

Aristotelian Rhetoric in *Paradise Lost*: Milton's Anti-Aureate Attitude

『パラダイス・ロスト』におけるアリストテレス的レトリック：
ミルトンの反金飾主義的姿勢について

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Abstract

This paper delves into John Milton's incisive critique against rhetorical sophistry through the metaphorical delineation of Eden as well as celestial rebellion in *Paradise Lost*, focusing on Satan's manipulative nature in employment of Aristotelian rhetoric strategies to subvert truth and deceive, which was rampant during the mid-seventeenth century for the narrator of *Paradise Lost* can be regarded as an orator, with the rhetoric of oration applied to his narrative. Milton thus strategically differentiates his use of rhetoric in depicting Eden, the fallen angels, and the Son.

Moreover, Leveraging Aristotle's *Ars Rhetorica* (*Ῥητορική*), the analysis explores how Satan exploits ethos and pathos to ensnare the heavenly host, revealing the inherent dangers of oratory that exploit emotional vulnerability. The contrast between Satan's not only grandiloquent but also duplicitous oratory exemplified by Ciceronian style, and Milton's ideal of earnest, unadorned discourse illuminates the moral and intellectual stakes involved. The orations of the archfiend are dissected for their rhetorical opulence and psychological subterfuge, emphasizing the perilous nature of persuasive tactics detached from veracity. By employing rhythmic cadence and emotive resonance, Devilish King's speech serves as a paradigmatic example of how eloquent manipulation can undermine genuine discourse.

In counterpoint, the study scrutinizes the stark contrast between Satan's fallacious rhetoric and the authentic, divine eloquence epitomized by Christ's chariot in *Paradise Lost*. The depiction of Son's chariot, characterized by intrinsic, self-sustaining luminosity, represents an ideal of rhetoric imbued with *alētheia*, or truth and rationality, untainted by pretentiously deceitful embellishments. Milton's anti-aureate portrayal thus plays a profoundly admonitive role against excessive rhetorical amplification and emotional exploitation, championing "unfeigned" oration founded on integrity and intellectual clarity.

Keywords: John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Satan, Aristotle, rhetoric, sophist

1. Introduction

Lucius Annaeus Seneca's (circa. 4 BC–AD 65) maxim, "*Fallaces sunt rerum species*," rendered as "Deceptive are the appearances of things" (bk. 4, ch. 34, section 1), underscores a pervasive theme of illusory perception. The concept of falsehood is one of the major themes in reading *Paradise Lost* (1667)¹⁾ by John Milton (1608–74). In fact, Satan's sophisticated rhetoric is ironically instrumental in precipitating the rebellion of "the third part of heaven's host" (bk. 5, line 710). The profundity of the Archdemon's oratory is such that, Hiroko Tsuji says, "It could potentially deceive contemporary audiences if not for Milton's countervailing epic voice" (2; my translation).

What, then, makes Satan's discourse so compelling? It is the classical discipline of rhetoric as established by Aristotle (384–322 BC) that is pertinent to examine to address this question. Written in around the 4th century BC, his *Rhetoric* (*Ῥητορική*) has exerted a widespread influence on literary tradition, including Milton's epic. The poet's incorporation of Aristotelian principles of persuasion into *PL* has been extensively analyzed by Francis C Blessington (54) and Kaley Jemison (94). This suggests that Satan's rhetorical strategies, epitomized by his designation as the

“arch-fiend” (bk. 1, line 219), are intricately aligned with Aristotelian concepts of persuasion. By tracing the application of Aristotle’s rhetoric in Satan’s discourses, we can gain insights into Milton’s faithful engagement with rhetoric because it was paramount in 17th-century education, along with grammar and logic, highlighting the connection between rhetoric and logic—the art of expression and reasoning. Under such logos-oriented circumstances indeed, John M. Major posits that rhetoric functions, in Milton’s era, as “the means of communication between the learned and the popular world” (686). Just as adherence to grammatical rigor underpins logical reasoning, rhetoric is essential for effective persuasion. Consequently, rhetoric has been a significant and enduring influence on Milton’s development of his literary theory since his formative academic years.

Then, this study systematically scrutinizes the rhetorical categories as delineated by Peter Berek and assesses the common problems shared by historical ancient orators, as exemplified by R. J. Stark, John Barclay Broadbent, and Tsuji. The thesis will identify instances of Satan’s rhetorical sophistry and explore potential metaphors that may reflect Milton’s anti-aureate attitude via the descriptions of Eden, the sword of Michael, and Son’s Chariot, as well as Satan’s historically problematic speech at the time of rebellion in *PL*. Eventually, this analysis through Devil-lord’s rhetoric aims to elucidate the poet’s ideal of oratory and solemn usage of logos that regrettably have not been methodically explained in the study of *PL*.

2. Detestation and Ideal of Rhetoric

As Major posits that Milton harbors an intrinsic aversion to excessive stylistic embellishment (695), his sentiment is evident in his *An Apology Against a Pamphlet Call’d a Modest Confutation of the Animadversions upon the Remonstrant against Smectymnuus* (1642), where he asserts, “true eloquence I find to be none, but the serious and hearty love of truth.” This assertion aligns with *PL*’s celebration of “wisdom, which alone is truly fair” (bk. 4, line 491), suggesting that genuine eloquence

is inextricably linked to reason. Milton underscores that true persuasiveness cannot be achieved through superficial technique or rhetorical flourish; rather, it necessitates logos—the power of rigorous and thorough thought.

On Milton's antipathy against rhetorical ornamentation, Major further argues that excessive beautification and artificiality are to be spurned (695)². This perspective is mirrored in Raphael's admonition in bk. 5, lines 486–88: "Fancy and understanding, whence the soul / Reason receives, and reason is her being, / Discursive, or intuitive." Here, this seraph underlines that intuitive or discursive deliberation is the essence of reason, reflecting Milton's belief that the core of oratory lies in rational thought. This view is reinforced by Francis Bacon (1561–1626), who asserts, "eloquence is doubtless inferior to wisdom, though, in profit and popular estimation, wisdom yields to eloquence" (qtd. in Major 707). As a Puritan, Milton thus eschews the ornate embellishments of the Ciceronian style: He favors plainness and simplicity as the truest expressions of divine truth, standing in stark contrast to the elaborate rhetorical styles of the Elizabethan and Italian traditions (Major 708–9).

On the negative side of rhetoric, Berek additionally examines how the discordant rhymes of Satan and the fallen angels abusively manipulate the audience's psychology, undermining reasoned judgment and suppressing dissent against sophistry (240). His argument is corroborated by the research of Leon Festinger and Nathan Maccoby, who have demonstrated that audio distraction can suppress refutation (Pratkanis and Aronson 185–86)³. In this context, the fallen angels' distorted rhymes diverted from the original purpose of conveying divine truth, only to serve as a metaphorical cunning screen for unreasoned discourse. This is reminiscent of Milton's biblical caution against false prophets like "the Prelats" who, once disguised as virtuous shepherds, have now revealed their true nature as ravenous wolves, rather openly threatening than protecting the flock of Christ, even seeking to devour it as their prey (*The Reason of Church Government*, bk. 2, ch. 4). Milton criticizes such personality of "wolves in sheep's clothing," suggesting that in Hell of *PL*, the crafting of fallacies in disguise constitutes a fundamental corruption of

rhetoric⁴).

One of Satan's most potent rhetorical weapons is his ability to evoke and agitate the emotions of his audience—one of the Aristotelian primal axioms that poetic expression constitutes effectiveness: "Language expresses emotion [*παθητική*] if, for a case of abusiveness, a speaker uses the language of an angry man" (130)⁵. Regarding this rhythmical persuasion, Berek critiques that the diabolic king's deployment of musical repetition as a means of emotional manipulation (240). To put it another way, the devilish audio performance highlights how the *logos*, originally a divine creation meant to embody reason, is usurped and reduced to mere emotional appeal by '*ὀργιζόμενον* (outraged)' Satan's rhetoric. This represents a cardinal perversion of divine reason, transforming it into a tool for deception, which can be interpreted as nothing less than Satan's subordination of God's *logos*, a calculated encroachment upon the sanctity of celestial discourse.

In essence, Berek juxtaposes the "plain" and almost mathematical speech of God with Satan's "ornate" and deceptive rhetoric insisting that Milton, through his poetic craftsmanship, warns of the perils inherent in the misuse of rhetorical techniques (246). Milton's ideal of rhetoric, as Ronald Cooley notes, is an integral component of the reformatory thrust of *PL* (233). Adapting Aristotle's principles with respect to critics' opinions, the poet seems to suggest that "language must maintain appropriateness [*πρέπον*] in expressing emotion and character, ensuring a sense of proportion in discourse—neither exaggerating trivial matters nor diminishing weighty issues" (Aristotle 130)⁶. The unproportionately devilish distortion of facts and rhetorical embellishments ("*κόσμοι*") are thus depicted as absurd but potentially hazardous, taking into consideration the abovementioned Tsuji's viewpoint on the oral superiority of Satan in pandemonium.

Meanwhile, in the idyllic landscape of Eden, Eve's harmlessly unadorned appearance is in contrast to Satanical disguise, "wolves in sheep's clothing." As a matter of fact, her inner purity is "proportionately" reflected when she welcomes Raphael, "[t]he affable archangel" (bk. 7, line 41), as below:

but Eve

Undecked, save with herself more lovely fair
 Then wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess feigned
 Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,
 Stood to entertain her guest from heaven; no veil
 She needed, virtue-proof, no thought infirm
 Altered her cheek. (bk. 5, lines 379–85)

This passage faithfully, not so exaggeratedly as Satan's address, expresses her innate beauty and virtue, untainted by external adornment, let alone by weapons. The concept of "Undecked" (line 380) can be interpreted rhetorically to signify the absence of superfluous embellishment. True eloquence, as suggested by "lovely fair" (line 380), derives from sincerity and grace, quite sharply opposite to the Devil's disposition "sly hypocrite" (bk. 4, line 957)⁷⁾. Additionally, given the context of the golden apple cast into the midst of the three goddesses on Mount Ida (line 382), "fairest" (line 382) also embodies the punning notion of the *fair*: justice or impartiality to say nothing but the truth. With respect to the significance of her fairness, Fowler writes, "unlike Pomona and Venus, to amplify Eve's spiritual adornment (nakedness symbolized integrity) and her historical reality" (Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 192). As a consequence, the phrase "no thought infirm / Altered her cheek" (lines 384–85) acutely reminds the orator to maintain not only purity but also reality in speech, remaining free from hostile thoughts of degradation such as ambition, deception, and fabrication.

Besides, Jemison's portrayal of Adam and Eve's assiduous grooming "to reform / Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green" (bk. 4, lines 625–26) within the Edenic locus exemplifies Milton's endorsement of the Anti-Ciceronian linguistic ethos, accentuating his preoccupation with the meticulous regulation and formalization of language (92). Essentially, paradise—a dense, primordial forest—works as a metaphorical discursive space, symbolizing a repudiation of the contemporary

rhetorical fashions, which had become excessively ornate and virtually unmanageable. Furthermore, a note of Hirai's translation figuratively comments, "some form of pruning is essential to make paradise truly a paradise" (Milton, *PL* [Hirai] 1: 396; my translation). Hence it follows that "lop their wanton growth" (bk. 4, line 629) allegorically represents the necessity for resolute expulsion of the problematic rhetoric. As a counter-movement under such ghastly stylistic circumstances, Milton in fact asserts that the ultimate purpose of learning, which also includes rhetoric of course, was to gain a proper understanding of God and to mend the devastation wrought by original sin, perceived education as the means to cultivate the "souls of true virtue" to their "highest perfection" (*Of Education*). With regard to the education problem, as Jemison particularly observes on Ciceronian rhetoric, Milton, in his youth, blames the prevailing university curriculum for its overemphasis on the texts written by Marcus Cicero (106–43 BC), where popular oratory was prized above grammatical precision and logical coherence (93). Therefore, Jemison contends that as opposed to the vogue of Latin rhetorical style, especially Ciceronian, during the mid-seventeenth century, the poet's ideal style has come to advocate the essentiality of prioritizing structural integrity over mere rhetorical embellishment (93–94). Milton lacerates the irrational aspects of a contemporary college education for prematurely forcing students to compose complex tasks—like themes, verses, and orations—that require mature judgment and should be the result of extensive reading and observation (*Of Education*). In this context, he laments the plight of students who, having not yet mastered even the rudiments of writing, are nonetheless obliged to produce sophisticated discussion. This premature exposure to advanced literary techniques leads them to rely on superficial eloquence more than substantive reasoning, thus compelling their audience through ostentatious language just like Satan rather than rigorous argumentation.

Jemison further depicts the "wanton," "profirous," and "overgrown" fecundity of Eden as emblematic of the excessive ornamentation characteristic of the Ciceronian style (95). This ironical perspective tallies with Milton's excoriation of

contemporary academic pedagogy, which he decried as embodying “the Scholastick grossness of barbarous ages” (*Of Education*). Jemison states this superfluous, undisciplined, and aesthetically unrefined Paradise is nothing short of a manifestative criticism against Ciceronian rhetoric, which merely adorns an otherwise undeveloped argument (99). Consequently, the rhetoric is perceived as merely adding a superficial layer of ornamentation to debate that is actually lacking in substance. In opposition to the misunderstood reason by “metaphysical gargarisms” in *The Reason of Church Government*, Milton expresses his frustration that many students, instead of defending justice and truth, have been stifled by university teachings that provided superficial scholasticism rather than meaningful knowledge, leaving them incapable of true philosophy or moral thought, and leading them to pursue hypocritical learning for personal gain or engage in trivial disputes to defend misguided prelatial views (bk. 2, ch. 4). Above all, he aversely likens ancient sophists, mediocre scholars, and notorious tyrants to the delusory speakers such as devils through the visual aspect of Eden and Eve, as well as the allegorical admonition by the epic voice. He thus stresses the historically continuous challenge posed by those orators inferior but difficult to deracinate just like weeds, metaphorizing the pervasive issue of rhetoric within the discursive space of Eden as follows⁸⁾:

the work under our labour grows,
Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
 One night or two with wanton growth derides
 Tending to wild. (bk. 9, lines 208–12; my emphasis)

In contradistinction to sophists, the scene in which Adam and Eve labor in the garden reveals their ideal humility. Respecting the indifference to worldly gain, Aristotle remarks, “Those who are honest, and it is those who do not depend on others for their livelihoods whom we take, to be honest—in other words, those

who work for a living, and especially farmers and those who work their own land [*αὐτοργγοὶ*]." (68)⁹). In their untainted state of integrity, they refrain from exerting more effort than necessary, nor do they attempt to embellish the appearance of their toil. The /l/-alliterative sequence of "labour" (line 208), "Luxurious" (line 209), "Lop" (line 210) reiteratively implies their modest self-controlling. Concerning the autonomy in their property ("*αὐτοργγοὶ*"), Totsuka in his footnote lucubrates this: "Laborer is deemed righteous because they earn only what is just for their efforts, unlike a merchant who might seek to extract excessive profit. The case of the subsistence farmer exemplifies this ideal." (Aristotle, *Ars Rhetorica* [Tostuka] 452; my translation and emphasis). Indeed, Adam and Eve avoid excessive pruning that might render the garden's beauty superficial.

This is starkly contrasted with Satan, who is described as a "cormorant" (bk. 3, line 196), embodying insatiable greed. The "first grand thief" (bk. 4, line 192) exhibits a ferocity akin to a hyena, employing florid rhetoric to seduce his audience. This means the figure tends to seek the admiration from fallen angels desperately with false charm and an unquenchable hunger for power in the following quotation:

Here walked the fiend at large in spacious field.
As when a vulture on Imaus bred,
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
Dislodging from a region scarce of prey
To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids
On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs
Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams; (bk. 3, lines 430–36; my emphasis)

This predatory nature is encapsulated in the use of "vulture" (line 430), meaning to devour entirely, much like an avaricious merchant exploiting customers. As far as the depiction of "gorge" (line 434) is concerned, Fowler makes an observation that

the “lambs and yeanling kids” (line 434) symbolize humanity, divided into innocent or redeemed sheep and reprobate goats, drawing on the Gospel of Matthew (Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 192)¹⁰). The imagery is further reinforced by the repeated use of the alliterative /f/-sound in words such as “from” (line 433), “flesh” (line 434), “flocks”, “fed” and “flies” (line 435). This acoustic pattern foreshadows the deceptive cunning of a felon who fabricates falsehoods, yet ultimately, will use these combinations of alliteration as mere façades to hide the facts. The implication is that the masses, akin to stray sheep, are easily controlled by the pretense of fraud and the misleading guise of a malevolent leader.

3. Historical Problems of Rhetoric over Sophists and *Logographoi*

The misuse of rhetoric has been a serious concern widely shared by rhetoricians throughout history. Stark, for instance, discusses Longinus’ concept of “*psychrotita* (*ψυχροτιτα*: false grandeur, or frigidity)”, linking the sham sublimity in *PL* to the cold-heartedness of the demons¹¹). He writes Satan’s rhetoric is best suited for self-important courtly displays, not for warmly direct dialogues or enlivening transfers of pathos (21). What the important is that the prince of devilish eloquence is grounded in a self-righteousness that starkly contrasts with the inherently warm and crisp nature of authentic rhetoric. In Stark’s view, “Pandemonium is best seen as the prototype for all vain stylistic impulses” (22). Namely, this illustrates how audiences often mistake external opulence for authority. The contradiction between eloquence with euphony in appearance and cacophony in substance underlines the difficulty in discerning truth from false grandeur when facing outwardly harmonious but fundamentally discordant sophists.

Broadbent also notes, “Milton lived during a period when rhetoric was flourishing yet becoming corrupted” (240). The poet’s decision to shift toward a style that emphasized logical argumentation and intellectual freedom, distancing himself from the ornate language and rhythmic patterns characteristic of poetry (242), was a

deliberate response to the excessively rhetorical era. Such poetic strategy of Milton is summarized in the following passage from the heavenly battle:

nor odds appeared
In might or swift prevention; but the sword
Of Michael from the armoury of God
Was given him **tempered** so, that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge: (bk. 6, lines 319–23; my emphasis)

In this extract, Satan and Michael, the “celestial armies’ prince” (bk. 6, line 44), are depicted as equals in physical strength and swordsmanship (“nor odds appeared” [line 319]). Nevertheless, Michael’s sword, a divine gift and therefore closer to the logos-like truth, surpasses Satan. Before the battle, Fowler discusses demon-prince’s arrogant stride and armor “in adamant and gold,” (bk. 6, lines 110) as Vipsanius Agrippa (circa. 63–12 BC), who established imperial Rome on the republic’s ruins (Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 345). The metaphorical difference in *ousia*, or substance between them serves as a refutation of Michael’s sword: As Laura E. Lockwood notes, “tempered” (line 322) signifies “bringing to a certain degree of hardness” (540), the owner of that hard sword, Michael’s sharp and incisive tongue naturally symbolizes his hardness, *viz.* consistency in honesty and rhetorical prowess. Hirai spells out, “Since Michael is renowned for his valor, he is thus well-suited to carry out justice” (Milton, *PL* [Hirai] 2: 388; my translation). In other words, the act of a just angel eliminating an unethical argument of Satan is in itself synonymous with morality, which should be officially justified in the opinion of Milton. In actuality, Michael says, “If thou well observe / The rule of not too much, by temperance” (bk. 11, lines 530–31). Concerning the rule, Fowler implies, “the maxim *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, inscribed in the temple at Delphi and quoted in Plato. . . . Moderation is a favourite topic of M[ilton]. . . . True liberty is always for M. ‘within bounds’ (vii 120)” (Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 627)¹². Therefore, Michael’s “tempered” sword represents

Platonic temperance via punning and consecutive /d/-half rhyme of “appeared” (line 319), “sword” (line 320), and “God” (line 321). As a matter of course, Satan’s “gluttonous delight” (bk. 11, line 533) in his oratory is promptly confuted, and tarnished with shame. When all is said and done, his fury erupts in a strangled rage: “Gnashing for anguish and despite and shame / To find himself not matchless, and his pride / Humbled by such rebuke” (bk. 6, lines 340–42). Above all, “rebuke” (line 343) is a verbal lashing that inevitably shatters Satan’s self-contradictory belief in his equality with God, leaving him to suffer in the realization that he is “so far beneath / His confidence to equal God in power” (bk. 6, lines 342–43). In short, Milton’s rhetorical priorities are unmistakably manifested in the archangel’s triumph over the archfiend through the genuine art of swordplay argumentation.

Moreover, Major makes a case, “Milton equates artifice and excess with moral corruption” (696). The serpent’s temptation of Eve is reminiscent of “some orator renowned / In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence / Flourished” (bk. 9, lines 670–72), Satan’s deceitful success reflects “the poet’s theological assertion that only God can truly discern hypocrisy” (698)¹³. Even Uriel, the “regent of the sun” (bk. 3, line 690), is “once beguiled” (bk. 3, line 689) by “the false dissembler” (bk. 3, line 681). Therefore, Milton not only divulges the various rhetorical pitfalls but also offers a safeguard against falling prey to the devil’s evil schemes—encouraging readers to pursue eloquence in its truest, most virtuous form in *An Apology Against a Pamphlet*: true eloquence is rooted in nature and best expressed by those who live virtuous lives, guided by what he calls “regenerate reason,” endorsing the idea that genuine eloquence cannot exist without moral goodness, implying that only good men can be truly eloquent. In brief, true eloquence necessitates true rationality, stemming from an authentic connection to nature, and orators must remain steadfast in this union throughout their rational substance, especially approved by Plato (circa. 427–348 BC). This notion, similarly aforementioned quotes from *Of Education*, directly references Milton’s alignment of virtue with oratory drawing upon Platonic philosophy (Major 705). It stands to reason that virtuous thoughts

embrace intellectual self-restriction, indispensable to oratorical leaders. In point of fact, Milton likens his ideal king of morality to Samson, who, disciplined in temperance and sobriety, gains strength and perfection, with the laws, such as his locks, surrounding and supporting his noble authority (*The Reason of Church Government*, bk. 2, ch. 4). Thus, Milton's assertive association of vitally influential eloquence with moral reason is since they are sine qua non for righteous leadership.

In addition, his idealistic rhetorical education, eventually deepened by *PL*, is further augmented by illustrative examples of the poet's Platonic truth-seeking spirit as follows:

I [Socrates] have called them hitherto dialecticians [διαλεκτικούς]. But tell me now what name to give to those who are taught by you and Lysias, or is this that art of speech [λόγων τέχνη] by means of which Thrasymachus and the rest have become able speakers themselves, and make others so, if they are willing to pay them royal tribute [δωροφορεῖν]? (*Phaedrus*, 266c; my emphasis)¹⁴⁾

In *Phaedrus*, Socrates addresses Phaedrus who obtains a popular treatise on oratory, implicitly satirizing the art of rhetoric as merely an “art of speech [λόγων τέχνη].” This term, in use since the era of Plato, reveals that the cynical aspects of rhetoric have been already recognized at his age. Socrates subtly suggests that the sophists, who practice this illogical technique, are regarded not as true philosophers but as mere flatterers, ridiculed as those who demand a “royal tribute [δωροφορεῖν].”

Socrates further indicts sophists such as Gorgias and Tisias, who heavily rely on *logographoi* (*logographos* in single form), or a type of mercenary ghostwriter rather than truth as follows:

And shall we leave Gorgias and Tisias undisturbed, who saw that probabilities are more to be esteemed than truths [εἰκότα], who make small things

[σμηκρὰ] seem great [μεγάλα] and great things small by the power of their words [ρόμην λόγον], and new things old and old things the reverse, and who invented conciseness of speech and measureless length on all subjects? (*Phaedrus*, 267a–b; my emphasis)¹⁵⁾

He contrasts the sophist's approach, which distorts trivial matters into significance and inflates insignificance, with true rhetoric, anchored in rationality and truth as noted earlier. Plato reprimands the habitual falsification through abusive speech (“λοιδορία”) by sophists with repeated mocking them as mere a slave of speech-writer (*Phaedrus*, 257c)¹⁶⁾. This means Socrates censures them for trivializing or embellishing matters and for their dependence on *logographoi*, to seek the popularity of the audience through rhetoric. This debasement of oratory from its noble purpose of edifying the audience was apparent even in democratic Athens, where rhetoric degenerated into a tool of manipulation rather than a virtuous instrument. On those situations, Fujisawa meticulously examines the degraded democracy in the mid-5th century in his commentary: Tisias and others begin teaching forensic rhetoric in Sicily, which expands to political oratory in Athens, emphasizing eloquence (Plato, *Phaedrus* [Fujisawa] 208–9). According to Fujisawa, this emphasis leads to the memorization of model speeches and the development of epideictic oratory in turn, yet Plato castigates his contemporary rhetoric in *Phaedrus* for prioritizing popular approval over truth, arguing that rhetoric should be connected to philosophy and the pursuit of truth (Plato, *Phaedrus* [Fujisawa] 236–41). Namely, Plato denounces the corruption of rhetoric from its philosophical origins, noting how it has become pedantic. The rote memorization of clichés, the pandering to the masses through pseudo-facts, and the sophists' egocentrically deceptive, sycophantic nature were all indicators of moral degradation precisely like Satan.

As Plato defines genuine oratory as consonant with truth, devoted to the philosophical quest for knowledge, and oriented towards the altruistic aim of enlightening the audience, *PL* echoes this condemnatory sentiment in the passage concerning the

“Paradise of Fools” as below:

Both all things vain, and all who in vain things
Built their fond hopes of glory or lasting fame,
Or happiness in this or the other life;
All who have their reward on earth, the fruits
Of painful superstition and blind zeal,
Naught seeking but the praise of men, here find
Fit retribution, empty as their deeds; (bk. 3, lines 448–454; my emphasis)

Milton repeatedly underscores the vanity and vacuity of “glory” and “fame” (line 449), comparing them to “*vanitas vanitatum*”—the ultimate futility of vanities¹⁷. The pursuit of worldly acclaim, he suggests, is nothing more than a transient quest for gain, ironically offering a pronounced contrast with even the virtues of the “Spirits damned” (bk. 2, line 482), who retain some measure of virtue despite their fall: “bad men should boast / Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites, / Or close ambition varnished over with zeal” (bk. 2, lines 483–85). Milton stigmatizes the sycophantic pursuit of praise, distantly dissociated from the Platonic ideal of the philosopher, who seeks truth and virtue.

In Raphael’s recounting of the celestial battle, he also narrates the rebel angels as nature of contemptible and morally corrupted as per the below quotation:

For strength from truth divided and from just,
Illaudable, naught merits but dispraise
And ignominy, yet to glory aspires
Vain glorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
Therefore Eternal silence be their doom. (bk. 6, lines 381–85; my emphasis)

These angels with “strength from truth divided and from just” (line 381), akin to the sophists lampooned by Plato, rely on persuasion deriving from factoid rather than truth, or *alētheia* (“ἀληθεῖς λέγοντες”)¹⁸. Milton’s depiction of these fallen beings highlights the notion that seeking fame through spurious glory or infamy embodies one of the essences of evil. This is corroborated by the fact that the pagan deities “Adramelec and Asmadai” (bk. 6, line 365), adversaries of the angelic host, are prefaced with the epithet “his vaunting foe” (bk. 6, line 363). This particular phrasing subtly unveils the author’s intent to put an emphasis on their pernicious substrata, which is encapsulated in the “y”-half rhyme of “ignominy” (line 383), “glory” (line 383), and “infamy” (line 384) revealing their moral failure and the ultimate cause of the rebels’ downfall. Thus, the defeat of devils, as Milton posits, was not a consequence of a lack of capability but rather due to their prioritization of acclaim over truth as follows:

[Socrates] [H]e who is to be an artist in speech must fix his attention upon probability. . . a speaker must always aim at probability [*εἰκότα*], paying no attention to truth [*ἀληθεῖ*]; for this method, if pursued throughout the whole speech, provides us with the entire art.

[Phaedrus] You have stated just what those say who pretend to possess the art of speech, Socrates. I remember that we touched upon this matter briefly before, but the professional rhetoricians think it is of great importance. (*Phaedrus*, 272e–73a; my emphasis)¹⁹

The dialogue sheds light on the fact that the sophists were uniquely preoccupied with the utilization of “*εἰκός* (probability)” rather than “*ἀληθεῖ* (truth)”. Within this discourse, we can discern a trenchant satire of the demons’ deceptive artifices, as they fabricate fiction masquerading as truth and lay claim to mastery over “the art of persuasion” (“*πόρρω τῆς ἀληθείας*”). That is to say, the appearance of pagan deities in celestial conflicts steadily functions as a caricature of the sophists’ cult-like

following, amassed through their duplicitous machinations²⁰). Their reliance on irrational rhetoric is emblematic of the degradation of discourse as Plato attaches importance in his episode on “τὸν θεὸν Ἀμμωνα (The God of Ammon)” as this: “One man has the ability to beget arts, but the ability to judge of their usefulness or harmfulness [βλάβης τε καὶ ὠφελίας] to their users belongs to another. . . . since they are not wise, but only appear wise [δοξόσοφος]” (*Phaedrus*, 274e–275b; my emphasis)²¹). In this passage, the author subtly intimates that the capacity for creation and the discernment to judge are not coterminous, implying that a rigorous and ethical approach to rhetoric is indispensable.

Moreover, the distinction between a true sage and a “*pseudo-propheton*” (false-prophet; Mat 7:15) pivots on whether rhetoric is wielded for virtuous or malevolent ends. Milton's illustration of such perversion of an ostensibly virtuous entity is epitomized in Demonlord's “*doxosophos* (δοξόσοφος)” exploitation of the “life-giving plant” (bk. 4, line 199) as a mere vantage point during his reconnaissance of Eden as follows:

[Satan] nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant, but only used
For prospect, what well used had been the pledge
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use. (bk. 4, lines 198–204; my emphasis)

With solely superficial wisdom, Satan's failure to apprehend the intrinsic value of this sacred tool compels him to act not “on the virtue thought” (line 198), but rather “for prospect” (line 200), thereby co-opting the tree of life for his own selfish gain. The tree, which was fundamentally “the pledge / Of immortality” (lines 201–2),

signifying eternal life, is misappropriated on account of Satan's incapacity to grasp its divine significance.

Furthermore, Milton's assertion that only God can fully comprehend the true worth of such sacred pledges puts the accent on the formidable obstacle of discerning right from wrong (“βλάβης τε καὶ ὠφελίας”). The archfiend's proclivity to “pervert best things / To worst abuse, or to their meanest use” (line 203–4) also exemplifies the sophist's duplicitous maltreatment of discourse. Such pretentious but epigonic rhetoric that classical rhetoricians have consistently repudiated is often suffused with nefarious intent. In this vein, Tsuji invokes Quintilian's stricture for sophistry in the following quotation:

Quintilian, in particular, was assiduous in his censure, stressing that orators must embody virtuous citizenship and that rhetoric should be intrinsically aligned with moral virtue. In his pursuit of this rhetorical ideal, Quintilian articulated the theory of holistic education, a tradition perpetuated by Milton in *Of Education* where rhetoric and the comprehensive cultivation of the individual are paramount. Consequently, Milton's work is perceived as advancing an educational philosophy that fosters the complete development of the person through the prism of rhetoric (14; my emphasis and translation).

Tsuji concludes that “Milton utilizes this example to emphasize the hollow and insubstantial nature of rhetoric when it is tainted by vice. Furthermore, it illustrates the inherent peril in Aristotle's rhetorical theory, which, when wielded for nefarious purposes, can become a formidable weapon” (14–15; my emphasis and translation)²²). Thus, the sophist becomes emblematic of an eloquent speaker who distorts rhetoric for improper purposes. Milton's aversion to the unnecessary embellishment of argument is intricately linked to their unethical tendencies, which are tallied more closely with vice than with virtue. The inclusion of the devil's rhetoric in *PL* lays

stress on his unwavering conviction that ethical integrity is the cornerstone of genuine eloquence. Then, this raises the question: how does Satan corrupt the art of rhetoric? This will be explored in the subsequent section.

4. Aristotelian Theory Abused by Satan's Speech

As Blessington contends, “[*PL*’s] explicit theme, to ‘justify the ways of God to men,’ situates the poem within the realms of forensic oratory and theological controversy, even though it fundamentally remains an epic poem” (49), the irony is palpable in the devils’ democratic convention of successive assemblies and councils to vow revenge on God. This reflects a semblance of the democratic process, albeit with ominous undertones. Yet, Milton’s overarching concern in these dialogues just like democracy is the providence of God, urging the importance of honest and open-minded discourse. On this point, Aristotle’s assertion that benevolence enhances credibility (‘*πιθανώτατον*’) owing to the virtuous nature (130)²³ is required to be fair and just reinforces the significance of straightforwardness without hypocrisy. Although he cautions that a speaker’s ethos must be substantiated by the rhetorical proof (‘*δεδίξις*’) itself, “Satan’s Fraudulent Force” deftly distorts this theory in the subsequent quotation²⁴:

[Satan] Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
Ambiguous words and jealousies, to sound
Or taint integrity; but all obeyed
The wonted signal, and superior voice
Of their great potentate; for great indeed
His name, and high was his degree in heaven; and
His countenance, as the morning star that guides
The starry flock, allured them, and with lies
Drew after him the third part of heaven’s host: (bk. 5, lines 702–10; my

emphasis)

Satan is indeed a commanding figure, his charisma undeniable. What stands out is not merely the reason for convening the “synod” (bk. 6, line 156), but the “superior voice / Of their great potentate” (lines 705–6). With a series of /h/-alliterations— “His” or “his” (line 707–08), “high”(line 707), “heaven” (line 707), and “heaven’s host” (line 710), the poet captures the essence of a crowd’s inclination to place faith in an orator who is renowned and of high stature. This uncritical trust in Satan’s authority seduces the audience into believing everything the speaker utters. Blessington encompasses this dynamic, “It is this identification between orator and audience that is the psychological essence of rhetoric” (52; my emphasis), wherein the sympathy between orator and audience reaches its zenith, diffusing the orator’s reasoning into the minds of the listeners—a subtle form of psychological manipulation.

Pratkanis and Aronson further clarify the fact that the most crucial element in interpersonal relations is “the quality of being likable” (144): The likability just like “the magic bullet” (144) can obscure any fallacies. The luminous metaphor of “the morning star” (line 708), as if it shone so brightly that it escaped scrutiny, even in heaven, serves as a reminder that none of the fallen angels suspected Satan’s duplicity. This suggestion on his treacherous countenance is seconded by Fowler, “the face of ‘Lucifer, son of the morning’ (Isa. 14:12) is itself a mendacious impersonation. . . . Satan makes a false show of fading before Son’s greater light” (Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 327). As regards the betrayal factor of appearance, Pratkanis and Aronson indicate that credibility is not inherently earned through merit, but is meticulously constructed through strategic image management, designed to fabricate an aura of likability, authority, and expertise, simultaneously arguing that once established, this contrived persona can propel any cause, allowing superficial credibility to overshadow substantive personality (146). It is true that “Satan exalted sat, by merit raised” (bk. 2, line 5), but a note of *Dartmouth* points out, “Satan’s merit is ironic,

however—he merits punishment, rather than glory.” In this context, Satan’s ability to make angels “allured” (line 709) into his followers is an allegorical exemplification of manipulative influence, a characteristic often found in charades by vicious politicians. The perfect rhyme in “guides” (line 708) and “lies” (line 709) also reinforce Milton’s oburgation for their prevarication. Such acts of willfully directing his talents towards malevolent ends are nothing short of moral corruption to be punished by God: Perversion of reason is just akin to the misuse of tools.

Satan’s discourse is rife with what could be oxymoronically called *appropriate impropriety*, exploiting his audience’s inclinations according to the below quoted Aristotelian theory:

Appropriate language also helps to make a case persuasive [*πιθανοῖ*]: the mind of listeners falsely concludes that a speaker is telling the truth [*ἀληθῶς λέγοντος*] because in such circumstances they are disposed to think he is telling the truth even if he is not. Besides, listeners always sympathize with someone who speaks emotionally [*παθητικῶς λέγοντι*] even if he is talking nonsense. That is why many speakers overwhelm their audiences with clamour. (Aristotle 130; my emphasis)²⁵⁾

His ability to make the absurd seem credible by adapting to the emotional currents of his audience is a testament to his rhetorical prowess (“*παθητικοῦ λέγοντος*”). Totsuka’s footnote asserts, “[The] ultimate aim [of oratory] is to engender the proper judgment within the listener’s mind by articulating the direct objective. Therefore, the art of oratory is characterized by the ability to discern and employ the most fitting means of persuasion from the array of available strategies” (Aristotle, *Ars Rhetorica* [Totsuka] 418; my emphasis). This analysis makes clear the derisive shrewdness of Satan’s discernment of his audience. To give an instance, the emphasis on familiarity between the orator and audience, as seen in his address to Beelzebub, “Sleepst thou, companion dear” (bk. 5, line 673), is an attempt at

emotional identification to adopt the aforementioned Blessington's theory of "identification" (52). This connection highlights the poet's concern with the psychological implications of rhetoric: "So spoke the false archangel, and infused / Bad influence into the unwary **breast** / Of his associate" (bk. 5, lines 694–96; my emphasis). The alliteration of /b/ toward Beelzebub in line 695 ("Bad" and "breast") is more than a mere poetic device: it signals the rhetorical strategy of aligning emotional sympathy ("συννομοπάθεια") with intellectual assent. Satan's act of sending angels to confer with Beelzebub, under the guise of glorifying God while planting malevolent thoughts, epitomizes the incarnation of ideas through emotional operation. In essence, rhetoric becomes a tool of mass agitation, premised on the embodiment of the speaker's intentions. As Blessington reminds us, "rhetoric is a morally neutral device that can be used for good or evil" (56), whether it manifests as a force for humanity or perversion ultimately depends on the moral character of the user.

Satan, nonetheless, deftly employs "calumnious art" (bk. 5, line 770) and avows to retaliate against God:

If these magnific titles yet remain
 Not merely titular, since by decree
 Another now **h**ath to **h**imself engrossed
 All power, and us eclipsed under the name
 Of king anointed, for whom all this haste
 Of midnight march, and **h**urried meeting **h**ere,
 This only to consult **h**ow we may best
 With what may be devised of honours new
 Receive **h**im coming to receive from us
 Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile,
 Too much to one, but double how endured,
 To one and to **h**is image now proclaimed? (bk. 5, lines 773–84; my emphasis)

The prominent nine times /h/-alliterations— “hath” (line 775), “himself” (line 775), “haste” (line 777), “hurried” (line 778), “here” (line 778), “how” (lines 779, 783), “him” (line 781) and “his” (line 784)—resonates through Satan’s discourse as if enacting more vicious wrongdoings than deadly sins. The poet subtly conveys that rebellion against God is an act of profound depravity. In addition, the persistently recurring /h/-sounds underscore each point, lending the impression of an increasingly fervent oratory. The intricate rhyme scheme, such as the assonance of “haste” (line 777) with “name” (line 776), and the consonance with “best” (line 779), implies deliberate calculation (“*τῶν χειρόνων*”), evocative of Satan’s meticulous machinations before the Synod. A comment from *Dartmouth* contends, “Although they [angels] constitute a hierarchy, they are all equally free. However, he complains that the anointing of a king (the Son) impairs their liberty.” For that reason, the elaboration of plenty of rhythmical phrases in advance as an antithesis to the tyrannical decree’s deprivation of freedom is indicative of the fact that the retaliation caused by the prince of the devil appears exhaustively premeditated such as a vulture despite his erstwhile obedience to God. That is to say, this makes it possible to recognize Satan’s psychological downfall which turns from obedience to rebellion.

In this context, Aristotelian theory proves useful in the analysis of Satan’s speech, for Aristotle posits that oratory is bifurcated into censure and praise: “Moreover, if you want to show someone in a good light, you must draw the metaphor from something better [*τῶν βελτίστων*] in the same genus, whereas if you want to criticize someone, you must derive it from something worse [*τῶν χειρόνων*]” (123)²⁶. Thus, Satan’s blasphemous diatribe can be construed as a perverse glorification of divine desecration. The inextricable interweaving of condemnation and ironical panegyric (“*ἐναντία*”) intensifies the speaker’s pathos, causing the speech to reverberate more powerfully with the audience. In fact, this impassioned rhetoric lies in concord with Aristotle’s assertion as follows:

In the act of praise [*ἔπαινον*] or blame [*ψόγον*], one should emphasize

attributes that closely resemble the individual's genuine qualities, selecting those that cast them in the most favorable light, which may engender fallacious [παράλογιστικὸν] inferences regarding their motivations. (35)²⁷⁾

This logically rhetorical maneuver is so potent that it makes the reproached subject appear irredeemably flawed, and any semblance of benevolence transmuted into malevolence. By systematically undermining divine authority, Satan “*para-logistically* (παράλογιστικῶς)” rationalizes the insurrection, cultivating the perception that the deity demanding “Knee-tribute” (line 782) is a tyrant from whom liberation is imperative.

Indeed, the Aristotelian theory to which Satan ironically adhered is as follows:

It makes good sense for speeches of praise to rely on amplification [αὐξήσις] because amplification depends on superiority [ὑπεροχή] and superiority is fine. . . . To generalize, of the elements common to all speeches, amplification is particularly suitable for epideictic [ἐπιδεικτικοῖς] speeches, because such speeches take a man's deeds for granted and focus on investing them with greatness [μέγεθος] and fineness [κάλλος]. (Aristotle 37; my emphasis)²⁸⁾

The archfiend primarily fixates on the perceived despotism of God, employing rhetorical “amplification” to sway his audience. Since superiority denotes virtue according to an abovementioned quotation from Aristotle, the phrases “how endured” (line 783) and “now proclaimed” (line 784) resonate with rhymical couplet containing the first vowel of /au/ in “how” and “now,” while “endured” and “proclaimed” further invoke consonance with the last consonant of /d/, intensifying the rhetorical question. The passage of “*psogon* (ψόγον)” reflects Satan's deeply ingrained vindictiveness toward the Divine.

[Who] can introduce
Law and edict on us, who without law
Err not, much less for this to be our lord,
And look for adoration to the abuse
Of those imperial titles which assert
Our being ordained to govern, not to serve? (bk. 5, lines 797–802)

In this excerpt, the five times /l/-alliterations — “Law” (line 798), “law” (line 798), “less” (line 799), “lord” (line 799), and “look” (line 800)—catches the ear, whispered with Satan’s augmented beguiling eloquence. Aristotle’s advocacy, “An epideictic speaker must also use many kinds of amplification [ἀνζητικῶν]” (37)²⁹ is exemplified here as Satan controls “rhythmical amplification (ρυθμική ἀνζήσις).” The devil manipulates prosodic embellishment to magnify God’s tyranny, with even the rhyme of “introduce” (line 796) and “abuse” (line 800) bearing witness to this hyperbole. By discrediting God’s benevolence, Satan indirectly maintains his own integrity through this malevolent lens, augmenting (“ἀνζανομένη”) the essence of his artful Aristotelian rhetoric (37).

Furthermore, the sound of /ə:ɪ/ (unaccented /əɪ/) words such as “Err” (line 799), “assert” (line 801), and “govern” (line 802), juxtaposed with “serve” (line 802) create a phonetic resonance that mirrors Satan’s anguished lamentation against God’s unilateral dominion, which is ascertained by his wail delineated in the soliloquy: “horror and doubt distract / His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir / The Hell within him, for within him Hell” (bk. 4, lines 18–20; my emphasis). The moaning voice of /ə:ɪ/ (or /əɪ/ without accent) in “horror” (line 18) and “stir” (line 20) profoundly have an acoustical effect on the visualization of his negative feelings. Under the speech of Satan, Fowler also states that Milton’s affront to autocracy is hidden beneath the surface (Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 331). This duality of emotion echoed by the very poet—interweaving anguish with rage—elicits empathy from the audience, transforming their support into a spirit of rebellion. Satan’s mastery of

disguise, as foreshadowed in the expression of “so well he feigned” (bk. 3, line 639), is so consummate that even the audience is ensnared by his duplicitous artifice. This calculated oration serves the grandiose purpose of reclaiming his lost sovereignty eclipsed by the anointment of the Son.

Nevertheless, Milton, through the purposeful construction of Satan’s rhetoric, highlights the jeopardies of emotional “amplification (*αὐξήσις*)” and the deceptive power of rhetorical embellishment. This plays a cautionary role as an example of the abuse, inherent in such ornamental discourse, urging the reader to remain vigilant³⁰. This proves the poet’s nobility, idealized by the very Christ.

5. Conclusion: Anti-Aureate Metaphor in the Chariots of Christ and Satan

Our analysis thus far has explored Milton’s anti-aureate depiction via Satan, and yet a pivotal question remains: What precisely constitutes the poet’s ideal of authentic rhetoric? About this question, it is the comparative analysis between Satan and Christ’s chariot in *PL* that illuminates this matter which previous research has not thoroughly interrogated. The epic voice sings as below:

High in the midst exalted as a god
 The apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat
Idol of majesty divine, enclosed
 With flaming cherubim, and golden shields; (bk. 6, lines 99–102; my emphasis)

In this extract, Satan is intrinsically linked to the epithet “golden” (line 102), a descriptor that conveys an image of ostentatious ornamentation. An annotation of *Dartmouth* remarks, “Although Satan’s chariot is impressive, it will pale in comparison to the Son’s.” This differentiation arises because the description of Son’s chariot

transcends mere symbolism: it is an embodiment of the divine essence. As David Quint, in his critical exegesis, draws an analogy between "Satan's downfall and the mythic figures of Phaethon and Icarus" (870), Milton spotlights Satan's calamitous ambition to usurp celestial authority. In fact, such high-minded attitudes reminiscent of Phaethon and Icarus, who were oriented toward the high throne, are cited as a bitter rebuke to orators with arduous devotion to making their style of wording look unnecessarily glamorous.

Additionally, a note of Hirai's translation keenly suggests, "Satan is cognizant of his idolatry by the subordinate angels" (1: 426; my translation), which serves more as a reproach for superficial veneration than a substantive argument. This portrayal of Satan starkly contrasts with Christ's chariot, depicted thus: "The chariot of paternal deity, / Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel, undrawn, / Itself instinct with spirit" (bk. 6, lines 750–52). On this matter, Fowler astutely observes, "an idol or false image of majesty divine; the chariot travestying Messiah's cosmic vehicle. . . . Satan's chariot is sun-bright, whereas the divine chariot's amber' throne (vi 759n) gleams with inner light." (Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 345). This truthfully signifies that the rhetoric employed by the narrator in depicting the Son is more divinely endowed than that used, in contrast, to portray Satan. Milton contends that artistic gifts as rare, God-given talents that are often misused but, when rightly applied, can promote virtue, public civility, inner peace, and devotion to God. (*The Reason of Church Government*, bk. 2, preface). Thus, the description of the chariot as "undrawn" (line 751) comes to the fore since it is autonomous from external manipulation, embodying an entity animated by a pure, self-sufficient spirit. Milton's employment of alliterative phonemes in line 751, such as the initial /f/ and /w/ in "flashing" and "flames" as well as "wheel within wheel," sonically reinforces the chariot's representation of reason and heavenly wisdom. As Fowler puts it, the phrase "wheel within wheel" from Ezekiel symbolizes divine omnipotence and providence (Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 376). In other words, this illustrates the complexity and interconnect-edness of God's plan, even in seemingly chaotic elements like rhetoric. In essence,

Milton's use of this imagery enhances the sense of transcendent mystery, suggesting that unseen forces exemplified by discourse critically shape reality while representing the paradox of complexity within a unified divine order. By referencing Ezekiel, Milton leverages the authoritative weight of biblical scripture, bolstering up his rhetorical impact and grounding his argument in a theologically rich context. Thus, "wheel within wheel" serves as a significant literary device that reinforces "unfeigned" (bk. 6, line 744) themes of divine order, mystery, and providential control in discourse.

The chariot's swift motion and incandescent energy metaphorically function as a testament that the rhetoric used for Christ is characterized by a profound sincerity and integrity untainted by diabolical influences as follows:

This [power divine] saw his hapless foes but stood obdured,
 And to rebellious fight rallied their powers
 Insensate, hope conceiving from despair.
 In heavenly spirits could such perverseness dwell?
 But to **convince** the proud what signs avail,
 Or wonders move the obdurate to relent?
 They hardened more by what might most reclaim (bk. 6, lines 785–91; my emphasis)

Milton's relentless invectives with phonological /p/-harmony extend to the utilization of terms, like "powers" (line 786), "perverseness" (line 788), and "pride" (line 789), attributing the cause of moral degeneration to arrogance that, driven by a craving for general approbation, embraces unethical choices. The use of "convince" (line 790) in this context also sheds light on the inherent problem within the art of persuasion, vividly divulging the obstinate recalcitrance of sophists who, even when confronted with irrefutable truth, steadfastly refuse to amend their positions. Besides, the reiterated /h/-phonemes in "hapless" (line 785), "hope" (line 787), and

“heavenly” (line 788), “hardened” (line 788) are in the immediate foreground by the futility of attempting to reason with such intransigent individuals. With reference to /h/-sound symbolism, Milton adheres to an opinion in *The Doctrine & Discipline of Divorce*: the belief that if God removed His punishments and limited evil, humanity would find peace is misguided for even without external harm, our flawed nature would inevitably “hammer out of our own hearts” new sources of sorrow from divine gifts (my emphasis). As Fowler stresses the quotation from *De Doctrina Christiana*, “[s]inners were hardened by treatment that ‘ought rather to soften the hearts of sinners’”(Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 380), the continuous /s/-alliteration in lines 798 and 799 represented by “spirit”, “signs” and “such” exposes the logically defective nature of these perverse interlocutors. As a result, with affirmative discussion on the way divine justice and mercy operate, Milton explains the paradox of how certain treatments intended for correction can have the opposite effect, hardening sinners instead of leading them to repentance.

To conclude, this devilish hubris led Milton to denounce the florid pedantry that directly precipitates such moral and intellectual degradation, distorting the truth, and substantially deviating from the authentic purpose of speech. Ultimately, the poet's portrayal of Satan's speech serves as a cautionary narrative around the risks of rhetorical amplification and emotional manipulation, emphasizing the need for sincerity and integrity in discourse.

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- 1) All quotations from *Paradise Lost* are from the Fowler edition and are hereinafter referred to as *PL*.
 - 2) Major continues to explain Milton's early pamphlet, *Of Reformation in England* (1641) about his derision in language reminiscent of Bacon and Burton against the crabbed, abstruse style of the Church Fathers, with its “knotty Africanisms,” “pamper'd metaphors,” “intricat, and involv'd sentences,” “fantastick, and declamatory flashes,” and “crosse-jingling periods” (695). This means the misuse of rhetoric by religionists was rampant at his time.
 - 3) The experiment is as follows: “Two groups of fraternity students watched a film presenting

strong arguments against fraternities. One group saw a straightforward presentation by a professor, while the other group watched an entertaining beatnik artist painting while delivering the same arguments. The distracted group, engaged by the entertaining film, had less capacity to counterargue and thus showed more opinion change against fraternities compared to the undistracted group.” (Pratkanis and Aronson 185–86)

- 4) “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” (*KJV*, Mat. 7:15); “Προσέχετε δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ψευδοπροφητῶν [*pseudo-propheton*], οἵτινες ἔρχονται πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ἐνδύμασι προβάτων, ἔσωθεν δὲ εἰσὶ λύκοι ἄρπαγες.” (*LXX*, Mat. 7:15)
- 5) Original text: “παθητικὴ δέ, ἐὰν μὲν ᾗ ὕβρις, ὀργιζομένου λέξις.” (bk. 3, ch. 7:3).
- 6) Original text: “[1] τὸ δὲ πρέπον ἔξει ἢ λέξις, ἐὰν ᾗ παθητικὴ τε καὶ ἡθικὴ καὶ τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις πράγμασιν ἀνάλογον. [2] τὸ δ’ ἀνάλογόν ἐστιν ἐὰν μῆτε περὶ εὐόγκων αὐτοκαθόλου λέγεται μῆτε περὶ εὐτελῶν σεμνῶς, μηδ’ ἐπὶ τῷ εὐτελεῖ ὀνόματι ἐπὶ κόσμος.” (bk. 3, ch. 7:1–2)
- 7) The warrior angel, Gabriel sharply reprimanded Satan in bk. 4, lines 957–60 thus: “who now wouldst seem / Patron of liberty, who more than thou / Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored / Heavens awful monarch?” This shows a strong likelihood that Satan caters to the wishes and feelings of the audience or authority such as God and Uriel. He as well takes advantage of them without slightest hesitation.
- 8) Note Hirai’s footnote to bk. 4, line 635: “‘My author and disposer,’ this vocative embraces their prelapsarian relationship with admiration for each other” (Milton, *PL* [Hirai] 1 :396; my translation). This is none the other than the proper way to use language in sharp contrast to bk. 9, line 1187–89: “Thus they in mutual accusation spent / The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning, / And of their vain contest appeared no end.” This testifies that logos is tightly associated with virtue just like grape and elm tree. However, the total loss of their venerated connection is signified by silence in bk. 9, lines 1062–64: “they destitute and bare / Of all their virtue: silent, and in face / Confounded long they sat, as stricken mute.” To put it in syllogism, logos should be for *εὐλογία*: eulogy (major premise); Adam and Eve cannot discontinue *κατάρα*: curse (minor premise); their linguistical depravity has been at worst (conclusion).
- 9) Original text: “[9] τοιοῦτους δ’ ὑπολαμβάνουσι τοὺς μὴ ἀφ’ ἐτέρων ζῶντας: τοιοῦτοι δ’ οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐργάζεσθαι, καὶ τούτων οἱ ἀπὸ γεωργίας, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων οἱ αὐτουργοὶ μάλιστα. [10] καὶ τοὺς σώφρονας, ὅτι οὐκ ἄδικοι.” (bk. 2, ch. 4:9–10)
- 10) Matt. 25:32–33; “32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.” (*KJV*); “32 καὶ συναχθήσεται

ἐμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφοριεῖ αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ὥσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων, 33 καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐρίφια ἐξ ἐωνύμων.” (LXX, Matt. 25:32–33)

- 11) For Aristotle's use of the related word stemming from Greek, see my footnote 27: “a cautious man can be described as cold [*ψυχρόν* (*phychron*)].”
- 12) It is undoubtful that the most well-known maxim of Delfi is “Γινῶθι σεαυτόν”, or “Know thyself.” This proverb, as well as “μηδὲν ἄγαν,” satirizes Satan's characteristics of gluttony and overconfidence in himself.
- 13) Major cites these lines: “For neither man nor angel can discern / Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks / Invisible, except to God alone, / By his permissive will, through heaven and earth” (bk. 3 lines 682–85); Fowler also stresses, “Uriel's sinless failure shows Eve's gullibility consistent with original righteousness” (Milton, *PL*[Fowler] 210).
- 14) Original text: “οὐδ' ἄν μετρίως διαλεκτικὸς. τὰ δὲ νῦν παρὰ σοῦ τε καὶ Λυσίου μαθόντας εἰπεῖ τί χρὴ καλεῖν: ἢ τοῦτο ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ἡ λόγων τέχνη, ἢ Θρασύμαχος τε καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι χρώμενοι σοφοὶ μὲν αὐτοὶ λέγειν γέγονασιν, ἄλλους τε ποιοῦσιν, οἳ ἂν δωροφορεῖν αὐτοῖς ὡς βασιλεῦσιν ἐθέλωσιν.” (Phaedrus, 266c)
- 15) Original text: “Τεῖσι δὲ Γοργίαν τε ἐάσομεν εὐδεῖν, οἳ πρὸ τῶν ἀληθῶν τὰ εἰκότα εἶδον ὡς τιμητέα μᾶλλον, τὰ τε αὖ σμικρὰ μεγάλα καὶ τὰ μεγάλα σμικρὰ φαίνεσθαι ποιοῦσιν διὰ ῥόμην λόγου, καὶ τὰ ἀρχαῖα τὰ τ' ἐναντία καινῶς, συντομίαν τε λόγων καὶ ἄπειρα μήκη περὶ πάντων ἀνηῦρον.” (Phaedrus, 267a–b)
- 16) Original text: “καὶ γὰρ τις αὐτόν, ὃ θαυμάσιε, ἑναγχοῦ τῶν πολιτικῶν τοῦτ' αὐτὸ λοιδορῶν ὠνεῖδιζε, καὶ διὰ πάσης τῆς λοιδορίας ἐκάλει λογογράφον: τάχ' οὖν ἂν ὑπὸ φιλοτιμίας ἐπίσχοι ἡμῖν ἂν τοῦ γράφειν.” (Phaedrus, 257c)
- 17) Fowler accentuates as follows: “the tradition of Dutch and Spanish vanitas paintings that heap improbable congeries of things emblemizing transient illusions” (Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 194). It seems that this reflects *Ecclesiastes* 1:2; “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” (KJV); “Ματαιότης ματαιότητων, εἶπεν ὁ ἐκκλησιαστής, ματαιότης ματαιότητων, τὰ πάντα ματαιότης.” (LXX, *Ecclesiastes* 1:2)
- 18) “The Greek term for truth, *alētheia*, is derived from *lēthē*, which means oblivion or concealment, combined with the prefix “a-”, signifying absence, negation, or extermination. Thus, *alētheia* conveys the concept of de-concealment. For the oblivious nature of *Lēthē* (*Λήθη*), see bk. 2, line 604–9: “They ferry over this *Lethean* Sound / Both to and fro, thir sorrow to augment, / And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach / The tempting stream, with one small drop to loose / In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe, / All in one moment, and so neer the brink.”
- 19) Original text: “οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὰ τὰ πραχθέντα δεῖν λέγειν ἐνίοτε, ἐὰν μὴ εἰκότως ᾗ

πεπραγμένα, ἀλλὰ τὰ εἰκότα, ἔν τε κατηγορία καὶ ἀπολογία, καὶ πάντως λέγοντα τὸ δὴ εἰκὸς διωκτέον εἶναι, πολλὰ εἰπόντα χαίρειν τῷ ἀληθεῖ: τοῦτο γὰρ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ λόγου γιγνόμενον τὴν ἅπασαν τέχνην πορίζειν. Φαῖδρος αὐτὰ γε, ὃ Σώκρατες, διελέλυθας ἂ λέγουσιν οἱ περὶ τοὺς λόγους τεχνικοὶ προσποιούμενοι εἶναι: ἀνεμνήσθην γὰρ ὅτι ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν βραχέως τοῦ τοιοῦτου ἐφηγάμεθα, δοκεῖ δὲ τοῦτο πάμμεγα εἶναι τοῖς περὶ ταῦτα.” (Phaedrus, 272e–73a)

- 20) Milton’s thunderous diatribe against such lascivious shrines, pagan artifice, and gilded idolatry is manifest in bk. 1, lines 367–73: “By falsities and lies the greatest part / Of mankind they corrupted to forsake / God their creator, and the invisible / Glory of him that made them, to transform / Oft to the image of a brute, adorned / With gay religions full of pomp and gold, / And devils to adore for deities.”
- 21) Original text: “ἄλλος μὲν τεκεῖν δυνατὸς τὰ τέχνης, ἄλλος δὲ κρίναι τίν’ ἔχει μοῖραν βλάβης τε καὶ ὠφελίας τοῖς μέλλουσι χρῆσθαι. . . .δοξόσοφοι γεγονότες ἀντὶ σοφῶν.” (Phaedrus, 274e–275b)
- 22) Tsuji continues to make an assertion as below: “Milton’s epic voice within the pandemonium subtly alerts the reader to the malevolent intentions of the devil, as well as to the latent perils inherent in rhetoric—dangers that can ensnare even the unwary” (15; my translation). The potential of rhetoric, which can oscillate between a mere instrument and a devastating artillery like “devilish machination” (bk. 6 line 504), is nowhere more evident than in the grim irony of wartime propaganda. The manner in which the populace is incited by fabricated narratives and subsequently conscripted into battle serves as a somber and cynical testament to the fact that the emotionally susceptible masses remain as manipulable now as they were in antiquity. For an in-depth analysis of Satan’s manipulative rhetoric, refer to Tatsuno. “Propaganda in *Paradise Lost*: Satan’s Sophistic *Ars Rhetorica* of Antonomasia.”
- 23) Original text: “ἡθικὴ δὲ αὕτη ἢ ἐκ τῶν σημείων δεῖξις, ὅτε ἀκολουθεῖ ἢ ἀρμόττουσα ἐκάστω γένει καὶ ἔξει.” (bk. 3, ch. 7:6)
- 24) R.M. Hillier says, “As *Paradise Lost* proceeds, the fraudulent nature of Satan’s mission against humankind is frequently signaled. The titles used for Satan include ‘fraudulent Impostor foule’ (3.692), ‘Artificer of fraud’ (4.121), and ‘the guileful Tempter’ (9.567)” (25). These antonomasias, or periphrastic nomenclature play a fundamental role in the association of the Devil with iniquity, which coincides with the research by Catherine Canino on Milton’s acquisition of abusive rhetoric. She examines his contemporaries’ demonization of the Irish during and after the 1641 rebellion by comparing it to the poet’s depiction of Satanic rebellion in *PL*: “English used to view the Irish rebels as monstrous, associating them with Hell itself. Despite sharing similar claims of fighting tyranny, the

Irish were demonized to distinguish them from the English Puritans. Anti-Irish rhetoric described the Irish as barbarous and demonic, presenting their rebellion as a threat not just to political stability but to God's order" (50). These portrayals profitably used dramatic and euphemistic language to evoke emotional responses and justify harsh actions against the enemy.

- 25) Original text: "[4] *πιθανοῖ δὲ τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ ἡ οἰκεία λέξις: παραλογίζεται τε γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ ὡς ἀληθῶς λέγοντος, ὅτι ἐπὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις οὕτως ἔχουσιν, ὥστ' οἴονται, εἰ καὶ μὴ οὕτως ἔχει ὡς λέγει ὁ λέγων, τὰ πράγματα οὕτως ἔχειν, καὶ συνομοπαθεῖ ὁ ἀκούων ἀεὶ τῷ παθητικῶς λέγοντι, κἂν μὴθὲν λέγῃ. [5] πολλοὶ καταπλήττουσι τοὺς ἀκροατὰς θορυβοῦντες.*" (bk. 3, ch. 7:4-5)
- 26) Original text: "*καὶ ἐάν τε κοσμεῖν βούλῃ, ἀπὸ τῶν βελτίστων τῶν ἐν ταύτῳ γένει φέρειν τὴν μεταφοράν, ἐάν τε ψέγειν, ἀπὸ τῶν χειρόνων*" (bk. 3, ch. 2:10); "[S]ince opposites fall under the same genus, the one is honorable, the other dishonorable [*ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν τίμιον τὸ δὲ ἄτιμον*]" in his example: "mendicant priest [*μητραγύρτην*] or torchbearer [*δαδοῦχον*]; Dionysus-flatterers [*διονυσόκολακας*] or artists [*τεχνίτας*]; brigands [*λησται*] or purveyors [*ποριστὰς*]; beg [*πρωχεύειν*] or pray [*εὐχέσθαι*]; take [*λαβεῖν*] or plunder [*πορίσασθαι*]; Both are metaphors, designed either to denigrate or do the opposite [*ταῦτα δ' ἄμφοω μεταφορά, ἡ μὲν ῥυπαινόντων ἡ δὲ τούναντίον*]." (124; bk. 3, ch. 2:10)
- 27) Aristotle's instance: "a cautious man can be described as cold [*ψυχρόν*]: and calculating [*ἐπίβουλον*], or a simple-minded [*ἡλίθιον*] man as decent [*χρηστὸν*], or an insensitive [*ἀνάληπτον*] man as even-tempered [*πρᾶον*] . . . and in addition . . . an irascible [*ὀργίλον*] and excitable [*μανικόν*] man can be described as blunt [*ἀπλοῦν*], and a selfish [*αὐθάδη*] man as magnificent [*μεγαλοπρεπῇ*] and dignified [*σεμνόν*]. In this way, one can claim that those who are in excessive states are in fact in virtuous states, and describe a reckless [*θρασὺν*] man as courageous [*ἀνδρεῖον*] and a spendthrift [*ἄσσοτον*] as generous [*ἐλευθέριον*], since that is what most people will think anyway." (35)
- 28) Original text: "[39] *πίπτει δ' εὐλόγως ἡ αὖξῆσις εἰς τοὺς ἐπαίνους: ἐν ὑπεροχῇ γὰρ ἔστιν, ἡ δ' ὑπεροχὴ τῶν καλῶν: [40] ὅλως δὲ τῶν κοινῶν εἰδῶν ἅπασι τοῖς λόγοις ἡ μὲν αὖξῆσις ἐπιτηδειοτάτη τοῖς ἐπιδεικτικοῖς (τὰς γὰρ πράξεις ὁμολογουμένας λαμβάνουσιν, ὥστε λοιπὸν μέγεθος περιθεῖναι καὶ κάλλος).*" (bk. 1, ch. 9:39-40)
- 29) Original text: "*χρηστέον δὲ καὶ τῶν αὖξητικῶν πολλοῖς*" (bk. 1, ch. 9); Aristotle's example: "he [An epideictic speaker] should state whether his subject was the only one to have done something, or the first, or one of only a few, or the driving force since in any of these cases he acted well. There is no difficulty in understanding their opposites: blame simply has the opposite elements" (37). Here, vice versa: blame is applied in the exchange of praise, so that "the first," "the few," and "well" entirely sound irony.

- 30) Abdiel's rebut plays a pivotal axle in contending the counterarguments of Milton. Regarding this, Fowler points out line 805–7 of bk. 5, ("Abdiel, then whom none with more zeal adored / The Deity, and divine commands obeyed, / Stood up") as follows: "The first challenge to Satan. . . . M. [Milton] tended to see himself as an Abdiel" (Milton, *PL* [Fowler] 333). The controversy between the archdevil and the seraphim demonstrates the poet's contemptuous attitude against mass-agitative rhetoric. Consequently, Milton consistently rings an alarm not to misuse discourse.

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