

Ryan Netzley
rnetzley@siu.edu
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Immediate Worlds: Creation and Narration in *Paradise Lost* and Du Bartas' *Semaines*

This paper revisits Milton's indebtedness to and revision of Du Bartas' *Divine Weeks* in several key episodes—the depiction of chaos and the excurses on human physiognomy—so as to explore how early modern hexameral epics present narrative immersion or engagement: i.e., the supplement to the Genesis account that is, at least in part, their *raison d'être*. Du Bartas' poem depicts human creation, including his own creation of the poem, as an analogous continuation of the very creation it recounts. The sudden apprehension of analogical order offers a different understanding of readerly immersion than the more tragic and textual, less exuberant accents of *Paradise Lost*. That does not amount to a progressive development from Bartasian naïveté to Miltonic self-aware criticality. Du Bartas' immediacy revolves around an analogical identity between the *Divine Weeks* and the creation it recounts, thus its expansive encyclopedism. Milton's epic, in contrast, offers an immediacy that occurs through the present experience of re-reading, one that does not rely on a convincingly represented world for its presentness. This paper concludes by sketching how these poems reveal the limitations of modern concepts of plausible world-building for understanding early modern epic and our conceptions of poetic form.