Milton's *Paradise Lost* in Eighteenth-Century Germany: Tradition and Renewal

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By the eighteenth century, Milton's work was read outside England both in the original English and, increasingly, in translation. *Paradise Lost* in particular was to arouse the imagination and interest of its German-speaking readers as it entered and transformed (and thus renewed) an existing and changing literary and critical tradition, at a time when many of its readers considered it to be quite radical in its style and many of the details of its treatment of its subject. In the German-speaking literary world, six distinct trends were to emerge, either sparked or fostered by the reception of Milton's epic. These were the *Seraphik*, the *Patriarchaden*, poems and prose depicting natural idylls, the heroic rebel (à la Satan), lyrical odes and the notion of the 'sublime' as a prerequisite for poetry. This article explores the interaction of Milton's text with the tradition it entered, and considers Klopstock as a specific instance of Milton's influence.

Diachronic readings of a poem such as *Paradise Lost* across a century or more must inevitably give different results. A reception view of literature, especially a cross-country reading – what Jauss, cited in Fokkema and Künne-Ibsch, calls a 'synchronic cross-section' (142) – exploits precisely that 'instability' of meaning, or approximately what Iser calls the essential 'openness' of texts (34-35). This is evidenced by the reception of Milton's poems over a particular stretch of time and in different spaces. Reception-historical theorist Hannelore Link points out that such 'openness is not a characteristic of texts, but a characteristic of their history' (563). Jauss contends that the reader's *Erwartungshorizont* (horizon of expectations) is determined by the particular reader's frame of reference (149), in this case, the German literary and critical tradition which these readers of Milton were accustomed to, and either supported or wished to reform.

The reception of Milton in the German *Kulturraum* occurred within the context created and the filters constituted by several continental writers, notably with regard to such concepts as '*die höhere Poesie*' ('higher poetry'). The first notable attempt to classify German poetry into the categories of 'higher' versus 'ordinary' poetry was made by Benjamin Neukirch in his preface '*Vorrede von*

der deutschen Poesie' to the anthology *Herrn von Hofmannswaldau und andrer Deutschen auserlesener und bisher ungedruckte Gedichte*, which appeared in 1695 (Pizzo). According to B.A.T. Schneider, the effect expected of literature in this time was *prodesse et delectare*, but in 'higher' or 'sublime' literature, *prodesse* was expected to be more significant than *delectare* (14).

The English literary movement from the Renaissance, to Neo-classicism and Enlightenment, to Romanticism (as a counter-movement to Neo-Classicism) was relatively linear. By contrast, the 'German' movement was frequently interrupted and followed a different order. Referring to the eighteenth century, one should perhaps speak of the German-speaking cultural sphere rather than of Germany. Politically, Germany did not exist in the eighteenth century. The German language was, however, used and, then as now, played a culturally unifying role. Thus this *Kulturraum* encompasses not only the influence of various thinkers and poets in the various scattered kingdoms, principalities, dukedoms and the like, including the electorates, in the Holy Roman Empire centred in Austria, but also those of Switzerland. Each region had its own particular set of literary and philosophical intelligentsia, in an era characterised by rapid and relatively radical shifts in literary and philosophical tastes. The Swiss influence, with literary influence emanating largely from the Züricher School (and strong religious influences still emanating from Geneva), was of great importance. For the purposes of this study, the term 'German' is taken to refer to the whole German-speaking cultural sphere, and does not denote any national, political or precise geographic location.

After the Renaissance, there was a period of reduced literary activity, then Baroque literature began to emerge in spite of the Thirty Years War. The Enlightenment which followed was perhaps more interested in philosophy than in literary production, but the poets and critics of the time entered the continental '*querelle des anciens et des modernes*'. A 'Promethean' counter-movement developed in defiance of the Enlightenment. This movement, the *Sturm und Drang*, was in essence very similar to English Romanticism in its precepts. The young Goethe and Schiller were its main figures, Rousseau its philosophical 'prophet', and Herder and the more neo-classically oriented Lessing its stylistic theorists. As they reached maturity, Goethe and Schiller's work entered a 'Classical' phase (an inversion of the English trend). The road to the Neo-classicist Humanism of the German Classical period used the ideas of Humanism, of the Enlightenment, but also the more passionate, lyrical approach of the *Sturm und Drang*. At times, both these streams were simultaneously represented in critical thought. There was a third important stream of thought: Pietism, a Protestant movement of the late seventeenth century, centred in Halle, Dresden and Berlin. The emphasis, as in medieval mysticism, was placed on intense experience of religion and on the individual spiritual life and revelation. The purists of the movement believed that they could be 'reborn' by means of a *ratio-*

surpassing revelation granted in a state of being completely humbled ('*in einem Schmerzvollen Zustand völliger Zerknirschung*'). According to literary historians Krell and Fiedler, the movement rejected both the playfulness of the secular Rococo and the 'cold' spiritual independence of Rationalism, and led to the development of a cult of sensibility ('*Gefühlsamkeit*'), which itself soon found secular expression in the '*Empfindsamkeit*', which had both English and French precedents.

Milton's *Paradise Lost* was received in often conflicting ways by successive generations of readers in various parts of the German *Kulturraum*. Whether *Paradise Lost* was received with admiration or met with severe criticism depended on a number of factors, varying from the prevailing literary fashion, the literary works and particularly personalities and theories influencing tastes and moods. The readers themselves could be rationalists, or pietists, proponents of the *Gefühlsamkeit*, or forceful young men of action. Nor were these categories necessarily mutually exclusive. It was into these shifting 'traditions' in the German *Kulturraum* that Milton's poem entered. It added considerably to the pressure for renewal within the tradition and was used both by the conservatives and the proponents of change and renewal to strengthen their arguments.

Let us briefly trace the development of this tradition and Milton's reception in this tradition. Baroque literature was characterized by a species of split consciousness, an awareness of the conflict between the enchantments of the world (the desire to 'sport with Amaryllis in the shade', as Milton would put it in 'Lycidas') and the vanity of such earthly 'delights'. The *carpe diem* was constantly contrasted to the concept of *vanitas*, *vanitatum vanitas,* as two opposite responses to the eternal *momento mori*. The German Enlightenment was equally aware of the tension between the earthly and the heavenly, but expressed this tension as a duality between the physical and the intellect, rather than as a tension between the body and limited intellect on the one hand and the spirit and faith on the other. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) with his motto '*Sapere aude! Habe Mut, dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen*' ('Have the courage to use your own mind'), from his essay '*Was ist Aufklärung?*' ('What is enlightenment?') was the philosophical *magus* of the movement in Germany. The period was characterized by a type of optimism, by a lesser degree of dependence of the human being on God or on faith and revelation, as opposed to a greater reliance on the human senses, *ratio* and empiricism. Given the ruling optimism about the potential of the human mind for human improvement, it is hardly surprising to find a greater tendency towards didacticism in various works, nor is it surprising eventually to find a shift away from religious work.

Extremely useful sources for information on the reception of *Paradise Lost* in eighteenth century Germany are Enrico Pizzo's 1914 study, *Miltons Verlornes Paradies im deutschen Urteile des 18. Jahrhunderts* (reprinted 1977),[1] and G. Jenny's 1890 study, *Miltons Verlorenes Paradies in der deutschen Literatur des*

18. Jahrhunderts. According to Pizzo, initially, Milton was not known to the German literary world as a poet, but as a 'statesman' (as Cromwell's Latin secretary) and as a political polemicist. Although *Paradise Lost* appeared in 1667, it was virtually unknown to most German writers until well into the eighteenth century.

An early translation was begun during the late 1670s by a German living in England, Theodor Haake.[2] The translation was not published, but one copy was sent to a Johannes Sebald Fabricius, another to Ernst Gottlieb von Berge. (According to Pizzo, a manuscript copy of this translation of the first three books of *Paradise Lost* and fifty lines of the fourth book was still in existence in the Landesbibliothek in Kassel in 1914.) Berge himself was inspired to undertake a new translation, which appeared in Zerbst in 1682. This second translation was characterized by what was regarded as more awkward, obscure and confusing language even than Haake's (Pizzo 1), implying that some difficulty was experienced with the translation due to the complexity of Milton's language.

The next important translation of *Paradise Lost* was Hog's 1690 translation of the poem into Latin, making it accessible to several intellectuals outside the English-speaking sphere. Fragments were translated by Brockes – but parts of this translation only appeared in 1740 and 1746. Meanwhile, translations into French (Courbeville), Dutch (Zanten) and Italian (Rolli) had appeared, and were followed by a prose translation by Bodmer *(Johann Miltons Verlust des Paradieses. Ein Heldengedicht, In ungebundener Rede übersetzt*, Zürich 1732, reworked and reprinted 1742, 1754, 1759, 1769, 1780), which was to be possibly the most influential translation by the person who was arguably Milton's most ardent German admirer in the eighteenth century.

While translation promoted access to the text of *Paradise Lost* itself, criticism of *Paradise Lost* was equally vital in the introduction of the poem to the literary minds and tastes of the German eighteenth century. Some of the first criticism to reach the German literary sphere was by Addison from the *Spectator*, first read in Hamburg, translated into French by Dupré de Saint-Maurs in 1727. French criticism was to play an even larger role in the introduction of Milton to German thought than English criticism, notably Voltaire's *Essai sur la Poesie epique* (1727 in English, 1732 in French), and Constantin de Magny's *Dissertation critique sur le Paradis Perdu* (1729).

Pizzo points out that one of the first German readers to express reservations about *Paradise Lost*, Gottsched, a Swiss (in his 1730 treatises *Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst* and *Beyträge zur kritischen Historie der deutschen Sprache, Poesie und Beredsamkeit, Erstes Stück*), did so in imitation of the French critics (10, 85). His main criticism was based on Milton's apparent failure to follow rules (Pizzo 10-12). Gottsched's theoretical *Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst* (1730) had a large impact on the literary tastes of the German literary scene and consequently on the reception of Milton in this sphere. His theory was strictly

based on Boileau's *Art poétique* (1674). Like the French critic, he prescribed rigid adherence to rules: strict metrical and rhyme patterns (the alexandrine, suited neither to the English nor to the German speech rhythms, was supposed to be ideal), and an avoidance of anything that was construed as 'fantastic', emotional, fanciful, not strictly useful or logical. A sample 'recipe' will suffice to illustrate Gottsched's rigidity and the implicit belief that writing poetry can be learnt from learning rules:

> The poet should choose a moral rule to illustrate to his audience. Next he invents a general story/fable to illustrate the truth of his moral teaching. In addition, he finds famous people in history who have experienced something similar, and borrows their names for his fable, to give it some lustre ... (my translation of the original as quoted in Van Rinsum & Van Rinsum 80).

Equally obvious from the 'recipe' is the assumption that literature must have moral and didactic utility. Gottsched assumes that if man knows what is good, he will behave accordingly, and therefore man must be shown what is good.

According to B.A.T. Schneider, the insistence on rules, essentially a product of early rationalism, was to remain in force until Herder, preparing the way for the young generation of the *Sturm und Drang*, recognised that '*alle wahre und echte Poesie immer der Ausdruck des aus dem innersten Erlebnis schöpfenden Dichters ist*' ('all true poetry is always the expression of the poet creating from his innermost experience'; 13). Milton's apparent non-adherence to any rules acknowledged by Boileau confused and puzzled many of his continental readers and was a source of much criticism. K.L. Schneider quotes Gottsched's sneering remark: '*Wir schliessen daher, daß die Muse von Tabor nicht Deutsch kann*' ('We must therefore conclude that the Muse of Tabor cannot speak German'; 32). His criticism was levelled not perhaps so much at Milton, but at Bodmer's translation of Milton. This translation was itself an experiment in style.

Theorists of the so-called Zürich School, such as Bodmer with his *Kritische Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren* and Breitinger with his *Kritische Dichtkunst*, opposed Gottsched and the formal rules he proposed, but not the concept that poetry had some didactic purpose. It was above all Bodmer whose enthusiastic reception of *Paradise Lost*, along with his translation of the poem, gave *Paradise Lost* a pre-eminent position among new poems. According to Pizzo, Bodmer, in his 1734 treatise *Character der Teutschen Gedichte*, differed from the French classicist critics in that he praised the representation of the wonderful and sublime (*das Wunderbare*) and in his willingness to ignore the maligned 'lack of form' (12). The 'sublimity' of *Paradise Lost* influenced Bodmer's lyric cycle *Thirsis und Damons freundschaftliche Lieder* (1736 - 44), Haller's *Ursprung des Übels*, and Immanuel Jakob Pyra's *Wort des Höchsten*, and *Tempel der wahren Dichtkunst* (1737). In the latter, Pyra, cited in Pizzo (13), praises heavenly poetry:

> *Mit majestätischen Schritten*
> *Trat Milton nun einher. Er hat die Poesie*
> *Von heydnischen Parnaß ins Paradies geführet.*
> ('With majestic tread Milton came. He has taken poetry
> from heathen Parnassus to Paradise'; my translation).

Even Pyra, however, was disconcerted by the fact that his enthusiasm for Milton could not be justified by any possible adherence to the rules prescribed for poetry by French *arts poétiques*. The definitive theoretic sanction was eventually provided in 1740 by Bodmer's *Critische Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie und dessen Verbindung mit dem Wahrscheinlichen. In einer Vertheidigung des Gedichtes Joh. Miltons von dem verlohrnen Paradiese; der beygefüget ist Joseph Addisons Abhandlung von den Schönheiten in demselben Gedichte*.

While debate focused initially only on the *form* of the poem, debate soon shifted to whether Milton's *choice of subject* was a successful one. According to Bergmann's 1910 and 1911 studies, this question was first posed by Georg Friedrich Meier in 1744 in his *Greifswalder kritische Versuche* – Meier answered in the affirmative. Among the most famous German critics of Milton's choice of subject was to be Goethe, who considered the Fall an unsuitable theme or topic for an epic.

The debate was most heated around the question of the alleged anthropomorphism (which Coleridge was to defend) and/or the sublimity of Milton's angels and fallen angels. The German debate centred less on the *doctrinal* correctness of Milton's procedure than around its *poetical* correctness, of form, logical consistency, possibility and probability. If God is almighty, why does He need the angels at all? Many also commented on what they perceived to be a problematic tension between the 'human' characteristics of the angels and the points in which they differ from humans (Skawran 119-121). The underlying assumptions are only partly religious; the assumed standard for what is workable and interesting in an epic was determined by the examples of Homer and Virgil.

Meier himself defended Milton's use of the angels and became the prime advocate of the stylistic vogue which Pizzo refers to as the *Seraphik* (which involves the anthropomorphism and/or simultaneous sublimification of angels, devils, etc). Pizzo's term *Seraphik* appears to be a coinage and has not been assimilated into the terminology of German literary history. The term seems to imply a somewhat exaggerated *Schwärmerei* (infatuation/sentimentalisation). Pizzo implies that a distinct movement was at work. Meier's *collegio aesthetico* used Miltonic examples, and examined the question whether, in an epic written by a Christian poet, angels and devils can and must take the place of heathen gods ('*ob in einem Heldengedicht, welches von einem Christen verfertigt wird, die Engel und Teufel die Stelle der heidnischen Götter vertreten können und müssen*'). An influential opponent of Milton's treatment of the angels and devils was, once again, Voltaire, in his *Essai sur le poeme Epique* (Skawran 120).

Milton's prime defender, Bodmer, assumed that the literal embodiment of the angels was a necessity and he admired only whatever idealization of the angels takes place. In trying to defend and attack Milton's procedure on poetic grounds,

both sides of the camp (unlike Coleridge) failed to examine the Biblical precedent. Various English critics (including Pope and Coleridge) joined this debate, but their comments came too late in the debate to be of great significance in the German reception of Milton.

Bodmer's defence of Milton was enthusiastic and influential, but, closely examined, not particularly rigorous (Skawran 120). For him, sublimity was almost synonymous with moral correctness (Pizzo 24). His defence made a few *ad hoc* attempts at rationalist criticism, but he relied largely on a subjective response in the mode of the *Gefühlsamkeit*, and on pietist acceptance. For him, Milton was the closest equivalent his own time had to the divinely inspired scribes of the Old Testament.

Klopstock, the writer of a German religious epic, the *Messias*, was a reader of Milton, and his comments and own poetry were to be influential in popularising Milton. He is considered as a special case later in this article.

A second genre that deserves mention here is that of the so-called *Patriarchaden*. This genre focused on the 'ancestral fathers' or 'patriarchs' (Adam's issue, as it were). It was inspired by Milton's suggestion of reverence and respect for such ancestors of mankind, especially for Adam and Eve, via the epithets used to refer to them, and the sympathetic treatment that Milton accords them, especially Eve as the universal matriarch. A few of these telling epithets include 'Adam, first of men', 'our first father', 'our ancestor', 'our sire', 'our great progenitor', and 'the patriarch of mankind'. Added to this we find Milton's treatment of the prophetic visions of Books XI and XII, and his use of universal types (including Job). Barbara Lewalski suggests that there was a continental tradition for the use of types and the admiration of the patriarchs (8, 27-40, 219). This genre uses the Biblical patriarchs as subject material, idealising their supposedly simple lifestyles in a species of Arcadian innocence. Among the writers who attempted this genre were Wieland (*Der geprüfte Abraham*), Bodmer (*Noah*, *Jacob und Joseph*, *Synd-flut*, etc.), Michaelis (*Moses*), Naumann (*Nimrod*) and Gessner (*Tod Abels*). Few, if any, of these works are read today. The genre was strongly reflected in, or possibly inspired by, Klopstock's *Messias*, which came to act as a filter for *Paradise Lost*.

A new possibility in poetry, a renewed interest in the detail of nature, was introduced by the detailed and observant descriptions of nature by poets such as the Hamburg poet Heinrich Brockes, who used nature to illustrate God's power, and the Swiss pietist Albrecht Haller (Ried 85) and 'Maler' Müller in his *Idyllen*. According to Krell and Fiedler, Brockes introduced the example of James Thomson's *The Seasons* as one of the first examples of a 'new' English poetic form (117). He translated sections from Milton: the end of Book IV was published in 1740, and the morning prayer in Book V appeared in 1746. He idealises nature and places particular emphasis on the picturesque and details of nature (Pizzo

39).Three examples will serve to illustrate Milton's influence here: Milton's paradisial pre-lapsarian bower inspired Klopstock, who in turn inspired a plethora of derivative 'bowers' *('Lauben')* in German literature. The sunrise in Book V of *Paradise Lost* was equally influential (Pizzo 39-40). Adam's first sight of the newly created world (Book VIII) and Eve's view (Book IV) were also greatly admired.

Gradually, under the influence of Lessing (himself influenced by the art historian Winckelmann), and with the gradual development of a species of neo-humanism and neo-classicism which was to find its climax in the works of the mature Goethe and Schiller, appreciation for *Paradise Lost* shifted from Milton's depiction of nature, the divine and the seraphic, to his allusions to classical Greece and Rome. The Enlightenment was overtaking the perceived passions and *Gefühl* of *Paradise Lost*.

By the 1760s Milton had attained high literary status in the German literary sphere. There was more or less general consensus that *Paradise Lost* was an inspiring work of great genius. Its reputation even inspired some of its readers to learn English to read *Paradise Lost* in the original, and it was regarded as a standard of epic excellence, for example, by Jacobi, in his dissertation *Vindiciae Torquati Tassi*. The military officer and poet Christian Ewald von Kleist is said to have forgotten to change the guard, so absorbed was he in his reading of *Paradise Lost*. A new generation of critics developed around Lessing, and this generation was careful to distinguish between Milton and Bodmer's translation of Milton. Lessing's famous *Laokoön, or The Limits of Painting and Poetry*, which appeared in 1766, defended *Paradise Lost* as 'the first epic poem since Homer' (53).

Lessing was also the first German critic openly to admit that Satan can be read with sympathy, as one suffering and tortured, rather than with loathing, as the arch-torturer of mankind. This view allowed for a new perception of the heroic outsider, even the heroic criminal, who was to play an increasingly important role in German Romantic literature. Following on from Lessing, Ramler (1769) saw Satan as the hero, apparently using the Aristotelian concept of tragedy as his point of reference, and declaring that any hero but Satan would make *Paradise Lost* tragic rather than epic. According to Pizzo, Daniel Webb, in an analogy to painting, suggested that Satan is interesting because he has 'shadows' (72). God, by contrast, is perfect, everlasting light without 'shadow'. But one cannot draw without shadow. For this reason, Webb suggested that Milton had failed to 'draw' God adequately, while Satan is simply 'more poetic'.

By way of Lessing and Herder the move towards the Romantic reception of Milton in Germany had begun. Shakespeare had became the favourite English poet for the young generation, and the veneration for the so-called *Seraphik* faded; the once so hotly debated angels were *passé*. Gradually, the new German poets themselves became the central examples for the new generation, and, while

Milton remained known, his poem was no longer 'experienced' to the same degree. The aesthetic response had also begun to separate itself from the religious response and secular themes were gradually becoming more popular than overtly religious ones. Little critical debate on Milton ensued from these new tastes: his work was simply read less.

Satan was the main figure still to attract attention, but Goethe's concept of Prometheus, as embodied in his poem 'Prometheus' (Echtermeyer and Wiese 186-187), was perceived to be far more immediate. There was a shift in the general perception of heroism. The Romantic view went back, partially, to the pagan classical ideal, using the Prometheus figure as a central heroic trope (Goethe and Shelley were only two Romantic poets to use Prometheus as a protagonist). Because rebellion against any restrictions or limitations (even those imposed by the gods) was celebrated, Satan came to be regarded as a heroic and tragic Promethean figure. (Goethe's Mephistopheles in *Faust* was also, however, influenced by Milton's concept of Satan as a destructive force. Mephistopheles claims to be '*der Geist, der verneint*', the Spirit of Negation.) Max Klinger was sufficiently impressed by Milton's Satan to use a similar image for his own Satan in his *Faust* (1790). Schiller too was impressed by the imaginative creation of Satan, and the revolutionary spirit of Satan finds a few echoes in the protagonists of *Die Räuber*. Schiller was to remain fascinated by 'great criminals' ('*große Verbrecher*'), but the emphasis moved away from the abstractly spiritual sphere of heavenly rebellion to the secular sphere and secular combat.

Although he was less read, Milton was again translated and was reprinted; biographical material became available, mainly due to an increase in 'scientific' interest. A few admirers remained: Füßli, Denis, Eschenburg, translators Ramler and Bürde (Pizzo 119). Some sections were popular, but Milton's 'learnedness', polemical passages, didacticism, his 'scientific' discussions and rhetoric, his 'theological and metaphysical wit' were rejected. The poem's 'Old Testament mythology' was criticised. Increasingly, commentators did not bother to read Milton's work itself, but accepted comments from other sources.

The Romantic movement in Germany emphasised the mysterious, or the vague, represented in poetry by an idealisation of the night and the quest for the elusive 'blue flower'. The young generation of 1800 possessed Keats's 'negative capability' in excess and consequently found *Paradise Lost* much too concrete. Few sections continued to interest them – the 'allegory' of Sin and Death was one of those few. They rejected the didactic and the 'intentional'. For this group, God could not be represented directly any longer, but only through his counterfoil, the world (Pizzo 138).

Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724-1803), author of the *Messias*, a German religious epic in twenty books, deserves special mention as a reader of Milton and transmitter of the perceived excellences (and flaws) of *Paradise Lost*. Klopstock's

own image has been somewhat tarnished in the English-speaking sphere because he has been alleged to have imitated Milton, and to have done so badly.[3] German literary historians Krell and Fiedler are a little more cautious, merely ascribing inspiration of the *Messias* to Milton. My own 1993 study comparing *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* with the *Messias* (Skawran), showed influence and evidence of knowledge of Milton's work, but not slavish imitation.

The young Klopstock was a poet whose horizons of expectation had been shaped by Pietism and by Milton (initially in the Bodmer translation of 1732, revised 1742, since Klopstock only read Milton in English in 1752), and informed by the Baroque style,[4] Enlightenment ideas and the *Gefühlsamkeit*. He wrote the *Messias*, but also many lyrical odes (which are, unlike his epic, still anthologised and read today), within the context of these influences, and had a vital influence himself on the young *Stürmer and Dränger* (including Goethe and Schiller).[5] Since Milton's work was perceived as the prime example of lyrical expression of emotion, his work set the standard, which explains the enthusiasm with which the first three books of Klopstock's *Messias* were received in 1747 (Skawran 121). The young Klopstock himself commented in his *Neue critische Briefe* (reprinted in *Klopstocks sämmtliche sprachwissenschaftliche und ästhetische Schriften* 156) that Milton had led him to new, unknown and untrodden worlds ('*neue unbekannte Gegenden'*) and claimed that, in future, he could wander in those regions freely ('*so darf ich künftig mit kühnen Füssen darinnen herumwandeln*'). He saw Milton's characters as new friends with whom he wanted to further his acquaintance ('*... die Bekanntschaft mit meinen neuen Freunden fortsusetzen...*').

Klopstock adopted a range of Miltonic devices, including his anthropomorphic angels, but not Milton's anthropomorphic God, and strengthened the trend toward the *Seraphik*. He also re-used the visions of Milton's Books XI and XII in his catalogue of patriarchs. It is worth noting that his use of patriarchs as characters does not reveal any clear grasp of the concepts of biblical typology as explained by Lewalski in her analysis of *Paradise Regained* (cf. Skawran 41-42), and arguably equally relevant for *Paradise Lost,* but act merely as a device to remind the reader of prior events.

Klopstock's *Messias* shows no evidence of his questioning the new heroism that Milton explores in *Paradise Lost* (even more rigorously in *Paradise Regained*, which Klopstock does not appear to know well, if at all).[6] He takes for granted (Skawran 114) the distinction that, as Steadman (14) points out, Milton makes between the divine and secular ideas of the hero, 'between the sacred and profane ideals of heroic poetry' (24). Unlike Milton, Klopstock does not explore in any systematic way the relation between the classical hero and a new, Christian heroism (this aspect of Milton's work is discussed fully by such critics as Francis Blessington and others) – his work focuses on the Hebrew tradition (which incidentally supports the argument for a continental tradition for the

Patriarchaden, in addition to Milton's influence). Joan Webber suggests that 'epic is essentially, though quietly, subversive' (xi). Judging by Klopstock's adoption of the new hero in Christ's image, one has to assume that as far as Klopstock the reader is concerned, Milton's epic subversion and renewal in the definition of the heroic is so successful (and so quiet) that Klopstock can present his Christ in the image of Milton's new heroism as though that is in fact the epic norm – a horizon of expectation has been successfully shifted by Milton's poem.

It is clear that Klopstock assumes at least some familiarity with Milton in his reader. According to Elisabeth Höpker-Herberg, he depends on the reader to know 'prior events' (47), such as the intriguing example of Milton's Abdiel's refusal to follow Satan. On the basis of this event, which is not in Genesis, Klopstock introduces the character of Abbadona, who was Abdiel's erstwhile friend, but is now despised by Abdiel, because Abbadona followed Satan. In Abbadona, Klopstock picks up on Milton's unanswered question as to what would happen if Satan were to repent (*PL* IV). For obvious reasons, this issue cannot be explored in the character of Satan, but in exploring the issue in this minor character, Klopstock introduces an intriguing and moving subplot, one of many in the poem (cf. Skawran 54-55, 79).[7] Such subtleties are not, however, much commented on by Klopstock's critics in relation to Milton.

Stylistically, Klopstock was influenced by Milton's perceived lack of adherence to rules and was inspired to experiment with poetic form – according to K.L. Schneider, Klopstock's wife Meta wrote to Young about the *Messias*,

> The verses of the poem are without rhymes, and are hexameters, which sort of verses my husband has been the first to introduce in our language; we beeing *[sic]* still closely attached to rhymes and iambics. (15)

Ironically, while Milton's popularity and the debates surrounding his work created a climate that was conducive to the initial reception of Klopstock's work, Klopstock's work was eventually to sustain interest in Milton and in the vogues that his work had sparked, in the German *Kulturraum*. It was not only the *Messias* that made this possible. The lyrical ode and pastoral poetry were popularised via Milton and Klopstock, through to the Anacreontic poetry of the 'late Rococo' of Wieland (but largely without the allegorical or polemical aspects of a poem such as 'Lycidas').

Later assessments of the eighteenth-century reception, such as those by Jenny (1890) and Pizzo (1914), are in themselves, of course, part of the broader 'synchronic cross-section' of the reception of Milton, in that they represent their own interpretations of the eighteenth-century reception, particularly in their focus on aesthetic aspects, to the strong exclusion of religiously/doctrinally coloured aspects of the reception of Milton's text, as well as the reception of other Miltonic

texts. It falls beyond the scope of this article to consider fully the gaps in their arguments, but I have discussed these more fully elsewhere (Skawran 114-115,125).

To summarize then, Milton's *Paradise Lost* became known via his fame as a polemicist, and his poem was initially received with great enthusiasm, until 1750, mainly owing to its dogmatic, didactic content – because it was a religious poem – not because of its artistic merit. Since Lessing, Milton's creative powers and his style enjoyed greater recognition. Satan was greatly admired as a literary figure. The scenes involving Adam and Eve, especially before the Fall, were considered to embody the perfect synthesis between dogma and artistry, and were popular throughout the period.

By the end of the eighteenth century, however, German literary tastes had shifted away from Milton's poem. He was by then rarely read, and was only occasionally assimilated via other poets (notably Klopstock) and critical writing. His polemical work and shorter poems were read far less as his epic stature grew. *Paradise Regained*, and certainly the *De Doctrina Christiana*, were not well known to the literary world in the German *Kulturraum*. Nevertheless, in the time of its popularity, and in its German offshoots, Milton's work had created a standard of the sublime (what Bodmer called '*das Wunderbare*') and had sparked or supported a number of vogues; it had shifted literary horizons, had altered a tradition, and had given those who wished to reform and renew the existing forms of poetry the ammunition they needed to support their quest for change.

NOTES

1. Pizzo discusses in passing some of the areas highlighted in this paper, namely the *Seraphik,* the *Patriarchaden, Naturschwarm* and *'das Wunderbare'.* These concepts were explored more fully in my 1993 thesis, adding a discussion of other areas (Skawran).

2. Pizzo refers to 'Haake', whereas Pamela R. Barnett spells the surname 'Haak'.

3. This allegation is reflected by editors Bloom and Trilling (63) in a footnote to Blake's poem 'When Klopstock England defied' – Blake's poem may not, in fact, be a comment on the *Messias* at all.

4. Klopstock's poetry has been accused of *Barocker Schwulst* (Baroque bombast), but his prose style was more concise. He strove to make a clear distinction between poetry and prose (Skawran 103).

5. Klopstock’s influence was recognised by contemporaries such as Lessing and Herder, and he was regarded by proponents of strictly regulated form, such as Gottsched, as a poetical radical, due to his experiments in form.

6. Pizzo does not mention the influence or reception of *Paradise Regained,* which is also neglected by all the German literary historians consulted. One could therefore conclude that most of these literary historians see the reception of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* as synonymous and do not distinguish between the two poems. It is also possible that the reception of *Paradise Regained* was so insignificant in Germany that it had virtually no impact (or no measurable or determinable impact) within this sphere. This study would cautiously suggest that a combination of these factors is most likely within the different circles of readers in the German sphere, and would see a possible field for further research in this area.

7. Abbadona appears repeatedly in the *Messias,* anxiously and remorsefully following the events leading up to the crucifixion. After the crucifixion, in the scenes where Christ deals with the First Judgement, Abbadona finally approaches Christ, and, kneeling at his feet, is forgiven.

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