Blake's and Shelley's Reader Responses to Milton's Satan in

Jennifer Noud
THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

BLAKE’S AND SHELLEY’S READER RESPONSES TO
MILTON’S SATAN IN PARADISE LOST

By

JENNIFER NOUD

A Thesis submitted to the
Department of English
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with
Honors in the Major

Degree Awarded: Bachelor of Arts
Spring, 2013
The members of the Defense Committee approve the thesis of Jennifer Noud defended on April 22, 2013.

Dr. Bruce Boehrer
Thesis Director

Dr. Margaret Simon-Fyfe
Committee Member

Dr. Brenda Cappuccio
Outside Committee Member
For my father and mother
Acknowledgements

I would like to first thank Dr. Bruce Boehrer, my thesis director, for his overwhelming support throughout this entire writing process. He has guided me since the beginning of my thesis from making me narrow down it down to honing its grammar and structure. His expert advice, especially concerning John Milton, has been invaluable to me. I am very appreciative for his patience during this past year while I wrote my thesis.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my two other committee members, Dr. Brenda Cappuccio and Dr. Margaret Simon-Fyfe, who have both given me instrumental notes and comments concerning several drafts of my thesis. Both of their insights, advice, and support have truly made the revision process enjoyable. I would also like to thank both Mr. Alan Jutzi and Mrs. Sydney Moritz-LeVine for allowing me to reproduce the William Blake plates for Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, which is a courtesy of the Huntington Art Collections, San Marino, California.

I am also grateful to Mrs. Tracey Noud, my mother, for always believing in me and pushing me forward to continue my thesis. I am also forever indebted to Dr. Leonard E. Noud, my father, for reading and revising countless thesis drafts. I thank him for always encouraging me to “go for the brass ring.”
# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................. 1

Introduction............................................................................................................. 2
  Historical and Political Contexts ........................................................................ 4
  Blake’s and Shelley’s Reworkings of Milton’s Satan ........................................ 12

William Blake’s Poetry ...................................................................................... 23

William Blake’s Illustrations of *Paradise Lost* .................................................. 41

Percy Bysshe Shelley’s Works ............................................................................ 61

Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 74

William Blake’s Plates of *Paradise Lost* ........................................................ 81

Bibliography ........................................................................................................ 88
Abstract

This study surveys William Blake’s and Percy Bysshe Shelley’s reader responses of Satan in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Blake and Shelley were both Romanticists and were highly captivated with the character of Satan. Their critiques of Milton’s Satan are evident through their works. Blake’s works that are examined are “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,” an eleven-page poem, *Milton*, an epic poem, and the illuminated printings of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Shelley’s works that are studied are *Prometheus Unbound*, a closet lyrical drama, and “A Defense of Poetry” which is an essay. Blake and Shelley believed that Satan was the proper hero of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. They both critiqued Milton’s Satan by finding several imperfections in *Paradise Lost*. Both tried to surpass Milton by creating their own perfect version of Milton’s Satan. Shelley goes a step beyond Blake when designing his Satan by producing a new tragic hero that does not have a hamartia.
Introduction

This thesis examines the critical reader responses of William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley of Satan in John Milton’s epic poem *Paradise Lost* during the Romantic period. My thesis is divided into three main sections: one section on the poetry of William Blake, one section on Blake’s illustrations of *Paradise Lost*, and one section on the work of Percy Bysshe Shelley. This introduction will give a brief history of the composition of *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Lost* in relation to the English Revolution, the literary movements of the late Eighteenth Century, and the characteristics of the Romantic Movement. My conclusions from Blake and Shelley’s critical responses to Milton’s Satan are that both saw multiple imperfections in Milton’s Satan, both corrected these imperfections in Satan through their own works, and both of them surpassed Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*.

*Paradise Lost* was first printed in 1667. Milton composed *Paradise Lost* during and after the English Revolution. He was an advocate of the English Revolution. Milton was a rebel and wanted to fight against the Stuart monarchy, and what he perceived to be the monarchy’s corrupt political system. He wrote *Paradise Lost* when he was fully blind, and with the help of aides, dictated the blank verse for them to write down. Christopher Hill, a historian who wrote *Milton and the English Revolution*, believes that *Paradise Lost* can be read as a representation of civil war due to Milton’s radical involvement. John Leonard, a Milton scholar, wrote in an introduction to *Paradise Lost*:

*Paradise Lost* is, among other things, a poem about civil war. Satan raises ‘impious war in Heav’n’ (I 43) by leading a third of the angels in revolt against God. The term ‘impious war’… implies that civil war is impious. But Milton applauded the English people for having the courage to depose and execute King Charles I. In his poem, however, he takes the side of ‘Heav’n’s awful Monarch’ (IV 960). Critics have long wrestled with the question of why an antimonarchist and defender of regicide should have chosen a subject that obliged him to defend monarchical authority. (xxiii)
The Garden of Eden can be seen as an allegory for the fall of England’s monarchy during the English Revolution which lasted from 1640 to 1660. The war between Satan and God is a civil war which bears certain similarities to the English Revolution during Milton’s generation. However, instead of siding with the rebels, Milton seems to be siding with God’s monarchy—which is different from the position he took in actual life. The answer posed by Leonard’s question is simple: for Milton, God came first and the monarchy came second.

Two major critics of the Satanic school were William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Robert Southey, a poet laureate, wrote in his Preface to *A Vision of Judgment* that Lord Byron was the founder of the Satanic school of poetry. Southey called the school Shelley established the Satanic School, since he did not approve of his unorthodox ways. Southey was more conservative, while Blake, Shelley, and other writers of the Satanic school were more radical. In the Preface to *A Vision of Judgment* Southey wrote that the writers of the Satanic school were “characterized by a Satanic spirit of pride and audacious impiety” (xxi). Lord Byron was one of the founders of “Liberty Magazine.” It was in the first issue of “Liberty Magazine” that Byron responded to Southey, and he created his own *The Vision of Judgment*. *The Vision of Judgment* was published in 1822, four weeks after Southey’s *A Vision of Judgment* was published. Byron took Southey’s coinage and created the Byronic hero. Byron’s parody of Southey’s *A Vision of Judgment* was very successful. The Satanic school represented multiple poets and writers such as William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, John Keats, and Leigh Hunt.

Blake and Shelley both have directly responded to *Paradise Lost* through their works. The primary sources examined here from Blake are the “Marriage of Heaven and Hell” (“Marriage”), *Milton*, and his water color illustrations of *Paradise Lost*. I will give one section on Blake’s poetry, and one section on his illustrations because one is written text and the other is
visual. Both Blake’s poetry and his illustrations provide a nuanced perspective on Milton’s work. “Marriage” is an eleven-page poem, while Milton is a semi-autobiographical epic poem in two volumes. The primary sources examined from Shelley are “A Defense of Poetry” and Prometheus Unbound. “A Defense of Poetry” is an essay, and Prometheus Unbound is a lyrical drama in four acts. Also surveyed is criticism from secondary sources which include, but are not limited to, J.M.Q Davies, Pamela Dunbar, Kay and Roger Easson, Andrew Franta, Bette Charlene Werner, Essick, N. Robert and Joseph Viscomi who have evaluated Milton’s Satan on the two primary sources, William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

**Historical and Political Contexts**

Milton, Blake, and Shelley were all influenced by revolution. Milton was influenced by the English Revolution and he was also a proponent for it. He was against the Stuart monarchy because the monarchy had a corrupt political system. Milton was also against the reformation of the British monarchy. Paradise Lost can be seen as a symbol of the English Revolution. The Garden of Eden can be a critique of the monarchy during the English Revolution.

Blake was influenced by the French and American Revolutions which can be seen in “Marriage” and Milton. He composed “Marriage” from 1790 to 1793 which was during the French Revolution. Blake was an anti-authoritarian and supported religious dissent. One example of his anti-authoritarianism and his religious dissent was that he felt slavery should not be a viable option, and he signed the forty-two articles proposed at the General Conference of the New Jerusalem Church in 1789. However, he grew cynical with this new church, and how it gave its allegiance to the king. He believed that we were all enslaved by the monarchy and by the church officials. This is one example of his religious dissent and his opposition to authority. Another example of his religious dissent can be seen in his poem “Marriage” where he wrote that
all *Holy Bibles* contained errors. This shows the corruption of church officials and the monarchy, and he proudly stood by his assertions.

Blake was influenced by the American and French Revolutions because each revolution was an opposition to authority. With the American Revolution the colonists were angry at the British Parliament for its numerous laws and acts imposed on them. These laws were only created by the British Parliament to have more control over the colonists’ money. The thirteen colonies in North America united and broke free from the hold of the British Empire with a vote for independence at the Second Continental Congress. Delegates created a separate, independent government from Britain under the Articles of Confederation. Blake supported the opposition of the colonists to British authority.

Blake was influenced by the French Revolution because the French Revolution arose primarily because the people were living in poverty. The people were also often malnourished because of rising prices of food due to poor harvests. This movement also concurred with people voicing their public opinion in France about political decisions being made without discussions (Crubaugh). This expresses Blake’s ideas about anti-authoritarianism and being enslaved to the monarchy. Political decisions being made without any discussion suggests that the people had to obey the monarchy, and they did not have a say about their political stances. Blake supported freedom of speech and believed everyone should have a voice. Through his works he gives people a voice so they are heard and are not silenced.

Blake wanted to reform and restructure the monarchy and religious institutions. One political idea was the free-love movement. This movement required all state’s to remove restrictions on sexual relationships/actions, marriage, and adultery. Blake strongly supported that marriage was a type of enslavement. He also was very critical of the church’s stance on
women being chaste. This could have come about because of the strain of his marriage.

Catherine, his wife, could not conceive a child and Blake wanted to bring a second woman into their relationship which shows his view of marriage is different from the traditional. In “Marriage” Blake also shows the hypocrisy and his resentment to religious authority. One example is that Blake opposed the priesthood which can be seen when he wrote:

Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of & enslaved the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects; thus began Priesthood
Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.
And at length they pronounced that the God’s had ordered such things.
Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast. (“Marriage” 115 Pl. 11, 7-12)

This is evidence of Blake’s religious dissent. The religious authority make people forget that God resides inside of oneself and not in religious authority. Blake was religious but was anti-clerical because he did not agree with their rules and regulations the members had to follow. The last line quoted above shows that Blake supported freedom and social equality. He believed that it was wrong of the clergy to force people to worship images. His anti-clerical view is also present when he said “Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion” (“Marriage” 114 Pl. 8, 1). Again, these regulations that are imposed upon him from religious and government authorities restrict his desires and his ability to follow their leadership which is why he is an anti-authoritarian.

Blake was very captivated with the marriage of contraries. Some of these contraries were reason and desire, heaven and hell, and innocence and experience. Through his work he showed his political stance on government and religious authority. Blake wanted his readers to see if both of these states were inside them. He did not believe a person should only be in a state of innocence or in a state of experience, but it was necessary for both to exist.

Shelley’s political stance, like Blake’s, was also anti-authoritarian. Shelley wanted to
abolish the aristocracy. He was also a supporter of the French Revolution. This can be seen in *Prometheus Unbound*. His character Prometheus abolishes tyranny and frees humankind.

Shelley wants humankind to be liberated and free from the monarchy. Shelley’s support for the French Revolution can also be seen in his pamphlet called *A Declaration of Rights*. This pamphlet was too radical to be read in England.

Shelley was also very active in his religious dissent. He wrote another pamphlet called *The Necessity of Atheism*. This pamphlet describes that God’s existence cannot be proven by only sense experience. He also stated throughout this pamphlet that atheists should not be persecuted because people’s beliefs are uncontrolled and they do not choose to be atheists. Shelley signed this pamphlet an atheist instead of writing his name. He wrote that he is an atheist because there is lack of proof supporting God’s existence. He sent this pamphlet to his father, the clergy, and the heads of Oxford colleges. This shows how politically active he was about his religious dissent. Shelley also wrote in *Queen Mab* that “There is no God” (7.13).

Shelley believed in anti-authoritarianism and wanted to abolish all the kings, the monarchy, and the aristocracy. As a cause of the American and French Revolutions, Shelley was a supporter of the democratic revolution. He thought that if “liberty existed anywhere it must spread and propagate itself” (Dawson 42). He has written numerous political poems such as “Ode to Liberty,” and “Ode to the West Wind.” Shelley was born a member of the aristocracy; he realized that “I am one of these aristocrats…In me… the same machinery of oppression is preparing, in order that I also in my turn may become an oppressor” (Dawson 47). He felt that the aristocracy had to work together to reform their political structure to avoid a revolution (Dawson 47). Therefore, Shelley rejected the ideals of his aristocratic class and was a “spokesman for the excluded classes” (Dawson 47). His background as an aristocratic helped
him figure out how his society was organized by power. Shelley rejected revolution because he saw how many people died during the French Revolution. He realized that during a revolution “the doctrines of Philanthropy and Freedom, were but shallowly understood” (Dawson 69).

Shelley moved to Ireland where he wrote two Reform pamphlets and published his *Address to the Irish People*. Shelley was also concerned with the majority of the Irish population since they were excluded from sitting in Parliament and excluded from some positions in the army due to their religious preferences (Dawson 25). By 1812 Shelley rejected the Whigs party, and he realized that liberty does not gain anything by changing people from positions of power and reinstating new ones in London (Dawson 31).

Blake and Shelley were both Romanticists. The Romantic period began in the late Eighteenth Century and continued through the early decades of the Nineteenth Century. Romanticism was a reaction to the Industrial Revolution and both the Enlightenment and Neoclassicism periods. Romanticists, including Blake and Shelley, emphasized the use of imagination, which was normally linked with nature, feelings, and intuition (De Man 10). This literary movement was focused on the individual and used common language of the day, so that all the people, not just the elite, could understand their literature (“Introduction” 13). Enlightenment readers of *Paradise Lost* looked at Christian traditions and identified with the Son of God, which is standard Christian theology.

Conventionally, Romantic authors relied on the imagination, emotions, and subjectivity, and were more focused on the individual, supporting democracy, praising nature, and the spontaneity of thoughts/actions especially in literature (“Introduction” 7-13). Romanticists were also interested in the supernatural and mysterious (“Introduction” 13). They were also driven by originality, the reinvention and creativity of a work, which subsequently meant looking to the
past. This is why Satan from *Paradise Lost* appealed to them, especially Blake and Shelley. They looked towards the past often romanticizing and reworking it. This is what Milton’s *Paradise Lost* does by rewriting specific events of the past via Christian theology. Romanticists also believed that nature should not be tamed or controlled by the people; therefore, there is abundant nature imagery in Romantic poems. Nature is also heavily prevalent in *Paradise Lost* as are all other Romantic characteristics.

Milton rewrites specific events from Christian theology which emphasize Satan’s fall from grace and the fall of man. Milton incorporated many elements of the primary/folk epic into *Paradise Lost*. He composed *Paradise Lost* in the literary mode as opposed to the primary mode. This makes the author an individual in the foreground of the work and makes authorship important, as opposed to the oral epic where the author is not in the limelight and authorship is not important. This has to do with the relative belatedness of the secondary/literary epic. It comes after an early stage of a nation’s development and expansion. It looks back over time to events that are not contemporary to the author himself. An author’s job is to rewrite and redo these specific events which Milton does through *Paradise Lost*.

John T. Shawcross, an editor for the *Critical Heritage Series*, has compiled responses of earlier writers in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries who have critiqued *Paradise Lost*. He has edited two volumes which consist of all of the early criticism of *Paradise Lost*. The first volume concerns Milton’s *Paradise Lost* from 1668 until 1731. The subsequent volume is from 1732 until 1801. Shawcross analyzes Milton’s life, historical background, and includes information on the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, as well as earlier writers’ criticism. Based on Shawcross’s analysis of primary sources, he found that during Milton’s time, readers responded to his prose with a negative attitude because of what he believed. Contradictory
attitudes towards Milton appeared in 1668, one year after the first printing of *Paradise Lost*. One attitude towards Milton was that he was seen “as a great traditionalist who imitated the ancients or the Spenserians” and he was either more or less successful when being compared to Homer and Virgil (Shawcross *Milton: The Critical Heritage* 3). Milton’s poetry succeeded because he upheld most of the forms and traditions of classical epics. While others felt that his poetry failed because he did not follow all of the traditional epic approaches, such as making his epic not rhyme and using blank verse instead (Shawcross *Milton: The Critical Heritage* 3).

In contrast, others felt Milton broke with the classical tradition of form and made poetry better. Some readers believed that Milton was a great author because he created his own vehicle, instead of continuing with the traditional form and traditional prosody which was the classical, primary epic. On the other hand, Milton was seen as a failed author because of his “inadequate results or misconceived intentions” (Shawcross *Milton: The Critical Heritage* 3). Another opposition towards Milton is dealing with the ideas expressed in *Paradise Lost*. They “either obfuscate any literary worth, for they are deplorable, inconsistent, ‘dead’” or they provide “all knowledge, all necessary philosophy and humanism” (Shawcross *Milton: The Critical Heritage* 3-4).

Contemporary critiques of Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* were received with mixed reviews. In 1674 John Dryden, an English poet, asked Milton if he could use his poem and make it into an opera which Milton gave him permission to do (Shawcross *Milton: The Critical Heritage* 17). The libretto was finalized in 1674 and sent to the Stationer’s Registrar, but the music was never composed, and therefore it was never performed. Dryden’s *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man* was written in heroic couplets instead of blank verse and was a tribute to Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The significance of Dryden using heroic couplets is that he is
using the classical traditional style of epic poetry. Milton rejected writing *Paradise Lost* in heroic couplets which is why he wrote it in blank verse. Even though both were opposites on their view of politics, Milton was against the reformation of the British monarchy while Dryden was a royalist, which did not interfere with his admiration for Milton’s work. Dryden’s work did not focus that much on the fall of angels, but rather the fall of man. Dryden’s Lucifer differs from Milton’s Satan as not being the hero of the play. It is Adam who is the hero of the play which expresses his political ideas for restoration. Lucifer’s government in hell is also different from Milton’s Pandemonium. Lucifer’s government shows royalist values when Lucifer discusses the fall of man with only a select few, while in Pandemonium it is present like a Parliament where all the devils are allowed to hear and debate the fall of man (Dryden *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man* I.I.58-185). Lucifer allows no volunteers for the mission for the fall of man, and his motives are made clearer than in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (Dryden *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man* I.I.175-185). Dryden removed all remorse and sympathy from Lucifer and his devils from their fall from heaven. Dryden stated Milton’s weakness of *Paradise Lost* in his Dedication to Æneis which was declaring Satan as the hero instead of Adam (7). Dryden clearly represented Adam as the hero in “The State of Innocence and Fall of Man” which was his main deviation from Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*.

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele founded a daily newspaper in England called *The Spectator* which lasted from 1711 to 1712. *The Spectator* was a very popular newspaper and it reached a wide audience in the Eighteenth Century. Addison, an English essayist, declared in *The Spectator* that *Paradise Lost* is indeed a heroic epic poem because it imitated other great epics, like the Illiad and Æneid, by following most of the epic traditions (“No. 267”).
He wrote an essay on each book of *Paradise Lost* to give an overview of the main characters including Satan, God, Son of God, Adam and Eve, to celebrate the beauty of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, and point out how close to scripture it remained. In *The Spectator* Addison’s view is that Milton “has filled his Story with so many surprising Incidents, which bear so close an Analogy with what is delivered in Holy Writ, that it is capable of pleasing the most delicate Reader, without giving Offence to the most scrupulous” (“No. 267”). He also addresses Dryden’s response to *Paradise Lost* because Dryden believed Satan to be the true hero (*The Spectator* “No. 297”). He responded to Dryden, and other critics like him, that the Son of God is without a doubt the hero of *Paradise Lost* in both “the Principal Action, and in the chief Episodes” (*The Spectator* “No. 297”). Addison felt that Milton’s *Paradise Lost* was truly a great heroic epic which followed the events of *The Bible* closely. He also believed that Milton’s *Paradise Lost* declared the Son of God as the hero, and he defended Milton’s *Paradise Lost* in spite of some critics, like Dryden, who said otherwise.

Knowing some of the contemporary critiques of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* allow us to have a better understanding of where Blake’s criticism is coming from since he is breaking with these critics more immediately than Shelley. Blake broke with major critics of the time, like Addison, who are all proponents of the Son of God being the hero of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. We can see in Addison’s papers published in *The Spectator* evidence of the backlash towards these critics, like Dryden, crediting Satan as the hero of *Paradise Lost*.

**Blake’s and Shelley’s Reworkings of Milton’s Satan**

William Blake was born in Soho, London, in 1757. He went to drawing school at the age of ten and later studied at the Royal Academy of Arts (“William Blake: 1757-1827” 76). When he was fourteen Blake had an apprenticeship lasting seven years to a renowned engraver, James
Basire (“William Blake: 1757-1827” 76). It was during this time that he started writing poetry when he finished his daily work for Basire. Blake married Catherine Boucher when he was twenty-four, he taught her how to read, and then she was able to help him with his engraving and printing (“William Blake: 1757-1827” 76). Most of Blake’s literary works are unique because along with displaying the words, he also did relief etching, which he called illuminated printing. These sketches are vital to his works, because these often allude to the overall messages of his or other author’s works. These poetical sketches were made on copper plates using “pens, brushes, and an acid-resistant medium” (“William Blake: 1757-1827” 77).

Blake was a Romantic poet, and he believed there were two states of being, the state of innocence and the state of experience, one of a series of his so-called “contraries.” Blake published Songs of Innocence in 1789 and then published Songs of Innocence and Experience in 1794 which encompassed poems of innocence and experience showing the differences between these two states (“William Blake: 1757-1827” 77). When you lose the innocence of the human soul, it changes your perception of the world because you have gained a new knowledge which is the state of experience of the human soul. The extent of a person’s knowledge will determine his reaction to the world, which is evidence of the state of the person’s soul. Both states are necessary for the human soul to perceive the world and situations correctly. When Blake first began studying Paradise Lost he viewed it as archaic but then began to see his own theology in Milton’s works (Peterson 2).

Keeping in mind these two contrary but necessary states when analyzing Blake’s works, I will begin with his poem “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell” (“Marriage”) which was composed from 1790-1793 (120 Pl. 25, 1). This poem suggests brazenly that Satan is the true hero of Milton’s Paradise Lost. “Marriage” describes the poet’s own journey to hell as analogous to
when Satan goes to hell in *Paradise Lost*. Blake writes there are two types of people, angels and devils, which are both necessary. Abrams and Greenblatt, editors of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, both note that one needs a marriage of the contraries, like the promptings of Hell and the denials of Heaven…[and] whoever tries to reconcile them seeks to destroy existence” (“Marriage,” 110). This means that hell is the antithesis of heaven, and that both are essential. According to Elise Peterson, a scholar who wrote her master’s thesis on Blake’s contraries, this “is a Hegelian understanding of historical development: a synthesis formed between a thesis and antithesis” (8). Placing hell as the antithesis to heaven shows that hell is of the same value and importance as heaven. There is an amalgamation between heaven and hell. Milton also believed in Hegelian predispositions which can be seen in one of his religious pamphlets he wrote called “The Reason of Church Government Urged against Prelaty” in 1642:

> If sects and schismes be turbulent in the unsetl'd estate of a Church, while it lies under the amending hand, it best beseems our Christian courage to think they are but as the throws and pangs that go before the birth of reformation, and that the work it selfe is now in doing. For if we look but in the nature of elementall and mixt things, we know they cannot suffer any change of one kind, or quality into another without the struggl of contrarieties. (7)

This section of the religious pamphlet shows that Milton believed in the marriage of contraries, a concept which Blake also strongly espoused. In Blake’s “Marriage,” he states, “Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence” (112, Pl. 3, 5-6). Blake accepts the standard Christian morality of Good and Evil, but reverses their values (Abrams and Greenblatt “Marriage,” 110). He derives the true Good and Evil from the required marriage or union of the contraries. This is in opposition to the “ironic Good” which is “abandoning of all restraints” (Abrams and Greenblatt “Marriage,” 110).
Blake wanted to praise Milton for his work on *Paradise Lost* since he was heavily influenced by Milton during his upbringing. He also held Milton accountable for what he coined the “False Tongue” of Milton’s Christian doctrine, which manifested itself in *Paradise Lost* (Davies 3). This “False Tongue” is expounded on by Blake’s poems “Marriage” and *Milton*, as well as his water color illustrations of *Paradise Lost*.

One example of Milton’s “False Tongue” found in *Paradise Lost* is that Milton recognized Satan as the Son of God instead of the Son of God. Blake responded in complicated ways to Milton’s work, in part criticizing Milton because he identified Satan as the “Messiah” which is seen in the passage below:

> The history of this is written in *Paradise Lost*, & the Governor or Reason is call’d Messiah. And the original Archangel, or possessor of the command of the heavenly host, is call’d the Devil or Satan, and his children are call’d Sin & Death. But in the Book of Job, Milton’s Messiah is call’d Satan. For this history has been adopted by both parties. It indeed appear’d to Reason as if Desire was cast out; but the Devil’s account is, that the Messiah fell, & formed a heaven of what he stole from the Abyss. (“Marriage” 112, Pl.5-6, 6-14)

Milton was a Protestant, and to say that he worshipped Satan instead of the Son of God was quite heretical. This is seen when the Devil in “Marriage” creates his own *Infernal Bible* and convinces the angel to follow him, which causes the angel to transform into a devil. Blake goes a step further in his poem “Marriage,” declaring Milton “wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, / and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the / Devils party without knowing it” (113 Pl.6, 9-11). This affirms that Blake believed Milton truly had faith in the devil, but he did not consciously know it--it was only seen in his work.

Another example of one of Milton’s “False Tongue” is that Blake thought Milton was in a state of serpent selfhood when writing *Paradise Lost*. This could be one of the reasons why
Milton approved of the devil instead of the Son of God in *Paradise Lost*. A person’s selfhood is how he makes his own distinct identity. When a person is in a state of serpent selfhood he cannot see anything clearly because this serpent selfhood is a characteristic of Satan. He must cleanse himself of the serpent to be able to find the infinite. Once he finds the infinite he will be able to find God. Since Milton was allegedly writing with a serpent selfhood he could not see the infinite. This is because Satan perverted Milton’s individuality, his selfhood. This is why the true hero of *Paradise Lost* is Satan instead of the Son of God.

Blake’s second work being analyzed is his epic poem *Milton*. Blake had the main character be John Milton, instead of himself in his semi-autobiography. Blake is a secondary character in *Milton*. This shows how influential Milton was to Blake, not only in his work but in his life. Milton was his spiritual and poetical teacher, and Blake’s high esteem for him is evident as Bette Werner observes, in the title he gives Milton: “Awakener” (15). Blake’s epic *Milton* is structurally similar to Milton’s epic *Paradise Lost*. Both are about their prophetic education which involves teaching others and/or yourself. Both wanted to correct other people’s mistakes. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton is correcting *The Bible’s* account of the fall of man. In *Milton*, Blake is correcting what he believes to be imperfections of Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Blake and Milton both had inspiration for their epic poems via visions. Blake had visions when he was in Lambeth, and Milton had visions which were guided by his muse. They also have multiple characters that parallel each other in terms of qualities, but differ regarding goals.

One example of Milton’s imperfections in *Paradise Lost* is how he described Satan’s fall. In *Milton*, Blake recreates Satan’s fall by putting the blame not on him but rather his female counterpart, Leutha, who is the counterpart to Eve in *Paradise Lost*. The main critique of *Milton*
is examining the bard’s song because it directly outlines the radical shift from Satan’s fall in
*Paradise Lost* to Satan’s fall in *Milton*.

Further imperfections Blake found in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* are the qualities associated with Satan. Milton made Satan too attractive to his readers. Blake’s main character, Milton, goes on a spiritual journey to correct his imperfections in *Paradise Lost*. Milton’s spirit awakens in heaven when the bard sings a song about his imperfections of making Satan too appealing to readers. Milton, realizing the effect of his imperfections, goes to Earth to correct them. This showed that Milton recognized his serpent selfhood, and he cleansed himself and his work to see the infinite.

Blake believed all of Satan’s negative qualities in *Paradise Lost* were imperfections. Blake reverses all of Satan’s negative qualities in *Paradise Lost* which makes Satan more agreeable and admirable. This is shown in Blake’s *Milton* when Satan is being portrayed as having:

...incomparable mildness;
His primitive tyrannical attempts on Los: with most enduring love
He soft intreated Los to give him Palamabrons station;
For Palambron returnd with labour wearied every evening. (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 122-123 Pl. 5, 6-9)

Satan is described as being mild, soft, caring, and loving towards his family. When Satan asks Palamabron, Los’s son and Satan’s brother, to perform his work it is because Satan feels pity and love for him. This is a stark contrast to Milton’s Satan and allows readers to see Blake’s corrected version of Satan to be heightened.

The second section of my thesis examines Blake’s watercolor sketches. These illustrations serve as a reader’s guide to Milton’s meaning of *Paradise Lost*. His interpretations are showcased in his exquisite sketches. Blake shows Satan’s qualities of masculinity,
determination, bravery, sexual and independent freedom, pride, and jealousy which make Satan the hero of *Paradise Lost*. Blake has multiple completed series of his *Paradise Lost* sketches. The 1807 version, the Thomas set, is now in the Huntington Library, and most of the 1808 version, the Butts set, is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Davies 51). The most impressive of the *Paradise Lost* sketches is the Butts set because they are much larger than the Thomas set, have maintained most of the colors and inks used, and the nude figures have a more commanding presence (Dunbar 35). Blake also has a third set of *Paradise Lost* illustrations which were ordered by John Linnell in 1822, but they were never finished (Dunbar 36). I agree with author Pamela Dunbar that out of the two completed sets of illustrations, Blake created twelve plates which generally followed the formula of “one plate, one Book” with only one or two plates as exceptions (36).

The third section of my thesis is where I examine Percy Bysshe Shelley, another Romantic poet, who thought that Satan was the true hero of *Paradise Lost*. Shelley came from a conservative background, his ancestors were aristocrats, and his father was a member of Parliament (“Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792-1822” 741). He was sent to Eton and Oxford for his education where he was bullied by older boys who were much stronger than him (“Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792-1822” 741). Editors Abrams and Greenblatt write that Shelley “later said that he saw the petty tyranny of schoolmasters and schoolmates as representative of man’s general inhumanity to man and dedicated his life to a war against injustice and oppression” (“Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792-1822” 741). Shelley, with his friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg, wrote a pamphlet called *The Necessity of Atheism* which showed that the existence of God could not be proved on only sense experience. He would not retract the pamphlet and was expelled at Oxford only after six months of his education (“Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792-1822” 741).
Shelley later met his first wife, Harriet Westbrook, when he was 18 years old. He became a student of the rebellious philosopher William Godwin, and this was where he printed his first significant work called *Queen Mab* (“Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792-1822” 742). Here, he met another woman named Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin with whom he fell in love; they eloped, had three children, two of whom died (“Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792-1822” 742). He was also distressed over the French Revolution. In a letter to Lord Byron in 1816, Shelley stated that the French Revolution was “the master theme of the epoch in which we live” (“The Romantic Period Topics”). He wrote his most indispensable works which were *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci* in 1819, and “A Defense of Poetry” and “Adonais” in 1821. Shelley was interested in “Scientific discoveries and speculations…but his earlier zest for Gothic terrors and the social theories of the radical Eighteenth Century optimists gave way to an absorption in Greek tragedy, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, and *The Bible*” (“Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792-1822” 743). Mainly due to Milton’s epic *Paradise Lost*, Shelley now believed that all the evil in the world was due to humanity’s moral failures (“Percy Bysshe Shelley 1792-1822” 743).

Shelley, like Blake, believed Satan to be superior to God. In his essay “A Defense of Poetry,” Shelley wrote, “Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in *Paradise Lost* (27). It is a mistake to suppose that he could ever have been intended for the popular personification of evil (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 27). Milton violated the popular notion of Christianity because he had “alleged no superiority of moral virtue to his God over his Devil” (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 27). One quality of Romanticism was the emphasis on individual thought. Satan was portrayed as an individual thinker, instead of only obeying God. He wanted his autonomy which is why he started the war in heaven. Satan
continued to try to overcome God which is one of the reasons Shelley considered Satan the true hero of *Paradise Lost*.

One imperfection Shelley found in Milton’s Satan was his qualities which portrayed him to readers only one way—evil. Shelley changes how people view Satan by giving him qualities he has never possessed. Prometheus has qualities that resemble Milton’s Satan at the onset of the play. Conversely, as the play advances, he progressively loses all his negative qualities and is exemplified as the Son of God in *Paradise Lost*. When Shelley’s Prometheus saves all humankind, this is a quality one would find in Milton’s Son of God rather than in Milton’s Satan. This gives Satan more complexity than only being evil, but allows him to expand and choose which path he wants to take, the path to malevolence or the path to righteousness. Shelley’s message is to reform ourselves by replacing evil/hatred for love.

An alternative imperfection that Shelley found in Milton’s Satan was his hamartia. In Shelley’s lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound*, he surpasses Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* by rectifying it. Shelley wrote in the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*:

> The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement, which, in the hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest. (776)

Shelley praises his work since he stated in the Preface that Prometheus is a “more poetical character” than Milton’s Satan (*Prometheus Unbound* 776). He creates Prometheus without a hamartia so he is not held back as Milton’s Satan is in *Paradise Lost*.

In this thesis, Milton’s Satan is studied through two surveys of reader responses by William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley. According to theorist Peter Smagorinsky when a person reads a text, the reader and the text interact in an “experiential space… [which is] a joint
accomplishment” (131). Smagorinsky continues on, stating that this joint accomplishment occurs among the reader, the text, and “the cultural practices through which both the reader and text [have] been produced and through which both become engaged” (131). In Professor Amanda Thein’s view these practices can be “beliefs, attitudes, and norms that are acquired through participation in social and cultural worlds” (277). Society and culture have both influenced the main literary criticism drastically and have allowed Satan to be reinterpreted over the centuries. Readings of Satan as a character even varied in the same time period, depending on what type of school the literary critic was a part of in England. Based on the responses of William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley, who were both part of the Satanic School, I conclude that the overall characterization of Milton’s Satan is that he was the true hero of *Paradise Lost*. Blake and Shelley both shared sympathy for the devil which is apparent in Blake’s “Marriage” and *Milton* and in Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound* and “A Defense of Poetry.”

Within this thesis, the chapters are organized first by the works of William Blake and then by the works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. I gave background information on the lives of both Blake and Shelley. For this reason, their works are organized by the dates they were published. This allows for a more historical context for both authors to highlight their progressing attitudes towards Milton’s Satan as seen through their own work. In the first chapter, the examination is on Blake’s “Marriage” and *Milton* which states the imperfections he found with Milton’s Satan, how he fixes them through his works to produce a new Satan, and the evaluations of Blake’s and Milton’s Satan. In the second chapter, the analysis is on Blake’s illuminated printings of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Also, at the end of this thesis are the studied and reproduced plates so the reader can perceive his work. In the third chapter, the study is on Shelley’s works *Prometheus Unbound* and “A Defense of Poetry” which states the imperfections of Milton’s
Satan, how he fixes them through his works to create a new Satan, comparing and contrasting Shelley’s Prometheus and Milton’s Satan, and creating a new type of tragic hero. The conclusion expresses that Blake and Shelley both tried to outdo Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* by creating their own works with characters similar to Satan, but altering his qualities. The addition of these qualities resolves the imperfections Blake and Shelley both perceived in Milton’s Satan. Shelley goes a step beyond Blake in surpassing Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* when Shelley creates not only a reworking of Satan, but a new type of tragic hero who does not have a hamartia.
William Blake’s Poetry

Blake held Milton responsible for his “False Tongue,” which was making Satan the true hero of *Paradise Lost*. Blake felt that Satan was the true hero which can be seen in his poem “Marriage” and his epic poem *Milton*. He states Milton’s imperfections in *Paradise Lost* through these two works. In *Milton*, Blake tries to correct Milton’s imperfections, and tries to exceed Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Blake exceeds Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* by creating a new adaptation of Satan who is exempt from the imperfections of Milton’s Satan.

According to Blake, one of Milton’s imperfections in *Paradise Lost* is that Milton approved of the devil instead of the Christian God. Milton’s approval of the devil can be seen in *Paradise Lost* with Satan’s grandiose speeches, vivid descriptions, and characteristics. Milton should have realized that the readers of *Paradise Lost* would be fascinated and drawn to Satan since he is more appealing than the traditional alleged hero, the Son of God. The Devil states in “Marriage” that “The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it” (113 Pl. 5, 21-23). Blake thought that the devils were representatives of the “False Tongue,” which makes Milton of the devil’s party. This means that Milton was not consciously aware that he sided with the Devil which “represents rebellious energy, against Jehovah which represents oppressive limitation” (“The Satanic and Byronic Hero”). Here he raises Satan as the hero of *Paradise Lost*. By elevating Satan to a hero status Blake shows that Satan is honorable, a warrior, who does not give up. Blake believes that Satan is the true hero of *Paradise Lost*, and this distinction perpetuates Blake’s view of the marriage of contraries in which both God and Satan need to exist.
An additional imperfection of Milton’s is that Blake believed Milton was in a state of serpent selfhood when writing *Paradise Lost*. A person’s selfhood is when a person has a well-defined and distinct identity. Milton’s selfhood is a serpent selfhood. He must cleanse himself of this selfhood to be able to see the infinite and see that God is the light. When a person is in a state of serpent selfhood, he cannot see clearly because the serpent selfhood is representative of Satan. Satan corrupted Milton’s individuality, which is why Milton made Satan the true hero of *Paradise Lost*.

A further imperfection is how the Son of God is viewed in *Paradise Lost*. Blake believed that the Son of God should be viewed with the qualities of Satan instead of being compared to God. The Devil and Angel argue about who truly is God in “Marriage.” The Angel has the standard, archaic version of who God is, and he manifests himself in the Son of God (“Marriage,” 120 Pl. 23, 3-7). The Devil refutes the Angel’s archaic concept of God and says to the Angel:

… Bray a fool in a mortar with wheat, yet shall not his folly be beaten out of him. If Jesus Christ is the greatest man, you ought to love Him in the greatest degree. Now hear how He has given his sanction to the law of ten commandments. Did he not mock at the sabbath, and so mock the sabbath’s God? murder those who were murdered because of him? Turn away the law from the woman taken in adultery, steal the labor of others to support him? bear false witness when he omitted making a defence before Pilate? covet when he prayed for his disciples, and when he bid them shake off the dust of their feet against such as refused to lodge them? I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments. Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules. (“Marriage,” 120 Pl. 23-24, 8-18)

This shows, in Satan’s view, that the Son of God broke all of the Ten Commandments and followed his own set of rules. The Son of God followed his own impulses and his own rules. This parallels with *Paradise Lost* because Satan did not follow the rules of God, he broke the commandments, and he acted on impulses to break free from the reign of God. Satan tried to
break free with one-third of the rebel angels during the war in Heaven. In this, Satan found virtue and he became his own God, and the God of the rebel angels. Blake is likening himself to the Son of God because he also does not follow the standard set of rules, but acts on impulses.

Blake also compares the Son of God to a Devil, by not following God’s commandments and straying away from God. This twist shows Blake’s infernal reading of *The Bible*. At the end of the conversation, the Angel transforms into a Devil “embracing the flame of fire, & he was consumed and arose as Elijah” (“Marriage” 120 Pl. 24, 3). Elijah was a prophet from the Old Testament, and for Blake to name the new devil Elijah shows that the Devil is the true God. The Angel’s transformation into a devil called Elijah shows that Blake found the Devil to be the true god, as opposed to God in Christianity. This shows that the Devil in “Marriage” and Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* are the true heroes, and everyone should convert just as the Angel did.

In *Paradise Lost*, Satan, Adam, and Eve’s desires are all restrained by God and his Son. Most critics, like David Boooker who wrote *Milton in Popular Culture*, view Satan as a “rebel against a tyrannous God or as the traditional figure of evil destroyed by ambition” (182). Both Knoppers and Semenza, the editors of *Milton in Popular Culture*, believed that Milton could not write what he wanted to directly because he was “imprisoned by the narrow dogma of his time and needed liberation through a ‘Satanic’ reading” (8). He was supposed to write a Christian epic, where most readers saw the Son of God as the epic hero. However, I believe that he read *The Bible* satanically, which then renders Satan as the epic hero.

Blake was a non-conformist and anti-authoritarian. In “Marriage” he states that “If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to me as it is, infinite… This I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid” (116 Pl.14, 8-12).
This also describes his illuminated printing as an infernal method where he is marrying two opposites which are the visual, his illustrations, and the written text. By sticking with his illuminated printing, he felt that he went against the ‘Satanic Mills’ of the Industrial Revolution which had depreciated this art into a mass product for the population. With his choice of illuminated printing, instead of the traditional method, he became poor since his copy method was very expensive. His support for non-conforming to the mechanical press is proudly shown through his illuminated books. Another example of his anti-authoritarian stance is seen in the “Proverbs of Hell” section of “Marriage” Blake states that “The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction” (114 Pl. 9, 5). This proverb means that those that follow their own impulses and desires are wiser than those who are submissive to authority. This authority for Blake was the monarchy and the church officials.

Continuing on with Blake’s critique of the monarchy, organized religion, and the Church of England, Blake clearly supports freedom from authority in “Marriage.” He abhorred the Church of England. Blake felt the church officials corrupted Christianity and took them further away from God. In “Marriage” and Milton he challenged religious and political institutions that formed the “mind-forg’d manacles’ of his generation” (“London” 94, 8). He thought everyone was enslaved by the authority of the monarchy and Church of England. In “Marriage” Rintrah, the Old Testament prophet, began to roar to raise the “just man” up for radical change (111 Pl. 2, 4). This radical change expresses Blake’s support for the revolution which is again stated when he writes “Now is the dominion of Edom, & the return of Adam into Paradise” (“Marriage” 111 Pl. 3, 3-4). He critiqued the monarchy’s laws when he wrote “No virtue can exist without breaking these Ten Commandments. Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules” (“Marriage,” 120 Pl. 23-24, 16-18). This shows his anti-authoritarian stance while
supporting the French Revolution and his criticism of the monarchy. Now is the time for change and one must follow one’s impulses to be free from enslavement.

Another proverb from “Marriage” is “One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression” which expresses Blake’s political message more clearly (“Marriage” 120 Pl. 24, 9). Some political beliefs of the time were that the lion and the ox cannot follow the same set of rules. They cannot have the same set of rules because they both live differently. They live in different classes, they have different ways of life, and they have different needs to survive. However, Blake firmly suggests that having one law for the lion and one law for the ox classifies as oppression. This shows that under the law they should appear equally, and have the same set of laws no matter what kind of animal you are. That is why it is oppression if both the lion and the ox have separate rules. The appearance of the lion and ox again occur in Blake’s *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* which says “And is there not one law for both the lion and the ox” (Pl. 4, 22)? This shows his political stance for equality no matter if the person is poor or the person is of an elite status. Blake writes “The Proverbs of Hell” section in a style that imitates the Old Testament verse in *The Bible*. This is important to understand the analysis of “The Proverbs of Hell” because he is imitating and satirizing *The Bible’s* proverbs by making his own.

Blake believed that Satan is the true hero of *Paradise Lost* because he exemplifies his anti-authoritarianism. In “Marriage” Blake’s Satan “opposes all repression—sexual, religious, political, and philosophical” (Knoppers and Semenza 8). Blake’s Satan is a satanic reading of *Paradise Lost*, as “a history of restraint of desire” (Knoppers and Semenza 8). This is shown when Blake states in the section “The Voice of the Devil”:

Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.  
And being restrained, it by degrees becomes passive, til it is only the shadow
of desire. The history of this is written in *Paradise Lost*, & the Governor or Reason is call’d Messiah. (‘Marriage’ 112 Pl.5, 1-7)

Blake believes that freedom occurs when you go against society, government, reason, and God. This again shows Blake’s support for the French Revolution which was happening when he was writing this poem. In *Paradise Lost*, Satan wants his individual freedom from God. Satan does not restrain his desires, but liberates and releases them, with the other one-third of rebel angels in the war in heaven against God. Satan does this because he is prideful. He thinks he can overthrow God since his powers are equal to God’s powers. This God is an omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient being. Satan truly believes he can outwit God by congregating one-third of the angels behind his back and start a battle in heaven without God knowing. He thinks he can catch God off-guard. If God is all-knowing, then God already knows what Satan is about to do--and is prepared for Satan and his army when they attack. Satan aspires to “be above his Peers” and essentially wants to be God (Milton 355, I.39). Satan does not have this characteristic, but he desires to gain it. Satan’s desire is to be the biggest, greatest, and best which can be seen in his future actions throughout *Paradise Lost*.

Blake likens Satan’s work in *Paradise Lost* to a cut worm from a plow. In “The Proverbs of Hell” section of “Marriage” Blake mocks and reverses the Proverbs of the Old Testament. “The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom...He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence. The cut worm forgives the plow” (“Marriage” 113 Pl. 7, 8-11). This means that it is acceptable to hurt somebody, the worm in this case, to accomplish something. Therefore, all progress is evil. To plow the field and produce crops one must hurt/destroy worms in the process. In *Paradise Lost*, Satan hurts God’s creation--Adam and Eve—to have revenge on God. Satan is like the plow in that he has to destroy something in the process; however he is different
because the plow is used to cultivate the soil for planting. Satan is destroying God’s creation not for the progress of growing his own crops, but he is actually destroying God’s crops, Adam and Eve. I agree with Jason Whittaker, author of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, that Blake inverts the antiquated hierarchies of good and evil, heaven and hell, just like Satan declares in Paradise Lost: “Evil, be though my good” (7).

Blake also sees himself as the Devil. Abrams and Greenblatt note that Blake sees himself being reflected on the plate he is etching (Footnote 2, 113). Joseph Viscomi, in his article “Lessons of Swedenborg: or, the Origin of Blake’s The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,” states that Blake’s “Bible of Hell” would most likely consist of the Devil’s wisdom, which means it can actually be “Marriage” itself. Viscomi asserts that Blake composed Plates 21-24 first, and then composed the rest of “Marriage.” Blake articulates, “I saw a mighty Devil folded in black clouds, hovering on the sides of the rock; with corroding fires he wrote the following sentence now perceived by the minds of men” (113 Pl. 3-4, 7-9).

Blake also sees himself as the Son of God and Adam. Adam’s birth/rebirth is a reference to the birth of the new Adam, “the Redeemer” (Abrams and Greenblatt Footnote 2, 111). Blake states that “a new heaven is begun, and it is now thirty-three years since its advent, the Eternal Hell revives…Now is the dominion of Edom, & the return of Adam into Paradise” (“Marriage” 111, Pl. 3, 1-4). Blake is thirty-three years old which is the Son of God’s age when he died and was resurrected from the tomb (Abrams and Greenblatt Footnote 3, 111). Blake is comparing himself to the Son of God and Adam. In this poem Adam is created; the “just man” is a poet-prophet in the manifestation of a devil, while the serpent is the “priest of the ‘angels’” (“Marriage” 111, Pl. 2, 4; Abrams and Greenblatt Footnote 1, 111). This is contrasted with the villains who converted Christianity into an organized, structured, and institutionalized religion.
Blake has a new life which is to become a poet-prophet. He compares himself to the Son of God and Adam again when the Devil states that they follow their own impulses and desires, instead of reason. Adam returns to Paradise in a pre-fallen state which gives hope to the human race. At the same time, Blake is giving the world his *Infernal Bible* which gives hope to the human race as well.

Blake, like Milton, deemed that the *The Bible* contained many errors. This is because he believed that there was corruption present in *The Bible*. He believes *The Bible* misinterpreted Satan’s words and has taken them for God’s. Therefore, Blake created his own *Bible* called the *Bible of Hell* which makes Satan a God. He described his illustrations and poems as his *Bible of Hell*. Blake undermines all sacred texts which is shown by his creation of *The Bible of Hell*. He reveals that “All Bibles or sacred codes have been the causes of… Errors” (“Marriage” 112, Pl. 4, 1). Blake describes Satan as the “original Archangel, or possessor of the command of the heavenly host” (“Marriage” 112 Pl. 5, 8-9). He writes, “This Angel, who [ha]s now become a Devil, is my particular friend; we often read the Bible together in its infernal or diabolical sense, which the world shall have if they behave well” (“Marriage” 120 Pl. 24, 4-6). He reveals that he studies *The Bible* through the text itself and has reading sessions to interpret it. Blake had a friendship with the Devil, and he teases that his works and illustrations and his *Bible of Hell* will only be shared with the world, if they are good. However, one line later, Blake states that the world will have it whether they want it or not (“Marriage” 120 Pl. 24, 7-8). Blake gives the Devil’s account of what happened in *Paradise Lost*. “The Voice of the Devil” section is Blake’s “diabolical reading of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*” (Abrams and Greenblatt Footnote 5, 112). “The Voice of the Devil” section, Blake summarizes the story of Satan’s expulsion from Heaven. He states it “appear’d to Reason as if Desire was cast out; but the Devil’s account is, that the
Messiah fell, & formed a heaven of what he stole from the Abyss” (“Marriage” 112 Pl. 5-6, 12-14). Reason is a representation of God and Desire is a representation of Satan. From God’s point of view it seems that he cast out Satan to Hell whereas from Satan’s point of view, he is making his own heaven in Hell.

Blake continued his Bible of Hell when he began writing his epic poem, Milton. His life is analogous to Milton’s in his effort to correct the errors of man, and bring his readers closer to enlightenment through reading his works. Analyzing Blake’s Milton, it shows through the bard’s song that Satan is the hero by reconstructing his fall from heaven. Milton is evidence of Blake’s esteem for his predecessor, John Milton, “whom he honors with the imagery of prophecy and the title of ‘Awakener’” (Werner 15). The inspiration for this poem was a vision Blake had where Milton and Los both appeared to him when he was in Lambeth (Kay Easson and Roger Easson 59). Milton is an autobiographical poem, where Blake outlines the progressions of his prophetic education (Kay Easson and Roger Easson 135). However, Blake is not the central figure in his poem as an autobiography would suggest. The main character in the poem is John Milton. This is because Milton was Blake’s spiritual and literary teacher (Kay Easson and Roger Easson 135). Milton as the main character allows him to guide Blake to his prophetic role. The reader and Blake both take a spiritual journey in Milton by figuring out what spiritual path to take on the journey. Blake is recreating Satan’s fall from The Bible. Blake uses the same structure for the verses of The Bible in Milton, but he inserts his own creation of Satan’s fall. Blake wanted to create an Infernal Bible and to do that he still kept the verse structure in The Bible, but he superimposed his own message. In Milton, Blake teaches that every person can become a prophet, and every moment on the spiritual journey renews this prophecy (Kay Easson and Roger Easson 135).
Blake felt that one of Milton’s imperfections in *Paradise Lost* was how Milton described Satan’s fall. In the bard’s song, the bard sings of Satan’s errors and gives his version of Satan’s fall. Blake gives a different version of Satan’s fall than the traditional and biblical account. With this new account of Satan’s fall, Blake makes Satan have new characteristics which make him even more admirable than Milton’s Satan. Blake states through the voice of the bard to “Mark well my words! They are of your eternal salvation” (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 112 Pl. 1, 25). This tells the reader that the bard’s song is important, and this idea is repeated six times throughout the song. Los has a female counterpart called Enitharmon, and Satan was one of their children. Satan’s job is to operate the mills. Los tells Satan that his “work is Eternal Death, with Mills & Ovens & Cauldrons. / Trouble me no more. Thou canst not have Eternal Life” (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 117 Pl. 3a, 17-18).

Another significant difference between Milton and Blake’s Satan is that Satan’s fall is not brought on by himself. Satan’s fall is brought on by his female counterpart Leutha, who testified to the assembly that she is the culprit for Satan’s sins. She was jealous of Elynittria, Palamabron’s lover, and she entered into Satan’s brain, keeping the feminine part awake, which gave birth to his “soft, / Delusory love to Palamabron: admiration join’d with envy” (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 133 Pl. 10, 6-7). Leutha’s serpent and the Gnomes cursed Satan “to do unkind things in kindness… to say / The most irritating things in the midst of tears and love” (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 134 Pl. 10, 32-33). This shows that Satan’s emanation is Leutha who represents Sin in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. In *Paradise Lost*, Sin sprang to life from Satan’s head and here in Blake’s “Milton” she came out of his head when the Gnomes in Palamabron’s harrow refused to work, and she was called Sin (Milton 403, II.746-61). Satan’s fall can also be compared to Adam’s fall in The Holy Bible, King James Version
because Adam fell due to his female counterpart, Eve. Satan’s fall from grace in *Paradise Lost* was when he tried to start a war against God in heaven and when he tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. In *Paradise Lost*, Satan was brought down by hubris and selfishness, whereas in Blake’s version of Satan’s fall, Satan is innocent of all guilt and his fall was not by his own doing. In this way, Blake’s Satan becomes connected to Milton’s Adam in *Paradise Lost*. Recreating Satan’s fall from grace, Blake corrects Milton’s ‘false tongue’ in *Paradise Lost*. Here, Blake is showing his sympathy for Satan by reinventing his fall the way he believes it should have occurred.

In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Blake found additional imperfections which were the qualities Milton associated with Satan. Blake reversed all of Satan’s negative qualities and made Satan human-like and more sympathetic. Blake created Satan with qualities an epic hero he wanted to embody. He wanted to correct Milton’s imperfections and surpass Milton’s Satan. In *Milton*, Satan is described as loving, caring, tender, and taking pity towards his brother Palamabron. This is a stark contrast to Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* who is depraved. The only love Milton’s Satan had for any being was for himself. In *Milton*, Satan wanted to do his brother’s work because he felt pity for Palamabron. Satan started to shake and cry when Los did not allow him to help out his brother. Satan, one of the Elect class, is portrayed as having:

…incomparable mildness;
His primitive tyrannical attempts on Los: with most enduring love
He soft intreated Los to give him Palamabrons station;
For Palambron return'd with labour wearied every evening. (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 122-123 Pl. 5, 6-9)

Here, Satan is described as being mild, soft, caring, and loving towards his family, which is in blatant contrast to Milton’s Satan. When Satan asks Palamabron, Los’s son and Satan’s brother, to perform his work it is because Satan feels pity and love for him. Los relented and allowed
Palamabron returned to his station and found his horses mad and his servants injured. Palamabron said to Los:

You know Satans mildness and his self-imposition,
Seeming a brother, being a tyrant, even thinking himself a brother
While he is murdering the just; prophetic I behold
His future course thro’ darkness and despair to eternal death
…he heath assum’d my place
For one whole day. Under pretense of pity and love to me:
My horses hath he madden! And my fellow servants injur’d. (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 123 Pl. 5, 23-29)

Palamabron realized that Satan deceived him by using his alleged love for a brother to be able to work at his station. Even though Palamabron understands Satan’s true qualities, Satan still believes what he did for his brother was out of pity and love. This can be seen by Satan telling Los that it was Palamabron’s fault for what happened and not his own. Los could not judge him “when Satans self, believ’d / That he had not oppres’d the horses of the Harrow, nor the servants” (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 123 Pl. 5, 41-42). Satan returned to his mill and he found it was in disarray because his servants were drunk. Los says that both of these messes were his fault and they went into mourning. This is a reference to the war in heaven from Milton’s *Paradise Lost* when fighting arose. During this war, Rintrah rouses Satan and in his rage, Satan kills Thulloh, one of Los’s sons (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 125 Pl. 6, 39). Rintrah is a prophet of vengeance who also appears in another poem by Blake called “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.” There is also a fight between Satan and the archangel Michael, which is another reference to Milton’s *Paradise Lost* VI.246-353, where Michael runs over Satan and makes him feel pain for the first time.

Blake kept some qualities of Milton’s Satan and he put them into his character Satan. Three of these qualities are bravery, ambition, and opposition to authority. These are seen when
Satan proclaims himself a God and finds himself above Urizen. Satan is outraged that Rintrah was to blame and is:

…flaming with Rintrahs fury hidden beneath his own mildness
Accus’d Palamabron before the Assembly of ingratitude ! of malice;
He created Seven deadly sins drawing out his infernal scroll,
Of Moral laws and cruel punishments upon the clouds of Jehovah
To pervert the Divine voice in its entrance to the earth
With thunder of war and trumpets sound, with armies of disease
Punishments & deaths musterd & numbered; Saying I am God alone
There is no other ! let all obey my principles of moral individuality
Of my Eternal Mind, transgressors I will rend off for ever,
As now I rend this accursed Family from my covering. (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 127 Pl. 7, 19-29)

Satan declares himself the true God and that anybody who does not follow his laws will be punished. Here, Blake exposes his view that organized religion, such as Christianity, has misinterpreted Satan’s words and has taken them as God’s in The Bible. It was Satan who created the seven deadly sins, moral laws, and harsh punishments. Satan “takes on the characteristics of a lawgiver, like Moses and Urizen whose laws ‘pervert’ God’s word and create the very sins they legislate against” (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi Footnote 21-23,128).

This is also a reference to Blake’s poem “Marriage,” in the “Proverbs of Hell” section, which states “Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion” (114 Pl. 8, 1). Satan’s goal is to “pervert the Divine voice in its entrance to the earth” (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 127 Pl. 7, 23). He does this by making moral laws which led to war.

This is one difference between Milton’s Satan in Paradise Lost and Blake’s Satan. Blake’s Satan conquers Los in their war, whereas Milton’s Satan does not conquer God during their war. This is a significant difference between Blake and Milton’s Satan, because it shows that Blake’s Satan can defeat his father, a fiery spirit. Milton’s Satan found out he could not defeat God and had to resort to other means to seek vengeance. Blake’s Satan declared himself
God, and was able to come through in his war. After Satan tells everyone in the assembly that he was the one true God, Rintrah and Satan started attacking people. Rintrah knew the “Science of Wrath” but Satan only knew “Pity” (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 128 Pl. 7, 46). This killing spree is described below: “The Separation was terrible; the Dead was repos’d on his Couch / Beneath the Couch of Albion, on the seven mo[u][n][tains of Rome / In the whole place of the Covering Cherub. Rome Babylon & Tyre” (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 128 Pl. 7, 49-51). This “‘Death Couch’ represents the mortal life of humanity and foreshadows the grave in which all will lie” (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi Footnote 2-3 128). This death couch is comparable to Satan’s seat and couch in Paradise Lost, where the devils were “Rous’d from the slumber, on that fiery Couch, / At thir great Emperors call” (Milton 366, I.377). Los and Enitharmon realized that Satan has been united with Urizen (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 129 Pl. 8, 1). Satan conquered over Los who ruled over Urthona and divided the nations and became his own God. The bard’s song ends with the reconciliation of the Elect, the Redeem’d, and the end of Leutha’s jealousy of Elynittria (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 136 Pl. 11, 29-38).

Blake not only retold Satan’s fall and gave him new qualities, but also had the character of Milton go through a series of tests on a spiritual journey. Milton goes to Earth where he “confronts projections of his selfhood, images of his error, [and] obstacles to the pilgrim’s spiritual growth” (Kay Easson and Roger Easson 136). Milton fights with Urizen, who represents Satan, in order to go to Earth. Milton is the creator who resembles the Son of God. After Milton and Blake’s union via Blake’s foot, the fiery spirit Los attached to his shoe when Blake tied it. Milton and Blake are now united through the imagination which makes sense since Blake believed all men were connected through the imagination. Blake’s union with Milton and
the spirit Los signify that Blake is a prophet and he needs to clarify and purify the visionary element of Milton’s poetry—Satan in *Paradise Lost* (Werner 16). Blake describes his prophetic calling, a spiritual encounter, with Milton and the fiery spirit Los, as “his own engagement with the brotherhood of prophets in the intellectual fires of spiritual warfare” (Werner 16). Milton urges Blake to write the poem *Milton* to correct his imperfections in *Paradise Lost*.

Blake parodies the way in which Milton dictated *Paradise Lost* to his daughters, when the narrator states that Milton:

…Saw the Cruelties of Ulro, and he wrote them down
In iron tablets: and his Wives & Daughters names were these
Rahab and Tirzah, & Milcah & Malah & Noah & Hoglah.
… and they wrote in thunder smoke and fire
His dictate; and his body was Rock Sinai; that body,
Which was on earth born to corruption. (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 144 Pl.16, 9-15)

Blake is saying Milton in *Paradise Lost* created Ulro, hell, just like when Moses received the Ten Commandments from God on the top of Mount Sinai which were written on iron tablets. God condemned people to hell if they broke any of these commandments. Milton’s family wrote in thunder, smoke, and fire when he dictated to them. This is represented by Blake’s style of etching which can be seen in his plates of “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.” This also represents Blake’s view that the human body is corrupted and must be cleansed to reach the infinite.

To reach the infinite, Blake’s Milton must recognize his serpent selfhood. Satan tries to entice Milton to use his power to annihilate him, Milton refuses, and he begins his transformation on his spiritual journey. I concur with Werner when she remarks that Milton realizes the “Satanic nature of his own errors and to repudiate them, Ololon is redeemed” (16). Ololon is Milton’s female counterpart, and she calls to his restrained desire and is representative
of all his works. Milton sacrifices himself to eternal death, self-annihilation, to save Ololon and his work *Paradise Lost*. He realized the amount of damage the character of Satan in *Paradise Lost* has caused. Blake and Milton merge to liberate man from the “Satanic Mills” which can be seen in part of his apocalyptic speech:

```
Obey thou the Words of the Inspired Man
All that can be ann be annihilated must be annihilated
That the Children of Jerusalem may be saved from slavery
There is a Negation, & there is a Contrary
The Negation must be destroyed to redeem the Contraries
The Negation is the Spectre; the Reasoning Power in Man
This is a false Body: an Incrustation over my Immortal Spirit; a Selfhood, which must be put off & annihilated always
To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by Self-examination. (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 206 Pl.42, 29-37)
```

Satan is the negation which must be destroyed to redeem the balance of the contraries. Satan is the Spectre that one must cleanse by examining one’s self. Once expelling him, then one will be able to see that everything is infinite. Blake wanted to raise “other men into a perception of the infinite” (“Marriage” 116, Pl. 13, 17). By cleansing oneself and casting off the negative, Satan, one would see everything as infinite instead of closing oneself up and seeing everything through “narrow chinks of his cavern” (“Marriage” 116, Pl. 14, 11-14).

The connection between Blake’s poems “Marriage” and *Milton* is the meticulous examination of the imperfections of Milton’s religion in *Paradise Lost*. I agree with author J M. Q Davies on Blake’s view of orthodox religion and churches in *Milton* which is “through a subversive analogy with the traditional categories of the Reprobate, the Redeemed, and the Elect, in which ‘the Elect cannot be Redeemed, but Created continually / By Offering & Atonement in the cruelties of Moral Law’” (7). This relates to the ‘Voice of the Devil’ section in “Marriage” when the Devil critiques *Paradise Lost*, Christian biblical history, and Christianity itself.
Another connection between Blake’s “Marriage” and *Milton* is the shared view of the Poetic Genius. In “Marriage” Blake states that “knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation” through the “tributaries of the Poetic Genius” (117, Pl. 15, 1-2; 116, Pl.13, 2). “The most original works originate or sprout from or are closest to the origin of creation, which, as Blake will dramatize on *Marriage* plates 6, 14, and 15, is hell” (Viscomi “Lessons of Swedenborg”). Hell, the closest thing to creation, is where Satan reigns over his rebel devils in *Paradise Lost*. In *Milton*, the bard is the Poetic Genius who is singing about the fall of Satan. He is transmitting knowledge to the next generation, people who are reading *Milton*, about the corrected version of Satan’s fall. The bard’s song in *Milton* is in direct opposition to Milton, but he accepts it. Blake believed that “Opposition is true Friendship,” and Milton agreed to go on his spiritual journey even when the bard’s song was in opposition to what Milton wrote (“Marriage” 119, Pl. 20, 35). Since the bard made him realize the error of his ways, it is a true friendship. Blake also believed that Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* in his serpent selfhood, and did not cleanse himself to see the infinite, which is why Satan is the true hero of *Paradise Lost*. To remedy Milton’s imperfections and to cast away his selfhood, his negative satanic counterpart, Blake wrote *Milton* in two books. Book I of *Milton* deals with the male journey of Milton, while Book II deals with the female journey of Ololon (Kay Easson and Roger Easson 161). Blake moved away from the traditional epic model to emphasize this dualism. Blake rewrites Milton through his own philosophical structures. He believed that there were two parts of the self, a feminine and masculine version which would make a person androgynous. Milton had his masculine personality and his female personality, Ololon. Milton without his counterpart to make himself whole was left in a state of serpent selfhood. Milton killed his serpent selfhood, and Ololon sacrificed her thirst for power to reconcile the contraries and become united again.
When they do this, both of them will be absorbed into the brotherhood, which represents the Son of God. This redeems Milton’s dualism and allows for contraries to persist, which is necessary for human existence (“Marriage” 112, Pl.3, 5-6).
William Blake’s Illustrations of *Paradise Lost*

Blake also shows Satan’s heroism in his illustrations of *Paradise Lost*. He made two sets of illustrations for *Paradise Lost*, one in 1807 and another in 1808. The 1807 version was the Thomas set and the 1808 version is the Butts set. He also put all his illustrations from Milton together in a book called *Milton*. These illustrations included *Comus, Paradise Lost, Nativity Ode, L’Allegro and Il Penseroso*, and *Paradise Regained*. Blake believed that Milton came to him in his visions, to explain the misunderstanding people had of Milton’s work which is why he wrote his poem *Milton* (Hofer xii). He also made the sets of illustrations of *Paradise Lost* to correct people’s misunderstanding using the visions which he had of Milton. The main misunderstanding was that the Son of God was the hero of *Paradise Lost*, when Milton’s blank verse lucidly demonstrates that Satan is the hero. In about half of these illustrations Blake focuses on a single event, while the others are references to multiple incidents (Dunbar 36). Like Milton, Blake has an “optimistic view of the Fall by presenting the Son of God’s final victory as assured and evil as…vanquished” (Dunbar 37). Blake chooses the subjects which are “directly relevant to the central Creation-Fall-Redemption story,” and he does not “adhere slavishly to biblical illustrative tradition” as other illustrators for *Paradise Lost* had previously (Dunbar 37). Blake also altered the importance of major characters of *Paradise Lost* and the relationships between them to reflect his own vision which is “both more compact and more complex than that of Milton--of the nature and history of man” (Dunbar 38). Satan represents “Adam’s negative characteristics of self-will” (Dunbar 38). He asserts a close connection between Satan and Adam in his other works like *Milton*. Blake’s own vision can be seen especially in the illustration of “Satan Calling Up His Legions” where he makes clear that Satan is the hero, even though he has fallen from Heaven. It can also be seen in the difference between his two illustrations of
Paradise Lost. Blake’s first series of illustrations depicted God negatively because Blake did not agree with Milton’s characterization of God as a revengeful character. In his second set of illustrations, Blake removed the figure of the vindictive God and focused, like Milton, on the redefinition of heroism (Werner 18).

During Blake’s time period, the traditional printing method was copy engraving. Copy engraving was very time-consuming and one had to get and cut copper plates which then were treated with acid-resistant film. After these steps were done, the engraver copied the text or image by tracing it with a needle on the copper plate’s surface. Blake developed a new engraving system called relief etching which he called illuminated printing. This process was more expensive then copy engraving which is why not many replicas exist. Blake called it illuminated printing because instead of the images or text copied to the plates in black and white, they were then painted with watercolors, thereby illuminating them. Blake combining the text and image was still very difficult to do in the late Eighteenth Century. Blake’s illuminated printings serve as continuation of the early manuscript illumination practices. Joseph Viscomi in his article “Blake’s Invention of Illuminated Printing, 1788” states that Blake inverted the copy engraving method, so instead of etching the design or text directly onto the copper plate, Blake etched away the background of the text or image. Blake etched away the background of the text or image with the acid-resistant liquid which made the design or text raised from the plate (Viscomi “Blake’s Invention of Illuminated Printing, 1788”). The design is in relief from the copper plate instead of the design cutting or sinking into the copper plate which is called counter-relief. After the etched parts dried, Blake then poured acid over the copper plate which etched away the parts of the copper plate he did not engrave. Blake then made impressions using ink on an etching press. Blake had to write the text and copy images backwards because when it was
printed the final product would be reversed and appear correctly. Once it was printed, Blake and Catherine, his wife, would illuminate them by hand painting them by using watercolor (Viscomi “Blake’s Invention of Illuminated Printing, 1788”). This process of illuminated printing is itself a reconciling of opposites. Blake reverses what is normally not a relief process, introduces color instead of being black and white, and reproduces both the text and the illustration on the same page. This allows the text and Blake’s illustration of the text to interact. Blake becomes the illustrator and the author because he is reinterpreting a text by illustrating it. This reinterpretation can either agree or disagree with the original author’s intentions. Blake’s illustrations of Paradise Lost show that he viewed Satan as the true hero. He illustrated Satan as splendid as he was represented by Milton in Paradise Lost. The ramifications of having Milton’s Paradise Lost illustrated are the characters, events and themes coming alive on the page. Blake’s illuminated paintings of Paradise Lost give us a visual representation of how Blake envisioned reading Paradise Lost which Milton’s unillustrated text cannot. Blake’s illuminated paintings serve as a guide to Milton’s Paradise Lost by visually showing readers that he believed Satan to be the true hero of Paradise Lost. Blake achieves this by making Satan’s actions the focal point in most of his drawings, displaying his masculinity, determination, bravery, sexual and independent freedom, pride, jealousy, and his serpent selfhood. Milton gave Satan all of these qualities to make him outshine God and his Son in Paradise Lost.

Blake’s first illustration in the Thomas Set is “Satan Calling Up His Legions.” Satan displays his masculinity, courage, and steadfastness to his ideals by standing erectly despite the flames around him. In all three versions of this plate, all of the devils are nude and are stripped of their attributes, and are situated in Hell (Dunbar 43). These devils are stripped of their attributes because they have fallen out of favor with God. All of their titles, rank, and clothes
have vanished, like when they were vanished from heaven into hell. This illustration shows how Satan rouses his fellow devils from the ground after they have fallen from Heaven. Satan is the largest figure in the illustration and has his spear and shield propped up by a rock. He is still ready to fight, has his hands outward and raised to encourage his followers to “Awake, arise, or be for ever fall’n” (Milton 364, I.330). Satan is the largest in the print and is depicted as a “full-frontal nude with Michelangelesque torso and legs” (Dunbar 46). This display of his beauty correlates to his grandiose speeches (Dunbar 46).

Satan’s look is one of the first signs of his fall from Heaven (Dunbar 46). Satan’s gaze reflects his uncertainty of where he is located and his confusion of his fall. He witnesses “huge affliction and dismay / Mixt with obdurate pride and steadfast hate” (Milton 356, I.57-58). Beelzebub is depicted behind Satan with his backside and arm on opposite sides of the river of hell, which suggest that he is the classical river-god (Dunbar 45). The rest of the devils are still imprisoned in “Adamantine Chains” (Milton 356, I.48). In Paradise Lost the devils rise from the lake and the chains are “conveniently forgotten” (Dunbar 46). In Blake’s illustration these chains represent his view of ‘mind-forg’d manacles’ in his poem “London” (94, 8). These fetters have been created by the mind and cannot be broken through physical force, but only through mental exertion (Dunbar 46). Hell is not a physical place to Milton or Blake, so it puts more pressure on the visual depiction of Satan who encompasses hell. Satan’s muscular body and strength in Blake’s illustrations appear like other classical artwork of epic heroes such as Achilles or Hector in The Iliad (Peterson 5). Blake uses classical symmetry thus emphasizing Satan’s “association with the failure of the classical formulation of heroism” which is found in his elaborate speeches, aspersions, and vehement actions (Werner 59). Satan, as well as the other devils, puts his entire body on display which represents his sexual and independent
freedom. Satan’s proud stance corresponds with how he gives his lengthy speeches in *Paradise Lost*, and Blake probably envisioned Satan saying, “Here at least / We Shall be free” to his devils (362, I.258-59). Satan’s action of never giving up allows many Romanticist’s like Blake to feel sympathy for him and hope he prospers against the tyrannical God. Satan continues to have his rather large and muscular body throughout the rest of Blake’s illustrations except when he is turned into a snake.

Milton’s interpretation of hell is in alignment with Blake’s interpretation of hell which can be seen throughout Book I of *Paradise Lost*. Milton’s view of hell can be seen by hell’s abstractness of time, place, and location. Milton described hell in *Paradise Lost* as an “Ethereal Skie / With hideous ruine and combustion” (355, I.46-46), a “bottomless perdition” (355, I.47), “The dismal Situation waste and Wilde; / A dungeon horrible” (356, I.60-61), “the seat of desolation” (359, I.181), and a “mournful gloom” (361, I.244). Blake did not believe that Hell was a physical place but was the mental state of man characterized by “Ignorance, Bodily Lust, Idleness & devastation of the things of the Spirit” (*Jerusalem The Emanation of The Giant Albion*, Pl. 10, Copy E, Object 77). Blake, accepting the emphasis of Protestant belief on the “psychological rather than on the literal aspects of evil, … takes this notion a stage further and transmutes it by suggesting that evil is without metaphysical reality: his hell serves in part as a metaphor for the fallen world, his Satan as the negative aspect of Adam” (Dunbar 38). Blake believed that the mental condition of fallen men was itself hell, which makes this illustration an allegory of the fallen world (Dunbar 47). The fallen world, which is the material world, can be seen in “Satan Calling Up His Legions” because all of the devils have lost their titles, have fallen from a state of grace, have been stripped of their clothes and of their attributes.
Satan’s bravery, independent freedom, and sin can be seen in the second illustration called “Satan, Sin, and Death: Satan Comes to the Gates of Hell.” This represents the scene where Sin arbitrates between Satan and Death so they do not fight. This scene is depicted in Book II of *Paradise Lost:*

> So frowned the mighty combatants, that hell  
> Grew darker at thir frown, so matcht they stood;  
> For never but once more was either like  
> To meet so great a foe: and now great deeds  
> Had been achiev’d, whereof all Hell had rung,  
> Had not the Snakie Sorceress that sat  
> Fast by Hell Gate, and kept the fatal Key,  
> Ris’n and with hideous outcry rush’d between. (719-26)

Satan’s sin is represented by the presence of Sin. Sin represents Athena, the goddess of wisdom, because she sprang from the left side of Satan’s brain when he was still in heaven scheming against God (Milton 403, II.748-57). Satan fell in love with Sin because she was not only beautiful, but reminded Satan of himself (Milton 403, II.757-65). Sin told Satan “thy self in me thy perfect image viewing / Becam’st enamour’d… that my womb conceiv’d / A growing burden” (Milton 403, II.765-67). Sin then tells Satan why her lower body appears the way it does: it is the result of the birth of their child—a shadow figure, Death. Death is the consequence of Satan’s sin, by raping Sin in heaven. This event also draws attention to Satan’s sin of pride and well as his sin of rape (Werner 63). Death then raped Sin, and that is why she has the hellhounds coming out of her who breed redundantly without cease. She is in continuous labor as a punishment for her fertility. Sin guards the key to open the gates of hell. This is an allegory to the epistle of St. James from the New Testament which states: “Then when lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (*The Holy Bible, King James Version*, James, I.15). In *Paradise Lost*, Sin is the mother of a spiritual death which brings “the eventual self-destructiveness of evil” (Werner 64).
Satan and Death both have a spear pointed at each other. Satan has a shield which is placed above Sin’s head, while Death has a burning dart and a fiery “Kingly Crown” (Milton 401, II.672). Satan is compared to a burning, blazing comet (Milton 401, II.708). Again, Satan is still in the form of a naked human since he has lost all of his titles as an angel. Satan is on his epic journey to go to Earth and expose and destroy God’s creation of man to continue his revenge and war with God.

Blake shows Satan’s sexual freedom in the middle of the illustration where there is a chain hanging from the ceiling. This reminds the reader that Satan and his army of devils have just recently escaped from these chains. These chains are still hanging over him. Satan has passed through two of the arches and is trying to get past the third. Satan is “in the midst of an action which stands both for copulation and for generation” (Dunbar 52). These gates are associated by Blake with sexual intercourse and birth which is perfect for this situation because of the interactions between Sin and Satan and Sin and Death (Dunbar 52). Blake depicts the confrontation of evil with evil and the family clash between Satan, Sin, and Death very well in this sketch. Milton’s epic reveals that Satan gets the key from Sin and goes forward with his plan through chaos, the sun, and then earth.

Blake portrays Sin as half human by appealing to her sensuality via her curly hair, face, and upper body. Her womb extends out in the form of hellhounds and her lower body as snakes. Sin also appears in line with Milton’s text as half female, half serpent, and has hellhounds coming out of her womb which guard the gates of hell (400, II.648-958). Sin reaches out one arm each to Satan and Death to keep them away from each other. Sin’s arms appear as though she is embracing both Satan and Death which implies their intimate sexual relations together. Sin has two snake tails, one of which is guarding the gates of hell with the key, whereas the other
is getting ready to strike Satan. Milton’s reference to Sin as a “Snakie Sorceress” also is an allusion to Medusa (Milton 402, II.724). Medusa wears a belt of snakes around her waist which represents fertility, and Sin has hounds wrapped around her which are constantly reproducing. Both are also seen as female monsters. Medusa has snakes instead of hair which is also a symbol of sin. There is a close relationship between sin and snakes which can be seen by Sin’s figure. The snakes foreshadow Satan’s sin of the Fall and turning into a snake because of it. Blake illustrates Death in naked human form as well but he appears as a ghost or apparition. Blake gives Death’s origins in Jerusalem The Emanation of The Giant Albion, where Death is eternal and the “Spectre of Satan” (Dunbar 51).

In the fourth illustration in Blake’s sketches of Paradise Lost called “Satan Spying On Adam and Eve And Raphael’s Descent Into Paradise” he shows Satan’s serpent selfhood. Adam and Eve are on the right side of the sketch, being watched by Satan who is on the left side of the sketch. This is the only drawing that combines both Satan spying on Adam and Eve and Raphael’s descent into paradise. This combines two books, Book IV and Book V. Blake stated in The Laocöön that “Art can never exist without Naked Beauty displayed,” which is one reason why Adam and Eve appear naked (Dunbar 56). Dunbar’s comment can also be extended towards his sympathy for Satan by wanting to display his beauty. Satan is in the naked human form in between two barren trees and has the appearance of bat-like wings. Blake departed from Milton’s text because Satan is still appearing as a cherub. This is significant because Blake shows how desperately Satan wants to be like Adam and Eve but he will always fall short. He appeared as a cherub to beguile Uriel earlier in the epic, and as a cherub to enter Eden. He also has a large serpent coiled around his ankles, legs, and hip which could be a snake and/or his serpent selfhood. The serpent’s head is above Satan’s own head which implies the serpent has
dominance over Satan. It also implies that the serpent is strangling Satan and has complete control over him. Satan appears to have just landed in Eden because he is standing on his tiptoes with his legs crossed. His hands are raised with his palms up which shows he is subordinate to the serpent. This interpretation follows Blake’s idea of a serpent selfhood. Satan is hell, and the serpent is representative of both Satan himself and all of his qualities. The serpent’s mouth is open, showing his teeth and tongue, which is a striking position. Satan standing on his toes implies he wants to sneak up on Adam and Eve quietly. His head is looking toward the right at Adam and Eve who appear nude and have their bodies turned away from Satan. This illustration suggests Blake’s contrary states of experience and innocence. Satan represents the state of experience while Adam and Eve represent the state of innocence. The darkness, barren trees, and the entwined serpent near Satan represent him as a “fallen man” (Dunbar 63). Adam and Eve are standing between two fruitful trees bearing grapes, and in between these trees is flourishing vegetation, which shows that they are in the innocent paradise of Eden. The trees with Adam and Eve are in contrast to the trees surrounding Satan. The fruitful trees bearing grapes which have vines growing on the tree bark next to Adam and Eve is in direct contrast with the dead, unfertile trees where the serpent is wrapped around Satan. Behind Satan and the barren trees darkness appears and behind Adam and Eve lightness appears. Adam and Eve are also hand in hand which is emphasized in Books IV and V of *Paradise Lost*. The look on Satan’s face is one of terror and bewilderment. Satan has his eyebrows furrowed, which indicates hesitancy, fear, and envy. Satan appears to doubt himself but finally identifies with the serpent, and both of them spy on Adam and Eve, their forthcoming victims (Dunbar 75). Satan “saw undelighted all delight, all kind / Of living Creatures new to sight and strange,” that is, Adam and Eve (450, IV.286-87).
Blake depicts Satan’s jealousy of Adam and Eve. Satan sees their beauty and what God has given them. There is a stark contrast between Adam and Eve’s “native Honour clad / In naked Majestie” compared to Satan’s nakedness stripped of all titles and attributes (Milton 450, IV. 289-90). Satan’s jealousy is conveyed in these lines:

```
hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two
Imparadis’t in one another’s arms
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill,
bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
Among our other torments. (Milton 458, IV. 505-10)
```

Satan sees Adam and Eve and finds this sight torments him. This is because he will never attain what they have, but will only attain torments. He will be forever in Hell. Satan is characterized as “Adam’s negative characteristics of self-will” (Dunbar 38). Adam and Satan are both in male, naked, human form, and both have curly hair. The only difference is that in a few of Blake’s illustrations, like this one, Satan appears with wings.

The portrayal of Satan and the serpent is in comparison to the couple’s representation. Satan is standing on tiptoe like Adam while the serpent is coiled around Satan’s body. Satan will forever have his serpent selfhood which is analogous to Adam and Eve’s relationship. Adam and Eve’s bodies are mirror images of each other. Adam’s left foot is on tiptoe while Eve’s right foot is on tiptoe. Adam’s left hand is pointed down and outward, while Eve’s right hand is pointed down and outward. Adam’s head looks to the right down at Eve, while Eve’s head looks to her left and up at Adam. The vines on the trees near Adam and Eve are a reminder of their daily work in the Garden of Eden. This was when God sent Raphael, a winged archangel, to warn them of the danger of Satan.

Blake illustrates Raphael’s descent into Eden as the focal point which occurs in Book V of *Paradise Lost*. Raphael’s descent to Eden is on a V-shaped cloud. Raphael’s position in the
illustration shows him separating Adam and Eve from Satan. Raphael is looking up at God hovering above him. Raphael is drawn negatively, because he is surrounded by the dark clouds of his descent. This shows Blake’s defiance of Milton’s view that the only source of cloud forms is that there were “none to obstruct the speeding angel’s flight” (Werner 76). The dark clouds show Blake’s criticism of Milton revealing his “mistaken theology” (Werner 76).

Blake contrasts Satan and God also in this illustration. God appears at the top of the illustration with his arms open wide flying above Raphael. He has a white beard and white hair. God’s eyes are looking downward and his look is of “profound sadness” (Werner 75). God’s expression of sadness is because he has foresight of Adam’s fall. He is not trying to prevent the Fall, but he sends Raphael down out of “pittie” for Adam and Eve, to keep his reputation of justice intact (Milton 482, V.220). Milton wrote in “The Argument” of Book V that God sent down Raphael to warn Adam and Eve to “render man inexcusable” for Adam’s predicted sin (Milton 475, V). Blake “abhorred the very notion of blame and… insisted upon the need for continual forgiveness, the formulation would have seemed monstrous” (Werner 75). Blake drew God very old, sad, negatively, and overshadowed by Satan, which depicts that he did not agree with Milton on God’s brilliance and almightiness. God appearing as a negative figure as well as Raphael shows that Blake did not agree with Milton’s account of God’s motives to send down the archangel Raphael. However, Blake and Milton both agree that God is trying to warn Adam of Satan before his Fall, to try to prevent “the potential for spiritual death” (Werner 76).

Blake represents Satan’s jealousy and steadfastness in the fifth sketch of Blake’s illustrations of *Paradise Lost* called “Satan Watching the Endearments of Adam and Eve.” Satan is spying on Adam and Eve as they lounge on a “soft downie Bank damaskt with flours” to try
and figure out how to destroy them (Milton 452, IV.334). Blake follows Milton’s textual

description of Adam and Eve on the flowerbed:

our general Mother….with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreprov’d
And meek surrender, half imbracing leand
On our first Father, half her swelling breast
Naked met his under the flowing Gold
Of her loose tresses hid…And press’d her Matron lip
With kisses pure: aside the Devil turned
For envie, yet with jealous leer maligne
Ey’d them askance, and to himself thus plain’d. (Milton 457-58, IV.492-504)

This scene describes Blake’s illustration. He followed everything besides Eve’s tresses covering
her breasts. In his drawing Eve’s hair is behind her shoulders leaving her breasts exposed. Satan
is hovering above Adam and Eve kissing and embracing each other, and he gets jealous since he
does not have that. Blake draws the couple caressing each other with one hand. Both are naked
and Adam is wearing a crown of flowers on his head which is an allusion to a crown of thorns
worn by the Son of God later. Blake and Milton both had a tolerant attitude with regard to the
physical body (Werner 70). Both are staring into each other’s eyes attentively. Adam and Eve,
sitting on their mound of flowers, roses and lilies, and plants, are in complete happiness. Blake’s
choices of flowers show that their love is true and pure. Nevertheless, Satan is hovering above
them, again reunited with the serpent wrapped around his naked body. Satan, looking below at
these two lovers, gently caresses the head of the serpent while the serpent wraps around his left
arm. Both are staring at each other. The serpent represents Satan self-identifying as a serpent
and him trying to have the same relationship as Adam and Eve. Satan has this solemn look upon
his face. His right hand is encroaching on the couple’s mound of flowers and plants, thus
violating it. The blissful couple is yet again unaware of the presence of Satan.

Blake displays Adam and Eve’s sexual freedom in their nuptial bed to once again contrast
with Satan and his serpent selfhood. Adam and Eve are sitting beneath twelve roses, six on the side hanging above Eve and six on the side hanging above Adam. This is their nuptial bed and is a lovemaking scene between the couple. Milton’s text suggested the highly sexual nature of this moment. Blake’s view was that “energy is eternal delight” which could be the reason he chose to draw this scene (Werner 72).

This parallels with the scene above the couple which shows Satan and the serpent in an embrace. Satan is still appearing as a cherub. A cherub’s expression is of joy, while Satan’s expression is of dismay. This is one distinction that separates him from a real cherub. The serpent can also be viewed as controlling Satan as he is contorted around him. This is symbolic of what a serpent-selfhood does to a person. The serpent is telling Satan the plan to lure Eve into temptation, and Satan looks mournful hearing it pointing down at the couple. This contrasts with the serpent’s sly look of corruption. If one takes this view, it is the serpent, Satan’s serpent selfhood, and not Satan who initiates the temptation of Eve (Dunbar 59). The illustration offers a sympathetic view of Satan.

The seventh illustration in the Paradise Lost series is called “The Rout of the Rebel Angels” which displays Satan’s independent freedom, bravery, and pride. It also displays the Son of God’s expulsion of the devils from hell. This illustration represents some of the contrasts between the Son of God and Satan. This event occurs in Book VI of Paradise Lost where Raphael tells Adam the story of creation and the war in heaven. In Blake’s illustration the Son of God is kneeling inside a pink circle surrounded by six of his angels, pointing the arrows at all the rebel angels below. This circle is a gap between heaven and the rebel angels. This pink circle can also be viewed as the sun where there is a unification of the sun and the son of God. The Son of God is holding a large bow and is pointing seven arrows at the rebel angels. This
bow is the focal point of the image and takes up most of the width of the illustration. Most of the rebel angels are upside down and have expressions of fear and pain on their faces. Satan is in the middle of the rebel angels. Blake decided to omit the reference “to the cosmic chariot” and instead places emphasis on the Son of God’s “human form divine” (Dunbar 64). The Son of God appears to the rebel angels in a chariot holding a bow with arrows pointed at them. The rebel angels are cast out of heaven by their own volition because of the Son of God’s divinity, and they fall from Heaven into “fiery Chaos” (Milton 509, VI.55). The Son of God does not use physical force so this bow and arrow is merely representative of what the rebel angels are feeling mentally and/or spiritually. The Son of God prevailed because the rebel angels recognized he was the spiritual King (Dunbar 80). The Son of God’s expression is mild, whereas the expressions of the defeated rebel angels appear terrified indicating their fear of divine wrath (Dunbar 83). Blake views the Son of God casting out the rebel angels as an act of love, which is apparent by the color of the circle; he is casting out sinners and it is an “act of redemption” (Dunbar 83).

Blake makes the reader feel sympathy for Satan and his rebel angels because they have no chance of winning this revolutionary war against God. The bottom half of the illustration represents the rebel angels fleeing heaven and falling to Chaos. There are red flames and smoke burning around the rebel angels as they grab their heads in agony. There are fourteen rebel angels. Satan appears in the middle, grabbing his head in pain and has snake scales covering his genitals. Satan was brave when he tried to fight against God and his Son. This is a weak moment for Satan since he is now falling into hell which is where he will regain his steadfastness to injure God in some form.
The ninth illustration called “The Temptation and Fall of Eve” is when Blake depicts Satan as triumphant in exerting his plan and his sexuality. In the center, there is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil where Eve is seen eating the forbidden fruit from the serpent’s mouth. The serpent has itself coiled around Eve’s body tempting her to eat the forbidden fruit. She is caressing the serpent and looking into its eyes just like she was caressing and looking at Adam in Blake’s illustration “Satan Watching the Endearments of Adam and Eve.” This kiss is a parody of the aforementioned illustration where Adam and Eve’s kiss was pure, good, and innocent, while Eve’s kiss with the serpent is evil, seductive, and indulgent. Eve’s facial expression is mesmerized which suggests Eve did not know what she was doing. This implies that Eve was under Satan’s spell of promises. Satan is fully absorbing his serpent selfhood, has lost his own body, and will now stay a serpent’s. By transforming into a serpent it symbolizes Satan’s debasement that his pride caused him. Satan tempts Eve with the forbidden fruit to make her disobey God’s orders. This shows Satan’s idea of having free will and rebelling against authority. Eve being alone from Adam already set the tone for Eve’s disobedience from God’s will for her own will. Meanwhile, Adam is pictured behind the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and has his back turned towards Eve, looking aimlessly around Eden. The trunk of the tree is taller than both Eve and the serpent, and its branches bearing fruit are hanging above them. Blake pictured an angry heaven in the dark sky with thunder. This serves as a complement to the serpent tempting Eve and her disobeying God.

Satan left Eden because he was afraid of Gabriel, and when he came back through water he decided to hide in serpent form because it was the “suttlest Beast of all the Field” (Milton 586, IX.86). Satan has changed yet again into the form of a serpent because it is the smartest
beast which is an allusion to Genesis III.I. Changing into the serpent form represents the degradation of his pride and the annihilating ambition he has to destroy God’s creation:

O foul descent! That I who erst contended
Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime,
This essence to incarnate and imbrue,
That to the hight of Deitie aspir’d;
But what will not Ambition and Revenge
Descend to? (Milton 589, IX.163-69)

Before Satan seduces Eve, he has continuing thoughts about Heaven spinning in his head. Eden reminds Satan of Heaven which still torments him. Since he cannot take refuge here, he must destroy God’s creations to “find ease” (Milton 588, IX.129). Eve convinces Adam that they should work separately in the garden to be more productive, and this is when Satan seduces Eve by tempting her with the forbidden fruit. Milton and Blake both put blame on Adam because he was submissive to her which allowed her to transgress God. This is shown by Blake’s drawing Satan in serpent form tempting Eve, with Adam’s back turned instead of Eve tempting Adam. This puts the blame for their disobedience not only on Eve but also Adam.

Blake shows Satan’s cunningness, appearing as a talking snake, by flattering Eve. He does this by appealing to her weakness which is she is in love with herself. The voice of God the Son warned Eve that she must not love her own image more than she loves Adam (Milton 456, IV.467-72). Satan used this weakness against her, and she does not realize that all he is telling her are lies. She is baffled that she is talking with a serpent and therefore she believes his lies. Satan uses his oratory skills not for political or war speeches, but here as flattery for Eve, to achieve his goal of destroying what God has made. When Eve eats the forbidden fruit, she accepts Satan as her God which encompasses “self-glory and pride” (Werner 89). She disobeys her one true God. The serpent is coiled around her body as he seduces her. Eve is standing tall as Satan the serpent moves in “Circular base of rising foulds, that tour’d / Fould a bove fould a
surging Maze, his Head / Crested aloft” (Milton 600, IX, 498-500). This winding motion makes the “intricate seem strait” and is associated with Satan’s flawed reasoning (Milton 600, IX.631). Satan tempted Eve to make her think what she was doing was just, when he really just wanted to see her fall from God’s good graces. Once Eve accepted taking the forbidden fruit of the serpent, her soul is no longer in a state of innocence. Therefore, Eve now yearns for sensual pleasure which becomes lewd. This can be viewed as an “archetypal rape” (Davies 76-77). Satan appearing as a long, phallic serpent covers Eve’s private part which further insinuates rape. This is because Eve’s entire, nude, innocent body has been shown throughout Blake’s illustrations thus far. Yet, her private part is covered here by the serpent’s body which implies sexual interactions between them. Blake and Milton differ because “lust and violence are caused by Milton’s rational dualistic hierarchy of values, not controlled by it” (Davies 77). Satan seduces Eve and at this same moment in Blake’s illustration Adam breaks the garland he made for Eve. Blake departs here from Milton’s text because the breaking of the garland and Satan seducing Eve does not occur instantaneously. Satan seduces Eve and then three pages later Adam breaks the garland he made for Eve. In Blake’s illustration, he makes these two separate events occur simultaneously. This represents that Adam thinks Eve is “Defac’t, deflourd, and now to Death devote” which suggests rape (Milton 612, IX.900).

The last and twelfth illustration by Blake is called “The Expulsion” which shows Raphael leading the banished Adam and Eve out of Eden along with the serpent. This illustration portrays Satan as victorious. Above Raphael’s head is a swirl of fire which represents a “flaming sword” the guardian cherubim are waving “in signal of [their] remov[al]” (Milton 708, XII.592-93). This prohibits Adam and Eve from returning into the Garden of Eden again. This parallels to Blake’s “Marriage” when he says:
The ancient tradition that the world will be consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years is true… For the cherub with the flaming sword is hereby commanded to leave his guard at the tree of life; and when he does, the whole creation will be consumed and appear infinite and holy, whereas it now appears finite & corrupt. (116, Pl. 14, 1-5)

Blake is describing the expulsion scene from *Paradise Lost*. He describes both Adam and Eve as appearing infinite before their expulsion. After falling prey to Satan, they now appear finite, tainted, and debased which is how Satan wanted them to feel.

His views are also closely related to his poem “Marriage.” Blake talks about the Church, the fallen world, and the devils of *Paradise Lost* as Evil in “Marriage.” The Devil in “Marriage” shows the Angel the truth about the Son of God and how he committed all the crimes in the Ten Commandments. After hearing this, the Angel then formed into a devil named Elijah. This Angel converging and reemerging as a devil holds that the Devil’s statements are true. Blake shows that the Devil, Satan, is the true hero in *Paradise Lost* through his illustrations and in “Marriage.” “Satan is represented as vigorous and even noble, his energy and naked beauty recalling those of the Devil” of ‘Marriage’ (Dunbar 48). In “Marriage” Blake maintains Satan’s status as noble and “possessor of the command of the heavenly host” and his children as Sin and Death (Pl. 5, 8-9). Satan, Sin, and Death can be seen as a reunited family in Blake’s illustration “Satan, Sin, and Death: Satan Comes to the Gates of Hell,” where Death and Satan are about to attack each other when Sin intervenes. In the illustration “Satan Calling Up His Legions” all of the devils are displayed, including Satan, looking unusual and out of place. Dunbar asserts that Blake accepts “that appearances are dictated by the eye of the perceiver” (67). In this first illustration, from Satan’s point of view he has not lost the war in heaven since he can make a heaven out of hell. Even though Satan was defeated in heaven, in a way he was not defeated at all. His will is still strong and with that he has everything. In hell Satan is the king like God is
the king of heaven. However, from God’s point of view he has gotten rid of evil, desire, and sin which have no place in heaven. In “Marriage” Blake treats this similar event when he states: “it indeed appear’d to Reason as if Desire was cast out; but the Devil’s account is, that the Messiah fell, & formed a heaven of what he stole from the Abyss” (112, 12-14). This parallels with Blake’s idea that “Opposition is true Friendship” (“Marriage” 119, Pl. 20, 35).

Blake deemed Milton was in a state of serpent selfhood and that is why he made Satan more grandiose and appear as the true hero of *Paradise Lost*. By Satan fully changing his appearance into a serpent this is when he actualizes his own serpent selfhood. Instead of the serpent only being a part of his identity and being attached to his body, the serpent has now become Satan’s entire identity. In “Marriage” Blake states in the “Voice of the Devil” that “The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the / Devils party without knowing it” (“Marriage” 113 Pl. 5, 21-23). This is evident in Blake’s illustrations because he made Satan more attractive than the Almighty God by using Milton’s own words. Blake stayed true to most of the major events in *Paradise Lost* thereby incorporating Milton’s true vision. He emphasizes Satan in his illustrations because he is the true hero of *Paradise Lost*. Blake reworked the relationships between Adam, Eve, and Satan to reflect his own vision, the correct vision, of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Adam, Eve, and Satan are all different aspects of an “original, androgynous personality that has become divided against itself in a falling and a fallen world” (Dunbar 38). Eve is Adam’s Emanation, his female counterpart. Satan represents Adam’s selfhood or Spectre which is his negative self, which is related to his epic poem *Milton* (Dunbar 38).

Blake’s illustrations show how he views Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Blake deems Satan as the hero of Paradise Lost by making Satan’s actions the focus of his illustrations, exhibiting his
masculinity, willpower, courage, sensual and autonomous freedom, arrogance, envy, and his serpent selfhood. All of the above qualities Milton gave to Satan to make him surpass God and the Son of God in *Paradise Lost*. 
Percy Bysshe Shelley’s Works

After examining Percy Bysshe Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound* and “A Defense of Poetry” I discovered that Shelley created his own version of Satan. In *Prometheus Unbound* Shelley created Prometheus as the hero without a hamartia of being prideful or arrogant. This allowed Shelley to create a new tragic hero who could control his own destiny. Making a hero without a hamartia allows him to achieve all of his goals without being held back. Shelley created his own version of Satan because he believed Milton’s Satan had imperfections. By comparing and contrasting Shelley’s Prometheus to Milton’s Satan I explored Milton’s imperfections of Satan. To surpass Milton, Shelley created not only a reinvention of Satan, but a new type of tragic hero.

Shelley wrote his closet lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound* in Italy from 1818 to 1819 (“Prometheus Unbound” 775). He created Prometheus as a hero without a hamartia which allows for a new type of tragic hero. This is what Prometheus does when he recants the curse and saves all humankind, instead of being like Milton’s Satan and being an enemy of humankind. One imperfection of Milton’s Satan was that he only used his powers for evil. Another imperfection in Milton’s Satan is that he is rebellious against God only to advance himself. Shelley creates Prometheus, his enhanced version of Satan, without these imperfections. He takes these two imperfections of Milton’s Satan and reverses them to make his character perfect. In the Preface of *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley constructed Prometheus in the “highest perfection” to have outstanding qualities, and he believes Prometheus is the most intelligent being created by nature (776). Prometheus, in Shelley’s account, is a God. Shelley states in the Preface of *Prometheus Unbound*:
He believed that Prometheus exceeded Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* because Prometheus uses his powers for good instead of evil. Milton’s Satan is rebellious and his aims are not altruistic, but are for himself; whereas Shelley’s Prometheus is rebelling against God to advance humankind and becomes an ally to humankind instead of an enemy. Instead of Prometheus using his powers for evil, he uses them for good. Instead of Prometheus improving only himself by rebelling against authority, he rebels so he can save all humankind.

Shelley changes how others view the character of Satan by giving him qualities he has never possessed. When Prometheus saves all humankind from pain and suffering this quality is evident in Milton’s Son of God instead of Milton’s Satan. This makes the character of Satan more complex. It allows him to expand and choose which path he wants to take. Satan could choose the path to evil or the path to good. Shelley’s Prometheus controlled his own destiny by not taking revenge on Jupiter, and saving humankind instead of destroying them like Milton’s Satan wanted to do.

Revenge is another difference between Shelley’s Prometheus and Milton’s Satan. Prometheus does not take revenge on Jupiter. Prometheus has been chained to a rocky cliff for 3,000 years while eagles rip and tear at his body which is his penance from Jupiter. Prometheus, like Milton’s Satan, is chained by the reigning God, and both break their chains. When Prometheus was still bound by chains for three thousand years, he resembled the sublime Satan.
when he felt unapologetic for letting the world go to “torture and solitude / Scorn and despair” 
(*Prometheus Unbound*, 779, I.14-15). Prometheus “endured personal agony for the sake of a personal revenge. I agree with scholar Balachandra Rajan that “the new Prometheus is going out of himself. He is putting himself ‘in the place of another and of many others.’ What afflicts him is not a limited, physical anguish but a universal moral perversion” (298). With the help of spirits, Prometheus is finally unbound and will not give Jupiter any more power by hating him (*Prometheus Unbound*, 787, I.303-05). Prometheus breaks the curse and his chains and does not seek revenge against Jupiter, whereas Milton’s Satan immediately seeks revenge against God for making him fall to Hell. Prometheus states:

Disdain? Ah no! I pity thee. --What Ruin
Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven!
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a Hell within! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then, ere misery made me wise. – The Curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall...
If then my words had power
-Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
Is dead within, although no memory be
Of what is hate—let them not lose it now! (*Prometheus Unbound*, 780, I.53-72)

Even though Prometheus has been chained and has felt unbearable pain, this torture has made him realize that he does not want to inflict pain on anyone else. He wants to recall the curse he put on Jupiter if only he could remember it. The rebellious and vengeful attitude he felt toward Jupiter is now “dead within” (*Prometheus Unbound*, 780, I.72).

Another difference between Shelley’s Prometheus and Milton’s Satan is that Prometheus has sympathy towards his oppressor while Satan only has hate. Prometheus has a change of heart, while Satan feels guilt and empathy towards God, only for a brief moment. Prometheus pities Jupiter and begins to have a change of heart, feeling angry to having compassion for him.
Milton’s Satan has the same feelings of guilt, shame, repentance, and compassion, but he does not change for the better. Satan only had a momentary lapse of sympathy and repenting; he does not eradicate all hate and evil inside him, but instead the hate and evil come back stronger. Satan states:

O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy Spheare;
Till Pride and worse Ambition threw me down
Warring in Heav’n against Heav’ns matchless King;
Ah wherefore! He deservd no such return
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright eminence…
What could be less then to afford him praise,
The easiest recompence, and pay him thanks,
Nay curs’d be thou; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
Me miserable!...To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav’n.
O then at last relent: is there no place
Left for repentance, none for Pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the spirits beneath, whom I seduc’d
With other promises and other vaunts
Then to submit…So farwel Hope, and with Hope farwel Fear,
Farwel Remorse: all Good to me is lost;
Evil be thou my Good; by thee at least
Divided Empire with Heav’ns King I hold
By thee, and more then half perhaps well reign;
As Man ere long, and this new World shall know. (Milton 442-444, IV. 37-113)

Satan is feeling guilty about starting a war in heaven with God when his hate towards God was undeserved. He made himself and the other one-third of the rebel angels miserable because of his ingratitude. This shows Satan has a conscience. He knows that God does not deserve this and wishes things could go back to the way they were. He discerns that all he needs to do is repent, bow down to God again, and return to giving gratitude. Yet his pride gets in the way and this condition remains inaccessible. He cannot achieve it, even though he sees it easily. This is
the trap of leadership. Satan finds it hard to acknowledge the error of his ways and repent because it affects not only him, but his followers as well. He has leadership responsibilities. Satan knows he needs to submit and love God genuinely, and he cannot do that because of the trap of leadership and the business of sin itself. It is easier to sin than to pull back, repent, and be deprived of willpower. At the end of his speech, he reaffirms his vengeance against God and his creations and seeks to destroy them. This is where Milton’s Satan differs from Shelley’s Prometheus. Instead of apologizing to God, his feeling of hatred has rekindled. Shelley’s Prometheus does not take revenge against Jupiter but immediately tries to aid humankind.

Prometheus is not just one character but embodies two characters in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. In the beginning of *Prometheus Unbound*, Prometheus is like Satan because he wants revenge against his tyrannical ruler, Jupiter. Then he mirrors the Son of God because he forgives Jupiter. He does not want “any living thing to suffer pain” and he wants to save humankind (*Prometheus Unbound*, 787, I.305). Mercury comes down to ask Prometheus what is Jupiter’s fate because he is the only one who knows. When Prometheus does not tell him, he is tortured by the furies and is shown the state of the modern world. Yet, he still bears no hate or revenge towards Jupiter, only compassion. When he says he does not want any being to suffer pain, his transformation from hate to compassion is complete. Prometheus understands that he committed a crime and gave Jupiter the power to rule. In continuing to detest Jupiter, he continues to grant Jupiter power over him. When Prometheus finally stops hating Jupiter after 3,000 years, he stops contributing to Jupiter’s tyranny. The Chorus asks Prometheus “Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken’dst for man” (*Prometheus Unbound*, 794, I.542)? This shows that he manifests some qualities of the Son of God since he transforms into a hero for mankind.
Conversely, Milton’s Satan acknowledges he committed a crime against God, but does not stop abhorring God, and becomes the enemy of mankind.

This is a statement about Shelley’s political beliefs towards the French Revolution, government, and the Son of God. The freedom that is leading France from tyranny, and at the same time is leading the world from Jupiter is Prometheus and the idea of removing the monarchy. Spirits tell Prometheus his prophecy and that he will end the reign of Jupiter and all human suffering. Prometheus is being likened to the Son of God figure so he can save all of man. Prometheus saves man from suffering and allows them to be free. This sheds light on Shelley’s feelings towards the French Revolution and the reign of King Charles I. Prometheus is the symbol for human freedom, freedom from tyranny, and freedom from monarchy. Images of the Son of God’s crucifixion appear as well as images of the French Revolution. The topic of the French Revolution emerges when the Chorus states: “See! A disenchanted Nation / … To truth its state, is dedicate, / And Freedom leads it forth, her mate” (Prometheus Unbound, 795, I.567-70). Abrams and Greenblatt believe that the nation is normally recognized as France (Footnote 9, 795). Linda Lewis in The Promethean Politics of Milton, Blake, and Shelley affirms that Shelley “believed that government…is a necessary evil, and that the political regimes of all major European countries abridge human rights and make slaves of the masses. Remove kings and bishops, disband standing armies and abolish the aristocracy…and the world will be a better place” (6). By allowing Jupiter to have divine fire Prometheus is not a tyrant. Prometheus is the representative for all of humankind which is evidence of Shelley’s political beliefs.

Milton’s Satan echoes his own radical stance against the tyranny of King Charles, and for most Romanticists Satan is the hero of Paradise Lost. Lewis believes that “Milton subverted the tradition by having multiple Prometheus figures in Paradise Lost” (5). There is the Satan who is
the rebel, the Son of God who is the savior of the human race, and Adam who is Satan’s negative counterpart. Shelley’s Prometheus represents his own radical stance against the tyranny of King Charles, the monarchy, and all forms of government. Prometheus changes his ways and ends up as the hero of *Prometheus Unbound* by representing the freedom of man. However, Prometheus still has blundered in many ways. Prometheus carries the burden that he caused human suffering when he gave Jupiter the power. Instead of keeping the power for himself and being the tyrannical ruler, as Milton’s Satan would have done, he entrusted his power to Jupiter. This mistake makes Prometheus worthy of blame for the state of the modern world. Prometheus becomes the savior only when he understands “that rightful self-esteem negates the necessity for a paternalistic ruler of the universe and allows the regenerative power of love to create a paradise on earth” (Lewis 168). Shelley ends *Prometheus Unbound* with the hope of a new era, of a new Eden. This is due to the use of Prometheus’ powers for good instead of evil.

Throughout *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley views slavehood in the same way as Blake views selfhood. Shelley views slavehood as a “condition of the mind” (Lewis 162). So any kind of liberation must be an effect of the mind (Lewis 162). Prometheus is a rebel and a slave to Jupiter and Jupiter is a tyrant, rebel, and slave to his own vices. Shelley reverses the “Miltonic universe” when Jupiter is all three: a tyrant, rebel, and slave at the same time when Milton’s God is none of these, and Prometheus is not a rebel or tyrant when Milton’s Satan is clearly both (Lewis 162). Shelley believed that to overcome oppression is “to hope, till Hope creates / From its own wreck the thing it contemplates” (*Prometheus Unbound*, 814, IV.573-74). Satan could not reign in heaven and he made his “own wreck,” which is hell (*Prometheus Unbound*, 814, IV.573). Satan says to Beelzebub, “Here at least / We shall be free…Here we may reign secure”
Here in hell Satan will make his own kingdom, and not have to obey God or God’s son. Satan will make a heaven out of hell which is a condition of the mind.

Once Jupiter’s reign was over, men have no kings and are free. This again states Shelley’s view against the monarchy. Men are “Exempt from awe, worship, degree” (Prometheus Unbound, 813, III.IV.196). Men are not in slavehood which is a condition of the mind but are now able to be unrestricted and liberated. The Spirit of the Hour tells of the change in the human world after Jupiter was overthrown: “The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains / Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed- but man: / Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless” (Prometheus Unbound, 813, III.IV.193-95). In the final act Demogorgon tells everyone that “Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom and Endurance” allowed them to overtake Jupiter (Prometheus Unbound, 814, IV.562). Demogorgon reminds us that:

If, with infirm hand, Eternity,  
Mother of many acts and hours, should free  
The serpent that would clasp her with his length—  
These are the spells by which to reassume  
An empire o’er the disentangled Doom. (Prometheus Unbound, 814, IV.565-69)

The serpent will always try to break loose and try to ruin humanity and make them fall all over again (Abrams and Greenblatt Footnote 7, 814). Demogorgon ends that the reigning Titan, Prometheus, is “Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free; / This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory” (Prometheus Unbound, 814, IV.577-78). Prometheus Unbound ends with a new golden age about to occur which gives hope to man that he can be saved.

The main difference between Milton’s Satan and Shelley’s Prometheus is that Shelley gave Prometheus more respectable virtues and morals. Prometheus being chained to a rock, with the help of the spirits, breaks the curse and reverses it. This is why Prometheus Unbound ends with Prometheus’ triumph as the true hero. Milton’s Satan and Shelley’s Prometheus are the
same in that they are fighting against the world, but Satan loses his heroic status when he transforms into a serpent and takes revenge on God by corrupting Adam and Eve. This makes Satan an enemy to the human race. Maud Bodkin, a critic of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, states in *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* that “The theme of his heroic struggle and endurance against hopeless odds wakens in poet and reader a sense of his own state as against the odds of his destiny” (234). Prometheus is exactly the opposite. Both Milton’s Satan and Shelley’s Prometheus struggle with a God who is all-powerful. God is able to overthrow Satan effortlessly in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. In Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*, Jupiter is not able to overpower the will of Prometheus (Bodkin 252-53).

Shelley also wrote the essay “A Defense of Poetry” in 1821 which was supposed to be written in three parts, however only the first part was ever written (Abrams and Greenblatt “A Defense of Poetry” 837). In “A Defense of Poetry,” Shelley outlines what a poet is and the qualities that all great poems should represent. He used countless examples from Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to prove his argument. In “A Defense of Poetry,” Shelley wrote:

> The distorted notions of invisible things which Dante and his rival Milton have idealized, are merely the mask and the mantle in which these great poets walk through eternity enveloped and disguised. It is a difficult question to determine how far they were conscious of the distinction which must have subsisted in their minds between their own creeds and that of the people... Milton’s poem contains within itself a philosophical refutation of that system, of which, by a strange and natural antithesis, it has been a chief popular support. (27)

Shelley claims that both Milton and Dante were secret heretics by idealizing “distorted notions of invisible things” which were “the mask and the mantle in which these great poets walk through eternity enveloped and disguised” (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 27). He is not concerned with figuring out if Milton intended or did not intend for these effects of *Paradise Lost*, but to establish that Milton’s *Paradise Lost* is what he deems as high poetry (Franta 132). Shelley
believes that “indirection masks the author’s true intentions…[which] allow[s] divergent interpretations of his central convictions” (Franta 134). From this viewpoint, Shelley portrays himself as the “proper judge” of Milton… [and] is “offering himself as the heir and interpreter” of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (Franta 134).

Shelley viewed poetry as different from reason and believed that some of the greatest poetry ever written was only a fraction of the original idea of the poet (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 39). He believed that poetry is divine and that it should bring about moral good. This can be seen in Prometheus Unbound where Prometheus, a Titan, brings about moral good and stops human suffering. Shelley claimed that “anything can exist in the perceiver’s mind,” he focused on how Milton formulated *Paradise Lost* (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 39):

The toil and the delay recommended by critics can be justly interpreted to mean no more than a careful observation of the inspired moments, and an artificial connection of the spaces between their suggestions by the intertexture of conventional expressions… for Milton conceived the ‘Paradise Lost’ as a whole before he executed it in portions. We have his own authority also for the Muse having ‘dictated’ to him the ‘unpremeditated song.’ (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry 39)

Milton conceived of *Paradise Lost* directly, via the senses of sight and hearing. He had dreams in which his muse told him to write it. This is one reason why Milton is a great poet to Shelley, because poetry is the “Expression of the Imagination: and poetry is connate with the origin of man” (“Shelley A Defense of Poetry” 2). Milton had *Paradise Lost* inherent in his mind by having the voice of the Poetic Genius inside him. He has the “faculty of approximation,” and it is his duty to express to society the “pleasure and its cause,” which he does in the form of *Paradise Lost* (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 3). Shelley believed that poetry was another being inside the poet which allowed the poet to perceive, to imagine, and to know (“A Defense of Poetry” 42). This “Fragmented being makes the whole soul of man” and “reproduces the
common universe” which makes poetry a “hidden unit of history” (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 42; White 5). Milton writes *Paradise Lost* to recreate the history of Christianity and rectify the errors of *The Bible*. This idea of poetry being another entity inside the poet is also representative of the voice of the Poetic Genius.

Shelley uses one of Satan’s speeches as an example to support his idea that “all things exist as they are perceived: at least in relation to the percipient” (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 42). Satan states in *Paradise Lost* that “The mind is its own place, and in it self / Can make a Heav’n of Hell, a Hell of Heav’n” (Milton 362, I.254-55). Poetry allows a poet not to be exposed to surrounding impressions (“From A Defense of Poetry” 848). In *Paradise Lost*, Satan did not let his situation, location, or God’s defeat deceive him. If he could not reign in heaven, he would make a heaven out of hell: “Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav’n” (Milton 362, I.263). This attests to Shelley’s claim that anything can exist in the perceiver’s mind, as long as you will it and perceive it to exist.

Shelley continues praising Milton and Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*. In his judgment of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* he deemed:

Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in *Paradise Lost*. It is a mistake to suppose that he could ever have been intended for the popular personification of evil. Implacable hate, patient cunning, and a sleepless refinement of device to inflict the extremest anguish on an enemy, these things are evil; and, although venial in a slave, are not to be forgiven in a tyrant; although redeemed by much that ennobles his defeat in one subdued, are marked by all that dishonors his conquest in the victor. Milton’s Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God, as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and torture is to one who in the cold security of undisputed triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy, not from any mistaken notion of inducing him to repent of a perseverance in enmity, but with the alleged design of exasperating him to deserve new torments. Milton has so far violated the popular creed (if this shall be judge to be a violation) as to have alleged no superiority of moral virtue to his God over his Devil. (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 27)
This demonstrates that Shelley believes that no other character can surpass Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Satan is unassailable as the hero of *Paradise Lost*. Shelley praises Satan and critiques God and God’s Son, given that no character can exceed Satan, since there is no “superiority of moral virtue” in them (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 27). Satan is still determined, even though he has many adversities as his penance from God. Shelley listed Satan’s qualities above which allow him to go above and beyond to personify only evil. Milton made Satan more attractive than any of the other characters in the epic poem, and even though Satan does not succeed, his “unconquerable will” still prospers (Milton 357, I.106). Shelley believed that Milton’s genius is his neglect of moral purpose (“A Defense of Poetry” 27). Here, Shelley emphasizes what Milton intended, what readers think of Milton’s neglect of moral purpose, and the effects of this neglect (Franta 132). The effect of Milton’s neglect causes a reversal of Christian history, where Satan and not the Son of God is the epic hero of *Paradise Lost*.

Shelley’s argument here is also seen in another essay he wrote called “On the Devil and Devils” where he applauds Milton’s Satan because Milton “exposes the injustice and impotent weakness of his adversary” (5). Shelley believes that all of Satan’s qualities are owed to Milton. This is because, in Shelley’s view, Dante and Tasso represented a disgusting and unpleasant idea of Satan, while Milton presented Satan with “a sting, hoofs, and horns, clothed him with the sublime grandeur of a graceful but tremendous spirit—and restored him to the society” (“On the Devil and Devils” 6). Shelley believes Milton gave Satan some noble qualities such as the defender of the oppressed and rebelling against God, the monarch. Milton is the first to explain Satan’s rebellion against God. These qualities of Milton’s Satan were also in alignment with Shelley’s own political views. This is why when Shelley wrote *Prometheus Unbound*, he kept some of Milton’s qualities that he wanted Prometheus, his Satan character, to express. Shelley is
comparing himself to Satan in “On the Devil and Devils,” Prometheus in *Prometheus Unbound*, and Milton’s Satan because he is a defender of the oppressed which is shown through his political activity and his writings.

Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound* and “A Defense on Poetry” are like Blake’s “Marriage” and *Milton* because they all give a nod to Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*. They all show anti-authoritarian, non-conformist, and religious dissenting views. *Prometheus Unbound* and *Milton* are related because of the shared view of Spectres. In *Prometheus Unbound*, Prometheus could not remember the curse and no living entity wanted to repeat it. Therefore, Prometheus calls up Jupiter’s ghost who finally repeats the curse. Jupiter’s ghost is a representation of Blake’s idea of serpent selfhood and emanations. Prometheus’ emanation is Jupiter’s ghost. This idea of emanations can be seen in Blake’s *Milton* where Satan’s female counterpart, Leutha, curses him to perform actions without his consciousness of them. Leutha is Satan’s emanation just like Jupiter’s ghost is Prometheus’ emanation.

In “Marriage,” *Milton*, and *Prometheus Unbound* Blake and Shelley both try to reconcile the contraries of good and evil. Both continue to be at a constant struggle which is stated by Demogorgon in the final act of *Prometheus Unbound*. In *Milton*, Milton realizes the evil in *Paradise Lost* by making Satan attractive, and he goes to eternal death to rid himself of his serpent selfhood. In “Marriage” Blake tries to reconcile good and evil by stating that both are necessary for human existence. Another comparison between *Prometheus Unbound*, “Marriage,” and *Milton* is that Blake and Shelley both create a new mythology to incorporate their religious and political liberty. Also in Blake’s “Marriage” and *Milton*, and in Shelley’s “A Defense of Poetry” and *Prometheus Unbound* they all rework the character of Satan, and make him the hero of each of the former specified works.
Conclusion

William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley have both critiqued Milton’s *Paradise Lost* on multiple levels. My investigations were concentrated on their critiques of the character Satan in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. In Blake’s section “Marriage,” an eleven-page poem, *Milton*, an epic poem, and his relief-etching illustrations were examined. In Shelley’s section *Prometheus Unbound*, a closet lyrical drama, and “A Defense of Poetry,” an essay, were examined. Both Romanticists believed that Satan was the true hero of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. I concluded that Blake and Shelley both tried to surpass Milton by creating their own, corrected versions of Milton’s Satan. It is also worth noting that these imperfections Blake and Shelley found with Milton’s Satan can be realized in other characters in *Paradise Lost* such as Eve, Adam, and the Son of God. Blake and Shelley execute a Romantic revision of Milton’s idea of heroism in *Paradise Lost*.

In the chapter “William Blake’s Poetry,” I analyzed “Marriage” and *Milton*. In “Marriage” Blake retells the expulsion of Satan from Heaven in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The section “The Voice of the Devil” is a “diabolical reading of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*” (Abrams and Greenblatt Footnote 5, 112). This poem allows the reader to go on a spiritual journey through hell just as Satan did in *Paradise Lost*. Blake believed that all bibles and sacred codes have errors; due to this he created his own *Bible* which he calls “The Bible of Hell” which is his works collected together (“Marriage” 112, Pl.4, 1). He reads *Paradise Lost* as a “history of restraint and desire” which is shown between the struggle concerning Satan and God (Knoppers and Semenza 8). Blake believed that you achieve freedom when you rebel against society, and in *Paradise Lost*, Satan yearns for his freedom. Blake sees himself as the Devil and believes that “a new heaven is begun” and the “Eternal Hell revives” (“Marriage” 111, Pl.3, 1-4). Blake’s
critique of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* is summarized when he states that Milton “wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it” (“Marriage” 182).

In Blake’s *Milton*, John Milton is the main character whose spirit awakens in heaven after hearing the bard’s song. He realizes his errors in making Satan the hero of *Paradise Lost* and goes to Earth to amend them. The main focus was on the bard’s song in *Milton* since that deals with Milton’s imperfections on how he created Satan. Blake creates a different version of Satan’s fall through the bard’s song. One grave difference is that in Blake’s reworking of Satan, he does not cause his fall. Satan’s female counterpart, Leutha, came forward and stated that she caused all of Satan’s sins. In *Paradise Lost*, Satan is brought down by his hubris. Blake recreates Satan’s fall to show his sympathy towards Satan.

Another imperfection Blake found was some of the qualities that Milton’s Satan had. Blake’s Satan is depicted multiple times as being mild, caring, and loving which is a blatant contrast to Milton’s Satan who is evil, corrupted, and prideful. In the end, Satan has allegedly done evil things, and his brother calls an assembly meeting where Satan declared himself the true God (Robert Essic and Joseph Viscomi “Milton” 127 Pl.7, 26-27). This mirrors the actions of Milton’s Satan when he calls a devil’s council meeting in Hell.

At the end of *Milton*, Blake’s message is that in every person there is a serpent-selfhood, Satan, which needs to be destroyed so the person can see the infinite. This is required for the person to be a prophet. In *Milton*, Milton recognized his serpent selfhood when writing *Paradise Lost* and was now able to see the infinite.

Blake’s illustrations of *Paradise Lost* show that he viewed Satan as the true hero. His illustrations normally represent one scene from each book. Blake focused mainly on Satan, God,
Adam, and Eve which is because they are all closely related to Satan’s fall. He draws Satan as grandiose and powerful as he is represented in *Paradise Lost*. I analyzed all his illustrations dealing with Satan. Throughout all of them, Satan’s unconquerable will is shown. This can be seen in Milton’s Satan when he states: “All is not lost; the unconquerable Will” (Milton 357, I.106). He never gives up and is always thinking of his next move on how he will take his revenge on God. Blake’s illuminated printings show that he believed Satan to be the true hero of *Paradise Lost* by making Satan’s actions the focal point in most of his drawings.

Shelley also believed Milton’s Satan was the hero. However, he too felt Milton made some imperfections with his Satan. This is shown in his work *Prometheus Unbound*. Prometheus is a Titan who is chained to a rock in a dark abyss. This resembles Milton’s Satan falling into Hell. Shelley stated in the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound* that:

> The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement, which, in the hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest. (776)

Shelley makes Prometheus exempt from Milton’s Satan’s characteristics. He takes Prometheus and, instead of his wanting revenge when he breaks free from his chains, he forgives Jupiter. Prometheus becomes the savior of humankind, taking all of their pain and suffering away, which he gave Jupiter the power to do—but he used it instead for his own benefit. Shelley ended *Prometheus Unbound* with Jupiter being overthrown and with the hope of a new era, of a new Eden. This is possible because Prometheus uses his powers for good instead of evil. Even though Prometheus resembles Milton’s Son of God in the end, he still resembles Milton’s Satan as well. Prometheus is able to go further with his plan because his egotistical qualities do not hinder him.
In Shelley’s essay “A Defense of Poetry” he explicitly states that Milton is one of the greatest poets who has ever lived. He also states that Milton’s Satan is the unmistakable hero of Paradise Lost. He believed that:

Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in Paradise Lost. It is a mistake to suppose that he could ever have been intended for the popular personification of evil. Implacable hate, patient cunning, and a sleepless refinement of device to inflict the extremest anguish on an enemy, these things are evil… victor. Milton’s Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God. (Shelley “A Defense of Poetry” 27)

There is no question in Shelley’s mind that Satan is the hero of Paradise Lost. Milton’s Son of God, who is supposed to be the true hero, does not even come into Shelley’s purview since Satan’s character is too grandiose.

Blake and Shelley both transcended Milton’s Paradise Lost by creating their own versions of Satan. Blake and Shelley both end optimistically with a new era, be it Eden or Heaven. They both have characters that represent Satan, and they give him new qualities. These new virtues heighten their characters and make Satan enhanced and superior to Milton’s Satan. One concept of the Romantic Movement was originality. This meant looking back to the past and reworking and romanticizing it. This is what Blake and Shelley both did with Milton’s Paradise Lost.

An area for further development in my thesis is increasing the amount of works studied for each author. I only analyzed two works from Blake and Shelley with the exception of Blake’s illustrations on Paradise Lost. More information about what Blake and Shelley thought of Satan could be likely found in Blake’s other prophetic books or Shelley’s poems. Another area that could have an impact on the outcome of my thesis is only analyzing one genre, instead of analyzing multiple for an all-encompassing and comprehensive outlook.

All three poet-prophets claimed that they wrote some of their work due to the visions
they had. This could either be a religious vision or it could be a medical condition. If a scholar looked into their medical history and series of visions, this might lead to a diagnosis of a mental disorder called schizophrenia. If this is true for any of the three poets in question, this would put a weakness in my argument. Steven W. Collins, author of *Puramore - The Lute of Pythagoras*, stated that William Wordsworth allegedly commented on Blake’s visions: “There was no doubt that this poor man was mad, but there is something in the madness of this man which interests me more than the sanity of Lord Byron and Walter Scott” (xi).

Blake, Milton, and Shelley were all political and religious activists. I showed that all three of them had political contexts to their work. This is shown by Milton’s epic poem *Paradise Lost* which is about the English Revolution since it occurred when he wrote the poem. Milton wanted to fight against the Stuart monarchy and their corrupt political system so *Paradise Lost* is a critique of the monarchy as well. This is evident in Blake’s poem “Marriage.” Blake did not believe in organized religion and he is also commenting on his abhorrence of the Church of England. The Devil rebels against an imposter deity who is symbolic of God. He was also inspired by the French and American Revolutions which can be seen in examples referencing these revolutions in his epic poem *Milton* and “Marriage.” He felt that the church officials and leaders were corrupting religion and taking them away from God. It is also shown by Shelley when he wrote *Prometheus Unbound*, because he relates it to the French Revolution. Shelley wanted to abolish the aristocracy. His main character, Prometheus, abolished the tyranny and then negated it by freeing humankind of all pain and suffering.

Blake and Shelley both viewed Milton’s Satan as the hero in *Paradise Lost*. However, when they wrote their own poems, essays, and books they did not view these imperfections equally. Blake found five imperfections in Milton’s Satan. The first imperfection was that
Milton approved of the devil instead of the Christian God. He was not consciously aware that he sided with the devil. The second imperfection was that Milton was in a state of serpent selfhood when writing *Paradise Lost*. Blake made his epic poem *Milton* to resolve this by allowing his main character John Milton to recognize his serpent selfhood on a spiritual journey. Milton’s third imperfection was how the Son of God was depicted in *Paradise Lost*. Blake felt that the Son of God should be viewed with the qualities of a devil instead of being compared to God. He rectified this imperfection in the “Marriage of Heaven and Hell” when it was stated that the Son of God broke all Ten Commandments and does not live life by reason but off impulses. The penultimate imperfection was how Milton described Satan’s fall. He fixed this in the bard’s song when Satan fell in *Milton* which was not brought on by himself, but his female counterpart, Leutha. The last imperfection Blake found in Milton’s Satan was some of his qualities that were ascribed to him. Blake reversed all of Satan’s negative qualities in *Paradise Lost* which makes Satan more agreeable and admirable in *Milton*.

Shelley found that Milton’s tragic hero was inadequate and therefore he created his own type of hero which allows the hero to choose his own destiny. Another imperfection was the qualities of Milton’s Satan. Shelley surpassed Milton’s Satan by allowing Prometheus to use his powers for good instead of evil and giving him qualities one would find in Milton’s Son of God. Shelley created Prometheus without the quality of hubris. Prometheus saved all of humankind instead of being an enemy like Milton’s Satan was to humankind. The last imperfection Shelley found in Milton’s Satan was that he only wanted to advance himself when rebelling against God. Shelley remedies this by creating Prometheus who rebels against authority, Jupiter, and does this to advance and save humankind from suffering.
Blake and Shelley did not retain all of Satan’s qualities from Milton’s *Paradise Lost* when they created their own characters of Satan. This was due to their insightful readings of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* since they believed Milton’s Satan had certain weaknesses. Blake and Shelley both improved the qualities of Satan and made their own Satanic hero. This improves upon the Satanic tradition, enhancing the character of Satan so he appears in a beneficial and endearing light.
William Blake’s Plates of *Paradise Lost*

*Paradise Lost* I: “Satan Calling Up His Legions”. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery (pen and water color). The Thomas Set, Object 1 (Butlin 529.1). © *Courtesy of the Huntington Art Collections, San Marino, California.*
Paradise Lost II: “Satan, Sin, and Death: Satan Comes to the Gates of Hell”. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery (pen and water color). The Thomas Set, Object 2 (Butlin 529.2). © Courtesy of the Huntington Art Collections, San Marino, California.
Paradise Lost IV: “Satan Spying on Adam and Eve and Raphael’s Descent into Paradise”.
Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery (pen and water color). The Thomas Set, Object 4 (Butlin 529.4). © Courtesy of the Huntington Art Collections, San Marino, California.
Paradise Lost V: “Satan Watching the Endearments of Adam and Eve”. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery (pen and water color). The Thomas Set, Object 5 (Butlin 529.5). © Courtesy of the Huntington Art Collections, San Marino, California.
Paradise Lost IX: “The Temptation and Fall of Eve”. Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery (pen and water color). The Thomas Set, Object 9 (Butlin 529.9). © Courtesy of the Huntington Art Collections, San Marino, California.
Bibliography


---. Footnote 5. Abrams and Greenblatt 112.


---. “Prometheus Unbound.” Abrams and Greenblatt 775.


---. “The Reason of Church Government Urg’d Against Prelaty.” Ed. Thomas H. Luxon. The


Werner, Bette Charlene. *Blake’s Vision of the Poetry of Milton: Illustrations to Six Poems.*


