"Thick as Autumnal Leaves"—

The Structure and Generic Potentials of an Epic Simile

James P. Holoka

Milton, in the famous Vallombrosa simile at *Paradise Lost* 1.299-313, invigorated a thoroughly conventional topos by enlarging the allusive, symbolic, and, not least, syntactic capacities of a generic stratagem. Inspection of the two most illustrious antecedents of the Miltonic simile yields insight into, in Eliot's terms, the individual talent of the poet and his exploitation of the aesthetic possibilities of a traditional device.

The simile is quite likely the oldest readily identifiable poetic artifice in European literature. The short Homeric similes have been ascribed to the earliest stages of an oral tradition receding into the mists of Mycenaean epic poetry.

However, the long, characteristically digressive, Homeric comparisons are relatively free from archaism and show a high concentration of late linguistic phenomena; they have with justification been called the peculiar contribution of the monumental composer.[1] Such similes are remarkably free-standing in their vitality and extension.[2] Homer's creative genius, however channeled linguistically and prosodically by the *Kunstsprache* within which he worked, apparently found unique expression in a poetic device of the highest antiquity.

οιη περ φυλλων λενεη, τοιη δε και ανδρων.
φυλλα τα μεν τ ανεμος χαμαδις χεει, αλλα δε θ υλη
τηλεθοωσα φυει, εαρος δ επιγιγνεται ωρη
ως ανδρων γενεη η μεν φυει η δ αποληγει.

As is the generation of leaves, so is that of humanity.
The wind scatters the leaves on the ground, but the live timber
burgeons with leaves again in the season of spring returning.
So one generation of men will grow while another dies.

(*Il.* 6.146-49)[3]

In their internal syntax, these lines are likely an expansion of a shorter, pre-existing traditional simile, inasmuch as the first line is itself composed of a protasis and an apodosis.[4] Lines 147-48 amplify the protasis but do not develop into a digression; the second apodosis, in 149, makes clear the suitability of the comparison. Moreover, 149 interlocks with 146 in a nearly exact chiasmus of sound:

οιη περ φυλλων λενεη, τοιη δε και ανδρων.
ως ανδρων γενεη η μεν φυει η δ αποληγει.

The lines are at least superficially well-adapted to their immediate narrative environs. Diomedes, wary of assaulting a divinity (the Lykourgos-Dionysos paradeigma in *Il.* 6.130-41 is a kind of self-caution), asks Glaukos for certification of his mortality. Glaukos responds with the standard item of heroic identification—the genealogy. The key word is "generation" in 6.145 ("High-hearted son of Tydeus, why ask of my generation?"): it speaks to Diomedes' inquiry in 6.123 ("Who among mortal men are you, good friend?") and anticipates the "generation" of the first protasis (146) and the second apodosis (149). Homer has taken care to integrate simile with context. Glaukos' pronouncement on the flux of generations leads nicely into the story of his personal ancestry, highlighted by the Bellerophontes digression, itself a balancing pendant to the paradeigma of Diomedes.

Still, despite this dexterous assimilation, the impression is of surface continuity only. There is not the "subterranean virtue" C. S. Lewis finds in Miltonic similes,[5] no sense of a pervasive texture of imagery coordinating a series of similes or securing their relevance to other parts of the poem. Glaukos' words, sublime as they are, remain an isolated, almost oracular, instance of privileged enlightenment, a noble and somber reflection on the ephemeral character of life within a larger, more enduring context—the species. An appropriate sentiment, given the insecurity war instills in its participants. Still, the setting of the utterance lacks plausibility: it is a curiously cool-headed and resigned moment of tranquillity in the frenzied combat of Diomedes' *aristeia.* As often in Homer, the simile is finally its own *raison d'être* and its own justification for being just where it is. There is no real attempt to justify the separate peace of Diomedes and Glaukos, their good-natured and leisurely exchange of cordialities. And yet, the poetry of *Iliad* 6—the speeches of the enemy warriors and later the interview of Hektor and Andromache—is as fine as any in either of the Homeric poems. The independent power to please, the intrinsic merit of the specific episode or speech or scene is sufficiently compelling motive for its inclusion in the epic.

Grammatically and logically paratactic, the "surface" quality[6] of Homeric verse had its origin in the

exigencies of oral improvisation.[7] The distinctive "adding style" evolved from pragmatic concerns that are no part of our own lettered experience of the poems. In the years since Milman Parry,[8] we have learned to avoid a too facile application to Homeric art of the Aristotelian notions of unity and continuity. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the products of an order of composition to which our critical tools are not yet properly adjusted. We must admit the excellence of an individual simile without seeking the same degree of integration into a pattern of symbolism or narrative structure that can be found so readily in literary epic. Of course, we need not discount altogether the commonly assigned validations of given similes.[9] They do contribute to the celebration of *menos* as well as to the creation of a naturalistic back-drop to the intensely martial atmosphere before Troy. They vivify the emotions of individuals and facilitate description of mental events generally. But we should not too eagerly ascribe a Virgilian or Miltonic depth of implication or interaction to the similes, especially the long similes. The danger is critical over-ingenuity transferred from the interpretation of thoroughly literary poetry.

Evocations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are of course a special enhancement of the *Aeneid.* Virgil successfully absorbed Homeric reminiscence into a poetry based on the more self-conscious aesthetic axioms of the Augustan age.[10]

> huc omnis turba ad ripas effusa ruebat,
> matres atque uiri defunctaque corpora uita
> magnanimum heroum, pueri innuptaeque puellae,
> impositique rogis iuuenes ante ora parentum:
> quam multa in siluis autumni frigore primo
> lapsa cadunt folia, aut ad terram gurgite ab alto
> quam multae glomerantur aues, ubi frigidus annus
> trans pontum fugat et terris immittit apricis.
>
> Toward him the whole crowd rushed to the river bank—
> mothers and husbands, those that had lived the lives
> of bold, brave fighters, boys, unmarried girls,
> young men cremated before a father's face—
> as many as forest leaves that flutter down
> at the first autumn frost, or as the birds
> that flock to earth from sea when winter's cold
> drives them across the deep to sunny lands.
> (*Aen.* 6.305-12)[11]

There has been considerable speculation about the precise lineage of this simile;[12] the safest assumption is of a typically Virgilian syncretism. Still, the Roman poet clearly invites direct comparison with the celebrated Homeric precedent. Virgil has taken the wolf by the ears: the pleasing aura of the Iliadic remembrance could well fade to an impression of slavish dependence.[13]

Iliad 6.146-49 had envisaged an ineluctable natural cycle: the leaves were the perfect image of the rhythm of life and death constituting the human condition. Virgil, however, shifts the emphasis to the fall of the leaves (*Aen.* 6.310: "lapsa cadunt folia"), the fall of all men to the underworld, a fall Aeneas, by divine dispensation, experiences prematurely (and revocably) in the *katabasis* of Book 6. Lines 6.305-8 establish the universality of death as the great leveller (cf. Horace, *Carm.* 1.4.13: "pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede . . . " or 2.3.21 ff.: "diuesne prisco natus . . . "). The season of death (6.309: "autumni") replaces that of life in the Homeric passage (*Il.* 6.148: "spring"), and the cold of death underlies the "first frost" of *Aeneid* 6.309 ("frigore primo"). Virgil, though not given to compound similes, manages a smooth transition to the second protasis—the birds—by cleverly controlling the focus of our mind's eye. Contemplating the fall of the leaves from the treetops, our attention is attracted by the birds whose flight describes a similar movement as they come to earth after the long migration "trans pontum"—a migration prompted by the same climatic change (note "frigidus annus" in *Aen.* 6.311) that caused the trees to shed their foliage.

Other niceties are a distinctive precision in alliterative patterns, necessary and periodic enjambment, coincidence and clash of ictus and accent, and outright verbal repetition. The *g, r, o, u* sounds following the bucolic diaereses in *Aen.* 6.309, 310, and 311 effectively bind the two protases together, the "quam multa" of 309 engaging neatly with the "quam multae" of 311 at the other end of the verses. The bond is additionally strengthened by the necessary enjambment at 309, 310, and 311 as opposed to the marked parataxis of the general catalogue of souls in 6.305-8. The simile also incorporates a symmetrical pattern of heterodyned (305, 308, and 311) and homodyned (306-7, 309-10) verses.[14] Finally, there is the answering of the heavily spondaic 305 (first line of the apodosis) by the equally weighty 309 (first line of the protasis).

Nor is Virgil's choice of setting any less adept. The cold wind of death moves human souls as well as leaves and birds. Man is subject to the same forces

that rule the vegetative and animal forms of life. The close similarity between *Aeneid* 6.305-8 and *Odyssey* 11.38-41 in the Homeric *Nekyia* illustrates the workings of Virgil's poetic imagination. Recognizing the enduring vigor of the leaves-men topos, he redoubles its force by a judicious relocation. Indeed, there is a sense of inevitability about its recurrence at *Inferno* 3.112-15 when Dante arrives at the banks of the Acheron.

Virgil also ensures the simile's contribution to the imagistic vitality of the poem. The two-pronged simile and the scene it graces have discernible affiliations with other passages in the *Aeneid;* the verses immediately following the simile proper touch on a favorite motif of thwarted human compassion:

> stabant orantes primi transmittere cursum
> tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore.
>
> They stood there begging to be first to cross,
> their hands outstretched in love of the other shore.
>
> (*Aen.* 6.313-14)

Compare Aeneas denied maternal consolation at the beginning of the poem:

> "cur dextrae iungere dextram
> non datur ac ueras audire et reddere uoces?"
>
> "Why was your hand
> not laid in mine? Why could we not speak true?"
>
> (*Aen.* 1.408-9)

or the cowed and suppliant Turnus at the very end:

> ille humile supplex oculos dextramque precantem
> protendens "equidem merui nec deprecor" inquit.[15]
>
> Turnus spoke, with suppliant's outstretched hand
> and humble glance: "I earned it. I have no plea."
>
> (*Aen.* 12.930-31)

Virgil justifies his theft by exploiting the subliminally affective minutiae of poetic artistry: the sound, the rhythm, and the syntactic nuances, together with stronger ties with the immediate context and with symbols reaching farther afield.

Eighteenth-century critics and the majority of their successors maintained that Milton's epic similes were of the distinctively Homeric variety. Their "separability" was seldom disputed, though the artistic merit of the technique was variously estimated.[16]

Current discussion, however, has been influenced by James Whaler's demonstration[17] that the similes often display an unprecedented congruity (Whaler's term is, unhappily, "homologation") with their narrative settings. As in Virgilian scholarship, critics have gone beyond the registering of allusive coordinates to the recognition that the similes are not merely sporadic irruptions of poetic genius (*ingenium*), but are purposefully deployed and interrelated (*ars*).

Milton asserted in his note on "The Verse" that he would attempt to set an example, "the first in *English,* of ancient liberty recover'd to Heroic Poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of Rimming."[18] That he also felt compelled to recover to heroic poetry the ancient mastery of the most firmly established minor convention of the genre is apparent from the extraordinary density of similes in Book I of *Paradise Lost*: the eleven long similes (five or more lines) of this book total some eighty-one verses. This is part of an agonistic engagement with the titanic ancient practitioners, announced by the unmistakable reminiscence of some of their finest moments.

> Nathless he so endur'd, till on the Beach
> Of that inflamed Sea, he stood and call'd
> His Legions, Angel Forms, who lay intrans't
> Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strow the Brooks
> In *Vallombrosa,* where th'*Etrurian* shades
> High overarch't imbow'r; or scattered sedge
> Afloat, when with fierce Winds *Orion* arm'd
> Hath vext the Red-Sea Coast, whose waves o'erthrew
> *Busiris* and his *Memphian* Chivalry,
> While with perfidious hatred they pursu'd
> The Sojourners of *Goshen,* who beheld
> From the safe shore thir floating Carcasses
> And broken Chariot Wheels; so thick bestrown
> Abject and lost lay these, covering the Flood,
> Under amazement of thir hideous change.
>
> (*PL* 1.299-313)

The web of allusion in this simile is subtly woven. Still, it may be instructive, within the context of the literary *agon,* to explore the peculiarly Miltonic modifications of the classical topos.

To begin with, the lines are a virtuoso performance; they stretch to their limits the grammatical capacities of the time-honored syntax of the simile. A fifteen-line sentence of over a hundred words, it is some three times the length of the average Miltonic verse sentence.[19] The compound protasis is much longer (9½ verses) than the usual extended simile

in Homer or Virgil. (I cannot find even one such specimen in the *Aeneid.*) The syntax shows a characteristic acceleration. From a straightforward combination of subject and predicate (299: "he so endur'd") amplified by a coordinate clause (299-300: "till . . . he stood and call'd") containing the direct object (301: "His Legions, Angel Forms")—from this uncomplicated sentence structure emerges, beginning with the relative "who" (301), a voluminous syntactic parenthesis. The heavy stress on "Thick" (302), inverting the iambic rhythm, signals the onset of the simile. There follows a series of dependent clauses: "that . . . where . . . when . . . whose . . . while . . . who . . . ." As the simile progresses, and especially in the second protasis, where the protraction of the sentence threatens to make it stall, the sense units become longer, forcing the reader to rivet his attention on the accelerating flow of words and to forgo the temptation to stop and take account of the vast distances of time and space being traversed.

The break after the second syllable in 305 together with the very faint caesurae of 307, 308, 310, and the necessary enjambments in 305, 306, 308, 309 produce these word groups: "when with fierce Winds *Orion* arm'd Hath vext the Red-Sea Coast" (14 syllables); "Whose waves o'erthrew *Busiris* and his *Memphian* Chivalry" (14 syllables); "While with perfidious hatred they pursu'd The Sojourners of *Goshen*" (17 syllables); "who beheld From the safe shore thir floating Carcasses And broken Chariot Wheels" (18 syllables).

Then comes the second apodosis (311-12: "so thick bestrown Abject and lost lay these, covering the Flood"); it both redirects us to the first and second protases ("bestrown" recalls "strow" in 302; "covering the Flood" aligns with "scatter'd sedge Afloat" in 304-5) and firmly establishes, by its proximity to "floating Carcasses And broken Chariot Wheels" (310-11), a third protasis—the Memphian Chivalry. The latter is introduced by association with the "scatter'd sedge" so deftly localized on the Red Sea. This parallels the localization of the leaves at Vallombrosa in the first protasis; there the gain was in sonority (an Ovidian delight in place-names) and in etymological suggestivity. The sequence of images unrolls smoothly. Though the conventional fossilized signposts ("Thick as . . . or . . . so thick . . . ") indicate and grammatically validate the terms of the simile proper, the image that is in fact most effective and suitable here—the Memphian Chivalry—emerges from the unfolding subordinate clauses appended to "scatter'd sedge Afloat." There is a gliding transition from the formal elements of the protases (leaves and sedge)—elements apropos in a relatively superficial way—to the true goal of the sentence and the real ikon of the simile.

The allusion to Exodus secures the simile's place in the larger symbolic texture of the poem,[20] and the most traditional component—the leaves—is itself part of a nexus of imagery:

> the idea of barrenness, consistently associated with death and evil in *Paradise Lost,* generates many of the images for the fallen angels and the landscape of Hell. Pharaoh's stricken hosts clearly belong to this complex of images and ideas. . . . Neither the fallen leaves nor the plague of locusts, nor most of the other images, is fully effective until we complete our knowledge of *Paradise Lost* and its myth.[21]

This persistence of impulse is a crucial difference between Miltonic and Homeric simile.

Milton's poetic imagination is richly integrative. Given his capacious memory so well stocked with materials from venerable literary and exegetical traditions, his syncretic method ran certain risks.[22] That he could so skillfully weave such diverse images and topoi into an artistically satisfying design is a tribute to his poetic craftsmanship. Seen against the background of ancient usage, the Vallombrosa simile is an illustration of Milton's ability to engage tradition. Far from being enfeebled beneath the weight of epic convention, *Paradise Lost* reanimated tradition, and nowhere more patently than in its similes.[23]

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NOTES

[1]Gerald F. Else, "Homer and the Homeric Problem," *Univ. of Cincinnati Classical Studies* (Semple Lectures), 1 (1967), 355: "at least in their developed form, they are not part of the traditional epic baggage. Nothing forbids our thinking that they were developed especially by the monumental poet." On early and late in the similes, see G. P. Shipp, *Studies in the Language of Homer,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1972), passim.

[2]S. E. Bassett, *The Poetry of Homer* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1938), p. 165: "the *simile à queue longue,* as Perrault called it, the unique form

of poetic expression which Homer gave to all future poets, begins as a comparison, but immediately transcends its function, and presents a little picture for its own sake. If the longer Homeric similes had been gathered by themselves, the Alexandrians might have called them *eidyllia*, for they are 'little poems.'"

[3]This and subsequent translations of Homer are from Richmond Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951); the Greek is from D. B. Monro, ed., *Homer: Iliad, Books I-XII*, 5th ed., rev. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906).

[4]The terms "protasis" and "apodosis" are used as in D. J. N. Lee, *The Similes of the Iliad and the Odyssey Compared* (Melbourne: Melbourne Univ. Press, 1964); they correspond to James Whaler's "S" (the simile) and "A" (the thing compared)—see note 17, below.

[5]*A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), pp. 42-43.

[6]Best characterized in the justly celebrated and much-reprinted essay "Odysseus' Scar" by Erich Auerbach, first in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1946; trans. W. Trask, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1953), pp. 3-23.

[7]See J. A. Notopoulos, "Parataxis in Homer: A New Approach to Homeric Literary Criticism," *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 80 (1949), 1-23; and Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 54-58.

[8]Parry's writings are the *fons et origo* of an increasingly complex inquiry into the nature of oral composition; published between 1928 and 1937 and long out of print, they are newly accessible in *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, ed. Adam Parry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). For further bibliography, see my "Homeric Originality: A Survey," *Classical World*, 66 (1973), 257-93.

[9]Still valuable in this regard are the observations on simile in C. M. Bowra's *Tradition and Design in the Iliad* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930); see, more recently, his *Homer* (New York: Scribner's, 1972), pp. 60-66.

[10]*Loci similes* are exhaustively tabulated in G. N. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer: Studien zur poetischen Technik Vergils mit Listen der Homerzitate in der Aeneis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964).

[11]This and subsequent translations of Virgil are from Frank O. Copley, *Vergil: The Aeneid* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965); the Latin is from R. A. B. Mynors, ed., *P. Vergili Maronis Opera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

[12]The variety of sources to which Virgil may have had access is large. New light on the question, together with a convincing case for Pindaric provenance can be found in Hugh Lloyd-Jones, "Heracles at Eleusis: P.Oxy. 2622 and P.S.I. 1391," *Maia*, 19 (1967), 206-29, esp. 218-25 and 228-29.

[13]This was a risk of which Virgil was no doubt acutely aware; see Donatus, *Vita Vergili* 46.

[14]See W. F. J. Knight, *Accentual Symmetry in Vergil* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939; rpt. 1950), p. 65.

[15]See, in addition, *Aen.* 2.792-94 (Creusa); 4.307-8 (Dido); 6.685, 697-701 (Anchises); cf. the sensitive discussion in the final chapter of Mario A. Di Cesare's *Altar and the City: A Reading of Vergil's Aeneid* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1974).

[16]See C. Ricks, *Milton's Grand Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 118-25.

[17]See esp. "The Miltonic Simile," *PMLA*, 46 (1931), 1034-74.

[18]M. Y. Hughes, ed., *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose* (New York: Odyssey, 1957), p. 210; all further citations of Milton are from this text.

[19]R. D. Emma, *Milton's Grammar* (The Hague: Mouton, 1964), p. 155, computes thirty-one words per sentence, though his samples are too small to be conclusive. The MS has a full stop after "Wheels" in 311; editors almost invariably omit it as a characteristic aberration in Milton's punctuation of similes: see J. Carey and A. Fowler, eds., *The Poems of John Milton* (London: Longman, 1968), p. 427 and ad loc. Though I concur in this, it may be that, in this instance, a full stop is needed for the proper respiration of the simile.

[20]See J. T. Shawcross, "*Paradise Lost* and the Theme of Exodus," *Milton Studies*, 2 (1970), 11: "these references [*PL* 1.306-11, 338-43, 482-84] early in the poem equate Satan and the fallen angels with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, then with the locusts . . . , and with the false gods of Egypt and the idol fashioned by Aaron after the Exodus. The history of the Exodus is retold in *Paradise Lost* in XII, 151-269. Although Satan and his cohorts are not mentioned in this passage *the attentive reader has been prepared from the beginning* [my italics] to recognize that this stage in history is analogic—indeed, almost allegoric."

[21]Isabel MacCaffrey, *Paradise Lost as "Myth"* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1959), p. 133; cf. Carey and Fowler, *The Poems*, pp. 436-37.

[22]T. S. Eliot, "The Classics and the Man of Letters,"

1942; rpt. in *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings* (New York: Farrar, 1965), pp. 148-49: "we must couple Milton with Dante in saying that never has a poet possessed of such great learning so completely justified the acquisition of it. . . . A lesser poet, with the learning and tastes of Milton, would have been in danger of becoming a mere pedant in verse."

[23]I am grateful to Professor Ralph Williams of the University of Michigan for suggesting to me this comparative analysis of the ancient and Miltonic similes and for his criticisms of an inchoate version of it.

The Secrets of Chaos

William H. Boyd

Perhaps one of the strangest things in *Paradise Lost* is the weird region situated between Heaven and Hell known as Chaos. Of all Milton's classical borrowings, Chaos is one of the most important for it provides more than just epic simile material or the continuation of literary tradition: it becomes a major component of his Christian cosmology. As such this Greek notion of the primordial void is as important in understanding Milton's epic as his Christian universe itself.

So well did Milton understand the Greek concept of Chaos, Edith Hamilton in *Mythology* (New York, New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1942), p. 63, uses a quotation from him to exemplify it. Chaos is " . . . the vast immeasurable abyss,/ Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild." Chaos was the original state of the universe; from Chaos came Night, "the eldest of things," and Erebus. These two, Night and Erebus, begat Love who in turn created Light; lastly, Earth appeared. How all these descendants of Chaos actually came into being is unexplained in the myths; Milton, however, has God call the world into being out of Chaos, his storehouse of "dark materials."

His inclination to incorporate the Greek myth into the Christian creation came from the Church Fathers who associated the abyss of Chaos with "the deep" of Genesis 1. Milton's interest in it though goes beyond cosmological speculation. His universe is, as Lawrence Babb has said, a moral universe endowed in itself with moral qualities as well as symbolism.[1] Consequently, Chaos is more than just an ontological curiosity in the poem; it is a key ingredient in Milton's moral universe and is of crucial importance in understanding the goodness of God manifested in divine creation, divine order, and divine justice, and, indeed, in helping to justify the ways of God to man.[2]

Chaos in Milton's cosmology is a paradox: a gulf between Heaven and Earth at the top and Hell, a place of "bottomless perdition," at the bottom. Yet, Chaos is an infinite abyss without any points of geographic reference. For it to have an upper and lower bound seems an odd notion, but Milton probably intends this confusion for the reader. To treat Chaos in any other manner would be inappropriate.

The structural nature (or nonstructural nature) of Chaos is of deep significance and interest; Milton seems almost to exhaust the English vocabulary in describing it. Chaos is an abyss, dark, hollow, desolate, and infinite. It is "the hoary deep, a dark/ Illimitable Ocean without bound,/ Without dimension, where length, breadth, and heighth,/ And time and place are lost."[3] Chaos is old, gray, rough, and deep, an unboundable sea ebbing and flowing as numerous currents course randomly through it, and storms wreak perpetual havoc within it. Chaos is a region without points of reference, completely immeasurable, and seemingly infinite, a place where all spacial and temporal perceptions are meaningless. Chaos is a vicious circle of ever increasing disorder.

The confusion of Chaos is not mere static disorder; it is turbulence and violence:

> For hot, cold, moist, and dry, four Champions fierce
> Strive here for Maistry, and to Battle bring
> Thir embryon Atoms; they around the flag
> Of each his Faction, in thir several Clans
> Light-arm'd or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift or slow,
> Swarm populous, unnumber'd as the Sands
> Of *Barca* or *Cyrene's* torrid soil,
> Levied to side with warring Winds, and poise
> Thir lighter wings. (ii. 898-906).