John Milton's "Unholy Trinity" (Satan, Sin, and Death)

by Anthony Lacy Gully

Each at their head
Level'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend, and such a frown
Each cast at th' other, when two black clouds,
With Heaven's artillery fraught, came rattling on
Over the Caspian, then stand front to front
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid air:
So frowned the mighty combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at their frown, so matched they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe: and now great deeds
Had been achieved, hereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky sorceress that sat
Fast by Hell gate, and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous cry outrushed between. . . .

Thus does Milton in Book II of *Paradise Lost* (lines 711-726) describe the first encounter of Satan with his daughter Sin and their offspring Death. The titanic struggle between these shades was a singularly popular image among artists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The illustrations of Satan, Sin, and Death are of two types: those which faithfully illustrate Milton's text and those which utilize the sublime encounter to make an observation on the human predicament or the character of the political state.

The first known illustration of the theme was executed by Sir John Baptist Medina (1659?-1711?), sixteen years after Milton's death. Born in Brussels of Spanish parents, Medina studied art with the Flemish master François Duchastel, himself a student of David Teniers the Younger. Emigrating to England at age twenty-six, Medina secured a good living fashioning portraits of the petty nobles of Scotland and the Northern Counties. In 1688, the year he arrived in Great Britain, he was asked by the publishers Flesher, Bentley and Tonson to design plates for a projected edition of *Paradise Lost.* His designs were engraved by Michael Burghers and enjoyed tremendous success. Eighteen editions published between 1688 and 1784 served as a paradigm for the majority of subsequent illustrators. Medina's presentation of "Satan, Sin, and Death" (Figure 1) owes a great deal to emblematic and biblical illustration. These first illustrations of *Paradise Lost* appeared ten years after Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* which, with the *Bible,* was the chief stimulant of popular illustration. Many of

Fig. 1. Sir John Baptist Medina, "Satan, Sin and Death," wood engraving, *Paradise Lost,* published 1688.

Medina's designs are medieval in character, often including more than one episode in a single plate. The twelve subjects Medina isolated, one from each of the twelve books of *Paradise Lost,* became standard until the very end of the eighteenth century.[1] Medina's composition is awkward and fails utterly to capture the dinotherian power of Milton's text. Aside from the limitation of his own talent and the transcription of his design by the engraver, Medina was plagued by the absence of a native tradition of history painting. Milton imbues Death with Apollo-like grace. Medina, ignoring Milton's description of Death, elects to repeat the convention of Death as a skeletal figure as encountered at an early date in the decorations of the Charnel House in Paris and repeated in Hans Holbein's "Dance of Death" engravings (1538) which Medina certainly knew. Death wears not the kingly crown assigned him by Milton and insecurely rattles a spear. Satan, in the center, is poised for his descent into Hell after the Gate has been opened for him (Book II, lines 917-929). His horns, bat-like wings, and monstrous ears do not accord with Milton's comely depiction of the fallen archangel, but relate to the many visualizations of devils and demons which haunt emblem books and anti-papal and anti-protestant satires published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To the right is Sin, a lustful creature, whose incestuous relationship with her son Death (the product of her incestuous affair with her father, Satan), has bred the Cerberean monsters which envelop the lower regions of her body. Her form in the Medina composition is very close to Cavaliere Cesare Ripa's image of Deceit in the *Iconologia* where Deceit is interpreted as a serpent-woman.

In 1720 Louis Chéron (1660-1731) was asked by Sir James Thornhill, William Hogarth's father-in-law, to illustrate an edition of *Paradise Lost* (Figure 2). His drawings were engraved by Du Bosc. Chéron's interpretation of the first meeting of Satan, Sin, and Death is singular. Satan is portrayed as a satyr, suggesting Chéron's classical bias; he had arrived in Britain from Italy in 1695. A *Prix de Rome* winner, Chéron's reputation rests on several large-scale decorative projects completed for English country houses.

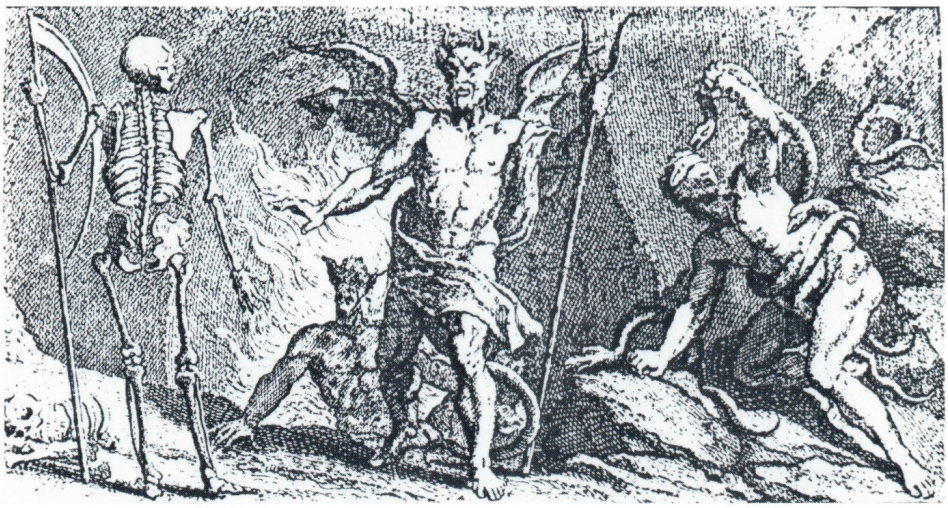

Fig. 2. Louis Chéron, "Satan, Sin and Death," wood engraving, *Paradise Lost,* published 1720.

The allegories at Burleigh, Chatsworth and most especially Boughton, where he completed two ceiling paintings, "The Assembly of the Gods" and "The Judgment of Paris," clearly confirm his links with Italianate art and explain his disinterest in the broadside tradition so important to Medina and others. Sin, too, is classically inspired, her form derived from the Laocöon. She is seen blindfolded, for which there is no textual support. The only iconographic parallels appear in Ripa's *Iconologia* (1709): Human Error is portrayed as blind; Synogoga is blind and bandaged, and Sin is a male youth, black but also blind. Chéron produced a second set of illustrations for an Irish edition which was published in Dublin in 1724. They differ in small details from his first illustrations for *Paradise Lost.*

Between 1735-40 William Hogarth executed an oil version of the theme,[2] (Figure 3) presently in the Tate Gallery, London. The Hogarth painting is pivotal in the evolution of the treatment of the theme even though the painting remained unknown for many years.[3] It was through engraved versions of Hogarth's composition that artists such as Henry Fuseli, William Blake, Thomas Stothard, and James Gillray learned of Hogarth's unique concept of the meeting of the "Unholy Trinity" and re-worked his composition. Charles Townley engraved the Hogarth design three years after the artist's death in 1767. Only three or four impressions of this print were made, and none are known to be extant. Samuel Ireland, Hogarth's early biographer produced a pitiful copy for his *Graphic Illustrations of Hogarth* (London, 1776). More influential in disseminating Hogarth's version to other artists was Thomas Rowlandson's engraving after a drawing by Richard Livesay. (Figure 4). Livesay resided with Mrs. Hogarth from 1777-1785 after Hogarth's death. Though the Rowlandson print is undated, stylistically it belongs to the artist's early career

Fig. 3. William Hogarth, *Satan, Sin and Death,* ca. 1735-40, oil on canvas. Reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London.

and most probably dates from the mid-1770's when Livesay was overseeing the reproduction of Hogarth designs from his establishment in Leicester Fields. Rowlandson's print, faithful to the Hogarth painting, is strikingly different from Rowlandson's light-hearted attitude towards death realized in his amusing drawings for *The English Dance of Death* (1814-1816).

Samuel Ireland claims, with no documentary support, that Hogarth's painting was commissioned by the actor-producer David Garrick. But as David Bindman has observed, Garrick's fame does not date before 1741 when he made a sensation in Shakespeare's *Richard III.*[4] The style of the Hogarth work clearly suggests an earlier date.

It is not insignificant that it was Hogarth who first ventured on a monumental scale to illustrate the work of an English author. Hogarth's chauvinistic hopes for an English art of distinction are central to his art. Hogarth's figure of Death and the costume and accouterments of Satan are essentially parallel to Medina's, a more plausible source than Frederick Antal's suggestion that Hogarth modelled his design on ideas gained from a print after Salvator Rosa's "Saul and the Witch of Endor" (Louvre),

Fig. 4. Thomas Rowlandson after Hogarth/R. Livesay, *Satan, Sin and Death,* ca. 1774-78, engraving, British Museum.

in which poses, costumes, displacement and gestures of figures and setting are dissimilar.[5] But whether Hogarth chose to look at Medina, Rosa, or emblem books[6] is not as significant as Hogarth's genius for illustrating a specific moment in time. He isolates the climax of the scene as Sin rushes between her lover/father and lover/son to forestall the deadly conflict. Hogarth is the first illustrator of Milton to isolate and concentrate our attention on the interaction of the protagonists. As with his "Modern History Paintings," Hogarth individualizes each of his figures; they seem to embody real spirit rather than to stand as wooden symbols. Dr. Samuel Johnson's criticism of Milton's encounter of Satan, Sin, and Death comes to mind. Johnson argued that to attribute actions to the allegorical figures of Satan, Sin, and Death is "to shock the mind by ascribing effects to a non-entity." But Hogarth manages very well. The most powerful effect in the Hogarth is the expanded gesture of Sin as she rushes to separate the combatants. There exists no known precedent for this inventive pose except in Hogarth's own art. In the artist's scene from Act IV of *The Beggar's Opera,* especially the sixth and final version in the Mellon Collection (1729), British Art

Fig. 5. William Hogarth, *The Beggar's Opera, Act IV,* 1729, Oil on canvas. Reproduced courtesy of the Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

Center, Yale University (Figure 5), the gesture is encountered twice. The painting illustrates Scene II of John Gay's satiric comedy, the sentimental climax of the play as Polly Peachum and Kate plead for Macheath's life.[7] Both figures, especially that of Kate, seen from the rear, presage the pose of Sin in "Satan, Sin, and Death."

The domestic character of Gay's comedy and the familial links of Satan, Sin, and Death raise the issue of the connection between Miltonic illustration and radical writings of the period. Repeatedly, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries one encounters the metaphor of familial discord or harmony as a literary device to reflect the respective health or weakness of the political and social fabric. Writers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot, Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft and William Blake employ the eternal triangle as a literary construction to examine social ills.

Rousseau in his *Confessions* (1770) laments how dancing masters and other social parasites succeeded in seducing their mistresses. The sexual license of these aristocratic women has undermined the authority of the father/husband. This sexual predicament is equated with the growing weakness and ineptitude of the French government.

Fig. 6. Francis Hayman, "Satan, Sin and Death," engraving, *Paradise Lost,* published 1749.

Many of these themes are also encountered in *La Nouvelle Héloise* (1760), where Rousseau argues for fidelity in the family unit and the restoration of "natural" relationships with the body politic.

In his *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790), Edmund Burke describes society in familial terms. The father figure is often associated with the constitution, and Burke's celebrated fictional account of Queen Marie Antoinette fleeing nude from Versailles suggests that her nude flight is analogous to the rape of the state.[8] Burke goes so far as to draw comparisons between Milton's vision of Hell and the "Jacobin Hell" of Paris. The allusion to Milton's writings and the familial metaphor are even more explicitly implied in his Parliamentary address of April 11, 1794. The French nation had been destroyed by an errant son who challenged and defeated the Father—imagery which parallels Milton's dramatic encounter between Satan, Sin, and Death.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) employs the familial metaphor in its exposition of the need to redefine the role of woman in society. Objecting to Rousseau's sentimentalism and primitivism, she argues forcefully for the education of women so they may participate in producing a virtuous and democratic society. Wollstonecraft frequently alludes to the child and parent bond as a parallel to a vital and productive social order.[9] Diderot in *La Religieuse* similarly uses the child/parent metaphor. He employs the love-child as a metaphor for the need for a new generation to rise up and challenge the older restrictive order.

The beauty of Sin in Hogarth's work is original with him, derived from Milton's text. Her serpentine form, accentuated by the snakes, recalls Hogarth's implied arguments about sensual entrapment and pursuit in his *Analysis of Beauty* (1753).[10] The Venus de Medici, Laocöon and Apollo Belvedere of Plate I of Hogarth's treatise seem to have coalesced into the lustful creature that dominates the center of Hogarth's canvas. Hogarth was attracted to the formal as well as to the sublime features of Milton's epic. In Hogarth's painting there is no beauty as Edmund Burke would have understood it; rather it presages the sublimity which Burke will define in 1759.

No form is passive; the composition is replete with the tension and unease so typical of Hogarth's work. Hogarth was attracted to the breadth of Milton's vision, which stepped beyond the everyday, and yet could be found lurking within the human spirit. Hogarth's interest in Milton may have resulted from the meetings of The Club, a group of literati, who in 1734 gathered to hear Jonathan Richardson read his *Explanatory Notes on Paradise Lost* which was published later the same year. Richardson wrote in part:

> The main of Milton's poem, the epitome of the whole argument of *Paradise Lost* which is a kind of paraphrase of the words of St. James, I:15, is that when 'Lust hath conceived it bringeth forth Sin, and Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.'[11]

In 1749 Francis Hayman (1708-1776) provided drawings for an edition of *Paradise Lost.*[12] Hayman's composition owes nothing to Hogarth's "Satan, Sin, and Death" (Figure 6). Hayman, in all probability, never saw the Hogarth painting. Hayman is the first illustrator of Milton to treat Satan in the "God-like shape and form, excellent (in his) princely dignity" as sketched by Milton. Hayman was not interested in the high drama that attracted Hogarth but conceived the subject in an elegant and essentially decorative style. The Hayman has been characterized by Geoffrey Keynes as "classic" in contrast to the Hogarth, but Hayman's design should be examined with more precision. Hayman gained his reputation for his decorations for the pleasure grounds of Vauxhall Gardens. His art possesses none of the bite and intensity of Hogarth. There was nothing of the revolutionary or social critic in Hayman, unlike Hogarth, who argued vociferously against the creation of the Royal Academy, fearing that once it was established the wealthy and elite could exercise control over artists. Hogarth was, of course, correct in his assessment. Hayman joined the Academy and served as its librarian from 1771 until his death in 1776. Though he never travelled to Italy, Hayman consciously strove to impart a "classical" grace to his work. It is not surprising to find him turning to Raphael as a figural source for his Miltonic illustrations. Hayman's Satan is almost identical in pose, costume, and spatial displacement to Raphael's "St. Michael" (Louvre, 1507-1515),[13] and the figure of Sin is a quotation from Raphael's "Galatea" (Farnesina Villa, Rome, 1513). Hayman probably knew both works through prints. Five editions of Hayman's designs were published between 1749 and 1815.

Another member of the classical school of British art to illuminate Milton's text was James Barry. In the late 1790's he produced his "Satan, Sin, and Death" (Figure 7). Barry's design owes something to Hogarth's composition and/or to Fuseli's re-interpretation of the Hogarth conception. Robert Wark proposed in 1954 a novel relationship between Barry's art and Edmund Burke's essay, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1759).[14] For Burke the beautiful was founded on the principle of pleasure, while the sublime was akin to the awesome, the terrifying, and ultimately, the painful. Barry's own work is realized in two styles which accord with Burke's two aesthetic categories. In works such as his "Jupiter and Juno on Mt. Ida" (1790-99, Sheffield) one encounters the "beautiful"; objects are smooth, undulating, modest in scale and evenly lit. In designs such as his illustrations for Milton's *Paradise Lost* we encounter the "sublime"; objects are of vast dimension, angular and enveloped in a gloomy and

Fig. 7. James Barry, "Satan, Sin and Death", late 1790's, *Paradise Lost.*

theatrically lit atmosphere. The stylistic dichotomy in Barry's work parallels the two nascent styles of the eighteenth century, Neoclassicism and Romanticism. For both Barry and Burke the two modes were not mutually exclusive but rather were simply means to different ends; both were recognized as legitimate in contrast to the arguments launched later by the Classicists and the Romantics. William Blake, always willing to compound, to spiritualize, wrote of Barry's Miltonic illustrations: "The hard and wirey line of rectitude, with its depiction of the ineffable figure of death is glorious." It is doubtful if Barry would have understood Blake's mystic definition of his art, but Barry's work captures the Burkean sublimity inherent in Milton's verse.

Henry Fuseli exhibited four versions of the "Satan, Sin, and Death," subject (Figure 8) in 1799, the year he opened his Milton Gallery with forty paintings illustrating the works of Milton. This enterprise, modelled on the publisher James Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, was a critical and financial disaster.

Fuseli had access to David Garrick's home and may have known the original William Hogarth oil.[16] Quoting Hogarth's design, Fuseli repeats the upraised arm of Satan, a feature not repeated in any of the surviving prints after the Hogarth design.

Though a political radical, Fuseli having been forced to leave his native Switzerland because of the publication of radical literature, the versions of "Satan, Sin, and Death" are conceived as aesthetic problems, with no allusion to the political state of France or Great Britain. Fuseli provided the minimum of setting as all emphasis is placed on the dynamic movement of the figures who strain, push, and pull against each other. Portrayed as a lithe, graceful, and yet muscular hero, Satan is a subtle fusion of the erotic femininity of Sin and the masculine strength of Death. Sin, as she reaches up athletically to restrain the combatants, is the focal point of the painting. Docking and Schiff have made the fascinating hypotheses that after Fuseli's treatment of the theme of "Satan, Sin, and Death," the artist treats woman as an erotic, corrupting force. Certainly in this work, and in the pornographic drawings after 1800, this interpretation of woman is very apparent.

Fuseli's figure of Death is positively bestial; the artist takes a good deal of liberty with Milton's description. The exaggerated drama of Fuseli's design is not surprising in an artist who had been nourished on the *Sturm und Drang* of German literature. Though Fuseli abandoned the skeletal vision of Death favored by previous illustrators, he does

Fig. 8. Johann H. Fuseli (Füssli), *Sin Separating Death and the Devil,* 1790-1800, oil on canvas, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick M. Nichols, Mr. and Mrs. Harry B. Swerdlow and Mr. and Mrs. William K. Glikbarg.

Fig. 9. James Gillray, "Satan, Sin and the Devil," June 9, 1792, engraving, published in London.

create the most dramatic confrontation of Satan, Sin, and Death. The gloom and violence of his composition accord perfectly with Edmund Burke's impressions of this scene. Burke cites Milton's figure of Death in his *Enquiry* as a paradigm of the sublime. He writes in Part II, Section III on "Obscurity":

> No person seems better to have understood the secret of heightening, or offsetting terrible things, if I may use the expression, in their strongest light by the force of a judicious obscurity, than Milton. His description of Death in the second book is admirably studied; it is astonishing with what a gloomy pomp, with what a significant and expressive uncertainty of strokes and colouring he has finished the portrait of the kind of terrors.
>
> *The other shape,*
> *If shape it might be called that shape had none*
> *Distinguishable, in member, joint, or limb;*
> *Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,*
> *For each seemed either; black he stood as night;*
> *Fierce as ten furies; terrible as hell;*
> *And shook a deadly dart. What seemed his head*
> *The likeness of a kingly crown had on.*

> In this description all is dark, uncertain, confused, terrible and sublime to the last degree.[17]

Fuseli's fascination with unseen forces and titanic literary visions served him well in his Miltonic illustrations as it did earlier in his many versions of "The Nightmare." In 1802 F. J. du Roveray published an illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost* based on the drawings of Fuseli and William Hamilton (1751-1801). A second edition appeared in 1807.

All the illustrators of Milton cited above have either viewed their Miltonic compositions as amplifications of the text or as opportunities to explore the new romantic and sublime sensibilities which were developing in the course of the eighteenth century. James Gillray's broadside, "Satan, Sin, and the Devil," published by Mrs. Humphrey on June 9, 1792 (Figure 9) represents yet another artistic manipulation of Milton's encounter in Book II. Gillray took the Hogarth model and twisted its meaning. Queen Charlotte, consort to King George III, has become Milton's "snaky sorceress." The pungent satire, not surprisingly, displeased the Court of St. James. William Pitt, the Prime Minister and the Queen's favorite, is seen as "Satan." His close association with "Sin" alludes to the alliance between the Queen and Pitt during the incapacities of King George III. Challenging "Satan and Sin" is Lord Thurlow, Chancellor of the Exchecquer, in the guise of "Death." Thurlow was forced from office by Pitt and the Queen. Around the Queen's waist is the key to the royal bedchamber, and the Cerberean monsters are represented with caricatures of Dundas, Secretary of War, Grenville, Foreign Secretary, and Richmond, Master-General of Ordnance. Gillray converts Milton's personages from the universal to the mundanity of contemporary British politics. The acerbic tone of this satire is typical of the bitterness of Gillray's best broadsides. Gillray's anger at figures in authority echoes that of Wollstonecraft, Thomas Paine, and Richard Price.[18] Unlike these writers and artists such as William Blake, Gillray chooses not to cloak his sardonic jibes behind a veil of complicated iconography and symbolism.[19] Prior to the Reign of Terror in 1793 Gillray had provided the radical wing of British politics with satires in support of the republican ideals of the French revolutionaries.

"Satan, Sin, and the Devil" like so many of Gillray's satires is double-barreled. He not only criticizes contemporary political corruption but also sets out to puncture the self-inflated sense of importance he finds among his fellow artists.[20] The letterpress attached to the caricature of "Satan, Sin, and Death" reads:

> *NB.* The above performance containing Portraits of the Devil and his relatives taken from life, is recommended to Messrs. Boydell and Fuzelli (sic) and the rest of the proprietors of the Three Hundred and Sixty Five Editions of Milton, now publishing, as necessary to be adopted, in their classick (sic) Embellishment.

Clearly, Gillray found the plethora of Miltonic pictures and prints rather precious; his distaste for the Royal Academy and "high-toned" art was pronounced.

Between 1806 and 1808 William Blake produced two sets of watercolor drawings illustrating *Paradise Lost*; neither set was engraved.[21] Blake's vision of "Satan, Sin, and Death" (Figure 10) is based upon the Hogarth/Fuseli formulas but is imbued with Blake's distinctive spirit. Though the contest between Satan and Death is not as dramatic as Fuseli's it is perhaps more successful in suggesting

Fig. 10. William Blake, *Satan, Sin and Death,* 1806-1808, watercolor. Reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the Henry E. Huntington Art Gallery, San Marino, California.

the universal significance of the conflict. Sin's face is stamped with horror and the ultimate degeneration of Satan is suggested. Satan, who detests ugliness, has just learned of the corruption attending Sin's birth; her degeneration implies his own fate. Blake, as many scholars have noted, completely turned Milton's imagery about face in his own writings with Satan emerging as the true hero. Satan embodies the energy and dynamism that Blake finds essential to personal and spiritual liberty. Satan is cast in the role of Blake's Orc, the youth who challenges tradition and power in several of his allegories. Interpreters of Blake suggest that Satan, Sin, and Death are associated with the mythical characters who appear in Blake's prophetic books. Bindman suggests that Death is Urizen; Keynes draws parallels between Enitharmon and Sin, and between Rintrah and Death from Blake's *Europe, A Prophecy* (1794). Erdman interprets a plate from the same epic of Rintrah and the two queens as an allusion to William Pitt and Queens Charlotte and Marie Antoinette, all three maneuvering to defeat liberty. The references to contemporary politics are enmeshed in a constantly shifting and changing fashion with the myth and symbol of the historical sequence of Britain's war against France.[22] The following passage from *Europe, A Prophecy* is derived from Milton's description of Satan, Sin, and Death, yet pictures the chaos wrought by the French Revolution:

> Go tell the human race that woman's love is sin . . .
> Orc the horrent demon rose surrounded with the red stars of fire
> Whirling about in furious circles around the immortal fiend
> And the vineyards of red France appear'd in the light of his
> Fury . . . . . .

One of the startling effects of Blake's drawing is its ethereal quality, resulting from the clear coloring and the marvelous transparency of the figure of Death.[23]

George Romney, in his notebooks, which date from the 1790's, also was attracted to the theme of Satan, Sin, and Death (Figure 11). An associate of Blake and Fuseli, he would most likely have known both artists' interpretations of the theme. Bindman suggests that Romney never intended to work up his sketches[24] but the artist's letters refute this. On February 2, 1792 he wrote to his son: "I have made and am making designs for Milton; and mean to make several before I begin to paint them, but it is quite a secret." And in response to an

Fig. 11. George Romney, *Sketch of Satan, Sin and Death,* 1790's, Reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.

enquiry from the Reverend William Hayley, who had contracted Romney to illustrate his *Life of Milton,* Romney writes in January, 1794: "My plan was, if I should live and retain my senses and sight, to paint six other subjects from Milton; three where Satan is the hero, and three of Adam and Eve."

Any number of English artists illustrated Milton's epic in the nineteenth century: Stothard, Heath, Charles Williams, and Samuel Clark. The latter's engraving of 1853 (Figure 12), reflects the diminished power of these later interpretations; the cosmic conflicts of Milton's verse are reduced to decorous vignettes. However, one illuminator in the nineteenth century did succeed in reworking the theme in a monumental fashion akin to Hogarth, Fuseli, and Blake. Between 1825 and 1827 John Martin produced a set of twenty-four mezzotints to embellish an illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost* published by Septimus Prowett. The denseness and sonorous quality of these plates (Figure 13), coupled with Martin's extraordinary vision

Fig. 12. Samuel Clark, "Satan, Sin and Death," 1853, engraving, *Paradise Lost.*

of a hellish landscape, are splendid additions to Milton's majestic verse. Martin's deep, cyclonic vistas owe something to Turner's apocalyptic landscapes.[25] It has been suggested that Martin's designs also allude, with a strange subterranean echo, to Brunel's tunnel under the Thames for the London Underground which was just then being constructed. The vast tunnel-like cavern dwarfing the three small figures captures the colossal scale of Milton's verse:

> . . . the hole immense wrought on
> Over the foaming deep high —
> arched a bridge
> of length prodigious . . .
> (Book X, 300-01)

Satan, Sin, and Death are building a bridge over chaos, bringing hell into the universe. The monumental vistas of Martin, the concern with spectacular spatial

Fig. 13. John Martin, "Building the Bridge over Chaos," 1825-27, mezzotint, *Paradise Lost.*

effects, far outdistance his interest in the personal struggle which attracted the imaginations of Hogarth, Fuseli and Blake.

As the nineteenth century progressed and the tensions of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars ceased to stir artists' imaginations, the illustrations of Milton's texts became increasingly polite and decorous. The designs published by Gustave Doré in 1884 and 1886 are typical of this declining interest in utilizing Milton's text as a vehicle for exploring political allegory or the sublime.

Notes

[1]In 1730 Pierre Fourdrinière copied Medina's design for an illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost*; he reversed the composition. In 1752, Richard Cooper made a pathetic copy after Medina's engravings. Cooper's plates appeared in a second edition published in London in 1784. The presence of Medina's plates and those which imitated his designs provided a visual source for subsequent illustrators of Milton.

[2]The oil measures 62 x 74.5 cm. Though undated, most scholars agree that the work must date from the mid-1730's to 1740. For a complete discussion of dating see: David Bindman, "Hogarth's Satan, Sin and Death, *Burlington Magazine,* March, 1970, 153-159.

[3]Ronald Paulsen has suggested in *Hogarth, His Life and Work,* Vol. II (New Haven, 1971), 281-3, that the painting may have been purchased by David Garrick from the artist's widow after Hogarth's death. At Mrs. Garrick's death the painting was sold to Thomas Seaton Foreman, who sold the work to Charles Fairfax Murray in 1899. It appeared on the block at Sothebys in December 1964. It was purchased by Sabin Galleries, London and purchased subsequently for the nation. See: Bindman, "Satan, Sin and Death," 153. The actual painting was not known to subsequent illustrators of Milton, with the possible exception of Fuseli. All other artists based their knowledge of Hogarth on the three prints cited in the text.

[4]Bindman, 153.

[5]Frederick Antal, *Hogarth and His Place in European Art* (London, 1962), 155.

[6]Emblem books such as those by Quarles were still in wide circulation in the first half of the eighteenth century. See: Rosemary Freeman, *English Emblem Books* (London, 1948), 114.

[7]For a penetrating analysis of "The Beggar's Opera" see: R. Paulsen, *Hogarth, Life and Work,* 180-191.

[8]Edmund Burke, "Reflections on the French Revolution" included in: Ray B. Browne, *The Burke-Paine Controversy: Texts and Criticism* (New York, 1963), 262.

[9]Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York, 1967). See especially Chapter XI, "Duty of Parents," 229-235. Another writer to use the familial metaphor is Richard Price. His sermons, especially those from 1789 forward, dismayed the conservative Edmund Burke yet both authors employ the same imagery to characterize the political chaos in France or concern over freedom in Great Britain.

[10]See R. Paulsen, *Hogarth, Life and Work,* Vol II, 189-192 for discussion of the sensual, even erotic, significance for Hogarth of the serpentine line. Hogarth himself quotes from Milton's *Paradise Lost* in his *Analysis of Beauty,* implying the entrapment of man by feminine beauty:

> So vary'd he, and of his torturing train
> Curl's many a wanton wreath, insight of Eve,
> To lure the eye.

[11]Jonathan Richardson, *Explanatory Notes on Paradise Lost* (London, 1734), 71-72.

[12]Bindman, 155, fails to give a date for this suite of Milton drawings. Hayman's designs were engraved by J. Miller.

[13]The Raphael painting was in a French collection in the eighteenth century. Hayman would have known the Raphael composition from prints in circulation. Hayman's figure may also have been derived from a print after Guido Reni's "St. Michael," 1626-27, in the church of Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome, which is ultimately also based on the Raphael work.

[14]Robert Wark, "A Note on James Barry and Edmund Burke," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute,* XVII, 1954, 382-85.

[15]The earliest version of "Satan, Sin and Death" by Fuseli is a pen and ink drawing with wash dated October 1776 in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (For illustration see Bindman, 156, Figure 34.) A later oil version dated 1802 is in the collection of Bavarian State Museum, Munich. For a discussion of Fuseli's interest in this theme see: Gert Schiff, *Johann Heinrich Füssli,* (Munich, 1973), pp. 189-197.

[16]Fuseli's influence can also be seen in the Miltonic illustrations by Edward Francis Burney (1799); Thomas Stothard (1792-93); and Richard Westall (1816 and 1821).

[17]Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (London, 1759), 100-101.

[18]Draper Hill, *Fashionable Contrasts: Caricatures by James Gillray* (London, 1966), 13-15 and 139-140.

[19]Draper Hill, *Mr. Gillray, the Caricaturist* (London, 1965). See especially Chapter Nine, "Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin," pp. 88-101.

[20]A good number of Gillray's satires are amusing variants of notable paintings by Gillray's contemporaries. A select number of examples include: "Weird Sisters; Ministers of Darkness; Minions of the Moon" (December 1791), based on Fuseli's "Macbeth and the Witches"; "Presages of the Millenium" (June 1795), composed in imitation of Benjamin West's "Death on a Pale Horse" and "The Death of the Great Wolf" (December 1795), based on West's "The Death of General Wolfe."

[21]A complete set exists in the Henry E. Huntington Art Gallery, San Marino. These drawings measure about 8 x 10 inches. A larger, but incomplete set is in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The Huntington possess both versions of "Satan, Sin and Death." Figure 9 is from the second, larger set; it measures 19½ x 13⅛ inches.

[22]Very notable in Blake's art after 1791, the year Blake decided along with his publisher Johnson not to publish his inflamatory and radical *French Revolution,* is a retreat behind constantly shifting and complicated symbols of his protestations against the repression he sensed in the political atmosphere in England.

[23]One is reminded of one of Blake's comments in his *A Descriptive Catalog* (1809) which accompanied the artist's only one-man exhibition. Blake writes: "A spirit and a vision are not, as modern philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapor, or a nothing; they are organized minutely articulated beyond all that mortal and perishing nature can produce." This

argument counters Burke's suggestion that obscurity is essential for the sublime.

[24]Bindman, 157-59.

[25]Around 1830, Jonathan Martin, John Martin's mad brother, produced a drawing loosely based on the Hogarth composition. This version of "Satan, Sin and Death" is replete with strange and cryptic symbols only meaningful to the mentally-deranged Martin, who was institutionalized after setting fire to York Minster. For an illustration of the Jonathan Martin drawing see: Bindman, "Hogarth's Satan, Sin and Death."