, but when the dragon womb  
Of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom,

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<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of Milton’s desire to unite Platonic vision with Aristotelian virtue in the masque, see Astrid Giugni, “The ‘Holy Dictate of Spare Temperance’: Virtue and Politics in Milton’s *A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle*,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 45 (2015), 395-418.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Campbell and Corns, 86-87. By the somewhat ambiguous term “Arminian,” I do not mean to imply a stance which is either anti-Augustinian or strictly tied to the archbishopric of William Laud. Rather, I mean to position Milton within a group of English Protestants who accepted fallen man’s depravity and need for prevenient grace but desired to mellow the double-predestinarian logic of Geneva and to move the soteriological focus onto the visible, universally offered grace of public worship. See Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, (London, 1988), 249; Lake, “Protestants, Puritans and Laudians,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 42 (1991), 618-628; Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*; “The Remonstrance” in Phillip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, (New York, 1877), 516-519; W. David Neelands, “Predestination” in *A Companion to Richard Hooker*, ed. Torrance Kirby, (Leiden, 2008), 185-220.

And makes one blot of all the air,  
 Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,  
 Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat', and befriend  
 Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end  
 Of all thy dues be done, and none left out ...  
 Come, knit hands, and beat the ground,  
 In a light fantastic round.

(125-144)

Comus is the priest of a bad religion. His eyes are not fastened to the ground; he looks up, but hopes to see darkness. He summons witch-goddesses. He celebrates “abhorred rites,” and fulfills his vows to the utmost end of his patronesses’ *dues*, which must run the opposite way from the “due steps” of the just and Milton’s “due feet” returning to the cloisters (535). The Attendant has already identified the steps of Comus’ dance as “hateful,” so when Comus invokes “Love,” we know that this word has been turned inside-out by his liturgy. His chalice is the sacrament of a black mass, complete with midnight torches, bestial companions, and a lost virgin to be sexually victimized. It is Nature worship *contra naturam*, in that Comus idolizes creatures over Creator, but it is a worship keenly aware of unseen realities. Comus reveals his spiritual perception both when he “can distinguish by mine art” the “different pace / Of some chaste footing” (the approaching Lady), and by his reaction to the prayer she sings: “Sure something holy lodges in that breast” (247). He has heard the sensual siren songs with which Circe would seduce sailors and put to sleep “the prisoned soul” with “potent herbs and baleful drugs” before, “but such a sacred and home-felt delight, / Such sober certainty of waking bliss / I never heard till now” (253-264). The Lady is of a higher order than Circe, but so is Comus. The Attendant has told us that the son “Excels his mother at her mighty art,” and Comus claims that “We that are of purer fire / Imitate the starry choir” (63, 111-112). He is thus a parody of the “aerial spirit” who descended from Jove’s “starry threshold” to open the *Masque* (1-3). Like him, Comus will appear as a shepherd. And his response to the Lady is identical to that of Milton’s Satan when he

first sees Eve: worshipful delight which appreciates the worth of its object and acknowledges her relation to a greater power (the holy “he” who makes in her “his hidden residence”), followed by a determination to possess the woman and defile her by winding snake-like into her heart (163). Comus’ “Love” is demonic hate. The “virtue of this magic dust” which he casts into the air is the power to ensnare the Lady’s “virtuous mind” (165, 211). Can virtue cast out virtue? Only if Comus’ *virtus* has been inverted and become a vacuum.

The Lady, though deceived by Comus’ disguise, recognizes something of his purposes before they meet. She has heard the racket of Comus’ celebration, and it reminds her of the worship of unruly, uneducated shepherds, “When for their teeming flocks and granges full / In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan, / And thank the gods amiss” (176). She is, like the elder brother in the following scene and like Eve in *Paradise Lost*, a little too naïve about the range of spiritual depravity. She envisions something similar to stanza VIII from *On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity* (1629):

The shepherds on the lawn,  
Or ere the point of dawn  
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;  
Full little thought they then,  
That the mighty Pan  
Was kindly come to live with them below.  
(85-90)

She supposes that the group in the woods, in contrast to the decorous shepherds above, have been drinking too freely, like St. Paul’s Corinthian parishioners who overindulge in the Eucharistic cup.<sup>28</sup> The worship is wanton, not the god himself—he is thanked amiss by abusing his bounty. But Comus and his followers never invoke “bounteous Pan” in their worship, because in these early poems Pan is associated with Christ and *ought to be* worshipped. This crew, on the

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<sup>28</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:17-22, King James Version.

contrary, is that which opposes the celebration of the *Nativity Ode* in stanzas XX and XXIV:

“With flow’r-inwoven tresses torn, / The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn”

(187-188), and “In vain with timbrelled anthems dark / The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshipped ark” (219-220). There are worse things than discordant liturgy.

The Lady discovers this when she enters the cloud of magic dust:  
 What might this be? A thousand fantasies  
 Begin to throng into my memory  
 Of calling shapes, and beck’ning shadows dire,  
 And airy tongues, that syllable men’s names  
 On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.  
 (205-209)

Comus’ attack on the Lady’s imagination, like the dream which the reptilian Satan whispers into Eve’s ear—“Assaying by his devilish art to reach, / The organs of her fancy, and with them forge / Illusions as he list” (*PL* 801-803)—is intended to taint her perceptions and prepare the ground for a frontal assault. The Lady, unattended by her brothers (like Spenser’s Guyon when he leaves behind the Palmer), is about to encounter a figure (like Spenser’s Mammon) whose offers of worldly enjoyment are next-door to Hell.<sup>29</sup> She turns inward, as Fish points out, to survey her defenses:

The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended  
 By a strong siding champion Conscience.—  
 O welcome pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,  
 Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,  
 And thou unblemished form of Chastity,  
 I see ye visibly, and now believe  
 That he, the Supreme Good, t’ whom all things ill  
 Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,  
 Would send a glist’ring guardian if need were  
 To keep my life and honor unassailed.  
 (211-220)

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<sup>29</sup> See *FQ* II.vi.24.

The Lady's inward gaze rests on her own Conscience guiding her; its attendance is an excellent thing, but she breaks off. For Conscience (*con-scientia*) to act rightly, it needs a correct knowledge of the pertinent facts.<sup>30</sup> Comus's attack on the link between her senses and her intellectual powers, united with the "single darkness" he has summoned to inhibit her senses themselves, leave Conscience vulnerable. But she is not given another moment either to rashly presume on her natural powers or to despair of them, because she is interrupted by an immediate infusion of theological virtue from the Supreme Good, the source of grace.<sup>31</sup> These graces are so tangible that the Lady sees them visibly in the form of a pure-eyed, white-handed, golden-winged angel. Faith and Hope can operate in confusion and darkness, because "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."<sup>32</sup> After Faith and Hope, the audience of course expects "Love" or "Charity."<sup>33</sup> Instead we hear "Chastity." I believe the reason for this must be related to what the Lady has unwittingly absorbed of Comus' imperfectly overheard grammar. By summoning the *nomen sacrum* "Love" into the midst of the "dragon womb" of his rite, Comus has defiled the word.<sup>34</sup> The Lady, her brothers, and the Attendant Spirit must and will rescue it from Comus by the *Masque's* conclusion, but in the meantime she chooses another. Chastity is not a negative term; it does not mean *abstinence* or the triumph of reason over passion. Chastity is the virginal love of a woman for God which we encountered in

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<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Frs. of the English Dominican Province, (Denzinger Bros., 1947), I.79.12.

<sup>31</sup> I think Fish's reading here fails to account for the Lady's cry of "welcome." He writes: "It is as if she were abstracted from the landscape of her consciousness and sees that in another instant its even surface will be marked by alien shadows and shapes. But then, in the nick of time, she dispels those shapes by declining to acknowledge them as her own; 'thoughts' they may be, but they are thoughts from some outside agency, and as she refuses them they fade away (like the fleeing, sighing, pagan deities of the *Nativity Ode*) to be replaced by *what was already there* [emphasis added]." Fish, 164-165.

<sup>32</sup> Hebrews 11:1.

<sup>33</sup> As in 1 Corinthians 13.

<sup>34</sup> See 1 John 4:8: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

mystic Melancholy, and which St. Paul commends when he writes: “There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit.”<sup>35</sup> Rosemond Tuve connects this care for holy things with “that element of right allegiance which Christian thought gave it right down through the centuries to Milton’s *Comus* (fidelity to ‘the right loves’ is the emphasis we persistently meet from Augustine onward, preventing the excesses of enslavement to Mammon or to Acrasia).”<sup>36</sup> When Spenser and Milton write about Temperance, they are writing about Love.<sup>37</sup> The Lady knows the love is mutual; God has sent her angelic graces, and the “glist’ring guardian” she will indeed need to combat the demonic “officers of vengeance” is already *en route*. Providence confirms this love by a sign, a flash of light which breaks through the clouds and which the Lady must be looking *outside of herself* to see (223-225). Fish’s image of meditating upon the Other via oneself, of venerating one’s own soul as an icon for the divine, does not cover the Lady’s need for and comfort from a wholly external divine interposition. Indeed, the sign fixes her attention more firmly on her need for help from the community of the good.

Prompted by her “new enlivened spirits,” the Lady begins to sing a prayer—a litany?—to attract the help of her brothers, but which also looks to the intercession of a witness, Echo (228).<sup>38</sup> She asks Echo to reveal to her the boys’ location: “O if thou have / Hid them in some

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<sup>35</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:34.

<sup>36</sup> Rosemond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery* (Princeton, 1966), 366. Cf. Fish, 165: “One who is chaste pledges herself to the highest possible service and rejects all other services as unworthy and idolatrous.”

<sup>37</sup> Tuve discusses how the old collection of the seven virtues (the three theological virtues with the four cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice) came to be integrated in allegorical literature with the seven evangelical gifts of the Spirit preached by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. Tuve, 88.

<sup>38</sup> Note the passivity of “enlivened”—a gift received, not a feat performed. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, XI.22-26: “See Father, what first fruits on Earth are sprung / From thy implanted grace in man, these sighs / And

flow'ry cave, / Tell me but where, / Sweet queen of parley, daughter of the sphere. / So may'st thou be translated to the skies, / And give resounding grace to all heav'n's harmonies" (238-243). Comus' music parodies the song of the spheres; the Lady's joins that song as she prays both for Echo's help and for Echo's translation from whatever sphere she currently resides in to the realm of "heav'n's harmonies," the starry threshold of Jove's court. If Echo receives grace, she will dispense grace: "Here now is one who will increase our loves."<sup>39</sup> This is Dantean in a manner uncomfortable to a Protestant ear—far too close to petitioning a departed loved one—but the cloisters Milton rhapsodized were not built by Reformers.<sup>40</sup> Compare Comus' response to the Lady's song with *Il Penseroso's* ecclesial "anthems clear" which could "dissolve" Milton "into ecstasies" and lift his heart to "Heav'n":

Can any mortal mixture of earth's mold  
 Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?  
 Sure something holy lodges in that breast,  
 And with these raptures moves the vocal air  
 To testify his hidden residence;  
 How sweetly did they float upon the wings  
 Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night  
 At every fall smoothing the raven down  
 Of darkness till it smiled ...

(244-252)

In the Lady's hymn, invisible reality transforms the material world. The words of her enlivened spirits move "vocal air"; her syllables are resonant, carnal and creative. Enchantment issues from the hidden residence of the holy, takes the oppressive darkness of the forest, and builds a vaulted

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prayers, which in this golden censer, mixed / With incense, I thy priest before thee bring, / Fruits of more pleasing savor from thy seed ..."

<sup>39</sup> Dante, *Paradiso* V, 105, in *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Paradiso*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, (Random House, 1984).

<sup>40</sup> Rather like the veneration of the "statue" of Hermione in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, V.3.

cathedral (with a religiously dim “high embowèd roof”) for music to echo in. Earth’s mold *can be* an instrument of divine power.

When Comus addresses the Lady, he begins by flatteringly adopting ceremonial language he believes will please her:<sup>41</sup>

... I’ll speak to her  
And she shall be my queen.—Hail, foreign wonder!  
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,  
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine  
Dwell’st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song  
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog  
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.  
(264-270)

Comus’ “Hail” casts his picture of her in a distinctly Marian light: she is a goddess-like being who dwells with Pan, who is honored by a shrine to the pair of them, and who sings a “blest song” which fights against the darkness. She is the opposite, in fact, of Comus’ true queen, to whom he had cried “Hail goddess of nocturnal sport, / Dark-veiled Cotytto”—the patroness of “the dragon womb / Of Stygian darkness.”<sup>42</sup> Comus recognizes the kind of thing the Lady is by associating her with the Christian archetype of holy chastity. But he has already profaned her hailing her name “in vain,” as the commandment puts it.<sup>43</sup> He plans to profane her further.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The terms “courtly” and “romantic” can here be clustered with the previously used “ritual” and “liturgical” without contradiction; the line between chivalric devotion to a beloved lady and pilgrim devotion to Our Lady is a fine one, as we see in Dante’s stance toward Beatrice or in the knights’ reverent responses to the iconography of Gloriana in *FQ II*.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *Paradise Lost* IV.505-535. Comus’ use of “Hail” here, recalling the *Ave Maria*, is a perversion (albeit written much earlier) of the typological “Hail, Eve” in *Paradise Lost*: “On whom the angel ‘Hail’ / Bestowed, the holy salutation used / Long after to blest Mary, second Eve” (*PL* V.385-387).

<sup>43</sup> Exodus 20:7.

<sup>44</sup> Defiling the Virgin Mary is a classic example of the single most heinous thing one might do to offend Christ. Timothy Wengert writes that it was the Dominican indulgence-seller Johann Tetzel’s claim that “were one to rape the Virgin Mary so that she conceived another child, God would forgive him, ‘provided he placed the necessary sum in the [collections] box’” which most enraged Martin Luther in their encounter. See Timothy J. Wengert, *Martin Luther’s 95 Theses*, (Fortress Press, 2015), xxxv.

The Lady, though, deflects both title and praise (a gentle Protestant corrective?)<sup>45</sup> and focuses attention on her own need for aid:

Nay gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise  
 That is addressed to unattending ears;  
 Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift  
 How to regain my severed company  
 Compelled me to awake the courteous echo ...  
 (271-275)

Her response makes it clear that she has, in fact, literally attended to his words; they are not, however, the kinds of words she is listening for (news of her brothers). Comus' flatterings are, as always, the wrong words. It is not until he tells a baldfaced lie about the boys' location, abandoning his preferred mode of telling the truth backward, that he convinces her to accompany him. Even here, however, Comus reveals his bent; when he saw the boys in the wood, he reports, "I was awestruck, / And as I passed, I worshipped; if those you seek, / It were a journey like the path to Heav'n / To help you find them" (301-304). The Lady should take warning from his confessed idolatry, but either she was too excited at his claim "Two such I saw" fifteen lines earlier to pay much attention, or she is too gracious to correct him a second time. Comus is correct, of course; the path to Heav'n and the path to reunion with her family run parallel for the Lady, while Comus strives to run the opposite direction. This is true even when their paths lie together. Comus is one of God's "slavish officers," so the temptations he presents to the Lady

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. stanzas II-IV of George Herbert's "To All Angels and Saints," published in *The Temple* in 1633: "Not out of envie or maliciousnesse / Do I forbear to crave your special aid: / I would address / My vows to thee most gladly, blessed Maid, / And Mother of my God, in my distress. / Thou art the holy mine, whence came the gold, / The great restorative for all decay / In young and old; / Thou art the cabinet where the jewel lay: / Chiefly to thee would I my soul unfold: / But now (alas!) I dare not; for our King, / Whom we do all jointly adore and praise, / Bids no such thing: / And where his pleasure no injunction layes, / ('Tis your own case) ye never move a wing." In *George Herbert: The Complete Poetry*, ed. John Drury and Victoria Moul, (Penguin, 2015), 74. Also see Stanza V of John Donne's "A Litany" for a less hesitant celebration of the Virgin Mary.

will glorify her while damning him. Perhaps the Lady sees through his disguise for a moment, for it is here that she utters her most overtly Christian prayer: “Eye me blest Providence, and square my trial / To my proportioned strength” (329-330). May Providence, the gentle aspect of the Protestants’ God, protect her, and may he not test his child beyond the strength (the *virtus*) he has given her to prevail.<sup>46</sup>

The Lady’s brothers are anxiously searching for her.<sup>47</sup> The elder seeks to dispel their fear of the dark dangers which might beset her with the cheering thought that “Virtue could see to do what Virtue would / By her own radiant light, though sun and moon / Were in that flat sea sunk” (373-375). Lines like this are central to Fish’s reading, but the younger brother is skeptical: “You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps / Of miser’s treasure by an outlaw’s den, / And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope / Danger will wink on opportunity” (398-401). It is difficult for me not to read this as a gloss on Spenser’s Guyon, who is astonished to come upon Mammon “sunning his threasure hore” (*FQ* II.vii.Arg.). Despite Guyon’s confident claim to Mammon that he has a “high heroicke spright” which disdains to look at money (II.vii.10), after a long debate he wavers and expresses curiosity to see Mammon’s “secret place” or storehouse (II.vii.19-20). The spiritual peril this puts Guyon in, opening him to ever-accumulating temptations, casts doubt on the elder brother’s (less confident) rejoinder that while his sister’s (mere) body may be endangered, “No goblin, or swart fairy of the mine, / Hath hurtful power o’er true virginity”

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

<sup>47</sup> This is a more faithful Spenserian reference, perhaps, than that of *Areopagitica*, where Milton writes that Spenser, “describing true temperance under the person of Guyon, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon and the bower of earthly bliss that he might see and know and yet abstain,” 939.

(*Masque* 436-437).<sup>48</sup> Even when the Attendant Spirit arrives to anxiously report that he has heard the Lady's song ascending like incense ("a steam of rich distilled perfumes"), but seen herself encumbered around with a "deadly snare" by a "damned wizard,"<sup>49</sup> the elder brother repeats the claim that Virtue may be "Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled" (555-574, 590). Rather than engaging him in debate, the Spirit replies simply that Comus' "Hellish charms" can "unthread thy joints, / And crumble all thy sinews" (614-615). Neither swords nor philosophy can prevail here—instead, he gives them a plant of "divine effect" called Haemony, which will act on Comus like garlic on a vampire, or like the sign of the cross on a demon.<sup>50</sup> In response, the elder brother finally follows his sister's example and remembers to pray, telling the Spirit to "lead on apace, I'll follow thee, / And some good angel bear a shield before us" (which of course exactly describes what the Attendant Spirit is doing with the Haemony; the grace has preceded the request) (657-658).<sup>51</sup>

I will give only a brief reading of the centerpiece of the *Masque*, the argument between Comus and the Lady. Comus and his "rabble" process in, set the Lady in "an enchanted chair,"

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<sup>48</sup> This pattern is repeated in Canto xii, when Guyon gazes for far too long on the cavorting maidens in the Bower of Bliss, "and in his sparkling face / the secret signes of kindled lust appear" (II.xii.68). At least for Guyon, a sin of the heart has already occurred, and shame may fuel his surprisingly thorough destruction of the garden as much as his mission does. Cf. Matthew 5:28.

<sup>49</sup> It is the wizard Archimago who tempts Guyon to attack the Knight of Holiness in the first canto of the *Faerie Queen* Book II.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Lancelot Andrewes' anti-iconoclastic Good Friday sermon on contemplating the crucified Christ: "Surely, the more steadily and more often we shall fix our eye upon it, the more we shall be inured; and being inured, the more desire to do it. For at every looking some new sight will offer itself, which will offer unto us occasion, either of godly sorrow, true repentance, sound comfort, or some other reflection, issuing from the beams of this heavenly mirror." In *The Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology: 96 Sermons of Lancelot Andrewes*, ed. Henry Parker, (Oxford, 1841), vol. 2, 130.

<sup>51</sup> Catherine Gimelli Martin addresses haemony within a compelling discussion of the convergence of Arminian and Spenserian themes in *Comus* in "The Non-Puritan Ethics, Metaphysics, and Aesthetics of Milton's Spenserian *Masque*," *Milton Quarterly* 37.4 (2003), 215 – 244, and her expanded version in *Milton among the Puritans: The Case for Historical Revisionism*, (London and New York, 2016), 141 – 174.

and offer her Comus' cup, which she refuses and "goes about to rise" (stage instructions after 659). Comus, lifting his wand, informs her that she is "Root-bound" by his power (662). She responds in the vein of the elder brother, though importantly concludes with eyes upward: "Fool, do not boast; / Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind, / With all they charms, although this corporal rind / Thou hast immanacled, While Heav'n sees good" (662-665). The ensuing debate, however, in which Comus clearly wants to take her virginity, does not actually center on a sexual act of some mere "corporal rind."<sup>52</sup> The act which Comus wants to her to commit is to drink of his cup, "That flames and dances in his crystal bounds," one sip of which "Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight / Beyond the bliss of dreams." (673, 812-813). The seduction combines the material with the spiritual, and Comus' final words in the *Masque* are "Be wise, and taste.—" (813).<sup>53</sup> This the Lady refuses to do, crying "Mercy guard me!" and rejecting his "lickerish baits" (695, 700). As St. Paul writes, "Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils."<sup>54</sup> The Lady's impassioned attack on Comus' "Vice," "ingratitude," blasphemy, and inability to comprehend "high mystery" and the "sage / And serious doctrine of Virginitie" moves her to again acknowledge that she is the vessel of "some superior power" like "the wrath of Jove." (760-803). But, unlike Satan in *Paradise Regained*, or even Spenser's Mammon, Comus has only made two serious attempts at this point. He has not exhausted his armory, but has just launched into a third attempt to "try her yet more strongly" when the rescue party arrives (806). God has answered her prayer and squared the trial to her strength. We are spared from asking ourselves "What would have happened? How long could she have resisted if no help had come?"

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<sup>52</sup> In contrast, say, to the rather similar debate between Helena and Parolles in Shakespeare's *All's Well that Ends Well*, I.1.

<sup>53</sup> Cf., again, the temptation of Eve in *Paradise Lost*.

<sup>54</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:21.

The brothers rush in and smash Comus' chalice, at which point he and his rabble flee. Any inclination they might have felt to be impressed by their own victory over his ritual, however, is immediately dispelled by the Attendant Spirit's rebuke:

What, have ye let the false enchanter scape?  
 O ye mistook, ye should have snatched his wand  
 And bound him fast; without his rod reversed,  
 And backward mutters of dissevering power,  
 We cannot free the Lady that sits here  
 In stony fetters fixed, and motionless.  
 (814-819)

The Spirit's plan is striking; the fact that he wanted the boys to take the wand from Comus makes it appear that he also wanted them (or himself) to use the wand and a spell to free the Lady. This, after we have seen the Lady adamantly refuse to touch Comus' black arts. How could they lawfully use his magic, even for a good end? The answer, I think, must be that Comus has been using their "magic" all along, but backwards. Reversing Comus' wand is to turn it right-side-up; chanting his spell backward is to pray in the right order. That prayer would free the Lady from her bondage—a bondage which is real despite the fact that she has resisted Comus' offers. This again mirrors Guyon's temptation by Mammon, since Guyon rejects all of Mammon's gifts but is finally "ouercome with too exceeding might" and collapses in a dead faint, only to be rescued by a guardian angel (*FQ* II.vii.66). The boys, despite their best efforts, "mistook," and the Lady is still bound, because they (like Guyon) need another outpouring of grace. It will arrive in response to the hymn to Sabrina, both stanzas of which conclude with the liturgically repetitive "Listen and save" (866, 889). Sabrina's performance of her "office"—sprinkling of the Lady with "pure" water to break the chains of "glutinous heat"—is too overtly sacramental to require much comment. The Lady is freed, and the Attendant Spirit gives due thanks, but he still knows better than to presume on the strength of mere creatures: "Come Lady

while Heaven lends us grace, / Let us fly this cursèd place, / Lest the sorcerer us entice / With some other new device” (938-941).<sup>55</sup> Heaven does lend grace, and “the stars grow high, / But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky” (956-957). The Attendant Spirit knows that none of them—not the boys, not the Lady, not even himself—are safe from Comus’ power. They will always need to return “to holier ground,” their due steps returning to the cloister, to be strengthened for that encounter (943). But return does not negate growth; the Spirit is explicit about this when he presents the children to their parents:

Here behold so goodly grown  
 Three fair branches of your own;  
 Heav’n hath timely tried their youth,  
 Their faith, their patience, and their truth.  
 And sent them here through hard assays  
 With a crown of deathless praise.  
 (968-973)

What have they done unaided? Nothing. What crowns can they claim to have gained? None but those won for them through the divine power which initiated the *Masque* and introduced them onto the stage. And yet the crowns have been truly given, the growth actually granted—theirs to keep, but not to rest on.

The Attendant Spirit begins to ascend, and leaves us with a benediction. He is going to the land, he says, where dwells the son of Venus:

Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced,  
 Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranced  
 After her wand’ring labors long,  
 Till free consent the gods among  
 Make her his eternal bride,  
 And from her fair unspotted side  
 Two blissful twins are to be born,  
 Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.  
 (1004-1011)

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. God’s words in *Paradise Lost*, XI.90-93: “He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite, / My motions in him; Longer than they move / His heart I know, how variable and vain / Self-left ...”

The *Masque's* movement ends with an eschatological image of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. If shaggy Pan is like Christ incarnate, his “pure ambrosial weeds” soiled “with the rank vapors of this sin-worn mold,”<sup>56</sup> Cupid is like Christ ascendant, divine Eros who inflames the longing of chaste virginity. The Lady becomes Psyche, an image for the whole church whose long, arduous wandering will culminate in her glorification as the spotless, Celestial Bride of St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians.<sup>57</sup> Their union is the consummation of charity, and it will produce eternal twins of beatitude. This is for the future, but even the present is redemptive. We last heard Venus’ name invoked in a perverse antithesis of chastity. Now she has been partially restored; she is the *mater dolorosa*, waiting sadly for wounded Adonis who as another Christ/church image (the corporal wounded body not yet in glory) is in the process of being resurrected. That resurrection is made up of many falls, and many turns to rise again. Through prayer, exhortation, and sacrament, Milton’s church was “waxing well” of the “deep wound,” for Heav’n had stooped to her (1000, 1023).

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. Isaiah 53:2: “he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him ...”

<sup>57</sup> See Ephesians 5:25-33. For a more extended typological reading of the the Lady/ Psyche, see David V. Urban, *Milton and the Parables of Jesus*, (University Park, Pa., 2018), chapter 5.