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Micah Gill

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton demonstrates a famous tendency to imbue his work with many layers of symbolism, ranging from simple to rich and from obvious to intricate. This attribute of the poem prompts readers to peer deep into the text in hopes of discovering further potential meaning. Successful attempts to identify symbolic meaning yield a more complete understanding of the text, such as that unveiled when analyzing the symbolism of the cardinal directions: north, south, east, and west. A reader's readiness to recognize Miltonian symbolism alerts them when coming across, for example, Gabriel's commands to his fellow angels to "coast the south" (4.782), "wheel the north" (4.783), and meet "full west" (4.784); what significance underlies Gabriel's speech that may be revealed upon further examination? When analyzing Milton's usage of the cardinal directions in *Paradise Lost*, we see that they have specific and symbolic moral and spiritual meanings.

H.F. Robins has taken the largest step forward in identifying symbolic meaning of cardinal direction terms in Milton's epic. His article "Satan's Journey: Direction in *Paradise Lost*" attempts to correct Walter Clyde Curry's cosmography in *Milton's Ontology, Cosmogony, and Physics*. Robins' rectifications of Curry's Miltonic cosmos include positioning hell's gate in the wall of the fiery domain instead of the roof, locating heaven's

gate on the east wall instead of the West, and identifying heaven's shape as quadrate instead of circular. In so doing, Robins announces a "consistently symbolic use of directions" by Milton and continues by extrapolating some of the meaning behind that usage (699). By pairing his assertions that "all direction in *Paradise Lost*—outside the World—is related to God's position in Heaven" (701) and that "God faces the east, traditionally the holiest of directions" (702), he lays a foundation for his ensuing arguments regarding cardinal directions symbolism. These connections also broaden the discussion of cardinal directions symbolism: if God anchors directional reference points to the East, then, for example, 'left,' 'right,' 'front,' and 'back' may be tied to the cardinal directions as north, south, east, and west, respectively. He leverages this understanding to frame "east and south, before God and at his right hand, [as] favorable directions; west and north, behind him and at his left, are unfavorable" (702).

Despite being published 60 years ago, in other words, Robins' article's contribution to the analysis of Miltonic symbolism related to the cardinal directions is still relevant. He provides, though, only a brief linguistic inquiry into cardinal direction terms. The attention that Robins does provide lacks the sufficient etymological support necessary for his claims. Robins' conclusions also derive from a cursory reference to biblical directions symbolism. His brief mentions of the Judeo-Christian Bible afford broad conclusions about the biblical authors' influence on Milton's symbolic employment of cardinal directions. Robins does not, though, draw precise conclusions about meaning beyond descriptors such as "favorable" or "unfavorable" due to a lack of specific textual analysis and examples. Finally,

Robins insufficiently acknowledges both British historical movements and literature, which are key to Milton the Englishman, and Hebrew historical movements and extra-biblical literature, which inform Milton's interactions with his primary reference, the Judeo-Christian Bible. While many of Robins' ideas are right and assist our understanding of the poem, I will attempt to reexamine some of his conclusions with more thorough etymological, literary, historical, and biblical analysis. This knowledge will give us the evidential support necessary to lean into and benefit from Robins' claims, while also enabling deeper appreciation of the complex moral and spiritual meanings that Milton's cardinal directions symbolism articulates.

Is there any etymological basis for suggesting symbolic meaning in cardinal direction terms? Cecil H. Brown assists in answering this question in his article "Where Do Cardinal Direction Terms Come From?" Providing results and analysis of his landmark research on the origin of these terms, he names "celestial bodies and events, atmospheric features, other more general directions, and environment-specific features" as the four most prominent progenitors for cardinal direction terms across cultures (126). His finding that "there are regular extensions in the development of nomenclature for the four cardinal directions" indicates that these etymological processes often yield similar results, even if development of the terms occurs independently (121). M. O'Connor adds that cardinal directions are "semantically engaging because they refer to independently describable features of the world; they thus [. . .] constitute a potential key to understanding the use of language" (1140). Because of these etymological and linguistic qualities, their appearance in literature becomes particularly noticeable, and consider-

ing Milton's renowned breadth of reading, employment of cardinal directions in prominent texts would have influenced his own usage. Analyzing etymological precedent along with Milton's literary influences enables us to understand his use of the cardinal directions in *Paradise Lost*.

Milton uses "east" thirty-one times throughout his epic, more than twice as much as any other cardinal direction. Brown would consider this disparity unsurprising: "Identifying east and west through reference to the rising and setting of the sun constitutes the most ubiquitous manner by which languages have developed terms for any of the cardinal points" (127). He adds that the "priority of lexical encoding is directly related to the salience of referents, be it natural or cultural. More salient referents tend to be encoded before less salient ones" (142). The sun's role as a light to all, a function that is both universal and immensely noticeable, earns it a status of the utmost salience among almost all global cultures. Therefore, it naturally informs the etymology of cardinal directions and the meaning behind them, particularly east, the cardinal direction from where it rises each day. Brown continues by clarifying the relationship between the salience of referents and the meaning behind the cardinal directions:

The four cardinal points differ among themselves with respect to degree of natural salience. For example, east and west are clearly, if only roughly, defined by the rising and setting of the sun. On the other hand, celestial events of equivalent natural prominence do not correlate with north and south. In addition, east would seem to have greater natural salience than west since it heralds the beginning rather than end of an important celestial occurrence,

i.e., the movement of the sun across the sky. (143)

This effect of the sunrise on the natural salience of the East coincides with a greater importance of that cardinal direction than the others, a reality reflected in the poem's emphasis on the East.

The East's salience has led to its widespread role as a basis for orientation. Brown reports this as another cross-cultural regularity:

East is associated with front [. . .] conversely, west is connected to back [. . .] speakers usually assume that they face east, the sunrise, "as the natural basis for orientation" [. . .] the more frequent affiliation of east with front and west with back may indicate that an eastward orientation is the usual canonical posture for humans across cultures.(136)

Brown offers another attestation to the East's role as the canonical posture, referencing the idea that "the human body is naturally orientated along an east-west axis [. . .] the preponderance of evidence indicates that the most common canonical posture for humans involves an east-west axis and that an eastward orientation is usually preferred over a westward one" (136). Even isolated peoples evince a conceptualization of both 'east' as 'front' and the way which people naturally face; on the Pacific island Ambrym, the native "speakers usually [assume] that they face east, the sunrise, as the natural basis for orientation" (Paton 191). Knowledge of east's role as the canonical direction clarifies its use in *Paradise Lost*.

With both the celestial importance of 'east' and its status as the canonical, frontward human posture established, we can perceive patterns of meaning throughout literature that inspired Milton's symbolic usage of

the direction. Jack Tresidder's broad literary analysis links prior etymological and celestial insights directly to symbolism: "the symbolism of individual directions was based largely on climate and the influence of sun" (89). Turning to Milton's primary reference, the Judeo-Christian Bible, we read that "as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man" (English Standard Version, Mt. 24.27). In this verse, we may link the Son's journey from the East to the sun's journey from the East. Both act as arbiters of light, coming from the East to cast out darkness, and those who properly orient themselves, i.e., face the canonical eastward horizon, will see him when he comes and be ready to "straighten up and raise [their] heads, because [their] redemption is drawing near" (Lk. 21.28). In this passage and in many of Milton's, we observe the literary trope, alongside John Anthony Mazzeo, that "light from the most ancient times has been symbolic of divinity" (243).

In understanding the importance of east in Jewish holy texts, we also gain insight into Old Testament Temple and Tabernacle symbolism, which in turn influences Miltonic eastern symbolism. Exodus 27:13-16 and 38:13 allow us to piece together that the Tabernacle faced eastward. Regarding the Temple, we learn in Ezekiel that the temple opened to and faced the east, and that there was a gate on its east side (ESV, Ezek. 8.16, 42.15). In both cases these architectural features prompt visitors to re-orient themselves to the holy place from which light emerges and darkness flees: the East. Ezekiel confirms the purpose of each gates' eastward openings when describing his vision of the Lord leading him through the Temple: "Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel

was coming from the east [. . .] the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east” (Ezek. 43.1-2, 4). Congruent with Ezekiel 43, the Zohar, a key Jewish religious text from the Middle Ages which greatly influenced *Paradise Lost*, echoes in its creation account that “the source of all lights shone forth and opened the gate of the east, for thence light issues” (Leviant 461). These references establish a precedent of eastern literary and religious symbolism for Milton to follow.

The biblical references to the East that describe Eden are the most important influences Milton’s eastern symbolism. In Genesis, “the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east” (ESV, Gen. 2.8), and that gate, like that of the Tabernacle or the Temple, rests east of the garden (Gen 3.24). Robert Hinckley notes that “the garden display[s] an affinity with the tabernacle [. . .] the tabernacle courtyard was oriented on an east-west axis, enclosed on all four sides by a fence, with the eastern gate on the eastern side,” characteristics also shared by the Temple (6). Through this connection, we may now understand the Garden’s eastern location and eastward-facing gate as symbolic tools that indicate both a proper posture in relation to God’s glory and a proximity to perfection.

To further solidify a conception of the east as a direction of light, glory, and holiness to *Paradise Lost*, we can note the posture of God, who also faces the East. Alexander Cruden’s concordance on the Judeo-Christian Bible extends the linkage further:

The right hand commonly denotes the south, as the left hand denotes the north. For the Hebrews speak of the quarters of the world in respect of themselves, having their faces turned towards

the east, their backs to the west, their right hands to the south, and their left to the north. Thus *Kedem*, which signifies before, stands also for the east; and *Achor*, which signifies behind, marks out the west; *Jamin*, the right hand, is the south; and Shemol, the left hand, is the north. (142)

William Smith concurs, stating that “the Hebrew word *kedem* properly means that which is before or in front of a person, and was applied to the east from the custom of turning in that direction when describing the points of the compass, before, behind, the right and the left representing respectively east, west, south, and north” (“East” 171). If the Hebrew holy architecture, religious texts, and language all point to the East as the front, we may adopt a strengthened version of Robins’ conclusion that, along with his throne, “God faces the east, traditionally the holiest of directions” (702). Establishing God’s eastward facing posture ratifies an association of the East with goodness, the front, the sun, light, glory, and paradise. This view accords well with Tresidder’s general literary analysis: “East almost invariably symbolized light, the source of life, the sun and solar gods, youth, resurrection, and new life” (89). This understanding of the meaning associated with the East provides insight into Milton’s symbolic usage in *Paradise Lost*.

Of Milton’s thirty-one references to the East throughout *Paradise Lost*, ten are in direct reference to the sun. Those which refer specifically to the sunrise take on new meaning when considered alongside previous assertions. Milton describes a sunrise in Book Five as Adam and Eve step out of their shaded enclave and towards the fields where work awaits:

Soon as they forth were come to open sight

Of day-spring, and the sun (who scarce up risen
 With wheels yet hov'ring o'er the ocean brim
 Shot parallel to th' earth his dewy ray,
 Discov'ring in wide landscape all the east
 Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains)
 Lowly they bowed adoring and began
 Their orisons, each morning duly paid
 In various style. For neither various style
 Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
 Their Maker. (5.138-148)

Milton clearly associates east as a source of light and goodness in this passage, as the sun “discovers” the perfect, “happy plains” of Eden. Since the East represents the proper human posture, Adam and Eve, in a perfected state, exit their Edenic habitation and begin the day with a greeting from eastern rays. They embrace the light and purity of the Garden, and, consistent with their proper orientation, they progress directly into worship, the only proper response to the eminent East. Just as in the Temple or Tabernacle, the rays entering from the East serve as a call to re-orientation to God each morning.

Eastern location, specifically that of the Miltonic Garden and gate, also bears symbolic meaning. In Genesis, Eden and the Garden are not the same place; rather, the Garden is located in Eden: “And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east” (ESV, Gen. 2:8). Milton adopts this eastern positioning of the Garden: “A Heav'n on Earth, for blissful Paradise / Of God the garden was by Him in th' east / Of Eden planted” (4.208-

210). Milton's primary intent with locating the Garden in the East of Eden is, of course, to stay true to the biblical narrative; he also has symbolic intent, though. The eastern establishment represents closeness to God and nearness to his heart by dint of the Garden's proximity to the sunrise and its location in the purview of God's own east-facing posture. We see a similar pattern with Milton's Garden gate, modeled after Genesis's account of the Garden's eastern gate (ESV, Gen. 3.24). The symbolic message here is similar, though more nuanced.

To understand the symbolism of the eastern gate, which constitutes five of Milton's references to the East, we must think again to "the principal way in which languages have innovated terms for east and west": the course of the sun (Brown 130). The East is the outset of the sun's daily journey, where the orb rises and distinguishes itself from the darkness, eventually overcoming it in full. Placing a gate in the East represents receptivity to the light, since a gate facilitates light from the sun streaming through, as opposed to a wall that would block the rays.

Consider, too, the tension that the eastern gate embodies. Each morning, the sun rises not out of light but out of darkness. Though the East acts primarily as a direction of holy light, there exists an opposing presence of evil that must be fended off. Since the East is the holiest direction, it is therefore the safest location to place a gate instead of a wall. The gate represents the tension between receiving the sanctifying sun while also keeping out the darkness and the evil that lies beyond. This critical point is a place where chaos meets order, the light of the sun intersects with the dark of the night, and the unknown brushes against the known. We may, as Milton

implies, by disorientation out of a holy, eastward facing posture, break our focus on the light. If our cautious, probing eyes divert from watching the gate, we may allow for chaos to creep through. This tension between good and evil links the gate to the tree and to the inner state of Adam and Eve. Milton incorporates these symbolic meanings into his utilization of ‘east.’

Milton’s symbolism of the North stands in stark contrast to that of the East, a difference which Brown discusses. He reminds us that “in the northern hemisphere, of course, the sun always travels from east to west in the southern half of the sky” (131), meaning that the North, unlike the East and the South, does not emit light. In fact, the Seneca nation of Indians’ term for north “is literally, ‘the sun isn’t there’” (Brown 132). In discussing cardinal direction etymology, Brown also emphasizes the importance of atmospheric features, particularly for the North. He highlights that “colder weather [coming] from the north” has spurred innovation of northern cardinal direction terms (Brown 132). In this etymological analysis, we see ‘north’ associated with darkness and cold.

The Judeo-Christian Bible also emphasizes a difference between the symbolic meaning of the East and that of the North. The biblical text depicts the North primarily in reference to evil, chaos, and vice. There is historical precedent to this symbolism: in the eighth century BC, the Assyrians came down from the northern part of Mesopotamia and invaded the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The Old Testament often references this event, especially in prophetic literature. In the book of Joel, the Lord assures Israel regarding the northern attackers: “I will remove the northerner far from you, / And drive him into a parched and desolate land” (ESV, Joel

2.20). The prophet Jeremiah also alludes to the northern enemies: “Out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land. For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north” (Jer. 1.14-15). In this context, we more clearly perceive the arrival of evil and destruction from the North as a foil to the glory and light emitting from the East. Later, Jeremiah offers another depiction of the chaos of the North:

Thus says the LORD:

“Behold, a people is coming from the north country,
a great nation is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth.
They lay hold on bow and javelin;
they are cruel and have no mercy;
the sound of them is like the roaring sea;
they ride on horses,
set in array as a man for battle,
against you, O daughter of Zion!” (Jer. 6.22-23)

The Judeo-Christian Bible, particularly in its allusions to the Assyrians, symbolically associates evil with the North.

British history—which Milton knew well—provides a parallel to the Assyrian invaders coming from the North. The Viking invaders, sailing from Scandinavia, ravaged the northeastern English coastline beginning in the late 8th century CE. These attacks eventually culminated with Harald Hardrada’s onslaught from the North, winning battles as far south as York. Though there is little British literature from this period in which symbolic associations could originate, another instance of northern destruction, in this case occurring in Milton’s home country, may have served as a key

influence that supplemented the symbolism of the North already present within the Judeo-Christian Bible.

Early British literature, which prefigured and influenced Milton, connects the North to atmospheric features linked to symbolic meaning. While Beowulf describes his competition with Unferth to outlast the waves of the sea, he proclaims:

Shoulder to shoulder, we struggled on
for five nights, until the long flow
and pitch of the waves, the perishing cold,
night falling and winds from the north
drove us apart. (Heaney 544-548)

In Beowulf's account, one of only four instances throughout the epic in which 'north' is directly referenced, the North is associated with cold, chaotic waters, night, and bitter wind. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* similarly alludes to the North as a source of ominous chill in one of the poem's two direct references:

But wild-looking weather was about in the world:
clouds decanted their cold rain earthwards;
the nithering north needled man's very nature;
creatures were scattered by the stinging sleet.
Then a whip-cracking wind comes whistling between hills,
driving snow into deepening drifts in the dales. (Armitage 2000-2005)

Congruent with Beowulf's description and Brown's findings, the North brings biting cold, and the aggressive, "wild-looking weather" promises to

“needle man’s very nature.”

These examples from the British literary canon, which Milton knew well, complement Tresidder’s literary analysis, which observes that “North symbolize[s] belligerent power, darkness, hunger, cold, chaos and evil in most northern hemisphere traditions” (89). In fact, some of these symbolic associations were encoded into modern English. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *sinister* as “corrupt, evil, bad, base,” but also as “left, left-hand” (“Sinister” 529). The more archaic latter meaning was incorporated directly from the Latin, which, assuming a canonical, eastward-facing posture, would be in the North. Brown confirms this association of a cardinal direction with a general direction, asserting that “in addition to left and right, cardinal direction terms often denote other more general directions such as up, down, in front of, behind, and so on” (124).

Many of *Paradise Lost*’s fourteen mentions of the North evince these symbolic insights, particularly the first reference, in which Milton describes the fallen angels:

A multitude like which the populous north
 Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
 Rhene or the Danaw when her barbarous sons
 Came like a deluge on the south and spread
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands. (1.351-355)

Milton likens the demons to the North with an allusion to “the barbarian invasions of Rome,” which began with “northern tribes crossing the Rhine (*“Rhene”*) and Danube (*“Danaw”*) rivers, then spreading across Spain into North Africa, according to Lewalski’s explanation of the text (21). We

may connect these specific warriors with others from “the populous north,” namely, the Scandinavians and the Assyrians, to see Milton’s symbolic strategy: situating the demons’ attack in a place bolstering their image of chaos and evil. Milton also draws on the North’s association with “frozen loins,” linking the demonic army to a bitter, severe cold. Building upon these symbolic ties, Satan and his demons march to heaven’s northern realm to set up their wicked throne after rebelling against God: “At length into the limits of the north / They came and Satan to his royal seat” (5.755-756). With his decision to place their rebellion in the North, Milton perpetuates his symbolic statements about the demons’ chaotic, evil rebellion.

This association shares additional symbolic meaning when observed in conjunction with Ezekiel 8:

The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy [. . .] then he said to me, “Son of man, lift up your eyes now toward the north.” So I lifted up my eyes toward the north, and behold, north of the altar gate, in the entrance was this image of jealousy. (*ESV*, Ezek. 8.3, 5)

Ezekiel equates the North with jealousy, a linkage that inspires Milton. When Satan becomes jealous of God’s power and sovereignty, he moves his troops to the North, establishing his own northern “seat of the image of jealousy.” Milton describes another object of Satan’s jealousy, his perception of the beauty of earth and of Eve:

That space the evil one abstracted stood

From his own evil and for the time remained
 Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
 Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.
 But the hot Hell that always in him burns,
 Though in mid-Heav'n, soon ended his delight
 And tortures him now more the more he sees
 Of pleasure not for him ordained. Then soon
 Fierce hate he recollects and all his thoughts
 Of mischief gratulating thus excites. (9.463-472)

With these insights in mind, we may further link Milton's symbolic association of the North with jealousy by drawing on Robins' realization that "when Satan re-enters the garden to effect the actual temptation, he comes with perfect consistency from the north" (709). Milton's usage of symbolism for the North relates that cardinal direction to evil, rebellion, chaos, darkness, and jealousy.

Milton's associations of symbolic meaning with the South stand in stark contrast to those of the North. Brown offers etymological insight into potential southern symbolism, noting that "in the northern hemisphere, of course, the light of the sun emanates from the southern sky" (131). This means that, unlike the North but like the East, there is celestial precedent in associating the South with light. Also, unlike the North, "warmer weather arrives from the south" (132). Regarding literary influences on Milton's symbolic use of the South, we see few obvious symbolic usages in the Judeo-Christian Bible. We do, though, see many references to the Son of God sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and assuming a canonical,

eastward-facing posture where the Father's throne is in the East, this would place the throne of the Son in the South. The Son of God, or the Logos, who sits on the rightward, southern throne in heaven, was made incarnate in Christ Jesus, in whom "we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (*ESV*, John 1.14).

St. John associates the light and glory of the Father's eastern throne with the southern Son, a linkage which Brown's research supports by tying the two directions together with etymological threads of sun and light. St. John, though, avers that the Son's southern glory derives from God's preeminent, progenitorial glory in the East. Several selections from the New Testament promote the idea that the East's superior, holy light generates that of the South, including Jesus's claims that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me," that "all things have been handed over to me by my Father" (*ESV* Matt. 28.18, 11.27), and that "the Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand" (John 3.35). The East's blessings of glory and light upon the South extend beyond the Son as well. In the final judgment, those on the right, or the South, instead of those on the left, or the North, will receive salvation from God: "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (Matt. 25.34).

In many of these examples discussing God's gifts of glory and light to the Son and the South, we may also note his gifts of power. St. Luke describes that "the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God" (22.69), while St. Peter writes that Jesus Christ "has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers

having been subjected to him” (1 Pet. 3.22). The *Zohar*’s creation account more directly ties this concept to cardinal directions: “South displayed the power of the light inherited from the head and was empowered by the East” (Matt 215). The knowledge that “the locution ‘right hand of the Father’ must be understood metaphorically” allows us to extend these insights about the South beyond geographical statements and into the domain of literary devices, especially symbolism of the East denoting power, glory, holiness, light, and goodness (Edwards 165).

Milton infuses these symbolic meanings into many of his references to the South, ten of which are direct. Similar to his positioning of the Garden and Edenic gate, his situating of the Son’s throne on the right while also incorporating southern themes of glory and holiness follows the Judeo-Christian Bible both literally and symbolically: “So said, He o’er his scepter bowing rose / From the right hand of glory where He sat” (6.746-747). Later, Milton symbolically specifies the South’s glory being received from something greater when he describes the Son’s return from routing the demonic armies:

Worthiest to reign. He, celebrated, rode
Triumphant through mid Heav’n into the courts
And temple of his mighty Father throned
On high who into glory Him received
Where now He sits at the right hand of bliss. (6.888-892)

Through analyzing the South’s righthand position in relationship with the frontward-facing East, we may perceive Milton’s linkage of eastern light and

goodness to a subordinate yet similar symbolic presentation of the South.

Milton more clearly expounds his symbolic association of the South as good when he contrasts it with the North. In the heavenly conflict of Book Six, Satan and his demonic army war against Christ and the heavenly angels. Satan encamps in and marches from the North, while Christ's throne, from which he departs to the battle, rests in the South (6.746-750). Holiness, divinity, and goodness fly from their southern seat to meet the chaos and evil of the North, a paradigm of conflict represented in an earlier-referenced Book One passage describing the demons facing their attackers and pouring down "like a deluge on the south" (1.354). Excerpts such as this lean on symbolic association to pit south and north against each other, resembling the greater battle between good and evil.

Milton bolsters his association of south with goodness and with an adversarial relationship to the North with an added association of the South as warm. Brown's linkage of the South to the light of the sun, particularly producing "warmer weather [which] arrives from the south," further associates the South with goodness (132). As Mazzeo notes, consideration of solar symbolism should not be limited to analyzing light, but should include perceiving the sun as "the source of [. . .] warmth" (243). This constitutes another point of contention between the warm, light south, and the cold, bitter north. Milton symbolizes the southern-northern conflict of good and evil in Book Ten: "The sun," explains the speaker,

Had first his precept so to move, so shine
As might affect the Earth with cold and heat
Scarce tolerable and from the north to call

Decrepit winter, from the south to bring
 Solstitial summer's heat. (10.652-656)

Throughout *Paradise Lost*, Milton symbolically casts the South as holy, powerful, filled with light, good, warm, and as an adversary against the wicked North.

Milton's symbolism for the West is distinct from that of the East and the South, though sharing similarities to northern symbolism. As Brown notes, "development of descriptive labels referring to the rising/setting sun constitutes the principal way in which languages have innovated terms for east and west," and so we should expect the sunset to be the West's primary source of symbolism (130). The setting of the sun in the West leads to a decrease of light and increase of darkness. An eastward-facing canonical posture bolsters this unfavorable symbolism because "west is connected to back," opposite the face and place of God (Brown 136). There are several selections from the Judeo-Christian Bible that operate within this symbolic context, such as this excerpt from Isaiah 59:

So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west,
 and his glory from the rising of the sun;
 for he will come like a rushing stream,
 which the wind of the LORD drives. (Isa. 59.19)

Holistically, though, the Judeo-Christian Bible contains little to implicate the West as the evil opposite of the East. Despite this lack of literary precedent, examining the text throughout *Paradise Lost* yields sufficient support for claims of symbolism associating west with darkness, absence of light, and the advent of evil.

Robins highlights one important usage, that “Satan enters [the Garden] over the western wall—‘On the other side:’” (708):

One gate there only was and that looked east
 On th’ other side. Which when th’ arch-felon saw
 Due entrance he disdained and in contempt
 At one slight bound high overleaped all bound
 Of hill or highest wall and sheer within
 Lights on his feet. (Milton 4.178-183)

Satan’s western entrance symbolically mirrors the darkness propounded by the western setting of the sun. Robins also notes that in the two most important instances of angels bearing unfavorable news, Uriel’s announcement to the angels of Satan’s arrival and Gabriel’s flight to inform Adam and Eve of their expulsion, they both bring their lamentable reports from the West (708-709). These examples highlight the West’s association with evil and darkness throughout the epic.

Milton also employs these symbolic meanings in Book Four, when Satan first comes to the Garden to tempt Eve in her sleep. Milton symbolically foreshadows the temptation with a vivid depiction of a western sunset, noting both “the sun now fall’n” and “The clouds that on his western throne attend” (4.591, 597). Later, the angels coordinate a search party to locate the arbiter of evil, establishing a rendezvous point in the West (4.784). At the conclusion of the search, Ithuriel and Zephon direct Satan into the midst of the host at “the western point” (4.862). Milton situates both the western foreshadowing of the mission and its dark conclusion in the same cardinal direction in which the sun sets, representing the sinful darkness of

night eclipsing the holy light of the East. Through these observations, we gather that the West symbolizes darkness, night, absence of light, and the onset of evil throughout *Paradise Lost*.

Not all of Milton's references to the cardinal directions throughout the poem contain symbolic meaning. There are, though, many instances in which a nuanced understanding of both Milton's literary influences and the etymological processes that influenced his language, met with an examination of the text in light of this understanding, yields rich meaning. In part, this meaning is elucidated by a recognition of Milton's symbolic usage of the cardinal directions. Throughout *Paradise Lost*, Milton symbolizes the East as representing ultimate divinity, goodness, and light; the North as representing chaos, jealousy, rebellious evil, and bitter cold; the South as representing holiness, subordinate power, and bright warmth; and the West as representing darkness and evil.

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