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Milton and evil in disguise

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MILTON AND EVIL IN DISGUISE

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INTRODUCTION

One of Milton's primary concerns was the idea of evil in disguise, which reveals its true nature in hypocrisy and in its cunning subversion of individual reason by appealing to the passions. Disguised evil most notably manifests itself in Comus, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained. I propose to treat this aspect of evil in these three works, and its effects upon the characters who encounter it. Furthermore, I propose to show that Milton's artistic treatment of disguised evil reflects his belief that it is the duty of the individual to rise above evil in any form, and to assert, as Albert W. Fields argues, his self-like-God aspect, or his noble and rational being.

Concern over the nature of disguised evil is deeply rooted in Christian culture. In the first century B.C., Cicero declares in "The Offices" that one of the ways "which one man may injure or oppress another" is by "fraud and subtlety." Such deception, says Cicero, "esteemed the part of a fox." And although a man may also be injured or oppressed by "open force and violence," Cicero holds that "fraud . . . is the more odious of the two." Later, in the fourth century A.D.,

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Saint Augustine writes in his *Confessions* that "There are some who lead us astray by means of philosophy and who use that great and pleasant and honorable name as a disguise or artificial coloring for their own errors." This early awareness of disguised evil echoes down the ensuing centuries, and eventually finds expression in many works of English Literature. A striking example is Chaucer's Pardoner who pretends religious sincerity, but is a diabolically subtle hypocrite: "a serpent prepared to sting, silently, swiftly, with his tongue."

In the course of time, the theme of disguised evil also became of absorbing interest to writers of the Renaissance. Curtis B. Watson observes, for instance, that the Renaissance fear of "the vice of fraud and deceit" often caused these "classical moralists to write endless pages of advice as to how the true friend could be distinguished from the flatterer and false one." Even the love poetry of the period reflects a related motive. For example, Michael Drayton's sonnet "Three Sorts of Serpents Do Resemble Thee" shows concern for the deceptive nature of evil, as it is revealed in feminine duplicity.

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Drayton says, with obvious contempt,

Three sorts of serpents do resemble thee:

That dangerous eye-killing cockatrice,

The enchanting siren, which doth so entice,

The weeping crocodile -- these vile pernicious three.

The contemptuous use of serpent imagery to describe woman's guile also suggests the most famous serpent-lady of the Renaissance, Spenser's Duessa.

Duessa's role in *The Faerie Queene* brings the deceptive nature of evil glaringly into view. For instance, after her companion, Sansfoy, is killed in battle with the Red Cross Knight, Duessa, while fleeing the scene, contrives the guise of Fidessa (i.e., true Faith) to deceive Red Cross. According to Kellogg and Steele, Duessa "represents all that is imperfect, chaotic, earthly, and evil." But the most diabolic example of disguised evil is Archimago who, after hoodwinking Red Cross and Una in his fraudulent appearance as hermit, later "throws off his disguise and becomes Archimago, the evil magician." Further evidence of Archimago's deception is seen in the fact that, although he shatters Red Cross' faith by confronting him with the magical illusion of Una (i.e., Truth) in the arms of a squire, Archimago "plots more cruelty

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and . . . disguises himself as the Red Cross Knight." In his characterization of both Duessa and Archimago, therefore, Spenser reflects the intense Renaissance interest in the nature of disguised evil -- an interest which later found artistic expression in the writings of another Renaissance giant, Shakespeare.

A. C. Bradley sees the theme of disguised evil uniquely represented in the two Shakespearean tragedies, King Lear and Othello. In King Lear this motif takes on repulsive dimensions in the treacherous character of both Goneril and Regan -- others, too, but these more especially -- who merely pretend filial devotion to their father, the aging King Lear. The deceitful character of Goneril and Regan leads Bradley to conclude that King Lear "is the tragedy in which evil is shown in the greatest abundance; and the evil characters are peculiarly repellent for their hard savagery, and because so little good is mingled with their evil." Turning his attention to the disarming two-sidedness of Iago in Othello, Bradley contends that "Evil has no where else been portrayed with such mastery as in the character of Iago." He is able to keep his real self hidden from Othello, whose unsuspecting nature he can so easily manipulate, as well as from his wife, Emilia,

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8 Ibid., p. 18

9 A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (Greenwich, Conn., 1966), p. 251.

10 Ibid., p. 173.
who never once suspects that it is Iago who has poisoned Othello's mind against the innocent Desdemona. "Even if Iago had betrayed much more of his true self to his wife than to others," continues Bradley, "it would make no difference to the contrast between his true self and the self he presented to the world in general."^{11}

These Shakespearean characters, then, Goneril, Regan, and Iago strikingly mirror for Bradley the shocking nature of disguised evil. The theme of disguised evil is thus important in the Renaissance, with some writers particularly aware of the awesome dimensions which evil can assume. As a Renaissance man, Milton was also conscious of evil's prodigious capacity to disguise itself, not only in reigning rulers but also in religious affairs. Beyond this Milton, a dedicated moralist interested in the struggle of good and evil, had a deep-seated knowledge that Adam and Eve's Fall from Paradise was due to their inability to distinguish disguised evil. Hence disguised evil acquired a broader and a more profound significance in both the prose and poetry of the great Renaissance poet, John Milton.

In The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, for example, Milton argues that the parliamentary law prohibiting divorce "is no law, but sin muffled in the robe of law, or law disguised in the loose garment of sin."^{12} Thus the parliamentary dogmatism that does not allow the

^{11}Ibid., p. 180.

separation of two incompatible individuals is another form of evil in disguise, because although it purports to do a good, by keeping unhappy persons together, the law is actually evil because it unwittingly encourages adultery among those who desire divorce. In addition, Milton warns in this same work that disguised evil is often masked in an enticing appearance: "and who knows not that the bashful muteness of a virgin may oft-times hide all the unliveliness and natural sloth which is really unfit for conversation?"13

This ironic discrepancy between appearance and reality was particularly odious to Milton, the disillusioned bridegroom, who was unhappy in his marriage to the young Mary Powell.14 Hence it is not surprising when, in the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, Milton again develops the motif of disguised evil in the ancient myth of true Love's search for his closely resembling brother, Anteros. True Love's fate in the quest for his brother, says Milton, "is to meet with many false and feigning desires that wander singly up and down in his likeness." But true Love soon penetrates appearances and "darts out the direct rays of his then most piercing eyesight upon the impostures and trim disguises that were used with him, and discerns

13Ibid., p. 708.

14For more insight into the unhappiness that characterized Milton's marriage see James Hanford's John Milton, Englishman (New York, 1949).
that this is not his genuine brother, as he imagined."\(^15\) This emphasis on disguised evil soon finds expression in Milton's *Areopagitica*, where he argues adamantly for freedom of the press.

*Areopagitica* was written in response to the parliamentary dictum that all books must be approved and licensed by parliament. To Milton, such a restriction on freedom of expression was tantamount to censorship, and in *Areopagitica* he took the position that "books are as meats and viands are -- some of good, some of evil substance." In addition to his revelation that evil, as well as good, may be found in books, Milton also implies the existence of disguised evil in his recognition that seldom is there a discernible cleavage between good and evil: "Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably." But the true Christian, says Milton, is "He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain."\(^16\)

The awareness of disguised evil, moreover, is even reflected in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, where Milton cautions his countrymen against the evil manifested in "the notorious hypocrisy and self-repugnance of our dancing divines" who transform "the sacred verity of God to an idol with two faces, looking . . . two several ways."\(^17\)


Later on, the theme of disguised evil appears in Eikonoklastes in the disparity between the noble portrait of King Charles I, set forth in a book by the king, and the ignoble King Charles that Englishmen had come to know. In this connection, Milton dismisses with scorn "the conceited portraiture before his book," and urges Englishmen not to adore "the image and memory of this man who hath offered at more cunning fetches to undermine our liberties, and put tyranny into an art, than any British king before him."\(^{18}\) In short, Milton sees in King Charles I the dangerous incarnation of evil in disguise, whose cunning nature we again meet in both A Treatise of Civil Power and in The Christian Doctrine.

In A Treatise of Civil Power, Milton declares that falsehood, "seducement," is to be overcome "by opposing truth to error . . . truth the strong to error the weak, though sly and shifting."\(^{19}\) Similarly, in The Christian Doctrine, Milton distinguishes between a good and an evil temptation, declaring that the former "serves the purpose of unmasking hypocrisy."\(^{20}\) The reference to hypocrisy here is a frank recognition that disguised evil does exist, and that it is often


\(^{19}\)Patterson, The Student's Milton, p. 873.

\(^{20}\)Hughes, John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, p. 988.
necessary to strip away the surface of things to ascertain the truth beneath -- a recognition that becomes a barbed criticism in The Means to Remove Hirelings Out of the Church. Here, Milton declares disdainfully that the religious devotion of some churchmen is a matter of appearance only, and that it is impossible to satisfy "the covetous pretenses . . . of insatiable hirelings." These false churchmen, who show more interest in lucrative reward than in serving God are fitting parallels to the false Judas, "the first hireling" who "for want of present hire answerable to his coveting . . . sold the religion itself with the founder thereof, his master."21

Milton's criticism of ecclesiastical corruption in The Means to Remove Hirelings echoes the disguised evil of the corrupt clergy in Lycidas who neglect the spiritual needs of the people, and,

for their bellies sake
Creep and intrude and climb into the fold?
Of other care they little reck'ning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest;
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least
That to the faithful Herdman's art belongs! (114-121)22

Furthermore, this cognizance of disguised evil in Lycidas eventually acquires greater depth in the shocking duplicity of Dalila in Samson Agonistes.

21 Ibid., p. 858.
Dalila is a shrewd, disarming faker whose true nature is not discovered until the very end when her departure from Samson -- after being soundly rebuffed for her treachery -- prompts the chorus's remark that, "She's gone, a manifest Serpent by her sting/Discover'd in the end till now conceal'd"\textsuperscript{23} (997-998). Dalila, then, is a living embodiment of disguised evil, of the "evil temptation" that Milton says, in \textit{The Christian Doctrine}, is instrumental in "unmasking hypocrisy."

The truth of this is borne out in the fact that Dalila's "evil" nature is finally distinguished, by both Samson and the Chorus, from her pseudo-sincerity and her seductive charm, and placed on the visible surface where it can be seen that naked coldness and indifference are her dominant traits.

If the motif of disguised evil is so prevalent in all of Milton's previously mentioned works, it would seem to follow that his persistent emphasis on concealed malice would acquire broader and deeper significance in his greatest artistic achievements. And so it does. \textit{Comus, Paradise Lost}, and \textit{Paradise Regained} subject disguised evil to more analysis than any other Miltonic poems. The purpose of this thesis, then, is first to examine in these three works the operation of disguised evil, and its appeal to the passions; and second, to illustrate that man is to

\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 314.
transcend evil and temptation through the exercise of his reason. For to paraphrase a Biblical commonplace, man has surely been placed "in" the world, but it does not necessarily follow that he should be "of" the world. Accordingly, Milton, who was steeped in Christian learning, certainly knew that because man is "in" the world, he will frequently be the object of subtle, as well as overt, evil and temptation. For as Milton declares in Areopagitica, "These things will be and must be"; thus the task is to discover "how they shall be least hurtful, how least enticing." But Milton also knew that the indispensable weapon deterring man from being "of" the world was his reason, which he bluntly defined in Areopagitica as the "freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing" between abstaining from tempting evil, disguised or otherwise, or succumbing to it.

Consequently, the approach here is moral-philosophical -- that is, the treatment of disguised evil assumes that the pervasive presence of this motif in Comus, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained has, at bottom, a moral or philosophical purpose. Simply put, the moral in these three works aims at revealing that evil abounds in the world, that it is spitefully disguised, or hypocritically wears the mask of truth and goodness. Moreover, a significant supplementary moral is that man's failure to remain virtuous, or to exercise his reason (the case of Adam and Eve), leads him to submit to the passionate appeals of disguised evil; whereas the assertion of reason (the case of the Lady in Comus and
and of Christ in *Paradise Regained*) results in defeat of this malicious force. Indeed, the whole intention of Milton's most famous work, *Paradise Lost*, is to develop a moral point: "to justify the ways of God to men." In addition, the Fall from Paradise is attributed to a moral flaw in Adam and Eve, to "Man's First Disobedience" of God's law. Thus to take a moral-philosophical approach to disguised evil in *Comus*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Paradise Regained* is significant because such an approach reveals that the ubiquitous presence of this motif in these three works is full of broad implications for man in the physical world.

I have divided my discussion into separate chapters on *Comus*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Paradise Regained*, respectively.

In the chapter on *Comus* I shall deal with the assault of disguised evil (personified in Comus's guise of a benevolent hermit) upon the inexperienced virtue and innocence of the Lady. An additional aim in this chapter is to show that, through reason, the Lady triumphs over Comus' attempt to arouse her passion to drink his "enchanted" wine. Next, in the chapter on *Paradise Lost*, I shall take up the varied dissimulations of disguised evil that are manifested in the malicious character of Satan. The object here is to reveal that every evil form that Satan assumes (as an angel in Eve's dream, as a toad at her ear, and, ultimately, as a serpent in the Garden), with the single exception of the angelic shape he adopts to deceive Uriel, is designed to spur Eve's passionate nature,
and to subvert her reason. Furthermore, I propose to show that, because of Eve's deficient reason, the disguised serpent easily inflames her passion to eat the forbidden fruit, both in her dream, and most significantly, in the Garden itself. Finally, in the chapter on Paradise Regained, I shall turn my attention to Christ who, while wandering in the Wilderness, encounters disguised evil at two distinct junctures. Satan first appears before Him as a rustic hermit, and later as a deceptive courtly figure. I shall attempt to demonstrate that in each of these cunning disguises Satan's intention is to arouse Christ's passion with one temptation after another; and that it is through exercise of reason, or Temperance, that Christ transcends the passionate exhortations of disguised evil.

The ingredients that combine to make a great literary work cannot possibly be condensed into a single, capsule statement. For such a work demands, among other things, an in depth consideration of artistic style and structure, the writer's vision of life, the universality of the writer's theme(s). It is in this latter sense, the universality of disguised evil, that I believe a treatment of this motif is most significant. In this sense, then, the disguised evil that surfaces in Comus, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained prefigures the hidden contempt that Montresor has for his unsuspecting friend, Fortunato, in Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado"; the concealed hatred, in The Scarlet Letter, that Roger Chillingworth harbors for the reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, because of the
minister's illicit involvement with his wife, Hester Prynne; and the undisclosed hatred, due to pride and jealousy, that the Duke has in his heart for his innocent wife in Browning's, My Last Duchess. Consequently, an analysis of disguised evil in Comus, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained, can only enhance our understanding of a significant Miltonic theme of universal dimensions.
CHAPTER I

COMUS

Milton says in *Areopagitica* "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue . . . that never sallies out and sees her adversary . . . ." In a real sense, the Lady in *Comus*, although unwittingly, sallies forth, in the darkness of the woods, to meet her enemy. For here she has a chance encounter with Comus disguised as a hermit, which makes it possible, as the above statement implies, for the Lady's virtue to be tried and tested. And if we also take Milton's position in *Areopagitica* that what "purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary," we can more fully comprehend Hanford's contention that "Comus represents the principle of passion in the soul, the Lady that of Reason." The Lady's meeting Comus in the woods, therefore, sets the stage for the dramatic clash between two opposing forces, reason and passion. It is of the disguised evil and passion in Comus, and the reason of the Lady, that I should now like to speak.

Maynard Mack says that one way to approach the character of Comus is to regard him as symbolic of evil "in its tempting disguises."
This is borne out at the end of Comus's night rendezvous with his "wily trains," when he hears the approach of unfamiliar footsteps in the darkness of the woods. He concludes that it is "Some virgin sure" (148), and states his evil intention to "hurl"

My dazzling spells into the spongy air,

Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,

And give it false presentments, lest the place

And my quaint habits breed astonishment,

And put the damsel to suspicious flight . . . (154-158)

The malicious design revealed here is the attempt to subvert the Lady's reason by resorting to trickery and deception, which lends credence to Maynard Mack's further statement that Comus "stands also for evil considered in its philosophical aspect as a perversion of the good: the misuse of the order of nature which makes the human being sink downward in the scale to the status of brute." The cunning means by which Comus hopes to bring the Lady to the unhappy state of showing "brute," or animal, passion, is by approaching her "under fair pretense of friendly ends," and by spurting arguments "Baited with reasons not un plausible" (162). In addition, "well-placed words of glozing courtesy" also figure prominently in the attempted seduction of the Lady. But if these strategems are to prove effective, Comus

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Ibid.
must first of all conceal his true identity from the Lady -- an intention revealed in the lines below:

When once her eye

Hath met the virtue of this magic dust

I shall appear some harmless villager . . . (164-166)

The success of Comus's mission, however, depends upon the extent to which he can undermine reason and arouse passion in the Lady, and upon the Lady's inability to recognize evil in disguise.

The Lady's knowledge of the corrupting ways of the world is apparently slight, for she does not immediately unmask the evil that Comus represents in the guise of a harmless shepherd. Moreover, the "Chaste Footing" with which the Lady enters the dark woods suggests her lack of familiarity with worldly trappings, a fact also implied in Sears Jayne's remark that "In the first scene . . . Reason is shown wandering in the dark wood of physical existence, where the principal danger is that she may succumb to either the appetitive or the irascible passions; . . ." But here it is necessary to point out at least two things. First, during the course of her search for the

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28 Mack, on p. 8 of Milton, says that "the forest through which the three children make their way home . . . is clearly in some sense an emblem of the perplexity and obscurity of mortal life, which constitutes God's trial of the soul."

two lost brothers, the Lady does not expect to encounter any cunning
deception or worldly temptation. Second, although the Lady is alone
in the darkness of the woods, she is comforted by her faith in the
inviolability of conscience. Consequently, her response to the mental
apparitions she experiences, "Of calling shapes, and beckoning
shadows dire" (207), is not one of defenselessness, but of deep
affirmation:

These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion, Conscience. (210-212)

And because she is secure in her faith in the power of reason,
or conscience, it does not much matter, when the Lady meets Comus
in the woods, that she is easily credulous in the face of his fraudulent
appearance as a "harmless villager." For, as D. W. Robertson
writes, "The reason should be subject to God, and 'sensuality,' or the desire for worldly satisfaction, should be subject to the reason."^{30}
The Lady is committed to the spiritual truth that resides in reason, and
her task is to reject the sensual indulgence, or the desire for worldly
satisfaction, to which the disguised Comus, against her better judgment,
would have her later succumb.

^{30}Chaucer Criticism: Volume II, ed. by Richard J. Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame, 1961), p. 90. Robertson's definition of "worldly satisfaction" is that it refers to the human desire for "sensuality," or for physical pleasure.
Moreover, the Lady is protected from moral laxity and threatening vices because the strength of her conviction will be sufficient to allow her untested virtue and reason to triumph over Comus's calculated stratagems to arouse her passion. "The theme of the masque," says Hanford, "is the unassailable security of the virtuous mind amid every circumstance of violence and wrong. For Milton in this period of his life the symbol of all virtue is chastity." Therefore with her faith in chastity, the Lady can "safely" be duped by the hermit-posing Comus when he says, in connection with the two lost brothers, "It were a journey like the path to Heaven/To Help you find them" (303-304). And hoodwinked she is, for she takes a kind gesture at face value, and innocently asks the disguised Comus, "Gentle Villager,/What readiest way would bring me to that place?" (304-305). Then, after successfully beguiling the Lady, Comus extends another fabrication to the effect that, "I can conduct you, Lady, to a low/But loyal cottage where you may be safe/Till further quest" (319-320).

Maynard Mack says of the misleading assertions of the disguised Comus, "Milton allows him to express truths which in his mouth become distortions of truth." Indeed, Comus's offer to take the Lady
to a "safe" cottage is a twisting of the truth, for, in reality, the offer contains the hidden snare that Comus will be better able to carry out his assault on the Lady's reason in a more secluded setting. James Hanford says it was Milton's belief in Areopagitica that "Corrupting influences are present everywhere and can be met only by building up an inner discipline and the power of rational choosing." Clearly, then, Milton's belief in Areopagitica receives dramatic treatment in Comus, for "the tempter" is striking evidence that malicious forces abound in the world, and the Lady is bent on asserting the primacy of reason and virtue above all else.

But in Comus Milton also develops the opposing view that reason and virtue are not free from the threat of evil, although, ultimately, they will prevail. These divergent viewpoints are argued at length in the dialogue between the two lost brothers. The Younger Brother expresses alarm over "that hapless virgin, our lost sister" (348) and asks with obvious impatience what if the Lady is "in wild amazement and affright:/ Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp/Of savage hunger, or of savage heat" (356-358). The Elder Brother, on the other hand, offers a reassuring voice, cautioning his Younger Brother to "be not over-exquisite/To cast the fasion of uncertain evils" (359-360). The Elder Brother is further convinced that nothing external can corrupt or under-

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mine the inner virtue and discipline of the Lady:

I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise

Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts
And put them into misbecoming plight. (366-372)

The Elder Brother also associates the Lady, with the possession
of inner light, the stronghold of reason:

He that has light within his own breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon. (381-384)

Although the Younger Brother to some degree shares the optimism of
his elder, with regard to the inviolability of virtue and reason, he is
apprehensive about the security of beauty, which he says is,

Like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.

But the Elder Brother triumphs with the reminder that the Lady
possesses "a hidden strength," which "Tis chastity, my brother,
chastity: /She that has that is clad in complete steel" (420-421). As we
have seen, chastity for Milton in Comus represents the sublime
alliance of virtue and reason -- hence the Elder Brother's confidence
that his sister is secure against the promptings of any evil, whether
disguised or not.
At the conclusion of the debate between the two brothers, we are transported to Comus's cottage, where we witness the direct confrontation between reason and sensuality. Here Comus tries to break down the rational resistance of the Lady by pleading that it is natural for individuals to seek satisfaction through sensual indulgence. Thus when she refuses to drink his enchanted wine, Comus says that the Lady is,

Scorning the unexempt condition  
By which all mortal frailty subsist,  
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,  
That have been tired all day without repast . . . (685-688)

But the Lady's behavior is consistent with the demands of reason, and she is not easily deluded into forsaking the virtue that resides in rational thinking. "Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind," she says to Comus, "With all thy charms" (663-664). Comus's attempt to corrupt the Lady's reason, therefore, only leads her to rebuff him for the disguised evil that he represents:

Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!  
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence  
With vizored falsehood and base forgery? (696-698)

"Sin, the disturbance of reason through the desire for temporal satisfaction," says D. W. Robertson, "makes man subject to both 'good' and 'evil' fortune, that is, to prosperity and to adversity."34 In this sense, the Lady's reason is undisturbed by the desire for temporal satisfaction.

34 Robertson, Chaucer Criticism, p. 90.
satisfaction which Comus offers in "Refreshment after toil, ease after pain." She is therefore unlikely to suffer adverse fortune at the hands of the disguised, sensually corrupting Comus -- a fact further borne out in the Lady's rejoinder that,

None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite. (702-705)

By implication, then, the Lady affirms that her inclination is rational--"wise"--and undoubtedly it is also the rational in her that causes the Lady to conclude that, because Comus is not "good," he is incapable of offering anything that does degrade human personality.

But Comus, bent on achieving his goal, is not impressed by the rational basis of the Lady's resistance. To him sensual indulgence is greater good, and he begins to plead that even Nature sanctions the free indulgence of the senses.

List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
Consists in mutual, and partaken bliss . . . (737-741)

Thus for Comus sensual indulgence has more to offer than a retreat into moral or rational sensitivity. The Lady, however, cannot accept his specious logic, and she rejects it with the objection that,

I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb. (756-759)
The Lady's basic admission is that Comus, through disguised external identity, managed to escape her detection, but that he cannot so easily subjugate her reason, which is internal. Furthermore, if one is convinced, like the Lady, that Nature urges rational restraint in the use of her bounties, and not over-flowing intemperance, he will know that Nature,

Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws
And holy dictate of spare Temperance. (764-767)

E. M. W. Tillyard says of Milton's representation of the Lady that, "Lost in the dark, deceived by the supposed peasant, still more lost in the alien brilliance of Comus's palace she is thrown back utterly on her own responsibility. She indeed is rescued by outside help, but not before she has asserted, as completely as a single human being can, her own unalterable conviction." Thus Comus graphically illustrates the problem of evil in disguise, and the appeals that such evil boldly makes to the passionate nature of the individual -- not to his reason. And Comus also reveals that the most effective way of combating this corrupting evil, and evil of whatever kind, is for the individual, like the Lady, to vigorously assert the rational side of self. For this side

is the seat of man's reason, the side which is most God-like, and the side that can most effectively sustain the onslaughts of evil and temptation.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{36} I am indebted to Albert W. Field's illuminating concept of self-knowledge. See the complete essay in \textit{PMLA}, LXXXIII (May, 1968), pp. 392-99.
Paradise Lost is more than a record of man's tragic Fall through willful disobedience to God. It also involves the destructive potential of disguised evil. It involves not only Adam's costly inability to perceive the disguised evil lodged in Eve's beauty, but also the fatal consequences of Eve's inability to unmask the disguised evil that is diabolically represented in Satan. Indeed, the deceptive nature of evil is strikingly reflected when, in journeying to Paradise to corrupt Adam and Eve, Satan encounters the archangel Uriel and adopts the fraudulent appearance of a cherub.

...first he casts to change his proper shape
And now a stripling Cherub he appears,
And of the prime, yet such in his face
Youth smil'd Celestial, and every Limb
Suitable grace diffus'd, so well he feign'd ... (III. 634-639)

Not only does Satan beguile Uriel through cunning dissimulation, he also hoodwinks the angel by contriving a sense of earnestness and awe over God's recent creation of Adam and Eve.

Brightest Seraph tell
In which of all these shining Orbs hath Man
His fixed seat ...

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
That I may find him, and with secret gaze,
Or open admiration him behold... (III. 667-672)

Such adulation of the works of the creator does not spur doubts in Uriel,
and he responds with complete confidence.

    Fair Angel, thy desire which tends to know
    The Works of God, thereby to glorify
    The great Work-Master, leads to no excess
    That reaches blame, but rather merits praise... (III. 694-697)

In addition to applauding the "stripling cherub's" enthusiasm over God's creation of Adam and Eve, Uriel also divulges, without any sense of betrayal, the earthly dwelling of the couple:

    That spot to which I point is Paradise,
    Adam's abode, those lofty shades his Bow'r.
    Thy way thou canst not miss... (III. 733-735)

If one wonders why Uriel is so easily coaxed into directing Satan-as-angel to Paradise, the answer is supplied by Milton:

    For neither Man nor Angel can discern
    Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
    Invisible, except to God alone... (III. 682-684)

The spurious angelic grace which Satan pretends completely conceals, even from an angelic being, the virulent malice within him.

    In Book IV of *Paradise Lost* Satan descends upon Eve, in the form of a toad, and attempts to poison her thoughts while she slumbers. But Uriel has since discovered Satan's crafty escape from Hell, and he sends Ithuriel and Zephon to terminate his venture into Paradise. The two angels discover Satan, disguised as a toad, practicing malice at Eve's ear:

    ...him there they found
    Squat like a Toad, close at the ear of Eve
    Assaying his Develish art to reach
    The organs of her Fancy, and with them forge
    Illusions as he list... (I V. 799-803)
"Without the influence of Satan," says D. W. Robertson, "no man would abandon reason and subject himself to Fortune." Satan's attack through fancy, the most vulnerable side of self, is expertly calculated to undermine Eve's reason, and to subject her to the instability of worldly satisfaction. Thus Satan hopes that "he might taint/Th' animal spirits that from pure blood arise" (IV. 804-805). Additionally, if Eve's fancy proves pliable, Satan wants to arouse "Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires" (IV. 808). But his attempt to stir Eve's passion is frustrated with the approach of Ithuriel and Zephon, and the perpetrator of evil sheds his disguise as toad and, ...

...started up in his own shape the Fiend.
Back stepp'd those two fair Angels half amaz'd
So sudden to behold the grisly King... (IV. 818-821)

James Hanford sees the malicious acts engaged in by Satan as a Miltonic judgment on the individualism that only seeks to destroy, which is symbolically depicted in "the sordid disguises in which, from the fourth book on, Satan appears." And Anne Ferry regards

37 Schoeck and Taylor, p. 93. The definition of Fortune relates to man's tendency to set "his heart on wealth, dignity, power, fame, physical pleasure, or any other worldly goods of this kind." In this sense, the serpent's purpose is to inflame Eve with a desire for the physical pleasure afforded by the forbidden fruit.

38 Hanford, op. cit., p. 23.
Satan as essentially a divided personality who "acts out this division in his experience by his deliberate attempts to make his outward appearance and actions belie the reality within him." Satan's disguise as a harmless toad, then, functions ironically as a foil to the heroic dimension of his evil nature.

But it is in Eve's ominous dream of Book V that the malevolent nature of disguised evil is even more dramatically evident. Disturbed at the implications of the dream, Eve seeks Adam in a state of alarm, and she tells him that the voice beckoning her to follow sounded much like his voice, and that it heaped praise upon her beauty.

...Heav'n wakes with all his eyes,
Whom to behold but thee, Nature's nature,
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze. (V. 44-47)

Eve later relates to Adam that in the dream she experienced, as she came "on a sudden to the tree/Of interdicted Knowledge,"

...beside it stood
One shap'd and wing'd like one of those from Heav'n (V. 54-55).

The furtive evil that Eve encounters at this stage is, of course, Satan, who in a manner recalling the irony of his former disguise as a "stripling cherub" again assumes the disguise of an angel. He attempts to arouse Eve's passionate nature by urging her to eat the fruit which,

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39Anne D. Ferry, Milton's Epic Voice (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), p. 120.
allegedly, can bestow knowledge.

...is Knowledge so despis'd?
Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?
Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
Longer thy offer'd good, why else set here? (V. 59-62)

The persistent dream emphasis of the quack angel upon the benefits of sampling the forbidden fruit may be viewed in relation to Ferry's position that the disguised Satan is, among other things, "the father of lies." For Satan's approach contains an enticing half-truth in that knowledge is seldom one-dimensional, and could lead to awareness of evil as well as of good. Satan-as-angel shrinks from this admission, although he expresses his willingness to eat the forbidden fruit without any sense of committing the unpardonable. Eve, by contrast, is mindful that from such an action she is divinely prohibited. "Mee damp horror chill'd," says Eve to Adam, "At such bold words voucht with a deed so bold" (V. 65-66). This dream-reluctance of Eve to defy the will of her Creator prompts the angel's suggestion that God is being unfair in stifling the human desire for a more rewarding life. And the fruit, says the charlatan angel to Eve, is

Forbidd'n here, it seems, as only fit
For Gods, yet able to make Gods of Men;
And why not Gods of Men, since good, the more
Communicated, more abundant grows,
The Author not impair'd, but honor'd more? (V. 69-73)

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Ibid., p. 133.
The angel's plea that eating the forbidden fruit will constitute no grave violation sets Eve's passionate nature in motion. She is represented in the dream as being overwhelmed when the angel,

Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part
Which he had pluckt; the pleasant savory smell
So quick'n'd appetite, that I, methought,
Could not but taste... (V. 83-86)

"Just as the serpent tempted Eve and Eve tempted Adam," writes D. W. Robertson, "so the motion of the senses tempts the lower reason, and this womanly faculty in turn tempts the higher reason." This chain reaction -- an ominous foreboding of what will happen when Satan disguises himself as a serpent for the actual temptation -- is precisely what occurs here in Eve's dream temptation: Satan, disguised as angel (or serpent in Book IX), tempts Eve; her passionate nature (the motion of the senses), which rules her lower reason, makes eating the forbidden fruit appear a good; Eve's lower reason soon lures Adam, the higher reason, into assenting to the temptation.

But at this stage Adam offers Eve the consolation that, although in her dream she saw herself forsaking God through the encouragement of disguised evil, no submission to temptation is inevitable if the higher

41 Robertson, Chaucer Criticism, p. 94. The lower reason is "dominated by the senses" and "indulges in pleasurable thought." The higher reason, on the other hand, is characterized by "wisdom," and thus should be guided by rational restraint. Adam and Eve's mistake is to show more allegiance to the lower reason than to the higher reason.
reason asserts itself.

Evil into the mind of God or Man
May come and go, so un'approv'd, and leave
No spot or blame behind: Which gives me hope
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream
Waking thou never wilt consent to do. (V. 117-121)

For Adam, as for Milton, there is nothing inherently corrupting in
the mere "thought" of evil if reason pronounces adversely on the deed.
Eve's dream that Satan-as-angel entices her into sin is a clear act of
capitulation to the passionate side of self, and although Adam believes
that adherence to reason will subdue any evil that threatens, he informs
Eve that sometimes fancy, which is less rational, obscures the role of
reason.

Oft in her absence mimic Fancy wakes
To imitate her; but misjoining shapes,
Wild work produces oft, and must in dreams,
Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
Some such resemblances methinks I find
Of our last Ev'ning's talk, in this thy dream. (V. 110-115)

Adam's "rationalizing" of Eve's dream is an attempt to minimize its
significance. But, ironically, what Adam unwittingly reveals is that he
is unaware, at this point, of the real evil which works upon the fancy
to subvert the reason. Thus the greater irony of Eve's uneasiness, over
what Satan-as-angel managed to accomplish in her dream, is that it
represents a more authentic response to the threat than Adam's.

Eve's imaginary yielding to temptation in the dream of Book V moves
closer to actuality when, in Book IX, she desires to work alone in the
Garden. Now Adam recognizes the danger of separation (a paradigm of the separation of lower and higher faculties of the reason), and he advises Eve to abandon any notion that would not keep them together. For "other doubt possesses me," says Adam, "lest harm befall thee sever'd from me" (IX. 251-252). And lest Eve should forget the divine warning that possible temptation lurks about them, he reminds her of this

...malicious Foe
    Envying our happiness, and of his own
    Despairing, seeks to work woe and shame
    By sly assault... (IX. 253-256)

But Eve is not in the mood for listening to Adam's admonitions, and shows pique towards his reluctance to let her go:

...that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
    To God or thee, because we have a foe
    May tempt, I expected not to hear. (IX. 279-281)

With supreme irony, Eve even accuses Adam of weak faith in the face of possible temptation by disguised evil, that is, by "fraud" (IX. 285-287). Adam's reply, however, goes right to the heart of the problem of disguised evil, and recalls Satan's deception of Uriel:

Nor thou his malice and false guile conternn;
    Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce
    Angels... (IX. 306-308)

The cunning means by which Satan might escape the sharpest vigilance is precisely what Milton wants to impress upon us.
But Adam does not forcibly hinder Eve's departure, because the matter involves the question of free will. And Adam would make Eve twice a prisoner if he compelled her to stay against her wishes, for God has created man such that he is "Secure from outward force," (IX. 348) and He has

left free the Will, for what obeys
Reason, is free, and Reason he made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect,
Lest by some fair appearing good surpris'd
She dictate false, and misinform the Will... (IX. 351-355)

Adam probably believes that he is properly performing the duty of reason when he enlightens Eve on the freedom of the Will. Ironically, however, Adam himself abdicates the superior role of reason when he does not prevent Eve from rushing to the disguised temptation -- to "some fair appearing good" -- which he knows may be lurking. In this way he psychologically prepares for his own Fall -- not as in Eve's case, through deception, but "through reason's yielding, not deceived, to the tug of passion." As Fredson Bowers puts it, Adam permits Eve "as a free agent to seek temptation because he cannot bring himself to enforce authority and reason on her disturbed passion and beauty," a tragic weakness in Adam, for his belief that Eve must be allowed freedom to choose the course she will follow, which would seem to be in

\[\text{Hanford, A Milton Handbook, p. 21.}\]
\[\text{Fredson Bowers, "Adam, Eve, and the Fall in Paradise Lost," PMLA, LXXXIV (March, 1969), 266.}\]
line with Milton’s ethics, actually represents an abdication of will on his part.

Adam’s misapprehensions are realized when Eve ventures into the Garden alone. The serpent appears, and just as Adam feared, Eve is unable to determine his true identity. Nor does Eve express any alarm over finding him in the Garden, for she is used to the sight of many creatures about her, and one more would create no unusual suspicion.

... she busied heard the sound
Of rustling Leaves, but minded not, as us’d
To such disport before her through the Field,
From every Beast, more duteous at her call,
Than at Circean call the Herd disguis’d (IX. 518-522)

Satan-as-serpent, in a moment of soliloquizing, has already vented his frustration over having lost the lofty position he once occupied in Heaven. His agony over this misfortune leads him to vow open hostility toward Eve, whose beauty seems incomparable and who enjoys the blessings of her Creator (IX. 489ff.) -- all the more intolerable to Satan since “the sequence of his disguises is a descent of the chain of creation.”44 But the serpent knows that he cannot abruptly reveal his hatred of Eve and his envy of her happier state, and she must be

44Ferry, Milton’s Epic Voice, p. 134.
approacht by stronger hate,
Hate stronger, under show of Love well feign'd,
The way which to her ruin now I tend. (IX. 491-493)

This is "fraudulent temptation," (IX. 531), the brain-child of evil in disguise. And although Eve defied Adam with the assurance that she could cope with any such evil, when it finally confronts her she is completely taken in -- note the naivete in her curiosity to know how such a creature as the serpent is able to talk (IX. 553ff.). The serpent appeals to Eve's fancy by attributing the excellence of his being to having eaten of the forbidden fruit, recalling that when he occupied the lowly state,

on a day roving the field, I chanc'd
A goodly Tree far distant to behold
Loaden with fruit of fairest colors mixt,
Ruddy and Gold: I nearer drew to gaze... (IX. 575-578)

The attempt at passionate arousal continues with the serpent's revelation that "to satisfy the sharp desire I had/Of tasting those fair Apples, I resolv'd/Not to defer" (IX. 584-586). Filled to satiety with forbidden fruit, the serpent says that he began to notice "Strange alteration in me, to degree/Of Reason in my inward Powers, and Speech/
Wanted not long, though to this shape retain'd" (IX. 599-601). These lies are carefully calculated to spur Eve's sensual nature, and to under-mine her reason. Hanford, viewing Eve's fall in several distinct stages, says that a significant phase "is the approach of Satan disguised as serpent. The point that Milton makes with this is that evil in the psychology of the sinner never looks like itself, but always like something
else." Eve, then, has been prevailed upon, by disguised evil, to pay no heed to the exhortations of divine law; and her sense of satisfaction over the possibility of achieving higher human heights, by disobeying God, makes it clear that she regards transgression of God's law to be of little consequence.

"The sin is mortal and the individual falls just as Adam fell," writes D. W. Robertson, "if the higher reason consents to the temptation or if the lower reason persists too long unchecked in pleasurable thought." Eve, demonstrating a gross incapacity to deal adequately with the furtive evil which Adam feared would be her ruin, has sinned on both counts. Her higher reason has been a willing partner in the movement towards submission to temptation urged by the serpent, and her credulity regarding the benefits of eating the forbidden fruit is sign enough that she has been "too long unchecked in pleasurable thought." For despite Eve's hesitancy to believe that the fruit bestows the bounties that the serpent says it does, the seed of temptation has been timely planted, for in the back of her mind lurks the thought of infinite human possibility from fruit she only has to taste. She consequently wants the serpent to divulge, "where grows the tree, from hence how far?" (IX. 616). Although she is not ignorant of the consequences of disobeying God's commandment, she shows blind gullibility and lets the serpent lure her to the forbidden tree.

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46 Robertson, Chaucer Criticism, p. 94.
Lead then, said Eve. Hee leading swiftly roll'd
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. (IX. 631-633)

The jubilant reactions of the serpent indicate his belief that if he can bring Eve squarely before the forbidden tree, he may be able to manipulate her pliant nature so as to bring on her downfall. The serpent is essentially correct in this assumption, for Eve is no longer the proponent of reason and logic, but the unfortunate victim of a craving for sensual release in the eating of the forbidden fruit, and of a manifest dissatisfaction with the place she occupies in the scheme of creation. For Eve abandons any allegiance to reason when she willfully follows the serpent to the forbidden tree.

When Eve and the serpent arrive at the tree and she realizes that it is none other than the forbidden tree, she shows a surprising strength of reason and will: "Serpent," says she, "we might have spar'd out coming hither, /Fruitless to mee, though be here to excess" (IX. 646-647). Moreover, Eve pays due regard to the divine prohibition which warns that,

of this Tree we may not taste nor touch;
God so commanded, and left that Command
Sole Daughter of his voice; the rest, we live
Law to ourselves, our Reason is our Law. (IX. 651-654)

But Eve's inclination to show obedience to the Divine will only strengthens Satan's resolve to lead astray, and makes him rely more heavily on his disguise:
The Tempter, but with show of zeal and Love
To man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on, and as to passion mov'd
Fluctuates disturb'd, yet comely, and in act
Rais'd, as of some great matter to begin. (IX, 665-669)

He argues against her legitimate fear of death -- "Queen of this
Universe, do not believe/Those rigid threats of Death; ye shall not
Die (IX. 684-685)" -- and her legitimate fear of adverse effects:
the fruit only enriches the mind; "it gives you life/To Knowledge
IX. 685-686). And if Eve is concerned about stirring the ire of God,
"The Threat'ner," the serpent questions the benevolence of a God, who
would let a mere animal, like himself, ascend the scale of creation --
"look on mee/Mee, who have touch'd and tasted" -- and who would frown upon
such a venture by a noble human being.

Shall that be shut to Man, which to the Beast
Is open? (IX. 691-692)

Finally, the serpent insists that only a capricious God would punish a
human who only wished to realize his ultimate potential.

God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just;
Not just, not God; not fear'd then, nor obey'd (IX. 699-700)

"The higher reason, which perceives the laws of God," going back to
Robertson's important analysis, "should dominate the lower reason, which
perceives the laws of nature."47 Now if Eve's higher reason informed her
aright, it would dictate that her devotion is to God's law, and not to the

47 Robertson, Chaucer Criticism, p. 94.
indiscriminate promptings of the serpent. And although Eve is here confronted with the subtlety of disguised evil, it is well to remember Field's reminder that the self-knowing person "should also realize that the divine image within him that empowers him with rational choice obligates him to be 'tested' for his 'salvation,' or resurrection of the body." Thus, be the evil disguised or not, the duty of Eve is to let reason rule the kingdom of the mind, thereby dethroning the malice and the passion that run counter both to God and to reason.

But with reason not asserting itself in Eve, she becomes a victim of the faulty syllogistic reasoning of the serpent. In lines 703-732, for example, the serpent offers Eve an elaborate, but misleading, argument on why God forbids her eating the forbidden fruit. The argument runs thus:

Why then was this forbid? Why but to awe,
Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
His worshippers; he knows that in the day
Ye eat thereof, your Eyes that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Op'n'd and clear'd, and ye shall be as Gods,
Knowing both Good and Evil as they know. (IX. 703-709)

The serpent's faulty syllogistic logic may be stated in this manner: God knows that to eat forbidden fruit will result in acquiring the God-like quality of Knowledge; God does not want Eve to become God-like; therefore, Eve is not allowed to eat forbidden fruit. The serpent's argument, of course, is false, and results from a twisting of what constitutes "knowledge."

\[48\text{Fields, "Milton and Self-Knowledge," p. 392.}\]
To the serpent, Eve presently exists in a state of blissful ignorance, bereft of the "knowledge" of anything. Ironically, the serpent asserts that the only road to knowledge for Eve lies in willful disobedience to God. The serpent is clearly "card stacking" in defense of his own argument, for he cleverly ignores that the most important "knowledge" for Eve is knowing how to preserve a right relationship with God. And this is best done through obedience to God, and not through the disobedience the serpent urges.

But there is an even greater fallacy in the serpent's argument. He would have Eve believe that a mere physical creation, like forbidden fruit, can bestow upon her a God-like quality that is not the special blessing of her Creator -- an argument which in its basic import is a vicious attempt to undermine Eve's dependency on God. However, this is simply another of the serpent's planned fabrications of the truth. For eating the forbidden fruit will not make Eve like the gods, but, rather, will make her aware that she was only too human in being goaded into sin. Moreover, inherent in the serpent's faulty logic is the assumption if it is recognized that she can never enjoy equality with God. For how could Eve, the created, show proper love and obedience to God, the Creator, if she existed on an equal par with Him?

Finally, the serpent's argument gives Eve the impression of a spiteful God who keeps human low and ignorant, so that they will not
enter His private domain of knowledge. Again, the argument is false. God does not require that Eve relinquish the thirst for knowledge, but He does require that the knowledge obtained be not at the expense of disobedience to Him. The knowledge which God approves, then, is that which stems from a right relationship of priorities: a knowledge of what is obedience to Him above the knowledge of anything else.

But Eve does not perceive the disguised evil that lies at the heart of the serpent's empty rhetoric. Consequently, she is easily influenced by the serpent's suggestion that no just God would show displeasure with the human desire for elevation of self. Eve begins to think anew about the devotion she owes to God, and the serpent's "words replete with guile/Into her heart too easy entrance won." Moreover, Eve believes that the serpent has spoken rationally about the power of the fruit, for

    in her ears the sound
    Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
    With Reason, to her seeming, and with Truth. (IX. 736-738)

Eve shows a gross inability to rationally govern herself when she succumbs to the belief that the serpent's words only enlighten her. For what Eve is moving toward, in defiance of God, is conscious submission to temptation, and this is a travesty of reason: Eve's unhealthy hunger for knowledge is ironically reinforced by a perfectly healthy -- but animal -- physical hunger.
Meanwhile the hour of Noon drew on, and wak'd
An eager appetite, rais'd by the smell
So savory of that Fruit, which with desire,
Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
Solicited her longing eye ... (IX. 739-743)

"When the higher reason bows to the lower reason," says D. W. Robertson, "when the pleasurable thought of Eve triumphs, the individual becomes a slave to Fortune." What is meant by Fortune "is subject to vices, to wander from the way to the true good in search of false and unreasonable worldly satisfactions."49 In this sense, Eve's higher reason has undoubtedly fallen under the domination of her lower reason (abetted by her purely animal appetite), for she can only think of the worldly satisfaction to be derived from eating the forbidden fruit, thus "wandering from the way" in disobedience to God. Hanford too affirms that "The essential fall of man occurs when passion predominates over reason."50 This having happened, Eve is on the verge of becoming an extension of Satan's empire, since "The realm of Satan ... is a realm of unreason and unrestrained passion."51

Eve's decision to taste the forbidden fruit shows how effective has been Satan's pernicious argument.

49 Robertson, Chaucer Criticism, p. 94.
In plain then, what forbids he but to know,
Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?
Such prohibitions bind not ... (IX: 758-760)

Here Eve is guilty of a weak effort to rationalize her eating the forbidden fruit. Her mistake, of course, is to believe that the end (wisdom) is guaranteed in the means (eating forbidden fruit). For in actuality no such guarantee exists, but Eve's belief that it does is an indication that she has literally digested the serpent's phony claims. And her flat assertion that God's prohibitions against eating the fruit "bind not" is thoroughly ironic; it pictures Eve as naive enough to believe that she can dispense with Divine law with a puff of breath. Eve's credulity goes to the heart of disguised evil in showing that, because reason is not alert in her, this disarming evil divides her from real truth, and makes evil appear good.

But the most striking irony of Eve's rationalization is that it amounts to a conscious overlooking of what is required of her -- obedience to God despite conflicting evidence that would undermine her obedience. But because Eve, in Robertson's terms uses only her lower reason (which perceives the laws of nature), and not the higher reason (which perceives the laws of God), she fails to give careful scrutiny to the serpent's basic assertion of having achieved exceptional stature by eating forbidden fruit. Thus because she proceeds from a false premise (i.e., that the serpent acquired exceptional stature by eating forbidden fruit), it is impossible for Eve to reach any valid conclusions on why she should emulate the serpent.
If reason is inadequate in Eve, it is even less evident in Adam when he comes upon her carrying fruit that bears witness to her sin. Eve holds out the dubious consolation that all is not as bad as it seems, telling Adam that,

This Tree is not as we are told, a Tree
Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
Op'ning the way, but of Divine effect
To open Eyes, and make them Gods who taste... (IX. 863-866)

Such specious logic, which shows her easy gullibility (and her complete assimilation not only of the serpent's message but its medium), is Eve's justification for sin; and Adam is startled by the boldness she has displayed in paying no heed to God's prohibition. He "Astonied stood and Blank, while horror chill/Ran through his vein, and all his joints relax'd" (IX. 890-891). But Adam's displeasure at Eve's disobedience does not move him to the degree that he is willing to sever his relationship with her. Says he to Eve:

...with thee
Certain my resolution is to Die:
How can I live without thee, how forego
Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly join'd,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn? (IX. 906-910)

Adam apologizes for Eve's transgression, by implying that she has been the unfortunate victim of disguised evil.

...some cursed fraud
Of Enemy hath beguil'd thee, yet unknown,
And mee with thee hath ruin'd... (IX. 904-906)
Adam is correct in saying that Eve has suffered the misfortune of being deceived by subtle evil. But although he perceives that this has been Eve's peculiar fate, the irony is that Adam does not perceive the evil now submerged in Eve's charm and beauty. Thus confronted with the perplexing dilemma of either choosing or losing her, Adam chooses to see his fate as unalterably linked to that of Eve's. "The tragic 'hero', says D. W. Robertson, "turns from the way and seeks false worldly satisfaction, abandons reason and becomes subject to Fortune."\(^2\) This is the nature of Adam's choice. He is so infatuated by the sensual relationship he enjoys with Eve, "the false worldly satisfaction" that this union affords, that he loses all reasonable perspective on the devotion that both he and Eve owe to God.

Adam believes (as did Eve, persuaded by Satan) that the fruit,

\begin{quote}
Profan'd first by the Serpent, by him first
Made common and unhallow'd ere our taste;
Nor yet on him found deadly, he yet lives,
Lives, as thou said'st, and gains to live as Man
Higher degree of Life . . . (IX. 930-934)
\end{quote}

With these attempts at blinking Eve's guilt, Adam tries to minimize the significance of disobeying Divine law. Eve equates Adam's constancy with "perfection" in him, and this flattery (which recalls the serpent's flattery of Eve, the difference being that she is now the false flatterer) is a

\footnote{Robertson, Chaucer Criticism, p. 91. As in chapter one, worldly satisfaction here has reference to one's desire for "sensuality," or for physical pleasure. See p. 89ff.}
powerful agent in the further weakening of Adam's reason.

O glorious trial of exceeding Love,
Illustrious evidence, example high!
Engaging me to emulate, but short
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain... (IX. 961-964)

The subjugation of Adam's rational side is well-nigh complete when Eve

embrac'd him, and for joy
Tenderly wept, much won that he his Love
Had so ennobl'd, as of choice to incur
Divine displeasure for her sake... (IX. 990-993)

What is significant here is that Adam does not perceive that disguised
evil is working upon him in the form of Eve's seductive sensuality. Con-
sequently, reason in Adam falls under the domination of passion; he eats
the fruit; the Fall is complete, and is confirmed by the arousal of lust --
the complete triumph of passion in Adam:

Carnal desire inflaming, hee on Eve
Began to cast lascivious Eyes, she him
As wantonly repaid; in Lust they burn... (IX. 1013-1015)

Both Adam and Eve, then, are guilty of inverting the scale of right values
in letting reason be corrupted by passion. For it is the function of reason
to subdue the purely sensual and to prevent man from revealing his baser
animal instincts. But when passion is allowed to usurp the role of reason,
Adam and Eve become extensions of the passion that Fields\(^5\) sees as the
unenviable province of Satan.

The Fall from Paradise, then, may be viewed as a direct consequence
of Eve's vulnerability to disguised evil, both in her dream and in her

\(^5\)Cf. the earlier reference to Fields in this connection.
solitary venture into the Garden. For in her dream Eve sees herself lured into eating the forbidden fruit, by Satan disguised as an angel. When the dream becomes reality, Eve encounters Satan in a lesser disguise, and does not recognize him as the subtle evil of which Adam had warned. Hoodwinked by the disguised serpent's exhortation to seek superior stature for herself, Eve's passion is so aroused that she eats the forbidden fruit. Adam completes the Fall through his susceptibility to disguised evil. Because she is the object of his love, Adam does not perceive the evil submerged in Eve, either when she is incorrigible in wanting to leave his side, or when she weeps on his shoulders after the sin is consummated. Consequently, when Adam sees his fate is linked to that of Eve's, and descends into passion with her, it is the ultimate product of his own insufficient knowledge of disguised evil. What we witness, in Robertson's terms, then, is a dramatization (perhaps even a morality) of the subjection of the higher reason (Adam) by the lower reason (Eve) and the lower by passion (Eve's hunger for the forbidden fruit). As a dedicated moralist, Milton undoubtedly wanted reason in both Adam and Eve -- and mankind in general -- to reign victorious over any form of evil, by reigning victorious over the passions. But Adam and Eve cast reason aside and fall prey to disguised evil and passion, resulting in the sin of disobedience of Divine law.
Paradise Regained is the sequel to Paradise Lost, and unlike its great precursor, it illustrates how, through the exercise of reason and the conquest of passion, man is able to "regain" Paradise. The central figure in Paradise Regained, in whom reason is dominant and passion subservient, is Christ, whose virtuous conduct "is a victory of temperance, the triumph of reason over desire." Nevertheless, the righteous character of Christ is put to task in the disguises assumed by Satan, and in the various temptations he offers to arouse Christ's passion. Elizabeth Pope says, "The hypothesis that Satan had assumed a disguise at the temptation rested on the supposition that he appeared in the wilderness in a corporeal form." This belief, she continues, "rested on the argument that since he was powerless to attack Christ as he (Satan) did ordinary human beings, all he could do was make direct suggestions from without." But Christ is able to successfully penetrate the disguises Satan assumes in the Wilderness, as well as, through reason, to reject the temptations of Satanic deception. It is with a view to more fully illuminating these aspects that I now turn to a discussion of Para-

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The opening of Paradise Regained describes the baptism of Christ, and how even the heavens pay homage to His majesty.

...on him baptiz'd
Heaven open'd, and in likeness of a Dove
The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From Heav' pronounc'd him his beloved Son. (I. 29-32)

Satan, on another of his flights, witnesses the deification of Christ -- "That heard the Adversary" -- and "with envy fraught and rage" he summons his council of rebel angels for a meeting "in mid air." The impatience with which Satan gathers his followers about him suggests that he is deeply alarmed over the Baptism that proclaims the ministry of Christ, and his words to them testifies to this fact. Satan reveals that it was through disguised evil, personified in him, that Adam and Eve forfeited the bliss of Paradise: "Since Adam and his facile consort Eve/Lost Paradise deceiv'd by me" (I. 51-52). But his successful corruption of Adam and Eve has left Satan in a state of mental uneasiness,

With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the Seed of Eve
Upon my head. (I. 53-55).

This dreaded event, Satan tells the council of angels, is now at hand.

For this ill news I bring, the Woman's seed
Destin'd to this, is late of woman born;
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause,
But his growth now to youth; full flow'r displaying
All virtue, grace and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear. (I. 64-69)
In addition, Satan tells his fellow outcasts that, since doom is upon them, it permits "no long debate, /But must with something sudden be oppos'd" (I. 95-96). And as was the case when he deceived Adam and Eve, Satan plans to tempt Christ through disguised evil by, "Not force, but well couch't fraud, well woven snares" (I. 97).

Thus very early in *Paradise Regained* the disguised manner in which Satan works his evil is reflected. But although he will attempt to deceive Christ, as he did Adam and Eve, through disguised evil, it is significant that Satan says he can only "hope of like success" (I. 105) in his endeavor to outwit Christ. For this qualification implies Satan's recognition that Christ is a stronger, wiser opponent than Adam's "facile consort Eve."

The cautious tone of Satan's optimism is well justified. Despite his disguise of "an aged man in rural weeds" (I. 314), which, according to Elizabeth Pope, "is the disguise most commonly ascribed to him, perhaps because it was thought the one in which he could best hope to deceive Christ," Satan soon learns that even the hope of tempting Christ is in vain. Aware that Christ has not replenished His body for forty days, the false swain says to Him:

...if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;
So shalt thou save thyself ... (I. 342-344)

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56Ibid., p. 44.
Satan's disguised identity here is strikingly reminiscent of Spenser's evil Archimago; but unlike Archimago, Satan's disguise does not help him to achieve his purpose, for his exhortation to turn stones into bread prompts Christ's rational reply that, "Man lives not by bread only but each word/Proceeding from the mouth of God" (I. 394-350). This exchange is a model of all the succeeding confrontations in Paradise Regained, and places Christ in the allegorical role of the rational God who is always in control of His emotions. At the same time, unfortunately, the prospect of serious dramatic conflict is drastically reduced because Satan has little chance of arousing Christ's sensitive side, if the being who answers him is always Christ, the rational soul. As Hanford puts it, "Christ foils Satan in Paradise Regained by clearly surveying all the enticements which are held out to him, analyzing them Socratically and detecting their fallaciousness."57

When he first confronts Satan in peasant disguise, which Elizabeth Pope says "answers the devil's purposes much better than the more familiar ... one of the friendly hermit,"58 Christ exposes the fallaciousness of the bread lure when he argues that it is not necessary to satisfy

57 Hanford, p. 233.
58 Pope, Paradise Regained: The Tradition and the Poem, p. 47.
the needs of the body by physical indulgence (the eating of bread being symbolically sensual or passionate), when he has spiritual food to sustain Him. Satan's shallow argument, that by turning stones into bread Christ can stem the pangs of hunger, constitutes an indirect, and unsuccessful, attempt to blind Christ to the threat of the passion that, under cover of disguise, he has set out to arouse in Him. According to Barbara Lewalski, "In direct contrast to Satan's posturing is Christ's straightforward ... attitude as he works out by stages his perception of the disguised shepherd's true identity." 59

But despite the fact that Christ easily unmasks the disguised evil, Satan still tries to subvert Christ's reason by affecting a sincere devotion to God. Says Satan:

... what he bids I do; though I have lost
Much luster of my native brightness, lost
To be beloved of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous... (I. 377-382)

Marjorie Nicolson says that, "In Satan's speech we hear the familiar strain of hypocrisy ... He insists that he is still the servant of God, in spite of his rebellion." 60 Barbara Lewalski, on the other hand, offers


an even stronger indictment against Stan's hypocrisy, contending that "After Christ recognizes him he assumes the deceptive manner of a smooth-tongued, fawning, obsequious inferior, evidently hoping thereby to catch Christ off guard, to lull him into a false security or perhaps to win his trust." 

However, the ploy is unsuccessful. It only leads Christ to soundly rebuff Satan. He says of Satan's misleading claim of devotion to God "That hath been thy craft, /By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies" (I. 432-433). In addition, He tells Satan of the rational means by which one can resist evil and temptation. God, says Christ,

...sends his spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
In pious hearts, an inward oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know. (I. 462-464)

Therefore, reflecting the inner conviction of Adam's address to Eve in Book IX of Paradise Lost, Christ reiterates that if man is able to recognize the divine truth that is lodged within his own breast, he will triumph over any form of temptation -- whether sensual or not. For God's truth consists in conquering these enemies of dignity and reason of man, and not in being victimized by them. Albert W. Fields puts it this way: "The realm of God . . . is the realm of pure truth and reason.

61 Lewalski, op. cit., p. 194.
The realm of Satan is . . . a realm of unreason and unrestrained passion. In refusing to give in to the passion of turning stones into bread, and in refusing to be hoodwinked by Satan’s misleading rhetoric and hypocrisy, Christ acts out of His divine reason.

Still Satan is the kind of foe who does not readily admit defeat. He tries to get Christ to believe that he still possesses some trace of virtue.

... the subtle Fiend,
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembl’d and this answer smooth return’d (I. 465-467)

In brief, Satan’s "smooth answer" to Christ is that his "misery" accounts for his hypocrisy and his scheming actions. He asks Christ

... where
Easily canst thou find one miserable,
And not enforc’d oftentimes to past from truth,
If it may stand him more instead to lie,
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure? (I. 470-474)

In addition, Satan attempts to justify his misdeeds by acknowledging that Christ is superior in conduct to him -- the implication being that he should not be blamed for not living as noble a life as Christ: "But thou art plac’t above me, thou art Lord" (I. 475). Moreover, in a further attempt to win Christ’s confidence, Satan confesses that, although walking the straight and narrow is a difficult task, he delights in the truth and especially from Christ.

Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk
Smooth on the tongue discourst, pleasing to th' ear,
And tunable as Silvan Pipe or Song;
What wonder then if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth? (I. 478-482)

To borrow Hanford's phrase, Satan is uttering here but "a fawning
and hypocritical complaint." Moreover, lest Christ should render
too harsh a judgment against him, Satan maintains that,

Thy Father, who is holy, wise and pure,
Suffers the Hypocrite or Atheous Priest
To tread his Sacred Courts, and minister
About his Alter, handling holy things... (I. 486-489)

Not only has God allowed the disreputable to worship Him, says Satan
to Christ, He has also,

...vouchsaf'd his voice
To Balaam Reprobate, a Prophet yet
Inspir'd; disdain not such access to me. (I. 490-492)

Barbara Lewalski says that, "at the end of Book I Satan identifies
himself as a Balaam figure -- as one who despite his own wickedness
is yet a prophet of God." It is with this kind of sly hypocrisy that
Satan disguises his evil attempt to deceive Christ. But Christ is, in
his aspect of Logos, invulnerable to Satan's deliberate wiles, and He
stands calm and unshaken, "with unalter'd brow."

Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid nor forbids; do as thou find'st
Permission from above; thou canst not more. (I. 494-496)

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64 Lewalski, op. cit., p. 201.
Therefore, having failed in the first Wilderness temptation of Christ, Satan withdraws in another disguise, "bowing low/His gray dissimulation, disappear'd/Into thin air diffus'd" (I. 497-499). How strikingly reminiscent of Satan's initial appearance before Christ as "an aged man in rural weeds," and suggestive of evil's vast potential for disguising itself!

Although we shall momentarily resume our discussion of the Satanic disguises which are designed to arouse Christ's passion, perhaps we should point out those instances that strongly imply Satan's function as a symbol of disguised evil, though these instances have nothing to do with trying to arouse Christ's passion. To begin with, when Satan undertakes his evil mission to tempt Christ in the Wilderness, Milton describes Satan's potential to disguise evil in this manner:

So to the Coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd,
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try ... (I. 119-123)

Moreover, even God acknowledges that Satan is not a sufficient match for Christ, and that he works his evil through disguise.

...let him tempt and now assay
His utmost aubtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostasy; ... (I. 143-146)

In addition, the hymn sung to Christ by the angels establishes in its argument that Satan's evil is disguised.
Victory and Triumph to the Son of God
Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.
The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
Ventures his filial Virtue, though untried,
Against what'er may tempt, what'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of Hell,
And devilish machinations come to nought. (I. 173-181)

Perhaps the above lines are some of the most important in exemplifying Satan's cunning ability to perpetrate disguised evil -- by employing "hellish wiles," "stratagems of Hell," "develish machinations." We can therefore see, relatively early in Paradise Regained, that Satan's real power lies in his special ability to work evil through disguise.

Now let us return to Satan's assumption of disguises as they reveal his attempt to arouse Christ's passion. We find Satan reporting the failure of his first temptation of Christ to his council of rebel angels. He tells the council that Christ is superior to Adam, for he

found him, view'd him, tasted him, but find
Far other labor to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam first of Men... (II. 131-133)

Satan's disclosure of how difficult it will be to tempt Christ -- as opposed to the easy conquest of Adam -- prompts Belial's offer to "Set women in his eye and in his walk, Among daughters of men the fairest found" (II. 153-154). But "the subtle Fiend" (I. 465) concedes that such an approach would be in vain, for though Solomon "to bait of women lay expos'd,"
Thus recognizing the impossibility of arousing Christ's appetitive passion through concupiscence, Satan proposes the alternative of arousing his appetitive passion through hunger. Says Satan to his council, who are "likest to himself in guile":

...now I know he hungers where no food is to be found, in the wide Wilderness; The rest commit to me, I shall let pass No advantage, and his strength as oft assay. (II. 231-234)

Having chosen the means by which he will attempt to arouse Christ's passion, Satan embarks on his second mission.

Christ has now been wandering in the Wilderness for forty days, "and human food/Nor tasted, nor had appetite." Nevertheless, He temporarily experiences the pangs of natural hunger: "But now I feel I hunger, which declares/Nature hath need of what she asks" (II. 252-253). But His sense of reason tells Him that "God/Can satisfy that need some other way, /Though hunger still remain." And reason also leads Christ to affirm that He is being "fed with better thoughts that feed/Mee hung'ring more to do my Father's will" (II. 258-259).

Despite the fact that reason allows Christ to triumph over the pangs of hunger, His reason and His physical resistance are again challenged by a disguised Satan. During the course of His wilderness wandering Christ
soon finds himself near "a pleasant grove" and is determined there/
To rest at noon" (II. 291-292). Here Satan appears disguised:

...suddenly a man before him stood,
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in a City or Court or Palace bred... (II. 298-300)

Still aware that Christ has been without food for forty days, Satan renews
his appeal to the passions by asking Him, "Tell me, if food were now
before thee set/WouLd'st thou not eat?" (II. 320-321). Hoping Christ will
fall for this enticement, Satan shows Him a lavish banquet that is aimed
at stirring the senses.

Our Savior lifting up his eyes beheld
In ample space under the broadest shade
A Table richly spread, in regal mode,
With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
And savor, Beasts of chase, or Fowl of game... (II. 338-342)

According to Hanford, Satan is making "a more elemental appeal to
appetite and natural need."65 We should see too that Satan's banquet is
a more lavishly disguised temptation than any of the earlier temptations.
But despite the attractiveness of the food set before Him, Christ
"temperately replied" to Satan's question of whether He would eat or not.
Thus refusing to indulge in Satan's banquet, Christ successfully dem-
onstrates His control over the enemies of temperance, such as "excessive
anger, excessive desire for pleasure," which tend to subordinate reason to
emotion."66 Christ, therefore, exemplifies the Renaissance ideal of

66 Kellogg and Steele, The Faerie Queene, p. 52.
temperance, and repudiates the attempt to rouse his passions:

And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles. (II. 389-391)

Nevertheless, Satan, still posing as a courtly figure, wastes no time in concocting new wiles by which he hopes to spur Christ's passion. Thus despite Satan's praise of Christ (that "no allurement yields to appetite, /And all thy heart is set on high designs"), he demeans Christ for being "unknown, unfriended, low of birth, /A carpenter thy Father known, thyself/ Bred up in poverty and straits at home" (II. 413-415). Such a plebeian and unglamorous life, says Satan, should serve to check Christ's high aspirations, for with this background,

Which way or from what hope dost thou aspire
To greatness? Whence authority ddriv'st,
What Followers, what Retinue canst thou gain... (II. 417-419)

Therefore, to compensate for the presumed deficiencies of Christ's lowly life, the disguised Satan proposes that Christ assume His rightful place as ruler of the throne of David, and

...if at great things thou wouldst arrive,
Get Riches first, get Wealth, and Treasure heap... (II. 426-427)

Commenting on Satan's disguise in relation to the present (and previous) temptation, Elizabeth Pope says, "he has apparently altered his style to suit his material: A richly dressed courtier accompanies... the glories of the world much better than an unkempt peasant." But the mask of a

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67 Pope, op. cit., pp. 48-49.
courtier also proves an imperfect disguise, for it does not succeed in arousing Christ's passion for the glories of the world. Rather, it leads Christ to offer reason's definition of a true ruler.

...he who reigns within himself, and rules Passions, desires, and fears, is more a King; Which every wise and virtuous man attains: And who attains not, ill aspires to rule Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes, Subject himself to anarchy within... (II. 466-472)

Though Christ's sense of reason reflects the purity of Divine Logos, and thus nullifies the inner struggle that temperance implies, it may well prompt a comparison with the ideal of temperance personified in Spenser's knight, Sir Guyon:

In the course of his adventure he has to conquer all of the chief temptations to emotional excess. And in the process he has to conquer himself, for the man who cannot control himself cannot defeat his enemies. For a part of his quest he is guided and controlled by right reason... but at other times he must depend upon his own reason... and his habits of self-control and virtue.68

The individual, therefore, who has a rational control over his inner self may fittingly be called a true "ruler." For he has subdued, like Christ, the "lawless passions in him." Significantly, then, Adam was on safe ground when he said to Eve in Book IX that, for man, "within himself the danger lies."

68Kellogg and Steele, The Faerie Queene, p. 42.
However, irrespective of the fact that Christ is governed by reason in His victory over the passion of hunger and worldly riches, Satan, still disguised as a courtly figure, persists in his effort to arouse Christ by offering Him fame and glory. Marjorie Nicolson says of Satan's effort to arouse Christ's passion here that, "Attempting to arouse Christ's desire for glory, he goes back to Alexander the Great, to Scipio, to Pompey, all of whom had become famous before they were as old as Jesus is now." Satan would have Christ believe that glory is, 

...the reward
That sole excited to high attempts the flame
Of most erected Spirits, most temper'd pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures also despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross... (III. 25-29).

and that He has lagged behind in achieving any glory for himself: "Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe." Nevertheless, Satan does not completely eliminate the possibility that Christ will ever achieve fame and glory. For though Satan believes that Christ is, in years, "over-ripe," he adds the optimistic note that, 

Yet years, and to ripe years, judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.

--Nicolson, p. 337.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd
With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long
Inglorious: but thou yet art not too late, (III. 36-41)

Christ, however, is clearly above the passion of seeking the world's

glory. Unlike Eve, Christ assures Satan that,

Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For Empire's sake, nor Empire to affect
For glory's sake by all thy argument. (III. 44-46)

Christ tells Satan that the glory offered by the world is often false glory,

and that it is often extended indiscriminately.

For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmixt?
And what the people but a herd confus'd,
Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?
(III. 47-51)

In a manner that strikingly echoes the denunciation of worldly glory in

Lycidas, Christ offers Satan a definition of true glory.

This is true glory and renown, when God
Looking on th' Earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
To all his Angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises;... (III. 60-64)

Satan views true glory as being the praise of man; Christ knows true
glory is bestowed only by God. Moreover, God's glory is extended
only by God. Moreover God's glory is extended only to the just man.
The glory offered by Satan makes no distinction between the deserving
and the undeserving; it is mere "public glamour," which may hide evil as well as reveal true worth.

In the process of conquering the passion for glory, Christ subjects this temptation "to the daylight analysis of reason." Christ assures Satan that,

...if there be in glory aught of good,  
It may by means far different be attain'd,  
Without ambition, war, or violence;  
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,  
By patience, temperance; ... (III. 89-92)

In defense of His position, Christ cites the patience of Job (III. 95) and Socrates who,

By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing  
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now  
Equal in fame to proudest Conquerors. (III. 97-99)

And above all, Christ clarifies to Satan His position on the question of glory: "I seek not mine, but his/Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am" (III. 106-107). We can therefore see that the glory Christ seeks is not a personal glory, but the glory of His Maker.

Despite Christ's rejection of glory, Satan launches a last desperate effort to arouse the passion for glory. Satan speciously argues that even God smiles with favor upon glory, and that in turning his back on glory, Christ is a poor representative of His heavenly Father. With this

71 Bowers, op. cit., p. 269.
assertion, Satan prevails upon Christ to

Think not so slight of glory: therein least
Resembling thy great Father; he seeks glory,
And for his glory all things made, all things
Orders and governs, nor content in Heaven
By all his angels glorifi'd, requires
Glory from men, from all men good or bad,
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption;... (III. 109-115)

Now up to this point, in responding to Satan's disguised attempts to
arouse His passion, Christ has either "temperately replied" (II. 377),
"patiently replied" (III. 432), or "calmly thus replied" (II. 43). But
when Satan intemperately asserts the false reasoning that God himself,
as if out of mere vanity, is a lover of glory, Christ "fervently replied"
(III. 121) to the charge. Christ tells Satan that God is not a selfish
seeker of glory, and that if he desires glory at all, there is a deep
and justifiable "reason" for it,

...since his word all things produc'd
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
But to show forth his goodness, and impart
His good communicable to every soul
Freely; of whom what could he less expect
Than glory and benediction, that is thanks,
The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
From them who could return him nothing else ... (III. 122-129)

Christ's use of the word "reason" here has at least a two-fold meaning.
In perhaps its most important sense, "reason" means that God, though
not selfishly, is "justified" or has a "right" to expect glory, or "thanks,"
from all things he has created. In another sense, Christ's use of the
word "reason" may well imply that Satan's indiscriminate insinuation,
that God is a selfish lover of glory, is an indication of Satan's inability
to "reason" at all. Evidence supporting this interpretation may be seen when Milton says that,

Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin, for he himself
Insatiable of glory had lost all ... (III. 146-148)

Satan, then, is a victim of his own irrational quest for glory. For if reason was dominant in Satan, rather than the unquenchable thirst for glory, he would have seen the futility of revolting against God.

Baffled by his last defeat in attempting to arouse Christ's passion for glory, Satan, still disguised as a courtier, conceives a new temptation. Satan urges Christ to fulfill His own destiny.

To a kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
To sit upon thy Father David's Throne... (III. 152-153)

However, Satan warns Christ that David's throne "Be now in powerful hands, that will not part/Easily from possession won with arms."

Moreover, Satan makes plain that the Roman-governed Judea is not "always rul'd/With temperate sway." Thus if Christ thinks He can "regain" His rightful lordship over David's throne "by sitting still or thus retiring," Satan quickly erases this hope.

So did not Maccabaeus: he indeed
Retir'd unto the Desert, but with arms; ... (III. 165-166)

But reason in Christ leads Him to check the passion for Kingship with this assurance:

All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,
And time there is for all things, Truth hath said:
If of my reign Prophetic Writ hath told
That shall never end, so when begin
The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
He in whose hand all time and seasons roll. (III. 182-187)

The conflict here is between Christ's sublime confidence that God's plan will reveal itself in the fulness of time as opposed to Satan's parody of a Miltonic Christian warfaring zeal. And, as Kenneth Muir says, Christ "is an able disputant." He can reason through the loopholes that invariably characterize Satan's phony logic. Moreover, Christ tells Satan that He does not view Kingship lightly, for God may well want the would-be-ruler to endure His trials before allowing him to assume this great role.

What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulation, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence ... (III. 188-191)

Not only does Christ divulge that God may sometimes find it necessary to test a potential ruler's stamina and faith, He also tells Satan that he can, "best reign, who first/Well hath obey'd" (III. 195-196). In arguing that Kingship is not a matter to be hastily realized, and that one must have shown the capacity to obey before he can rule, Christ demonstrates the operation of a perfected Right Reason; Satan's argument on the other hand, is merely, in the Lady's words to Comus, "false rules prankt in

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in reason's garb, "the crux of evil in disguise. Just how false the temptation is is shown by Christ's triumphant scorn when He asks Satan, if he is mindful "my promotion will be thy destruction?" (III. 202). Inherent in the glory Satan offers Christ is Satan's defeat.

Fredson Bowers says of the Old Adam, when Eve wishes to part from him, that "for a moment he allows his passion to cloud his judgment," and only later do we see "his reason asserting itself once more." Contrary to the Old Adam, the New Adam never lets passion rule His judgment in any situation, for His reason is always in control of any matters involving temptation and passion. For as Milton says of the disguised evil that Satan has heretofore attempted, Christ has "made void all his wiles. /So fares it when with truth falsehood contends" (III. 442-443). Therefore Christ, through the penetrating power of reason, also triumphs over the disguised evil that lurks beneath Satan's subtle attempt to arouse His passion for Kingship.

In Paradise Regained, then, Christ, like Adam and Eve before Him, is confronted with the subtle attempts of the disguised Satan to arouse the passions. But unlike Adam and Eve, who let disguised evil corrupt

73See Comus, line 759.
74Bowers, op. cit., p. 269.
their reason and stir the passion to eat forbidden fruit, Christ consistently repulses disguised evil because reason in Him is always dominant over the passionate side of self. Consequently, Satan's separate disguises of peasant and courtier fall under the domination of man's God-like aspect, reason, and Christ emerges victorious over even "the evil that wears the mask of truth and goodness."\(^7^5\)

\(^7^5\) Kellogg and Steele, *The Faerie Queene*, p. 20.
CONCLUSION

To treat disguised evil is to consider a motif that has significant moral-philosophical meaning -- the most important being that for man to drop his guard is to lay himself open to disguised evil. Because evil is so frequently disguised, man's task is most often to detect the villainy behind the smile. He can best do this through the application of reason, whose power can vanquish even evil that is disguised, and whose impotence can only cause man to slip into the pitfall of sin and passion. Thus in Comus, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained, we have seen how either the exercise -- or failure -- of reason enables certain Miltonic characters to either reign victorious over disguised evil's appeal to the passions, or to be victimized by its assault on the passions.

The Lady in Comus, hoodwinked but not corrupted by disguised evil, is exemplary of the use of reason. Comus's external disguise deceives the Lady, and believing that his scheming offer to help find the two brothers is aboveboard, she follows him to a presumed "safe" cottage. But once inside this secluded dwelling, the Lady soon discovers that Comus's pose as a "harmless villager" was a disguise adopted with malice aforethought. "The Tempter's" attention turns from a concern for the two lost brothers to a clever attempt to spark the Lady's passion. Comus tries to get her to drink his enchanted
wine, and when she refuses, makes light of her abstinence from "Refreshment after toil, ease after pain." The Lady's reluctance to drink prompts Comus to offer his version of beauty's role:

Beauty is nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
But must be current, and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partak'n bliss,
Unsavory in the enjoyment of itself. (739-742)

But the Lady is not so dumbfounded by her experiences with Comus that she is willing to forsake the virtue that resides in reason. For the Lady now recognizes that Comus's true self is diametrically opposed to the harmless self he presented to her in the woods. Thus when Comus launches into a lengthy argument on why the passions should be indulged the Lady aptly brands him "a foul deceiver" and a "false traitor"; the reason that informs the Lady's virtue allows her to perceive that Comus's argument for uninhibited expression of the passions is merely "false rules prankt in reason's garb." Also, the Lady's reason assures her that the unleashing of passion in drinking enchanted wine is repellent "to a well-govern'd and wise appetite." Consequently, although Comus's disguise of a simple villager succeeds in eluding the Lady's visual detection (which is external), it does not succeed in corrupting her reason (which is internal) by appealing to the passions. Instead, both the disguise and the passionate appeal are victoriously handled by the Lady, when they fall under the penetrating power of reason.
In *Paradise Lost*, however, Adam and Eve do not experience a similar success either in their bout with disguised evil, personified in Satan, or in their use of reason. The latter is particularly evident in Eve's dream capitulation to Satan in angelic guise; in her adamant desire to leave Adam's side, and his reluctant assent to it; in the serpent's success in getting Eve to taste forbidden fruit; and in Adam's decision to side with Eve, in spite of her defiance of God's law.

In Book V Eve tells Adam of the dream in which she was lured to the forbidden tree by a figure disguised as an angel: "One shap'd and wing'd like one of those from Heav'n." The angelic being, says Eve, flattered her beauty, and prevailed upon her to follow him to an undisclosed tree. Eve is startled to find herself before the forbidden tree, but her defenses are weakened when the false angel offers her forbidden fruit. Eve tells Adam that the upshot of her dream is the eating of forbidden fruit, for the angel "so quick'n'd appetite, that I, methought, /Could not but taste." Though she is unaware in the dream that Satan in disguise is working on her passions, Eve is disturbed at the violation she has committed.

Ironically, however, Adam plays down Eve's authentic response to the dream. He says that irrational "fancy" in Eve has taken over the function of reason: "Some such resemblances methinks I find/Of our last Ev'ning's talk, in this thy dream." At this stage, in Robertson's analysis, Eve, in the dream-eating of forbidden fruit, is characterized
by her capitulation to passion when faced with disguised evil.

It is in Book IX that Eve's liability to the limitations of her "lower reason" leads to tragedy. Despite her awareness that a sly "sly" enemy may be awaiting his chance for possible temptation, Eve is bent on leaving Adam's side to work alone in the Garden. Adam also alerts Eve to the danger of disguised evil, of "some fair pretending good" that may be lurking. But just as Adam made light of Eve's dream of Book V, Eve now makes light of his warning not to separate.

...that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt, I expected not to hear. (IX. 279-281)

With this rejoinder Eve prepares to go her way, and Adam does not obstruct her path, because, to him, Eve must be allowed to exercise free will. The tragic mistake here is that both Adam (the higher reason) and Eve (the lower reason) allow will to usurp the instructive role of reason: Eve wills to go, and Adam wills to let her go. Reason thus becomes subservient to will. And if Adam and Eve are to be more than mere puppets, who dance unhesitatingly to the Divine tune, free will is undoubtedly necessary. But at the same time, the judicious exercise of free will is incumbent upon both Adam and Eve; that they fail in this regard is the tragedy.

Additionally, what Adam fails to perceive in Eve's avowed willingness to leave his side is the disguised evil and passion that lies submerged
in her beauty. He discovers it in the most striking manner after Eve ventures into the Garden alone. For just as both God and Adam have warned, Eve meets disguised evil in the person of Satan-the-Serpent. The serpent dulls her reason by flattering her beauty, gets her to follow him to the forbidden tree, and ultimately succeeds in arousing her passion to taste the forbidden fruit. When Adam comes upon Eve with fruit in her hands, he is utterly stunned that such a beautiful creature has committed the unpardonable (IX. 895-900). Still blinded by Eve's beauty, Adam concludes that disguised evil has "beguil'd" Eve into eating forbidden fruit, but he does not see the hidden evil in her, nor does he see that Eve is now an extension of Satan's dominion of passion. And because he enjoys the self-satisfaction he derives from the pleasure of Eve's company, Adam tries to minimize her sin. In turn, Eve praises Adam for his devotion to her, weeps upon his shoulders, and soon draws Adam into the vortex of passion (IX. 1013-1015). In Robertson's terms, the lower reason (which characterizes both Adam and Eve after the Fall) is consumed by passion -- the triumph of disguised evil.

In Paradise Regained, however, passion and disguised evil are vanquished by Christ, the New Adam, who as the apotheosis of the higher reason, perceives only the laws of God. During the course of His Wilderness wandering Christ is without food for forty days. Satan's knowledge of this lack of bodily replenishment and his presumption that
Christ is physically vulnerable, leads to a strategy: he descends upon Christ under guise of "an aged man in Rural weeds," and challenges Christ to turn stones into bread to stem the pangs of hunger (I. 342-345). But with reason ("wisdom," I. 175) guiding Him, Christ strips Satan of his disguise ("I discern thee other than thou seem'st"), and exposes his sly appeal to the passions: "Man lives not be Bread only, but each Word/Proceeding from the mouth of God" (I. 349-350). Thus in their first wilderness meeting Satan is soundly defeated by Christ, whose reason detects his disguise and unwaveringly rebuffs his appeal to the passions.

Though more of the same is in store for Satan, he soon adopts another disguise (that of a courtier) in his relentless effort to stir Christ's passion. Under cover of this disguise Satan renews his attack on Christ's passion by offering Him the pleasures of a lavish banquet (II. 337-367). But just as reason in the Lady causes her to consider Comus's offer of enchanted wine repellent, reason also permits Christ to curb the passion that Satan's banquet is designed to arouse. Consequently, Christ "temperately" replies to Satan's invitation, and goes on to divulge His awareness of how Satan's evil is frequently disguised.

And with my hunger what hast thou to do? Thy pompous Delicacies I contemn, And count thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles. (II. 389-391)
Therefore because passion is never dominant in Christ, He flatly
snubs Satan's every attempt. For example, Christ exposes the para-
dox of Satan's urging Him to assume His rightful place as ruler of
David's throne -- for inherent in Christ's earthly rule is Satan's
defeat (III. 202). Moreover, in rejecting Satan's notion of rule over
men, Christ offers reason's definition of a true ruler -- one who must
first rule effectively over his own inner being and passions (II.: 466-476).
Most important, reason enables Christ to show the shallowness of
Satan's belief that true fame or glory is achieved only through conquest
by arms: True glory comes not from the indiscriminate applause of
men, but from God's ultimate pronouncement on the lives of those who
are "just" (III. 60-64). Controlled and sustained by this conviction
of the higher reason, Christ also checks the passion for glory.

I should now like to consider what appear to be the similarities and
the differences between Comus, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained.
All three works deal with the problem of disguised evil. The Lady meets
disguised evil in the form of Comus's "harmless villager" pose; Eve in
the form of Satan-as-angel in her dream, and as serpent at the actual
temptation; and Christ in the form of Satan as peasant and courtier. All
three works reveal that the basic aim of disguised evil is to arouse the
passions. Comus tries to get the Lady to drink his enchanted wine;
Satan, as angel in Eve's dream and as serpent at the final temptation,
exhorts (and gets) Eve to taste forbidden fruit; Satan again, disguised as
peasant and courtier, attempts to inspire Christ with the passion for hunger, for glory, for fulfilling His own destiny, and for Kingship. An additional link between the three major works is that Milton's characters either use reason to transcend the passionate appeals of disguised evil, or they fail to exercise reason and succumb to these appeals. The Lady preserves the virtue that resides in reason and refuses Comus's enchanted wine; Eve falters in the use of reason, not only when she chooses to work alone in the Garden, but also when she eats forbidden fruit, both in her dream and when faced with the actual temptation. Adam is deficient in the use of reason when he minimizes the significance of Eve's dream, and when he offers Eve the argument that though she has eaten forbidden fruit and he has allied himself with her, they may be able to escape God's wrath with impunity. Moreover, Christ, in His aspect of Divine Logos, is reason personified and perfect. He is the epitome of rational self-control and is thus undisturbed by Satan's variously disguised efforts to arouse the passions.

Paralleling the similarities between the three works are significant differences. The Lady's confrontation with the disguised Comus is a chance encounter which comes without prior warning. The situation thus created seems perfect for the Lady's deception by disguised evil. The Lady is in fact deceived by Comus's guise of a "harmless villager," but the passion that Comus's enchanted wine is aimed at stirring is thoroughly subdued by the reason that influences the Lady's virtue. But Adam and
Eve's temptation by disguised evil is not without the benefit of God's prior warning that a scheming Satan is determined to work their ruin. And though there is a discernible comparison between the Lady and Eve in that, initially, both are deceived by disguised evil -- the Lady by Comus's pose as a harmless villager, and Eve by Satan's disguise as angel and serpent -- there is a notable difference in how this deception is counteracted. Unlike Eve, who shows a healthy but animal hunger at the prospect of gaining Godhead, which the serpent says will accompany the eating of forbidden fruit, the Lady shows no willingness to taste Comus's enchanted wine, from which she would derive only dubious satisfaction. Moreover, Adam is also aware that a disguised Satan may be lurking, but his passionate attachment to Eve blinds him to their best interests both when she chooses to defy his warning of temptation by disguised means and when he eats of the forbidden fruit.

Christ, on the other hand, in His aspect of Divine Logos, is a totally unique personality. For though, like the Lady, He has no warning (as did Adam and Eve) of temptation by disguised evil, Christ is never deceived for a moment by Satan's disguises of peasant and courtier. Christ, then, is the epitome of the higher reason, and as such, He is not vulnerable to even the deception that disguised evil works on fallible mortals (e.g., the Lady is deceived by Comus's pose as a "harmless villager"; Eve by Satan's angelic and serpent disguises; Adam by the beauty that disguises the evil in Eve). Thus what we
witness in Christ is the difference between God and man. Christ always reflects the purity of the Divine image, is always unmoved by either Satan's disguises or by Satan's attempts to arouse His passion.

Thus in *Comus*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Paradise Regained*, there is a discernible thematic development of the question of disguised evil. *Comus* may be said to serve as the springboard for this motif. The Lady, though virtuous and convinced of the validity of reason, is unfamiliar with worldly temptations. Consequently, what better way for evil to attack the Lady's personal decorum than under cover of disguise, as *Comus* does in his "harmless villager" pose? *Comus*’s plan is frustrated, however, because the Lady, through reason, penetrates the disguise and thwarts the passion that *Comus* tries to arouse with enchanted wine. In this regard, the Lady functions as an example of man's potential for vanquishing even evil that is disguised.

Moreover, once Milton established disguised evil as a threat to the passions in *Comus*, it was only logical to conclude that disguised evil's ability to subvert the reason, and arouse the passions, accounted for the fall from Paradise. The difference, however, is that while the Lady's rejection of the disguised *Comus*’s passionate appeals illustrates man's transcendent potential to resist any form of evil, the explosion of Eve's passion in eating forbidden fruit, urged by the disguised serpent, illustrates man's capacity to descend to the level of unruly passion and concupiscence (so does Adam's submission to Eve's sensual charm).
Though man fell from Paradise through his inability to control his passion when faced with disguised evil, there are qualities (personified in Christ) man can employ to "regain" his Paradise. Specifically, these are qualities of the mind -- the belief that the soul is more important than the body, that man is to serve God and no other, that ungoverned passion is antithetical to preserving the Divine image, that adherence to reason makes one secure against any form of evil. Because He is the personification of Divine Reason, these qualities are developed to the maximum in Christ. He is the perfect man of reason and harmony -- who is always in control of His emotions. Thus Christ is never disturbed by either Satan's disguises as peasant and courtier, or by any of Satan's temptations to arouse His passion. This undeviating use of reason sets Christ substantially apart from the Lady, as well as from Adam and Eve -- though less from the former than the latter. For contrary to the Lady who is initially deceived by Comus's harmless villager disguise, but later triumphs over him through use of reason, Christ is not fallible enough to be deceived, even for a moment, by Satan's disguise as peasant or as courtier. In a real sense, then, the possibility of intense dramatic conflict between Christ and Satan is practically nil, because Christ's devotion to reason makes Satan's attempts at arousal of the passions utterly futile. Even more important, is that the reason invariably influencing Christ is diametrically opposed to the passion that distorts the judgment of Adam and Eve. Christ,
through reason, thwarts disguised evil's appeal to the passions, and is so doing, epitomizes the inner decorum which man should strive to emulate, and the perfection to which man should always aspire.

The perfection of reason in Christ brings us to the implications of disguised evil in Comus, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained. To begin with, because evil's capacity for disguise and dissimulation is prodigious, its adversary is seldom confronted openly and heroically. Instead evil attempts, surreptitiously, to divide man from truth, goodness, and virtue. Since evil's purpose is to undermine what is noble in man, it shuns reason, and directs its attack at man's most vulnerable side -- his passion. But man is not all negative in potential. For even in his battle with disguised evil's assault on the passions, man can be as noble as the Lady; he can aspire to be as perfect as Christ. Such a potential resides in man's effectively employing the reason that was divinely implanted in him. If this is done, man need not become, like Adam and Eve, the lamenting victim of passion. This is the moral-philosophical import that man must digest and make the stuff of his existence and striving.
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