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**“Against such hellish mischief fit
to oppose”: A Grotian Reading
of Milton’s *War in Heaven***

“BY THE TIME THE LATTER PARTS OF *Paradise Lost* came to be written,” remarks Stevie Davies, “the revolution had failed and the new tyrant, Charles II, had been restored” (45). In *Paradise Lost*, this essay proposes, Milton calls upon Hugo Grotius’s version of natural law to distinguish evil from good at a time when evil seemed to prevail. He attempts to make natural law perform beyond the restoration of monarchy, to ultimately prove God’s just intention in allowing the unfortunate outcome of the English Civil War to take place. Demonstrating the poet’s Grotian belief that the parameters for legitimate military action must be circumscribed in accordance with the laws of nature, two models of warfare—criminal battle originated by Satan, and God’s justifiable defensive response—take place in the War in Heaven in Book 6 of the epic.

This three-day conflict fought between God’s troops and Satan’s enables Milton to investigate “what kind of rebellion was justified and what not” (Hill 366). As explanation for why the angels agree to battle, I consider how the War in Heaven ensues in a Grotian manner as a necessary instrument, for there is no other way of obliging errant nations which are uncivil to conform to reason. In response to unjust war, that is, one must wage just war. In contrast to Satan, who reveals himself as a usurper who initiates his “foreign” or international campaign for conquest and plunder of land, commendable rulership is embodied in juxtaposition with the author’s depiction of God. Ultimate restoration, accordingly, remains attributable to Milton’s God of equity, who “excels in mercy and justice both” (3. 132-33), a legal Deity who resolves the War in Heaven on its third and final day.

Contrary to the majority of Milton scholars, who maintain that the poet was unreservedly opposed to military discord,¹ my paper demonstrates that Milton’s sustained depiction of war’s violence is predicated on his optimism that the parameters of martial strife may be kept within reasonable juristic limits. Throughout battle’s rise in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe, war was

increasingly professionalized and the competency of state armies improved. Efforts centered around rendering military enterprises more efficient. Nevertheless, at the same time, an explicit delineation of practical limits—an understanding when it came to the impacts of weaponry, a predictability in reference to tactics and formation, and perhaps most notably, a reliable foresight in terms of possibilities for outcome, characterized early modern warfare. Moreover, though negatively associated with the devil and man's prelapsarian condition, firearms were consistent with the humanist impetus for progress. The fabrication of gunpowder and correlated weaponry signaled the spirit of human development and inquiry—a product of man's expanding scientific interest—as well as incited loss of life.

In Renaissance Europe, furthermore, war gained significance in political writings and influenced international law to such an extent that it evolved into a new arena of study. The subject of international law was developed to include consideration of martial strife and divided into categories of legitimate versus criminal types of battle. Issues of rightful kingship and calls for moderation in war fell increasingly under the rubric of legal analysis. Those evaluating battle from a jurisprudential perspective shared primary assumptions regarding what organized resort to violence might rightfully entail and by which parameters these efforts might be limited.

All agreed that the motive for war must be just, that it should only be waged at the command of a legitimate sovereign superior, and that the means used... should be as moderate as possible. All... agreed that war was a continuation of justice by other means and should only be undertaken when all possibilities of peaceful arbitration had been exhausted." (Hale 339)

Generally, war involved all of these diverse considerations for Milton. Armed strife, specifically for the author, nevertheless centered around the widening gap between the Stuart court and Protestant elements in England which resulted in the English Civil Wars from 1642 through 1651. During this sustained civil conflict, Milton's work and existence were saturated with battle. Residing only a few minutes from the Artillery Garden where the local militia or Trained Bands practiced during this conflict, he was "an interested observer of the musters and drills that were an ever-present part of London life at the time" (Fallon, CC, 56). Later, following the formation of Parliament's New Model Army in February 1645, he lauded the implementation of this heroic, unbeatable, perpetually-standing Army of Saints, which not only won the battle for Parliament but itself came to exercise considerable political power.

Even more significantly, Milton's notion of military strife, as it evolved in his prose and poetry, was strongly influenced by the concept of natural law as it was defined in the works of Dutch writer Hugo Grotius, known as the founder and father of modern international law. As a leading proponent of just / criminal war during the Renaissance, Grotius maintained that battle could reflect a nation's prioritization of right reason and ethics. He viewed limited warfare as essential to the establishment and continuation of an organized society. Despite the fact that military conflict was recognized as an inherent aspect of the international community beginning at that time, the inchoate nature of martial theory, and its pernicious effects, are essential to understanding the motive behind and opportunity for the Dutch scholar's task in his formidable *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* of 1625. With his moral and legal standards unremittingly threatened by the prevalence of what he perceived as criminal warfare, and disturbed by the propensity for those in authority to condone martial practices which patently countered the fundamental tenets of natural law, Grotius wrote this tract at the height of the Thirty Years War.²

Like his predecessor and fellow Netherlander, Erasmus, Grotius similarly sought to secure a society whose organization was based upon rationality and justice. Equally recoiling from unjust war practices, and preferring peace when non-violent methods of settlement, or *temperamenta*³ were feasible, his theories were not wholly divorced from the early humanist pacifistic tradition of Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, John Colet, Guillaume Bude and others, and their schemes to improve the social order to conform with the goal of peaceful, good living. Nevertheless, by seeking to limit war rather than eliminate it, the Dutch scholar envisioned lawful battle as a rational instrument for reinforcing natural equity.

Milton and Grotius met in Paris during the poet's Italian journey of 1638-39, an introduction which Milton "ardently desired" (*Second Defense*, 4: 615). During this peaceful decade prior to English Civil War, British interest in Grotius was quickly increasing.⁴ The Dutch scholar's ideas gained intellectual significance in England due to his prioritization by a group of English poets and intellectuals who gathered at the Oxfordshire house of Lucius Cary, 2nd Viscount Falkland, during the 1630s. The Great Tew Circle, as this on-going reading party came to be called, provided an escape from the conservatism of Laudian Oxford. "It was [the] taste for heresy, this willingness to dissent from received opinion... which united the whole circle, in varying degrees of intimacy, around their host" (Trevor-Roper 170). Predating the English in their creation of a theological basis for toleration, the Dutch provided a key model for these liberal British thinkers. Striving to reassociate the Church of England with the Arminian tradition from which, under the Laudians, it had wandered, they attempted to secure its intermediary

position founded in human reason. Of all the philosophers who exhorted the supremacy of human rationality," the greatest of all influences on the Great Tew group was that of Hugo Grotius, the Dutch scholar, statesman and philosopher" (Trevor-Roper 19). Grotius, Trevor-Roper observes, "whether named or not, is everywhere at Great Tew. He was its immediate tutelary spirit, [its] father-figure" (192).

Similarly, the Dutch scholar's ideas were essential to the formulation of Milton's own tolerationist viewpoint. Integrating Grotius's ideas into his work later than Great Tew, the poet was in a more advantageous position to incorporate his liberal perspective.⁵ Milton's acquaintance with Grotius occurred on the eve of his immersion in political life and scholarship—his anti-prelatical pamphlets advocating a more democratic church were composed in the immediate years which follow, at the start of the English Civil War. Consequently, it follows, the poet engages in Grotian subjects throughout his battle-related work—the social disposition of man, the moral foundations for pursuing rightful warfare to protect rights, interdiction against criminal property usurpation. These considerations, originating from classical models, were critical to the poet's depiction of martial struggle and his faith in the possibility of resort to battle as a requisite means. Milton mentions Grotius in sections of his works which foster natural-law derived theories regarding individual integrity and the supremacy of human reason such as *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643), *The Judgement of Martin Bucer* (1644), and the conclusion of *Tetrachordon* (1645).⁶ The poet's ever-expanding collection of philosophical and juridical tracts—augmenting even after his eyesight—were additionally vital in shaping his perspective on war. His personal library held a varied array of the Dutch scholar's works, such as *Adamus Exul*, *Ad Genesin*, *Annotationes Ad Veterum Testamentum*, *Annotationes in Libros Evangeliorum*, *Christus Patiens*, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, *De Veritate Religionis Christianae*, and *Poemata Collecta* (Boswell 117-18).

Grotius's representation of natural law in his foremost work *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (1625), it is significant for us to consider, is founded on his belief that humanity is social, and that individuals are motivated by the realization that society exists in harmony with human nature.⁷ The Dutch scholar and other lawyers throughout Renaissance England and Europe recognized the presence of two primary and mutually interactive domains of justice which have their foundation in sociableness, their basis in this natural tendency of man to desire common society—legal principles originating from divine or eternal sources, and positive laws deriving from man-made legislation. Because the former is indiscernible to human perception, a link between the two systems is necessary so that man-made law corresponds to God's law. As a means of securing this association,

sixteenth and seventeenth century jurists looked back to ancient paradigms for their various incarnations of natural law. Knowledge of this essential connection between divine equity and man's faculty was to be discovered in the development from Socratic origins of natural law in fifth century B.C. to Aquinas's integration of faith and reason eight centuries later.

As that part of God's law which man can grasp with his powers of reason, the laws of nature provide norms for justice, encouraging man to embrace virtue and avoid vice. As an authoritative specification for action, "[natural law acts as] a barometer by which people must adapt their worldly laws to come as close as possible in a fallen world to enacting and obeying divine law" (White 4). It gauges the extent to which man can recapture and operate in accordance with standards of prelapsarian perfection in his motives and actions. Demonstrating that the laws of nature and of nations perpetually interact with one another—that positive law, man-made constantly strives towards or strives to emulate the paradigmatic, divinely-derived natural law—Grotius emphasized that man-made law is tempered by, and seeks to conform with, natural law's moral imperative.⁸

A particularly compelling facet of natural law significant to Grotius's interpretation, and to Milton's adherence to the concept, is its ultimately virtual status. "Natural law... is essentially... a skeleton law" observes Taiwo (45). "As a framework law," he elaborates, "natural law is a guide to action designed to enact its precepts into positive law" (72) whereby positivism designates the mode by which these theoretical tenets are "brought to life" (9) by human agency in an ethically praiseworthy manner or not.⁹ Striving to promote a paradigmatic example of what "ought to be," enacting a sort of superego function for legal formulation, natural law spontaneously acts as a *tabula rasa* for imaginative projection of optimism, and as an act of reason contemplating good versus evil which prioritizes the good. Contextualized within society, natural law may be recognized as the idealized legal system which strives for realization. With this goal at the fore, it perpetually seeks an opportunity to "order... reason" (Taiwo 44) in a prototypical and definitive manner.

In the analysis of *Paradise Lost* which follows, we will investigate how the laws of nature, as defined by Grotius, are essential to differentiating between Satan's despotism and God's rightful rule. The indicative and authoritative nature of the natural law imparts its own interdiction against evil and mandate of good throughout the epic. Performing a superego function, supporting what "ought to be," these tenets morally evaluate Satan's false appearance of equity in relation to God's true embodiment of justice, thereby confirming God's beneficence.

Milton's shared Arminianism with Grotius further clarifies the epic's indeterminate portrayal of evil. Both men organized their appeal for revolution

and reformation around their increasingly similar notions of what God truly meant to them. Beginning their lives as orthodox, predestinarian Calvinists, both turned to the more reasonable God of Arminianism, a God whose faith in human dignity, free will, and salvation for all falls easily in line with their natural law emphases.¹⁰ When he composed his poem, Milton had solidly arrived at the progressive theology which he hinted at in his earlier political and poetical works. As Christopher Hill confirms, “*Paradise Lost* appeared at exactly the time of Arminianism’s victory” (Hill 277). By the time that he wrote his epic, he perceived election and reprobation as conditional upon man’s cooperation. Passionate belief in human freedom set him apart from more orthodox Calvinists of his time, who maintained that man was powerless to participate in the redemption of his own soul. “According to *Paradise Lost*, the possibility of election results from the grace of God, but the enjoyment of this possibility requires the volition of man” (Kelley 15).¹¹

“Long choosing, and beginning late”¹², the protracted development of this great work led to its complex content, by which Milton seeks an answer to the apparent injustice of the Restoration. As Hill suggests, “*Paradise Lost* subsumes Milton’s experience in the forties and fifties, and because of this is a richer poem than the Arthurian he might have written if there had been no Revolution” (403). The failure of the English Civil War oriented the poet’s focus toward the possibility of effecting a meaningful dialectic between good and evil, which would enable him to perceive what had happened in a more positive light. Informing his epic with Grotian themes such as the social nature of man, the ethical foundations of pursuing just battle to protect rights, and a prohibition against property usurpation allowed him to eschew his trepidation that the War—his efforts in it and hopes he had for it—were without meaning.

If we turn now to the epic, we can begin by considering how Grotius’s laws of nature and Arminianism help to elucidate Milton’s portrayal of God. As soon as He enters the epic in Book III, God’s “rasping, arbitrary” (Martz 127) exhortations underscore why so many scholars have found fault with the poet’s decision to represent God anthropomorphically.¹³ It is God’s apparently problematic relationship to justice which is most pertinent to our Grotian reading. Obsessed with His own defense, His impulse toward self-justification seems to somehow devalue his “divinity.” Exploiting the law to cast himself in a more advantageous light, God leads us to conclude that there is no difference between him and his mode of defense. He administrates justice in order to manipulate mankind into submission, wields justice to limit what others can and cannot do.

Significantly, Satan appropriates various Grotian parameters for just and criminal war to defend his license to rage against God. Satan seeks to convince

his troops that God is simultaneously consumed with the law, and busy breaking it. He seeks to legally justify his crusade by suggesting that he has been personally injured by God's decision to promote Christ. In Book I of *Paradise Lost*, as James A. Freeman points out, Satan portrays himself and his legions' "glorious enterprise" (1. 89) as a just opposition to God's despotic command that all Heaven "deify his power" (1. 112) (Freeman 147). In Book 5, it follows, Satan impersonates a political conservative who questions the innovative "[n]ew laws" (5. 679) set forth by God, since they supposedly impede freedom in heaven (Freeman 147). Even more reprehensibly, insists Satan, God is a usurper. In the War in Heaven, Father and Son resolve to "extend / His empire" (2. 315, 325-27). Not merely has God's kingdom been established in heaven: it is expanding territorially too. Now his sovereignty will proliferate throughout Hell, where his power will be "arbitrary" (2. 334). God, Satan urges, has stolen his legitimate right.

Nevertheless, God's sovereignty—as demonstrated through the authority of the laws of nature, whose moral investigations are founded on God's adherence to ideal standards of justice—is ultimately good. To maintain their freedom, both angelic and human beings must proceed in conformity with this natural law, which encompasses the proper state of nature. As God declares

Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith or love,
Where only what they needs must do, appeared,
Not what they would? What praise could they receive?
What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
When will and reason (reason is also choice)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
Made passive both, had served necessity,
Not me. (3. 102-111)

Obedience to divine equity does not signal a limitation by the tenets of God's imposed justice, it follows, but rather a manner of accepting and returning divine love. The justice God demonstrates is an indication of his devotion. In his inviolable adherence to Law, he deals directly and effectively with the subject of divine justice as it affects the fall of man and his requirement for salvation. Through the parameters of his law, God provides man with boundaries and a focus for his behavior. These margins serve to "frame" his existence, and to give him a presence in hierarchy. Absence of these limitations are evident in Satan, who in rejecting the law and attempting to supersede the order of being, embodies intense absence and displacement.

One of the primary ways that Milton assures us of God's goodness is through His Arminian nature. Nowhere is Milton's progressive theology more visible in *Paradise Lost* than in his complex depiction of the Deity. A principal intention of Milton's later Arminianism was to show how God is good and just, as well as omnipotent. His goodness and justice, we may say, encompass his omnipotence. His stringent expectations exist as the fabric of his supreme power and benevolence. As an Arminian deity, He is followed by man voluntarily and without coercion, as an effect of their free and rational choice. In this way, God exemplifies ideal justice and legitimacy.

The poet's Arminianism is particularly evident in the council in Heaven in Book 3. God foretells man's inevitable corruption by Satan's treachery, but denies responsibility for their downfall since he furnished him with reason and will to withstand these temptations. In our first meeting with God in the poem, he declares that Adam and Eve are "...authors to themselves in all / Both what they judge and what they choose; for so / I formed them free, and free they must remain, / Til they enthrall themselves (3. 122-25). Ethical culpability for the fall itself, and for all the subsequent transgressions, he tells the Son, rests upon humankind. Denying his accountability for man's fate, God leaves it to man to chart his own moral destiny.

Milton endorses Arminian solutions to issues concerning divine justice in reference to Adam and Eve, who—when we initially meet them in Book 4—are "two of far nobler shape erect and tall, / Godlike erect" (4. 288-89). In Eden, God's manifestation in nature *creatio ex deo* secures man's freedom within nature. This material emanation of goodness that extends beyond Himself into the universe serves as testament to His devotion. Within the verdant Garden, humanity knows the good which is the Law without knowing ill, as Eve recognizes—"we live / Law to our selves, our reason is our law" (9. 654). In pristine Paradise, where "gentle gales / Fanning their odoriferous wings dispense / Native perfumes" (4. 156-58), there is an unhindered manifestation of the laws of nature. In his subsequent portrayal of Adam and Eve's disobedience in Book 9—they "yielded to transgress / The strict forbiddance" (9. 902-03)—Milton shows us what evil the infraction against *jus naturae* can amount to (Dust 19). The Fall, we may say, serves as mankind's ultimate breach of natural law.

Milton and Grotius's conversion from Calvinism to Arminianism, it is important to note, was further predicated upon their adherence to sociability. Both believed that men are autonomous by nature, and that their innate appetitus societatis is vital to preserving and prioritizing individual rights. As the Dutch scholar confirms in his *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, "Right reason... and the nature of society... ha[ve] in view... that through community of resource and effort each

individual be safeguarded in the possession of what belongs to him” (*DJBP*, I, II, V 53).¹⁴ Once the epic illustrates God’s beneficence through the laws of nature and by elucidating His Arminian nature, it seems to me, Milton expands his portrayal to various manifestations of Grotian sociability. In this way, God’s law is given the potential to touch and reverberate throughout the community of mankind.

God’s word expands throughout human society by way of the Son’s exaltation. Interceding on the final day of the War in Heaven, the Son of action—“heir of all [His] might” (5. 720)—brings to *Paradise Lost* a paradigm of faith in God’s absolute and ultimately incontestable justice. In setting this critical precedent for absolute belief, the Son impels His will into the community or *communitas* of mankind. In this way, He enables civilization to benefit humanity’s needs through its devotion to God. As Hill puts it, “the Son becomes man, believers become Sons. So we move on to the final stage in which the abstract God of will dissolves and is replaced by the composite body of Christ—the community of Sons” (Hill 357).

Satan’s angry response to the Son’s promotion, as I touched upon earlier, draws upon and parodies Grotian principles of rightful ownership. The Son’s bold elevation represents a distortion of natural justice, according to Satan. As Freeman puts it, “God has not simply stolen Satan’s ‘just right’; he has also filched from Satan’s followers their ‘just inheritance’” (Freeman 146). Consequently, he endorses the individual’s right to retaliate against property usurpation, which he claims God is committing. In essence, we may say, he attempts to naturalize the possibility of revolt against a leader who does not serve the people advantageously. In a skewed representation of the revolution Milton himself advocated years before in the *Tenure of King and Magistrates* (1649) and *Eikonoklastes* (1649) it seems, Satan points out how to identify, object to, and revolt against a leader who abuses his power.

At the beginning of the poem, Satan strives to present himself as a champion of justice who will marshal his forces to continue their rebellion against an arbitrary and corrupt Deity. It is only in this way, he seeks to convince his army, that lawfulness will be restored. He acts, as Freeman puts it, as a defeated general who refuses to disclose any sense of final submission or despair to his legions (113). Milton describes him “in bulk as huge / As whom the fables name of monstrous size, / Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove” (l. 196-98) ; he “stood like a tower” (l. 591). Massive in mind and body, his unspecified breadth rivals both the scope and mystery of God’s influence. We encounter him just after he and his legions have been cast down into Hell. Shackled on the burning lake, he delivers his first speech to Beelzebub, his “bold compeer” (l. 127) and “nearest mate” (l. 192): “What though the field be lost? / All is not lost; the unconquerable will, /

And study of revenge, immortal hate, / And courage never to submit or yield: / What is else not to be overcome?" (1.105-09). Out of total darkness punctuated with tempestuous fire, Satan speaks as a courageous and charismatic military leader capable of reinvigorating his dejected troops. This set-back—he attempts to convince his regiments—can be overcome.

Distracting the reader from the destructive and self-aggrandizing motives which inspire Satan is the staunch individualism which comprises his martial bravery. In keeping with Grotian sociability, Milton illuminates Satan's supreme individuality by emphasizing his corresponding rationality and free will. In his gathering of outstandingly organized, obedient, and precise troops, he seeks to legitimize his actions through the achievement of ultimate control over his ranks. This consummate military machine stems from Satan as an eminently successful leader, who not only assembles and regulates his forces with expertise, but furthermore claims to have the principles of law on his side in doing so. Severing all ties to Heaven as he bids farewell, he appears able to govern himself, of being "self-begot, self-raised" (5. 860): "Farewell happy Fields / Where joy for ever dwells: hail horrors, hail / Infernal world, and thou profoundest hell / Receive thy new possessor: one who brings / A mind not to be changed by place or time. / The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven" (1. 249-255). Seeking to preserve that which is his own according to Grotian standards which maintain that the distinctness of an individual's personhood characterizes his very independence—the "legal right... [or] right to one's own[ership]... over oneself, which is called freedom" (*DJBP*, I, I, V 35), Satan's resilient mind will not be swayed by either Place or Time. He will transform the horrors of hell into a paradise.

Nevertheless, Satan's appearance of heroic self-sufficiency—cloaked in Grotius's notion of absolute integrity of the individual—is informed by a palpable instability. In this early portrait of Satan, we come to realize, Milton presents us with merely superficial trappings of legitimacy, reinforced by seamless military maneuvers and lavish pageantry, "a horrid front / Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise / Of warriors old with ordered spear and shield" (1. 564-65). Revealing the incongruity between his outward performance and inner despair, Milton portrays "their mighty chief" (566) delivering his spirited recitation to an audience of attentive and subservient troops one minute, and the next, overcome with extraordinary "pain, / Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair" (1. 125-26).

A palimpsest of identities lead to the revelation of the "hateful siege / Of contraries" (9. 120-21) which torment Satan's soul. In determining why the poet escorts us through the peeling off of so many layers in his presentation of

Satan's evil, it seems helpful to note his highest ranking among angels. Originally known as Lucifer and second only to God, there is—Milton tells us—heavenly luminosity radiating from him still. Book I confirms that “his form had yet not lost / All her original brightness, nor appeared / Less than archangel ruined” (1. 592-93). Freshly exiled, and outraged at his unjust handling by God, he is in the process of losing the “dauntless courage, and considerate pride” (1. 603) which emanated from his previous majesty.

In this intimate juxtaposition good and evil—of evil still associated with good, so to speak—Milton shows us, as he did in *Areopagitica*, how difficult it is to distinguish between truth and falseness. He seeks to demonstrate, furthermore, that they subsist in irksome proximity as two kinds of signs leading to the formation and confirmation of true goodness. It is for this essential reason that God and the Son's view of Adam and Eve “in the happy garden placed / Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love” (3.67-68) is juxtaposed with “...Satan there / Coasting the wall of heaven on this side night / In the dun air sublime, and ready now / To stoop with wearied wings, and willing feet, / On the bare outside of this world” (3. 70-74). Travelling from the border between Earth and Chaos to Paradise, Satan's liminal status confirms his ability to implicate the world in his malevolence—to somehow invade or overlap with it, or more disturbingly, to integrate imperceptibly with humanity. Milton tracks his increasing proximity to man: “Here walked the fiend at large in spacious field” (3. 430) . . . “All this dark Globe the fiend found as he passed” (3. 498)...“There lands the fiend” (3. 588). Placing God's bountiful creation in the path of Satan's “desperate revenge” (1. 85), Milton rouses our appreciation of natural goodness and elucidates its sacredness.

At this point in the epic, Milton deconstructs his suggestion of Satan's “sociable” concern for preserving and prioritizing individual rights to expose the tyranny which underlies his intention. Consistent with Grotius's criterion for justice and injustice, Milton leads us to perceive God's commitment to the Law by Satan's disregard for it, and from his monumental anguish which ensues. The natural law, according to Milton's Grotian definition of it, serves as the linchpin upon which the dialectic between good and evil consistently turns in the epic. Once the supremacy of this law—distorted by Satan, but redeemed by God—is established in *Paradise Lost*, we are left with “tyranny”—the central organizing principle of this portion of the epic—fulfilled in regard to Satan, the most striking abuser of power to emerge in Milton's fictional work.

Satan's selfish rule is developed according to Grotian standards of despotism in the Great Consult, the debate which occurs in the opening half of Book II. Here, as Satan on his throne “exalted s[its]” (2. 5), he consults his compatriots Moloch, Belial, Mammon, and Beelzebub, all of whom offer different opinions

regarding solutions for their relegation to Hell. Moloch, “now fiercer by despair” (2. 45), suggests they wage battle against Heaven; Belial, “in act more graceful and humane” (109) encourages no action whatsoever; and Mammon proposes they adapt to their infernal surroundings, “from [their] own / Live to [them]selves, though in this vast recess, / Free, and to none accountable” (253-55). Beelzebub insists that retaliation may be achieved by corrupting “the happy seat / Of [God’s] new race called Man” (348-49). While Satan’s government gives the appearance of democratic decision-making, its full representation proves bogus.¹⁵ The parliament, as it turns out, has been gathered to validate Satan’s individualist retaliation against God. Ignoring the input of his compatriots—eradicating the distinctness of their identities according to the laws of nature, as Grotius would see it—he attempts to perpetuate an amorphous social whole founded upon his own misgovernment. He seeks to dismantle the individual liberty of his fellow soldiers according to his convoluted rationality. As “rebel to all law” (10. 83), as Milton later brands him, Satan moves in an opposite and uncertain space away from the appearance of consolidating his followers toward usurping their privileges. It is little wonder, consequently, that Satan promptly dismisses this meeting when he attains approval for his journey, or that the meeting ends with profound bows to a tyrannous leader with pretensions to divinity.

In this interiorized investigation of evil, Milton wishes us to witness the unravelling of Satan’s property of self—the deconstruction, so to speak, of what Grotius called his *sum* (*DJBP*, I, I, V 35). We experience the devastating effect of Satan’s evil constitution, the ramifications of his “corroding loneliness” (Davies 22), the inner implosion of his essential malignancy. Consumed with misery, Satan strives to impose his own inner evil on the universe. Whereas God, we may say, expands his infinite love into all of nature, Satan projects outward in an attempt to rid himself of his supreme grief. To externalize his torment, he becomes a master of camouflage, a harbinger of infinite identities. Inhabiting the form of a snake one moment, a bird, a lion, a tiger, and a toad the next (Book IV), his ultimate scheme of dissimulation arrives in Book VI—as a wicked pretender to divine authority, “the apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat / Idol of majesty divine” (6. 100-01). Later in Book IX, as he surveys the Garden of Eden, Satan confesses: “Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crowned, / Rocks, dens, and caves; but I in none of these / Find place or refuge; and the more I see / Pleasures about me, so much more I feel / Torment within me...” (9. 117-21). Finding no place for himself in God’s munificent bounty, Satan feels gratified as he envisions the destruction of his natural surroundings. His focus on usurpation and dominion, which we will explore in the War in Heaven, is a reflex of his emptiness, a gratuitous effort to fill up his infinite hollowness.

His strategies to rid himself of torment ultimately prove useless. In a visceral expression of pain, he declares: “Me miserable! Which way shall I fly / Infinite wrath, and infinite despair? / Which way I fly is hell; my self am hell” (4. 73-75). Satan’s revelation of interior consciousness confirms his greatest devastation—his realization that his attempts to flee himself, and to subsidize his identity with Eden, with Earth, with God, with His goodness, are fruitless. He originates and embodies all infernal misery with no respite, no reprieve.

Significantly, the one angel among Satan’s followers to challenge Satan’s rebellion in Heaven is Abdiel. In his loyalty to God, the poet emphasizes, this angel stands alone—“faithful found, / Among the faithless, faithful only he; / Among innumerable false” (5. 896-98). Though “his zeal / None seconded” (5. 849-50), Abdiel’s matchless virtue allows him to hold onto his belief in God’s purposes. Essential for our considerations, it seems, is that it is through the word of the law that Abdiel seeks to penetrate Satan’s shortcomings and confirm God’s goodness.

Realizing, as Grotius does, that “There are certain causes [of war] which present a false appearance of justice” (*DJBP*, II, XXII, IV 549), Abdiel reveals that Satan’s call to war, which involves a quest for illegitimate territorial acquisition, is unlawful. We encounter him in Book V, in Raphael’s recollection for Adam of Satan’s revolt against God.

Unjust thou say’st
Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free;
And equal over equals to let reign,
One over all with unsucceeded power.
Shalt thou give law to God, shalt thou dispute
With him the points of liberty, who made
Thee what thou art, and formed the powers of heaven
Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being? (5. 818-25)

Here, the archangel explains that Abdiel contested Satan’s complaint that God has imposed new and harmful laws.

At the same time, this messenger of Grotian right confirms that his own dedication to God’s love has been achieved through his commitment to divine justice. With his use of the word “circumscrib’d,” he informs Satan that the parameters of justice “frame” a creature’s existence in the boundaries they establish for him. While God possesses superior power and ranking, Abdiel understands, He does not exceed his own laws but commits himself to them. The proof of His adherence to these principles reverberates through all of nature.

His profound saturation with His laws sends an endless bounty throughout the earthly surroundings, as He himself is infinite and uncircumscribed.

Strikingly, Abdiel exemplifies the natural law of God as defined by Grotius. This steadfast angel recognizes that freedom may be secured when divine and mortal beings act in accordance with the laws of their natures. It is in this manner, as Bennett puts it, that “the physical and spiritual nature contains within itself the rules of its own operation” (65).

All things, even thee, and all the spirits of heaven
 By him created in their bright degrees,
 Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named
 Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers,
 Essential powers, nor by his reign obscured,
 But more illustrious made, since he the head
 One of our number thus reduced becomes,
 His laws our laws, all honour to him done
 Returns our own. (5. 836-45)

Here, Abdiel establishes that God who made law submits to law; He identifies through a perfect reciprocity with his creatures. Affirming God’s system of justice as a form of knowledge which has encouraged him to seek out virtue and eschew vice, this loyal angel embodies the virtual status of natural law itself in serving as an idealized model for man’s relationship with the divine. Aptly, Joan Bennett dubs Abdiel “the true Miltonic revolutionary” (52). In close proximity to Satan, yet exposing the depth of his weakness, he is tempted by but proves triumphant over sin. In his model of ultimate courage, it seems, the ability to know good by evil is taken to its limit. His example of sole conviction, I would further add, evidences Milton’s and Grotius’s Arminianism in its demonstration of truth over falseness secured through rational thinking, its display of faith sustained in the face of intense provocation.

Abdiel’s actions reflect Grotius’s belief that boundaries for legitimate battle must be drawn in relation to the laws of nature. With the Dutch scholar’s notion of conference in mind—in which “negotiations were to take place among parties to a dispute to the exclusion of third parties” (Edwards 126)—we can take an in-depth look at Abdiel’s crucial engagements with Satan at the end of Book V and beginning of Book VI. As we previously considered, Grotius argues that “in the midst of divergent opinions we must lean towards peace” (*DJBP*, II, II, VI 560). He introduces three methods of *temperamenta* —conference, arbitration, and settlement according to lot—by which disputes could be prevented from breaking

into battle. In conformity with Grotius's rules of moderation, Abdiel engages Satan in a one-on-one debate: "Shalt thou give law to God, shalt thou dispute / With him the points of liberty, who made / Thee what thou art, and formed the powers of heaven / Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being?..." (5. 822-25). The angel of justice realizes that if Satan were to recognize God's devotion and abide by His laws, there would be no occasion for war.

Milton's Grotian space of conference, potentially facilitating settlement by peaceful method, establishes an opportunity for martial strife to be avoided. Abdiel's persuasive defense of divine right, Stella Revard points out, technically gives Satan a chance to reconsider his alliance with evil (164). He appeals to Satan "Cease then this impious rage, / And tempt not these; but hasten to appease / The incensed Father, and the incensed Son, / While pardon may be found in time besought" (5. 845-49). Nevertheless, battle ensues because the Godly truth that Abdiel champions is overridden by Satan's need to do away with Law. Once he is certain that Satan will not reconsider, the loyal angel warns him that violence is imminent. He guarantees that God will strike back with defensive fervor. "That golden sceptre which thou didst reject / Is now an iron rod to bruise and break / Thy disobedience... for soon expect to feel / His thunder on thy head, devouring fire" (5. 886-93).

Satan heeds no warning, regardless. He becomes even more hardened, "more haughty" (5. 852) and "fearless" (875). Unwilling to embrace reason, he moves "with vast... strides" (6. 109) into battle. Rather than respond to the opportunity for settlement by peaceful means, he will look only to combat for the solution to what he perceives as God's abuse of power. Consequently, his false claim at being wronged by the divine leads to his initiation of criminal warfare.¹⁶ Satan's unlawful goals, significantly, are centered around property usurpation, a primary Grotian category of unjust battle. "[Unjust] cause... [includes] the desire for richer land" (*DJBP*, II, XXII, VIII 550) which belongs to another, the Dutch scholar indicates. Contradicting the laws of property ownership, those which encompass the first and most essential element of justice, "The banded powers of Satan hasting on / With furious expedition; for they weened / That self same day by fight, or by surprise / To win the mount of God and on his throne / To set the envier of his state, the proud / Aspirer" (6. 85-90). Significantly, the soldiers of Hell strive to seize control not only of God's heavenly terrain, but furthermore—"on his throne / To set the envier of his state" (6. 88-89)—to displace his being.¹⁷

Realizing the scope of destruction Satan intends, Abdiel perceives the necessity of resorting to violence against him. Informed by Grotian parameters of *temperamenta*, he ultimately determines that justice cannot be met by any other means. In his own achieved freedom, furthermore, this angel of justice

gauges the depth of Satan's absence of reason—he ultimately proves that Satan is not self-generated, but is in fact self-imprisoned in his defiance against God. “This is servitude, / To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled / Against him worthier” (6. 178-79) he tells Satan in Book 6, when he confronts him later in battle. Remarkably, Abdiel strikes “the proud crest of Satan,” striving to defuse the Devil's excessive pride with his own virtuous blow.

So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield
Such ruin intercept: ten paces huge
He backed recoiled; the tenth on bended knee
His massy spear upstayed. (6. 189-195)

Disrupting the Devil's pretense to Arminian uprightness, the faithful angel knocks him backward, off his feet and onto “bended knee,” sending him down to commune in his own spiritual insufficiency.

This martial response, succeeded by archangel Michael's stroke which splits Satan temporarily in two, initiates the “violent eruption of evil” (Martz 123) which encompasses the War in Heaven in Book 6. Crucially, Milton chooses to designate the nucleus of his poem as an interlude of martial strife—a battle conducted by the rebel angels against the good. This military episode both confirms and challenges what we have already learned about God, the Son, and Satan and their respective identities in the epic. Furthermore, the War in Heaven establishes a foundation upon which all previous and subsequent action proceeds. With little other action in this work (Wilding 195), this celestial dissention is a critical occurrence.

In Book II of *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, the Dutch scholar cautions that “war is not to be undertaken save from the most weighty cause at the most opportune time” (II, XXIV, IX 575). With its complexly-wrought earthly trappings of warfare, the realism of Milton's imagery confirms that actual martial strife takes place here as a necessary instrument. Condensed into three days, battle is expedient and limited, indicating the poet's desire to temper war's portrayal. In this way, we are given the Grotian sense of an actual military conflict which has been choreographed in the service of showing some greater point of supreme necessity.

Paradise Lost's focus on *temperamenta*, its exploration of the gamut of requirements for legitimate versus lawless strife, its focus on property usurpation and resistance to tyrannical kingship, confirm that Milton modelled his portrayal

on the Dutch scholar's concept of military conflict. The War in Heaven reflects Grotius's belief that battle must proceed as a sanction to right wrongs. In the opening of *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, the Dutch scholar establishes the fact that

War... is undertaken in order to secure peace, and there is no controversy which may not give rise to war. In undertaking to treat the law of war, therefore, it will be in order to treat such controversies, of any and every kind, as are likely to arise. War itself will finally conduct us to peace as its ultimate goal. (*DJBP*, I, II, I 33)

It is precisely this belief in battle's gamut of possibility—its variable or flexible nature, so to speak—which underscores Grotius's opposition to the anarchy which characterized martial conflict during his own time. Conducted within rightful limits, war could coincide with the laws of nature. As an opportunity to defend and maintain personal liberty, military action need not be irreconcilable with justice.

Rather than include the War in Heaven in order to indict battle or to prove its evil, as the majority of critics contend, I wish to suggest that Milton is not merely interested in exhausting the potential of Satan's ill-intention in this portrayal. In keeping with Grotius, this celestial warfare takes place as an occasion to promote order, a chance to attain recovery or restoration. Scholars frequently fail to acknowledge that two types of war—criminal warfare initiated by Satan, and God's justified defensive battle in response—are pursued here.

During the opening day of this celestial battle, the loyal angels are victorious, but are unable to expunge the rebel forces—though, "o'er-wearied" (392) and "ignominious" (395)—out of Heaven. In this conflict, significantly, Milton's earlier portrait of Satan's courage is entirely subverted. As Revard observes, "It is quite clear that Milton intends by Book 6 to limit severely the kind of heroic expansiveness he had earlier permitted Satan. What he allows in the delusive half-light of Hell he will not allow in the clear sun of Heaven" (220).

Nevertheless, Satan's intention to commit widespread destruction is encapsulated in his fabrication of the cannon and invention and first use of gunpowder on Day Two. An offshoot of his overwhelming impulse to destroy, the Devil's tool of territory annihilation may be seen as an effort toward compensation for his diminishing stature within the poem. Yearning for "weapons more violent" (6. 439), the rebel forces tear up the land for gunpowder, load their tool and fire it: "...in a moment up they turn'd / Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath / The originals of nature in their crude / Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam /

They found, they mingled, and with subtle art, / Concocted and adusted they reduc'd / To blackest grain" (6. 509-15). Exploiting heavenly territory for their illicit purposes, Satan and his cohorts eagerly defile nature in service to their criminal war mission. Specifically contradicting Grotian requirements for just war, the Devil's mechanical contrivances corrupt the divine landscape. Milton nevertheless permits the display of technological initiative in order to examine their corrupt objectives with a wider lens. Significantly, God from his throne in Heaven had "foreseen / This tumult, and permitted all" (6. 673-74), thus allowing this act of de-creation to be fully played out.

In reaction to Satan's unlawful attempt at usurpation and possession, the faithful angels respond with permissible defensive warfare. "No other just cause for undertaking war can there be except injury received" (*DJBP*, II, I, IV 170), the Dutch scholar confirms in *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*. In the second book of this treatise, which he devotes to identifying just causations for battle, he explains that "Authorities generally assign to wars three justifiable causes, defence, recovery of property, and punishment. All three you may find in Camillus's declaration with reference to the Gauls: 'All things which it is right to defend, to recover, and to avenge' (II, I, IV 171). According to these limits, God's troops answer the barrage of cannonballs by throwing mountains at their adversaries

Light as the lightning glimpse they ran, they flew,
From their foundations loosening to and fro
They plucked the seated hills with all their load,
Rocks, waters, woods, and by the shaggy tops
Up lifting bore them in their hands. (6. 642-46)

As "power / Which God hath in his mighty angels placed" (6. 637-38), these mountains, as Joan Bennett observes, serve as the "ultimate natural weapon" (Bennett 89). This organic artillery, so to speak, proves to be an effective mode of retaliation in its own right. In response to this unanticipated tactic, "terror seized the rebel host, / When coming towards them so dread they saw / The bottom of the mountains upward turned" (6. 649).

In Book 1 of *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, Grotius further argues that self-preservation is the first and most fundamental principle of the natural law, used for positive ends to maintain and preserve rights. In mandatory self-protection such as this, "against such hellish mischief fit to oppose" (6. 636), force is permissible to maintain legitimate rights, and is thereby not irreconcilable with law. Conducted in service of the laws of nature, armed strife is evidence that justice is existent and operative. The martial strife pursued by the good angels, we may say, is representative and

defensive of the laws of God. Their counter-attack ensues in a Grotian manner as a necessary instrument, for there is no other way to compel errant forces which are uncivil to adhere to reason. In order to eradicate criminal warfare, one must pursue legitimate battle.

Nevertheless, the War in Heaven does not end at this point. Despite retaliative efforts by the loyal forces, "...horrid confusion heaped / Upon confusion rose: and now all heaven / Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread" (6. 668-70). The divine landscape is increasingly destroyed. In answer to this pervasive anarchy, the coming of the Son on Day Three achieves a true restoration of Heaven. Reserving the denouement of the apocalyptic drama of heavenly conflict for the Son, God instructs him "that the glory may be thine / Of ending this great war, since none but thou / Can end it" (701-04). In an ultimate act of devotion, the Son is the only one who can rescue the angels from ceaseless battle. Arriving at the conclusion of Book VI, the conquering Son in a visionary triumphal chariot descends in a whirlwind of flames and smoke

And the third sacred morn began to shine
 Dawning through heaven: forth rushed with
 whirlwind sound
 The chariot of paternal deity,
 Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
 It self instinct with spirit (6. 748-52)

Materializing miraculously in a self-propelled carriage, his easy involvement in the War contrasts with the painstakingly-contrived cannon and gunpowder of the Satanic offensive. Milton wishes to emphasize the effortless involvement in the Son's engagement in and resolution of this battle. Proceeding "instinct with Spirit" (752), he achieves victory without exertion as a result of his supreme obedience to God. The Son's restoration of order appears as an ultimate act of justice within the text—the fruition of defensive battle in which the laws of God are actualized.

In keeping with Grotius's requirements for just battle, furthermore, the theme of limited warfare is essential to the Son's arrival. The Son praises the loyal angels for their dedicated effort—"faithful hath been your warfare,... fearless in his righteous cause" (6. 803-04), but assures them that Satan's wrath is ultimately directed toward him. Afterward, he engages in an awesome display of strength," in his right hand / Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent / Before him" (835-37), inducing the rebel angels to drop their weapons in terror. Strikingly, the Son's might is counterbalanced by a call to *temperamenta*. Despite his show of

force, Milton tells us, the Son moderates his war-like efforts: “Half his strength he put not forth, but checked / His thunder in mid volley, for he meant / Not to destroy, but root them out of heaven” (6. 853-55). In this way, a gratuitous excess of violence is avoided. “Devastation should be refrained from,” the Dutch scholar informs us, “if there is good hope for a speedy recovery” (*DJBP*, III, XII, III 748). With Grotian theory elemental to the War in Heaven, it seems, peace is kept fully in view as the goal of effort.

Portraying the War in Heaven according to Grotian parameters, Milton champions the Dutch scholar’s notion of just war, and problematizes the criminal. Losing the battle they initiated—driven out of Heaven and made to fall flaming for nine days though Chaos until they reach Hell—the irretrievable descent of the rebel forces proves that their imposition of unjust battle gave them no advantage over God. Rather than an opportunity for Satan to show off his military prowess and leadership expertise, the War is utterly diminishing. The technocrat of the cannon and gunpowder briefly defiles divine territory, upsetting the natural order of Heaven, but is neither successful at appropriating it, nor at usurping the place of God. On the other hand, the Son’s moderated effort is sufficient to root out the evil adversaries. And earlier than this, the loyal angel’s use of natural means—hurling mountains at the offending cannon, a legitimate target of defense—proves to be a much more warranted mode of engagement.

Notes

1. Leading Miltonists such as Stella Purce Revard and James A. Freeman, for instance, argue that Milton’s work illustrates that martial strife cripples man physically and spiritually—that battle exists as his most barbarous error.
2. See C.V. Wedgwood’s *The Thirty Years’ War*, Geoffrey Parker’s *The Thirty Years War*, and Ronald G. Asch’s *The Thirty Years War: The Holy Roman Empire and Europe, 1618-48* for description of the brutish and unrestrained military practices which characterized this lengthy struggle.
3. In *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, Grotius seeks to demonstrate that “in the midst of divergent opinions we must lean towards peace” (*DJBP*, II, II, VI 560). He advocates three techniques of *temperamenta*—conference, arbitration, and settlement according to lot—by which conflicts could be prevented from escalating into military strife.
4. My recent research at Leiden University, and at the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* and *Bibliotheek Vredespaleis* (the Library at the Peace Palace) at the Hague, of proceedings from recent Anglo-Dutch and Grotius Conferences, has helped to confirm the importance of the Dutch scholar to English intellectuals.

5. The members of Great Tew serve as prototypes to Milton's interest in the Dutch scholar. At the same time that Chillingworth, for instance, follows Grotius in establishing the theological foundation for toleration in his main work *The Religion of Protestants* (1638), neither he nor his fellow scholars promoted a comprehensive doctrine of toleration. Jonathan Israel indicates that "in England it was only with the defeat of the King in the Civil War, and the temporary overthrow of episcopacy, with the onset of a period of de facto limited toleration, that freedom of practice became a pressing issue (23). Historical events such as these, it seems to me, paved the way for Milton's enthusiasm over the possibilities for ecclesiastical development founded upon liberation of expression in *Areopagitica* of 1644, based on the sovereignty of the individual reason and the eradication of censorship by state authority.
6. In regard to Grotius's notes on the law in reference to dissolution of marriage in *Annotationes in Libros Evangeliorum* (1641) on Matthew 5, Milton refers to him in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643), where he designates him "Hugo Grotius, a man of these times, one of the best learned" (2: 238); in *The Judgement of Martin Bucer* (1644) (2: 433); and in *Tetrachordon* (1645), where the poet introduces a quote by the Dutch scholar with "Grotius yet living, one of prime note among learned men" (2: 715).
7. As Ernst Bloch observes, "Grotius made his starting point... [an] optimistic one: It was not the drive for self-preservation motivated by the fear of one's neighbor" as in Hobbes' or Machiavelli's theories of state, "but the social drive or social appetite, that led to the social contract" (48).
8. In this way, the laws of nature provide an "evaluative criterion" for legal positivism, they "furnish a standard of identity, justification, and evaluation for positive law" (Taiwo 71). The closer the two branches of juridical reckoning resemble one other, the more positive law aligns with or approximates ideal standards of justice, so the gap between them is diminished. We can see this comparative method discussed as early as Thomas Aquinas during the 1200s—"[I]f a human law is at variance in any particular with the Natural Law," he warns—"it is no longer legal, but rather a corruption of law" (White 4).
9. As White puts it, "Natural Law may be regarded simply as an intellectual 'model,' since in the realm of observation it has 'never really existed.' No actual society has ever been built upon its premises. It may be no more than a rational hypothesis, or a useful, even necessary construction, suggesting what 'ought to be' rather than what 'is' " (preface xi).
10. Grotius became profoundly embroiled in this controversy which divided Protestants of the Netherlands during the early 1600s. This religious dispute began when Jacobus Arminius, a theology professor at Leiden University, was formally requested to elucidate what is currently referred to as the "supralapsarian" viewpoint regarding divine intention. He was asked to clarify whether God had decreed "election" to salvation for certain individuals and initiated the "fall" of man afterward to justify the decree, or whether had He predicted and permitted man to fall and then decreed divine election subsequently as a way of saving some of them. As Arminius deliberated over a reply, he grew to challenge the inflexible notion of unconditional predestination. Ultimately, he attributed to man a moral freedom which opposed the fundamental tenets of Calvinism (Edwards 3-4).

11. By contrast, Grotius's Arminianism emerged with much greater subtlety. The Dutch scholar composed his defense of the Christian religion *De Veritate Christianae Religionis* (True Religion) (1619-20) at the fortress of Loevenstein, where he was imprisoned (1619-21), and nearly put to death, after championing Arminianism at the Synod of Dort. Although the Arminian debate was the foremost cause of this treatise, Grotius's precarious situation made it impossible for him to overtly promote his radical faith. Nevertheless, this apologetic work—as well as his other religious tracts such as *Meletius*, an early “blueprint” for *De Veritate*, written between 1609-11 and discovered in Amsterdam in 1984, and the *Annotations* (1640s), his biblical commentary on the Old and New Testaments—are founded upon the Arminian conviction that reason, engaging sacred scriptural truths, could affirm the foundation of Christianity, and “prove to [all Christians] that [they] are citizens of one community” (*Meletius* 104, italics mine).
12. See Milton's proem to Book 9.
13. Anthony Low points out that it is the manner in which He speaks, with “absolute self-assurance... no trace of humility... without metaphor or simile... [with] intention to give information only” (25) which increases the impression of discomfort.
14. *Communitas* is one of the primary general features which Milton and Grotius privilege. Significantly, *communitas* does not promote the merging of all individuals but rather seeks to preserve the original distinctness of persons—their respective *suum* (*DJBP*, I, I, V 35) or property of self—according to the powers of consciousness and reason.
15. Michael Wilding observes that “This is not an egalitarian society. The majority are excluded and reduced... There is a *show* of representation—but, in fact, only Satan, Moloch, Belial, Mammon, and Beelzebub speak... The debate... had been mere window-dressing... the appearance of discussion. As soon as Satan has got what he wants—the assent of his assembly that he should go on a mission to the world—he swiftly puts an end to the debate” (215-16).
16. As Grotius observes

There are some indeed who clearly ignore justifiable causes. To these we may apply the dictum uttered by the Roman jurists, that the man is a robber who, when asked the origin of his possession, adduces none other than the fact of possession. (*DJBP*, II, XXII, III 547-48)
17. It is noteworthy that Satan's territorial ambitions include his desire to depose God as well as take control of his land. In this way, it appears, his scheme coincides with Grotius's liberal definition of property to include life, limbs, and liberty (*DJBP*, I, II, I 54) as parts of an individual's possessions. The Devil's desire to appropriate God's identity and land—meshed together into an undifferentiated whole—exist as a composite usurpation of individual freedom.

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