

## THE SEMANTIC FIELD OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS IN *PARADISE LOST*

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"Words glisten. Words irradiate exquisite splendour. Words carry magic and keep us spell-bound ... Words are like glamorous bricks that constitute the fabric of any language ... Words are like roses that make the environment fragrant."

(Chand, n.d.: p. 3-4, quoted in Aitchinson, 1987: 4).

Man, through his intellect, organises reality. In the process of human knowledge - from the ontogenetic point of view - starts the formation of units at the level of perception. The process of structuralization is a cognitive property of man. Through perception, reality is not apprehended as a set of sensorial stimuli, but, these stimuli experiment an organization in sets in the light of a series of phenomena characteristic of perception: grouping phenomena with their factors of proximity, similarity and continuity.

Man delimits the real world in different and unitary sectors that make up a system of hierarchies. The limits of a given sector of reality are determined according to the relations which they hold with other sectors integrated in the same sphere, and also with sectors belonging to a superior sphere. Then, man tries to formalize reality - as a significant content of a language - in order to produce the essentialization and structuralization of that given reality. This point is based on the thesis of "Weltbild" (image of the world) of the language, which goes back to Humboldt and was also adopted by Sapir and Whorf:

que la lengua no es sólo un medio de intercambio, sino un mundo real que el espíritu debe poner entre él y los objetos con la actividad de su potencia interior.

(Humboldt, 1907: 176, quoted in Haensch et al., 1982: 325)

Therefore, the division within an individual language entails the process of decodification of a given reality through the concepts of an individual language. These concepts are not given before hand, man creates them when transforming the world into verbal substance. This point means that every language sets up frontiers and barriers where reality is conceived as a continuum. In this respect, Coseriu shows that in the determination of concepts for the linguistic organisation of an experience, reality does not supply linguistic categories:

Es, por lo tanto, absurdo pretender interpretar estructuraciones lingüísticas a partir de las supuestas estructuraciones de la realidad; el comienzo tiene que hacerse con la aserción de que no se trata de estructuras de la realidad, sino de estructuraciones que la interpretación humana ha impuesto a esa realidad.

(Coseriu, 1970: 17)

On this line, the notion of 'field' is intimately related to the notion of scheme, (Leborans, 1977: 29-ff). As Leborans claims, the notion of scheme comes about as a result of the process of the essentialization and structuralization of reality at the intellect sphere (cf. *supra*). The content of a concept, transformed into a linguistic meaning, involves the intellectual apprehension of all its essences and aspects. So, as Breson (Leborans, 1977: 31) shows "tenemos una noción intuitiva de la significación" and meaning "no se reduce a un sistema de relaciones, sino que sería una revelación o intuición de las esencias".

Then, a system of network realtions does not form the concept or the meaning, but, it is, on the other hand, fundamental to the definition of a semantic and conceptual field<sup>1</sup>, formed not only by individual lexical units but also by a network of relations (privative, synonymy, contrast, etc.), which, will eventually, characterize the typology of a given reality, (cf.

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<sup>1</sup> Both Leborans (1977: 33-ff) and Coseriu (Geckeller, 1976: 241) assert that there is a clear-cut difference between conceptual and semantic field. The former is defined as "la extensión significativa de un concepto genérico repartido entre varios conceptos" (Leborans, 1977: 3 4), whereas the latter is conceived as a lexical paradigm, (cf. Coseriu, 1977: 185)

*infra*). With these theoretical assumptions in mind Coseriu defines a semantic or lexical<sup>2</sup> field as:

(...) un paradigma léxico, es decir, una estructura lexemática opositiva. En cuanto tal, (...), se caracteriza por el hecho de que resulta de la repartición de su contenido léxico entre varios lexemas que se oponen de manera inmediata unos a otros, por medio de rasgos distintivos mínimos.

(Coseriu, 1977: 185).

We all agree that man structures and fragments reality as a set of lexical entries into a paradigm. Then in the field of language and mind, structure plays a predominant role. Our task is, to a large extent, one of expression rather than one of discovery. It is pointless to structure something of which that property is an intrinsic part. The results of the kind of investigations that I have made is to organise and make explicit this previously intuitive knowledge (cf. Brenson) of the lexical fields and the relations between their constituent lexemes; to replace what was previously performative knowledge with what might be called descriptive knowledge.

## 1. CHARACTERISTICS AND TYPOLOGY OF THE LEXICAL FIELDS

In the first stages, reality appears as a neutral, indefinite substantial complex. In this respect, and according to Hjelmslev's terminology, reality would be a non-formed "substance". Man, gradually, formalizes that substance up to a point where the level of formalization becomes an overriding factor<sup>3</sup>. There is an intermediary degree of formalization, characterized by the harmonious confluence of form and substance,

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<sup>2</sup> The difference in terminology is almost irrelevant; the former will be framed within Semantics and the latter within Lexicology. The reader, no doubt, will understand the difference by recalling the Hjelmslevian dichotomy between the level of expression and the level of content.

<sup>3</sup> Leborans, 45-ff.

representative of the linguistic unities man masters in every act of communication, and unities which integrate the semantic fields<sup>4</sup>.

Every attempt at formalizing<sup>5</sup> the verbal substance of a lexical unit entails an effort of delimitation - through intellectual abstraction-, that is to say, one will look upon a minimal definition of the meaning of a form as a statement of semantic components that are sufficient to distinguish the meaning paradigmatically from the meanings of other forms in the language.

In a componential analysis<sup>6</sup>, each lexical unit is decomposed into the smallest distinctive features. Each feature represents a degree of formalization of the verbal substance. The last stage of formalization in a lexical unit gives rise to the *seme*, defined by Pottier as "le trait sémantique pertinent" ; then the *sememe* described as "l'ensemble des traits sémantiques pertinents (ou semes) entrant dans la définition de la substance d'un lexeme"<sup>7</sup> and last but not least the *lexeme* defined as the lexical expression of a sememe. Pottier also distinguishes the notion of *archisememe* defined as a set of common semes which are relevant when neutralized, and whose lexical realization is called *archilexeme*<sup>8</sup> or "cross-word" or "inclusif".<sup>9</sup>

The structure of this field will be defined according to the relations of the lexical items. Our first step will be to identify the type of formal lexematic oppositions that might be found in the field<sup>10</sup>. But the structuralization and functioning of a field does not only depend on the

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<sup>4</sup> I do not intend to give a precise account of the history and different approaches of the lexical theory. I refer the reader to Geckeller, 1976: 97-211.

<sup>5</sup> For an exhaustive explanation of the concepts of form and substance, see. Coseriu, "Forma y sustancia en los sonidos del lenguaje" in *Teoría del lenguaje y lingüística general*. (Madrid : Gredos, 1962).

<sup>6</sup> Pottier, Greimas and Coseriu are the three more relevant approaches at a componential analysis. For a precise historical account of componential semantics, see. Geckeller, 246-ff.

<sup>7</sup> See. Pottier, *Reserches sur l'analyse semantique*. 8.

<sup>8</sup> These semantic features mirror the phonological features *pheme*, *pheteme* and *phoneme*, introduced by the Prague School.

<sup>9</sup> see. Pottier, *Présentation de la linguistique*.

<sup>10</sup> Again, there is a clear parallel between phonology, whose typology is defined according to the oppositions which its members hold, and the lexicon.

formal type of oppositions but also on the type of extralinguistic relations that they organise.

A basic criteria for the typology of lexical fields is that of *dimension* (Coseriu, 1977:217) defined as the point of view or the focus of an opposition. In the case of a lexematic opposition, it is the semantic property that this type of opposition refers to.<sup>11</sup> From the point of view of dimension, fields are divided into "unidimensional" and "pluridimensional". Within each category, Coseriu distinguishes categories according to the relations of their constituents.

In this research, I have drawn two clear-cut frontiers; one which will cover the boundaries of denotation and the other of connotation within the semantic field of light and darkness. For the first one, I will decompose each unit into its semantic features (cf. *supra*) and I will describe the typology of this field according to the relations of those lexical items. I aim to give an account of how the lexical units which conform the semantic field are structured into a paradigm and show how vocabulary, as well as reality, undergoes a process of structuralization and essentialization through man's intellect, in this case through Milton's intellect.

With regards to the second part, I will present, no doubt, the most interesting points as far as Milton's view of the world is concerned. I will use the notion of *virtueme*, which belongs to the sphere of connotation, and is defined as "chaque lexie a ainsi un certain nombre de virtualités combinatoires, qu'on peut appeler ses virtuemes. Ceux-ci peuvent être caractérisés par un indice, très approximatif, de probabilité"<sup>12</sup>. He even regards the *virtueme* as a special kind of seme: "Les sémes variables forment le *virtueme* et son connotatifs (...)"<sup>13</sup>. I share Coseriu's view that the notion of *virtueme* is not intrinsic to the language, but a category founded in the light of our knowledge of the world. Doubtless, connotation is a dominant feature in the field of human signification. Man projects his peculiar subjectivity, in every linguistic sign and image, the base of

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<sup>11</sup> See. Coseriu (1977) for discussion of the notion of dimension. Coseriu attacks Lounsbury's theory.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. "Rehabilitación de la semántica". *Problemas y principios del estructuralismo lingüístico*. (Madrid, 1967) 55-63.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Présentation de la linguistique*, 27

connotation, which constitutes the sense of every linguistic communication. In fact, connotation is closely linked to the creative role of the language. It is ilimited and based on the vague extension and comprehension of a concept. I will show how Milton not only orders and structures reality - dennotative part- but also imposes criteria of evaluation which seem to depend on his own semantic intuitions and creative capacity. These intuitions will be deeply rooted into a religious scenario and his lexical choices will serve as a vehicle to express his religious believes and ideas.

I think that, after this brief theoretical background, we are ready to enter into the practical corpus and draw conclusions that might help us reveal how Milton's semantic intuitions mirror his knowledge of the world and his intellect formalizes the verbal substance and frame it into a field.

## 2. LIGHT AND DARKNESS: DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION

The phenomenon of dualism seems to be an intrinsic element of man, perhaps the best naturally realized. As Leborans (1977: 75) shows:

El hombre, potencialmente abocado a la aprehensión del mundo , a la posesión inmaterial de su esencialidad, proyecta sobre él su psiquismo consciente de su "yoidad" individualizadora frente a la "otridad" del cosmos circundante. Surge así el primer dualismo.

One of the dualisms, determined by the rotation of the earth, which most influences man's psychic and biological development is that of light and darkness. From this biological view, "day" is the time when man carries a vital and dynamic development; sight and hearing exploit all their possibilities to the utmost, (cf. infra). However, "night", by virtue of its state of darkness, facilitates rest, a passive state and inactive vital development. These chartacteristics would conform the denotative meaning, but light and darkness have served, both sincronically and diachronically, as a vehicle for the expression of those connotative, emotive values. Connotated meaning conforms much a broader field than denotated meaning.

Primitive man reflected his belief in the intrinsic power of an eternal being through cosmoteluric external manifestations and symbols. By reason

of this belief, man elaborated a particular cosmogony formed by diverse personifications of celestial bodies and atmospheric phenomena. With regards to our dualism, man, before devising a mythology, attaches several significant connotations to light and darkness as cosmic natural phenomena, which pass one after the other cyclically and in perfect harmony. Light, as we will see later, is associated with God and Goodness whereas darkness with Satan and wickedness (cf. *infra*).

These connotated values have lasted throughout the centuries. In fact, Milton also makes use of them to express the supreme power and grace of God (light) and the terrifying power of Hell and Satan (dark), (cf. 2.2.).

2.1. In the description of the semantic field, I aim to show how vocabulary is organized into one paradigm. Bearing the theoretical assumptions in mind, (cf. *supra*), I will detail some of the main characteristics of the semantic field of light and darkness.<sup>14</sup>

The range of the corpus is quite broad. Hundreds of examples might be found: *light, glimmering, bright, unobscured, lucid, shine, illumine, radiant, darken'd, Night, day, deep, depth, darksome, starless, opacous, gloomy, dim, dawn*, etc. All these instances hold a privative relation based on the bipolar structure : + Light/-Light. In pure semantic terms, if we decompose each unit into its smallest constituents (semes), we will conclude that each word has one feature in common - either light or - light- but also characteristics which are intrinsic to each lexical unit and which differentiates them from the rest.

These characteristics allow each word to have its own semantic status and be neutralized in a given context:

light: (+light), (+bright).  
 bright (+light), (+full intensity), (+shining)  
 radiant (+light), (+shining), (light in all directions).

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<sup>14</sup> In this part, I will be very brief and I will just point out some characteristics with a view to showing how any piece of discourse - in our case Milton's- is organized into a structure. Although I will leave out the long process of the componential analysis of each unit, I will analyze a couple of instances so that the reader can understand the point I am trying to get across.

As we see, they share a common feature, which is the one responsible for bringing all these lexemes into one paradigm. However, within that paradigm, each unit neutralizes in a given context due to the existence of other distinctive semes which are characteristic of each lexeme.

With regards to the structure, we are faced with an "unidimensional" field. This field, according to the privative oppositions the lexical items hold, is antonymous<sup>15</sup>. It is based on privative oppositions, that is to say, of the kind X/no X<sup>16</sup>. Then, we have a bipolar field constituted by two lexical units, where one is the opposite of the other - light is the opposite of darkness.

In this bipolar structure, we do not find an archilexeme or an archiseme because the two sectors in which the field is structured can not be neutralised. As Trujillo (1970:82) asserts:

la no existencia de archilexema para el rasgo o rasgos comunes a todo el sistema (o campo) no quiere decir otra cosa que determinados tipos de oposición semántica no son nunca neutralizables aun teniendo los mismos miembros un contenido casi idéntico.

This bipolar field, characterized by an antonymic opposition, presents the following characteristics:

- a) The difficulty of finding an archilexeme for the two poles.
- b) The distinctive features (semes) are marked positive in all the words which belong to the sphere of light.

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<sup>15</sup> I will not enter into considerations about such an intricate problem as antonym. I refer the reader to Geckeller, 450-455 and Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*. (Cambridge, 1968) 460-470.

<sup>16</sup> Leborans, 1977, 61 prefers to use the terminology "grado positivo/grado negativo

	Light			Darkness	
NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	VERBS	NOUS	ADJECTIVES	VERBS
Day	Bright	Illumine	Depth	Dark	obscure
Light	Gay	Shine	Shades	Gloomy	Darkn'd
Brightness	Lucid	Lights	Night	Nocturnal	Darkens

So, this would be the structure of the semantic field. Within each category, lexical units hold a different type of opposition and are neutralised, according to their semantic components, in a given context. As indicated above, vocabulary, despite being an open category, might be organized into fields. Man, through his intellect, formalizes verbal substance and arranges it into a paradigm. In our case, we are dealing with a very particular paradigm, that of a religious scenario.

2.2. At first, the dualism light and darkness appeared in man's subconscious as an archetype, giving rise to one symbol, integrated in the primitive mythological mind with a connotative meaning. These connotative values come about as a result of the numerous forms of feeling and emotions derived from the influence that cosmic phenomena exercised on human psychic development. The connotative value never disappeared and, in fact, it still lasts as reflected in Milton (cf. *infra*).

In this section, we will divide this wider corpus into three main groups: one will refer to the connotated values of day and night; the second to light and darkness and the third to Fire and the Sun.

2.2.1. Day and Night have been the object, throughout the history, of numerous connotations. Sometimes, the use of some connotative values has become so generalized that some of them work, at a conceptual and linguistic level, as denotative. I have fragmented this group into several subgroups: each of them reflects a particular characteristic of day and night.

2.2.1.1. Several instances show the dangers and terrible things that take place at night, in contrast with the harmony and peace which occur

during the day time. In fact, it is at night that Satan speaks to Eve and tries to corrupt her:

(...) while Night  
Invest the Sea, and wished Morning delays.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 1. 207)

(...); And when Night  
Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons  
of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 1. 500)

2.2.1.2. Again, another contrast is expressed by these two lexemes: day is conceived as the time when man engages in vital and dynamic activities, hearing and sight exploit their possibilities to the utmost (cf. *supra*), whereas night is described as a period of rest and passive activities. In other words, day is intimately related to life and night to death:

In the wide womb of uncreated night,  
Devoid of sense and motion?  
(*Paradise Lost*, 2. 150)

These past, if any pass, the void profound  
of unessential Night receives him next  
Wide gaping, and with utter loss of being  
Treatens him, pūung'd in that abortive gulf.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 2. 438)

(...). Thus with the Year  
Seasons return, but not to me returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn  
Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summer's Rose,  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark  
surrounds me from the cheerful ways of men  
Cut off, and for the Book of knowledge Fair  
Presented with a universal blank  
Of Nature's works to mee expung'd and raz'd'  
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 40).

Of Night, and all things now retir'd to rest  
Mind us of like repose, since God hath set

Labour and rest, as day and night to men (...)  
*(Paradise Lost, 4. 611)*

2.2.1.3. Night, Chaos and Stan are presented as three colleagues who strive to create and expand wickedness. Night and Chaos are depicted, in some instances, as components of Hell, they seem to be two intrinsic properties of that "darkn'd Gulf". Night is also described as the consort of Satan:

And time and place are lost, where eldest Night  
 And Chaos, Ancestors of Nature, hold  
 Eternal Anarquy, amidst the noise  
 Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.  
*(Paradise Lost, 2. 894)*

(...) ; when staight behold the Throne  
 Of Chaos, and his dark Pavillion spread  
 Wide on the wasteful Deep; with him Enthron'd  
 Sat Sable-rested Night, eldest of things  
 The consort of his Reign; (...)  
*(Paradise Lost, 2. 959)*

And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,  
 Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy,  
 With purpose to explore or to disturb  
 The secrets of your Realm, (...)  
*(Paradise Lost, 2.960)*

2.2.1.4. Night and day appear to struggle to dominate the cosmos. Here, I have picked out quite a revealing instance which portrays the regaining of the lost territory by the power of light. In connotative terms, the battle is between good (light) and evil(darkness):

Of light appears, and from the walls of Heav'n  
 Shoots far into the bossom of dim Night  
 A glimmering dawn; here Nature first begins  
 Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire  
 As from her utmost works a brok'n foe.  
*(Paradise Lost, 2.1035)*

Therefore, these instances are quite revealing in so far as they throw some light on the connotated meanings of day and night. The underlying

meaning which these two items convey is that of God and Evil. Here is a scheme of the connotated meaning of day and night found in Milton:

Day	harmony/peace	life	noise	good	light
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Night	terrible dangers	death	silence	evil/Chaos	darkness

2.2.2. Within this group, I have discovered several subgroups: firstly, those lexemes that describe both Hell and Heaven; secondly, I have studied those lexical categories that Milton uses to describe God and Satan; thirdly, those that depict divine characters and evil characters; fourthly, those which show the antagonism light darkness as a battle.

2.2.2.1. Numerous instances have been collected in this subgroup. Milton quite accurately describes the two continents in the Universe: Hell and Heaven. Milton's semantic intuitions reveal his religious convictions.

Heaven is always described as a continent where everything is bright; every lexeme carries the semantic feature (+Light). From a connotative point of view, this means that Heaven is characterized as a place of peace, harmony and goodness; it is the place where God dwells. In Milton's poems, there are striking contrasts between Heaven as a good place where everything is positive and Hell, where Satan and evil characters dwell. Hell is depicted as a place of pain, sin, enemies, violence and wickedness. All these connotations are expressed through the lexemes which integrate the semantic field of light and darkness:

Here in the heart of Hell to work in Fire,  
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep;  
What can it then avail though yet we feel  
Strength undiminisht, or eternal being  
To undergo eternal punishment?  
*(Paradise Lost, 1. 151)*

(...)  
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies  
Bordering on light.  
*(Paradise Lost, 2. 968)*

Gustav Ungerer

Not far off Heav'n, in the Precincts of light. (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 88)

To that new world of light and bliss, (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 2. 867)

Unbarr'd the gates of light (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 4. 4)

From him, who is in the happy Realms of Light (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 394)

Dwell not unvisited of Heaven's fair Light  
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 2. 398)

These lexemes acquire a new dimension, which comes about as a result of Milton's subjective conception of the world. So, it would be impossible to understand the essence of the text without projecting the affective and emotive values of these words.

2.2.2.2. Milton identifies God with all the positive values, that is to say, with the lexemes carrying the seme (+light), whereas Satan (-Light or +Dark). God is conceived as the "Celestial Light" and brightness. Physically, God's attributes reflect light and brightness as symbols of wisdom, grace, Fountain of goodness, spiritual guidance, glory etc.:

Bright effluence of bright essence increate (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 6)

Ethereal King; the Author of all Being,  
Fountain of Light, thyself invisible  
amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 374)

Hail Holy light, (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 1)

Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud  
of anger shall remain, but peace assur'd  
And reconcilements; (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 262)

That from his Lordly eye keep distance due,  
Dispenses bright from far; (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 578)

Made visible the Almighty Father shines, (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 386)

Let there be light" said God, and forthwith Light  
Ethereal, first of things (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 7. 242)

Milton does not hesitate in identifying God with light in an overt and clear way:

(...) since God is light (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 3)

Jesuschrist is also depicted with (+light) lexemes and even Milton uses lexemes of this semantic field to express the aim of mankind:

The radiant image of his Glory sat,  
His only Son; (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 63)

My Umpire Conscience, when if they will hear.  
light after light well us'd they shall attain.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 195)

With regards to Satan, Milton depicts him as an evil character, as somebody devoid of light, grace, glory, wisdom etc (cf. God's attributes). Even when Satan appears, nature undergoes a process of darkening, and therefore wrath, envy etc appear:

The seat of Desolation void of light  
(*Paradise Lost*, 1. 181)

So spake the Sovran voice, and clouds began  
to darken all the hill, and smoke to roll  
in dusky wreaths, reluctant flames, the sign  
of wrath awak't.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 5. 557)

Satan, now first inflam'd with rage (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 4. 9)

2.2.2.3. Divine characters, as well as God and Jesuschrist, are portrayed with lexemes that have the seme (+light). Evidently, these divine characters - angels - are God's pupils and therefore they have the same qualities as God:

Thither comes Uriel, gliding through the Even  
On a Sunbeam, swift as a shooting Star.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 4. 555)

Angels ascending and descending, bands  
of Gurdians bright (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 511)

With regard to evil characters, obviously, they are depicted with negative properties conveyed by lexemes which belong to the subsystem (+dark). Milton refers to them as "doleful shades" or "shades of death".

2.2.2.4. Some instances portray the symbolic battle light and dark, or, to put it in another way, the battle between good and evil. Satan does not fear the power of light, of God. However, Milton, quite clearly shows the image of the Supreme power of light over darkness:

(...) This deep world  
of darkness do we dread?  
(*Paradise Lost*, 2. 262)

Must'ring their rage, and Heav'n resembles Hell?  
As he our Darkness, cannot we his light  
Imitate when we please.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 2. 268)

2.2.3. In this final section, I have included other lexical units which, are indirectly related to our subject of study. These lexemes have the common seme (Fire and Sun)

A striking contrast is presented between Fire and the Sun. Fire is portrayed, throughout the poem, as an element of Hell. Fire is pernicious, painful. The places where Satan and the rest of evil characters meet are

surrounded by fire. It is also a weapon for Satan when he fights against God. Black fire and horror shot with equal rage. Whereas the Sun is a positive element; it illumines Heaven and it is the light that is "imparted" to all of us. Sun beams and rays convey a positive meaning and value. Here are some instances that illustrate this theory:

Where pain of unextinguishable fire  
must exercise us without hope of end (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 2. 65)

Glar'd lighting, and shot forth pernicious fire.  
(*Paradise Lost*, 6. 849)

(...) , as when a wand'ring Fire  
Compáct of unctuous vapour, which the Night  
Condenses, and the cold environs round  
Kindl'd through agitation to a Flame,  
Which oft, they say, some Evil spirit attends (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 9. 634)

Our prison strong, this huge convex of Fire,  
Outrageous to devour, immunes us round (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 2. 434)

With regards to the Sun, I have picked out, among others, the following instances:

The same whom John saw also in the Sun:  
His back was turn'd, but not his brightness hid;  
Of beaming sunny Rays, a golden tiar  
Circ'l'd his head, nor less his Locks behind  
Illustrious on his shoulders fledge with wings  
Lay waving round; (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 3. 623)

The Sun that light imparts to all, receives  
From all his alimetal recompense  
In humid exhalations, and at Even  
Sups with the Ocean; (...)  
(*Paradise Lost*, 5. 423)

(...)  
Of day spring and the Sun, who scarce uprisen

With wheels yet hov'ring o'er the ocean brim,  
 Shot parallel to the Earth his dewy ray.  
 Discovering in wide Landscape all the East  
 Of Paradise and Eden's happy Plains'(...)  
 (*Paradise Lost*, 5. 139)

However, fire, in very specific contexts, is used to describe the apparition of an Angel or divine character. It is at this level that it acquires a positive dimension, fire, in this case, lightens an angel:

Th'unarmed youth of Heav'n (...)  
 Hung high with Diamond flaming, and with Gold.  
 (*Paradise Lost*, 4. 345)

There is an interesting instance that illustrates a change of meaning, motivated by a change of attitude of one character; it is that of "Morning Star", referring to Lucifer. From an etymological point of view, Lucifer meant the Prince of Light. He was absorbed by the world of darkness and he became an evil character. In this respect, Milton is aware of this change as is illustrated in this passage:

His count'nance as the Morning Star that guides  
 The starry flock, allur'd them and with lies  
 Drew after him the third part of Heav'n's Host;  
 (*Paradise Lost*, 5. 708)

Every instance in this section 2.2. reflect, on the one hand, the connotative values of the lexemes of the semantic field light and darkness and, on the other hand, how Milton, through his semantic intuitions and intellect, not only organizes verbal substance (cf. 2.1.) but also expresses his knowledge of the world and his religious convictions.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

My thesis on this paper has been to show how Milton organises and structures the semantic field of light and darkness both from a denotative and connotative point of view in *Paradise Lost*. On the one hand, Milton orders reality through his intellect and structures the text- set in a religious scenario-

both coherent and cohesively by grouping the lexical units into paradigms. These lexical units have a feature in common - that of light or darkness- and a distinctive feature which allow them to be neutralised in a given context. This sphere is what I have called the denotative part.

On the other hand, Milton, besides ordering reality, imposes some criteria of evaluation, which seem to depend, fundamentally, on his intuitive capacity or on his affective and emotive sphere. It is at this connotated level that Milton exploits his linguistic and literary creative capacity to the utmost and reveals his religious convictions .

Light and darkness as antonyms, rich in connotative values, are not an original creation in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Milton follows an old tradition, (cf. Spanish mystic poetry and primitive cultures). The interest of this dualism, with respect to other symbols in Milton's work, lies on the human world of significance in general; light and darkness as physic and natural phenomena, as images and linguistic signs are meaningful to the religious man.

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