

Synopsis

The Department of English Language and Literature
Of Graduated School of Literature and Sciences,
Nihon University
Chika KANEKO

Title: Milton's Latin Poems: From the Pastoral to the Political

Presenting an overview of John Milton's (1608–1674) Latin poems, this essay clarifies as to how a poetic vocation appeared in his youth. As a result, *The Poems of John Milton, both English and Latin, Compos'd at several times* (1645, hereafter abbreviated as *1645 Poems*) is defined as a collection of *pastoral* poems, where Milton develops his poetic skills, and at the same time, preparing for the political phase of his life. Milton experiences a spiritual journey from a profane setting to a religious setting, i.e. from the pagan world to the Christian world.

My essay develops the idea of the relationship between Phoebus and Milton, and challenges Milton's poetical vocation through the other Latin poems of Milton.

However, a complete research has not been done on how Milton develops the poetic vocation in his Latin poems. Accordingly, my essay argues that each Latin poem in Milton's *1645 Poems* has three seminal themes about composing an English epic.

One theme is his determination to be an epic poet in the future. *1645 Poems* is a kind of a prayer book written to show the poet's firm resolution to serve the poetry God Phoebus Apollo. This is one consistent theme throughout the Latin section of the book.

Another theme is Milton's challenge to immerse in and make poetic experiments using various classical ideas, expressions and poetic techniques to compose his epic in the future. It is clear that his Latin poems represent a germinal stage of his career. However, they express his political and religious ideas and poetic artistry as peculiar concrete forms, which are later to be developed in his master work *Paradise Lost*. Without obedience to Father-god, Milton cannot hope to achieve his heroic goal of being the first man to complete an English epic.

The third theme is his ironic criticism of the monarchical government under which people were oppressed and forced to believe in the so-called 'divine rights of kings'. Thus, in his Latin miniature epic on the Gunpowder plot, Milton sweeps away the contemporary traditions that ascribe the discovery of the intrigue beforehand to James I's distinguished talent and special blessings from God. Instead, the poet creates a heroic image of the English and not the king. This essay will be organized as follows.

To begin with, Chapter 1 gives an overview of every Latin poem by Milton in *1645 Poems*, with a literature review of each. This chapter clarifies as to when and for what purpose he composed each poem. To analyze how Milton's epic intention and characteristics develop in his pastoral phase, each Latin poem in *1645 Poems* must be examined.

Chapter 2 discusses Milton's determination to be an epic poet. In his earlier Latin poems, *Carmina elegiaca* (1624), *Elegia prima* and *Elegia quinta*, he is conscious of the relations between his poetic success and the favour from the poetry God Phoebus Apollo. Each Latin poem shows a consistent connection with Phoebus, in which Milton shows that he is a believer in Phoebus. Moreover,

in *Ad Patrem* and *Mansus*, Milton builds a pattern regarding himself as a son of Phoebus. Then, the argument is developed in *Epitaphium Damonis*, wherein Milton declares his intention to depart from his pastoral field. He climaxes in the figure imitating Phoebus. Thereby, I chronologically trace these poems by showing that the distance between Phoebus and Milton keeps decreasing and they keep getting closer. This chapter also gives comparative views of his English poems in *1645 Poems*, focusing on the different roles of Phoebus. This process makes the difference of Phoebus' roles far clearer in his Latin and English poems. This, this chapter examines the development of Milton's poetic vocation focusing on his attitudes toward Phoebus. Milton establishes an imaginary pasture where Phoebus/a pastor takes care of Milton/a sheep.

Chapter 3 challenges the view that Milton questions the idea of *Carpe Diem* espoused by Horace (65–8 BC), in his *Odes* 1.11, arguing that Milton gradually Christianizes the Latin theme. I trace three of the most prominent examples: Milton's translation of *Odes* 1.5 (1626?), *Elegia sexta* and *Epitaphium Damonis*. In analyzing Milton's challenge of *Carpe Diem*, this chapter will highlight Milton's opposition of Protestant virtue that was expressed more specifically in terms of chastity and the contemporary notions of *Carpe Diem*. Thus, while the previous chapter deals with Milton's poetic spirit, this chapter emphasizes his vow to live a frugal life.

Chapter 4 especially focuses on Milton's thoughts on the changeable nature in *Paradise Lost*, analyzing how the theme of nature is portrayed in several key passages in *Naturam non pati senium*. In other words, Milton's way of thinking about nature is introduced in the Latin lyric poetry and is developed in the English epic. Furthermore, from the viewpoint of the destruction of nature, Milton considers it important to be faithful to God, the Almighty Father. This point supports the pattern regarding himself as a son of Phoebus, which is analyzed in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 5, I show how some distinctive aspects of *In quintum Novembris* (1626) are reprised in *Paradise Lost*. For this purpose, I focus on the following three topics. One, to organize royalist data, particularly religious sermons and political speeches on the Gunpowder plot, which were utilized to compile heroic images of King James I (1603–1625). Mainly, I treat publications in those days, utilizing *Early English Books Online*, in order to more clearly show Milton's original view on the plot and his artistic techniques represented in *In quintum Novembris*. Second, to compare *In quintum Novembris* and *Paradise Lost* and clarify the development of Milton's concept of heroism: the English people as the hero in the poem. Finally, I trace that the heroism is refurbished in Milton's anti-prelatical tracts such as *The Reason of Church-government* (1642) and *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (1651), with talking into account the influencing relations among the Cambridge of Platonists.

Accordingly, with a global view of Milton's Latin poems, this essay portrays the heroism in Milton's life as a trainee epic poet. Milton spiritually and practically grows his poetic talent in the Latin pasture. Milton reveals his Latin poems as a kind of a poetic pedigree or a prayer book, which he has in his hand and challenges a new world.

At the end of the essay, the original Latin text and the Japanese translation are attached. Every Japanese translation of Milton's Latin poems (except *Ad Patrem*, *Mansus* and *Epitaphium Damonis*) is done by Chika Kaneko as the first trial of its kind in Japan.