

A Body, a Mirror, a Womb: The Creation of the Female
and the Dynamics of Companionship in John Milton's
Paradise Lost

by

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Introduction

Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
Godlike erect with native honor clad
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all.
And worthy seemed for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone:
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure,
Severe, but in true filial freedom placed,
Whence true authority in men. Though both
Not equal as their sex not equal seemed:
For contemplation he and valor formed,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace:
He for God only, she for God in him. (*Paradise Lost*, 4.288-299)

With these lines, John Milton introduces us to our first mother and father, walking in peaceful bliss in the Garden of Eden. *Paradise Lost*, Milton's 1667 epic poem, tells the biblical story of the fall of man throughout two narrative arcs: one following Satan after his banishment to Hell, and the other of Adam and Eve's temptation and fall from Paradise. It is a story of grandeur, in which the simple domestic lives of Adam and Eve in Paradise are interrupted and distorted by war, celestial knowledge, and Satan, the greatest antagonist to ever slither across the page. Their simple domestic lives are defined by tending to the Garden of Eden, extolling their great Creator, and relishing in each other's companionship and marriage. They are the first mother and father of the human race, and the children they conceive will population and fill the Earth. Milton's representation and treatment of women, marriage, and reproduction in *Paradise Lost* and other works continue to be subject to criticism in modern feminist debate. Milton's creation of the female body, the female

mind, and the female companion within *Paradise Lost* prompts discourses regarding the importance of the female in the Christian narrative, and the weight and responsibility placed upon Eve for the Fall of Man. Through close reading and analysis of Milton's epic poem, this thesis addresses the language used by Milton to underscore the role of objectification and obedience that Eve must embody to maintain the patriarchal order in Paradise. I will examine why Eve was created as a companion for Adam, the benefits and downfalls of their companionship, and the role of the female in marriage and reproduction, in contrast to the role of the male.

The questions I propose are not original, and it is with inspiration from other feminist theorists and writers who continue to extrapolate upon Milton's representation of woman that I dove into this topic. One of these writers is Mary Wollstonecraft, whose *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) greatly influenced the idea behind my thesis. Milton's impact on her writing is evident throughout her arguments that women should be educated in order to transcend society's definition of the female as the subordinate companion of the male. In one of her many passionate rebuttals of Milton's representation of the female, Wollstonecraft writes:

...when he tells us that women are formed for softness and sweet attractive grace, I cannot comprehend his meaning, unless, in the true Mahometan strain, he meant to deprive us of souls, and insinuate that we were beings only designed by sweet attractive grace, and docile blind obedience, to gratify the sense of man when he can no longer soar on the wing of contemplation. (36)

Wollstonecraft argues that women are kept in ignorance, under "the specious name of innocence," in order for men to maintain control over their intellect and bodies (36).

By rendering the female as “gentle, domestic brutes,” men establish themselves as women’s sole source of reason and guidance. This is evidenced in Book Four of *Paradise Lost*, when Eve tells Adam, “what thou bidst / Unargued I obey; So God ordains; / God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more / Is woman’s happiest knowledge and her praise” (4.635-638). Wollstonecraft describes Eve’s proclamation of obedience as similar to how a child regards a parent. Yet in a child-parent relationship, there comes a point that the child has matured to independent reasoning, and no longer needs the parent for guidance. In *Paradise Lost*, there is no process of maturation, culminating the patriarchal control over Eve becoming unnecessary—rather, she is reduced to a permanently child-like state of ignorance.

Wollstonecraft’s arguments significantly influenced how I approached my thesis. In parallel to her ideas, I argue that Eve’s subjugation to masculine power and reason is learned and instilled in her from birth. Without equal education to men, women are susceptible to patriarchal control, for they do not have the learned intellect needed for autonomy. In their state of ignorance, women are reduced to helpmates and vehicles for reproduction. This is where my thesis focuses, upon the patriarchal control over reproduction and companionship present in *Paradise Lost*. Where Wollstonecraft argues that uneducated women become subjected, trivialized helpmeets of men, I argue that they are relegated even further: to bodies used for masculine reproduction.

Wollstonecraft’s arguments and other criticism surrounding Eve’s learned subjection continue to be extrapolated in more modern feminist criticism of *Paradise Lost* as well. This is evidenced by Christine Froula’s article, “When Eve Reads Milton,”

which argues that Eve is taught patriarchal lessons from the first moment of her awakening in Paradise. Froula underscores that Eve's submission to Adam "illustrates the way in which patriarchal culture at large imprints itself upon the minds of...women," using Milton's Adam and Eve as representations of patriarchal authority as a whole (329). Her article touches upon the silence instilled upon the female voice, for the female is expected to follow the guidance and reason of masculine superiority. Similar to Wollstonecraft's argument that women are relegated to "gentle, domestic brutes," Froula refers to woman as "newborn innocent" and "tabula rasa," who must be imprinted with masculine authority in order to become a "patriarchal woman" (328). Both Froula and Wollstonecraft's arguments portray the female body and mind as a blank slate to be shaped and stamped by patriarchal dominance, an idea that heavily influences my reading and analysis of *Paradise Lost* within this thesis.

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John Milton's life coincided with a multitude of monumental historical moments, most importantly, the English Civil Wars from 1642-1651 and, later, the Restoration in 1660. His childhood, education at Christ's College, and marriages shaped him into a radical political presence who argued for self-determination, the condemnation of Charles I, and "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties" (*Areopagitica* 49). In *The Life of John Milton*, Barbara K. Lewalski writes that the character traits that he acquired at a young age came to define him for the rest of his life:

...very exacting standards of personal morality and accomplishment; high expectations for human institutions (schools, marriage, government, the

church); a disposition to challenge and resist institutional authorities who fell short of such standards; and a strong need for and high idealism about friendship and love. (1)

Born in December 1608 to a bourgeois, Protestant family in London, Milton went to Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1625, and by the end of his college career, his beliefs were leaning further towards radicalism. Following his graduation from Cambridge in 1632, Milton forwent a career in the clergy for a life devoted entirely to poetry and academia. He traveled around Europe, meeting other academics, poets, and political figures.

At this point in English history, English Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians were challenging the legitimacy of the Anglican Church—and consequently, the king himself. Charles I believed in the divine right of kings, and ruled over England, Scotland, and Ireland according to his own conscience. Milton strongly disagreed with the ideology of the divine right of kings and any political control over spiritual matters, aligning himself with the Puritans and Presbyterians against the English monarchy. Following the execution of Charles I in 1649, Milton worked for the revolutionary government that replaced the monarchy, defending the English Commonwealth against royalist aggressions (Teskey xxi). The English Restoration occurred in 1660, with the triumphant return of Charles II, the son of the executed Charles I. Gordon Teskey writes, “The revolution in which Milton had placed his hopes...had come to its inevitable, ignominious end” when Charles II rose to power, usurping the English Commonwealth (xxii). At this point in Milton's life, he was blind, had been widowed twice, and in the midst of writing *Paradise Lost*. Milton's active participation in these

historic political upheavals greatly influenced his writing, evidenced by *Reason of Church Government* (1642), *Areopagitica* (1644), *Eikonoklasts* (1649), and *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), and *Paradise Lost* (1667).

Just as Milton was seen as a radical leftist in the political sphere, his beliefs and arguments regarding marriage were perceived as equally radical in 17<sup>th</sup>-century England. He married a seventeen-year-old Mary Powell in 1642. She promptly abandoned their marriage a month later, only to return three years later in 1645. In those three years, Milton wrote his divorce tracts—four pamphlets that argued for a version of no-fault divorce: *The Doctrine of Discipline and Divorce* was written in 1643, *The Judgement of Martin Bucer* in 1643, *Tetrachordon* in 1645, and *Colasterion* 1645. Within these four texts, Milton writes that he sees marriage as greater than a contract between two people in agreement to procreate, but rather as a meeting of souls and minds. At the time that he wrote these pamphlets, England observed canon law, which followed the biblical prohibition of divorce, except only in cases of adultery. Per canon law, marriage was an insoluble contract for life, and the desertion of a marriage would result in permanent separation without the ability to remarry. In general, marriage was a binding relationship that only ended in death (van den Berg 5). Milton argues against these canonical beliefs in the divorce tracts. He writes that divorce should be the legitimate route taken on the ground of “That indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering and ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace” (*Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* 44). He believes that if two people are truly unfit to spend their lives together, it is an insult to marriage itself to remain in an unhappy companionship.

Milton uses biblical text to support his arguments, using passages that are mirrored in *Paradise Lost*. He writes:

...it shall be here sought by due ways to be made appeare, that those words of God in the institution, promising a meet help against loneliness, and those Words of Christ, *That his yoke is easie, and his burden light*, were not spoken in vain; for if the knot of marriage may in no case be dissolv'd but for adultery, all the burd'ns and services of the Law are not so intolerable. (*Doctrine of Discipline and Divorce* 43)

Milton alludes to Genesis 2:18 in this passage, which reads, “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him,” referencing His creation of Eve to quell Adam’s loneliness in Paradise. In his biblical exegesis, Milton highlights that God promises a “meet help” for Adam that will not only quell his loneliness, but also ease his yoke and lighten his burden. In other words, when given a companion that you are truly compatible with, “all the burd’ns and services of the Law are not so intolerable,” and you will not pursue divorce. Milton’s arguments were considered radical for 17<sup>th</sup>-century England, for he is not only arguing for a dissolution of marriage, but using biblical text as the groundwork for the argument. English Parliament would not reform marital law until the Divorce Reform Act of 1969, underscoring how radically modern Milton’s opinions on this topic were for his time.

Milton began writing *Paradise Lost* in 1658, now completely blind, and widowed by his first two wives, Mary Powell and Katherine Woodcock. He went on to marry his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, in 1663, who would outlive him. He

composed *Paradise Lost* with the help of aides, and by 1665, had completed the over ten-thousand-line poem. Lewalski writes, “Into *Paradise Lost* Milton poured all that he had learned, experienced, desired, and imagined about life, love, artistic creativity, theology, work, history, and politics” (442). With the publication of *Paradise Lost*, along with the later publications of *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, Milton concretely established himself as one of the greatest poets in English history.

My thesis came to fruition after years of reading *Paradise Lost* in classes, and continuing to feel as though I had made barely a dent in such an awe-inspiring piece of literature. In a class my junior year at Wesleyan, a professor asked the question: Who is to blame for the fall of man? This question began my exploration into Milton’s presentation of the role that the female, and the female body in particular, plays within *Paradise Lost*. The story of creation is echoed throughout *Paradise Lost*, from God’s creations of heaven, to his creation of Earth, Paradise, man, and woman. Eve’s creation is a response to Adam’s request for an intellectual companion, because he feels isolated and alone as the only human in Paradise. Yet after multiple readings of *Paradise Lost*, I questioned whether Eve was made to be an intellectual companion. I argue that she was not made to be a companion, but a vessel, an image, a flimsy counterpart to Adam.

Inquiries into the reproductive role that Eve plays in Genesis and *Paradise Lost* have been woven throughout a multitude of feminist texts, from 17<sup>th</sup>-century feminists like Rachel Speght, to modern feminist scholars like Mary Nyquist. In “The genesis of gendered subjectivity in the divorce tracts and in *Paradise Lost*,” Nyquist discusses the polarizing opinions regarding Milton’s representation of women. She extrapolates upon

the question of blame regarding the Fall of Man in her essay, and the correlation between mutuality and equality. She writes,

The undeniable emphasis on mutuality to be found in *Paradise Lost*—the mutual dependency of Eve and Adam on one another, their shared responsibility for the Fall—is for this reason often treated as if it somehow entailed a significant form of equality. (99)

In her writing, Nyquist highlights the problematic tendency to equate mutuality as equality. While Adam and Eve are mutually dependent on one another, this does not amount to equality. This argument alludes to the 17<sup>th</sup>-century argument of a similar nature proposed by Speght, who places a strong emphasis upon marriage as involving the “mutuall participation of each others burden” in her tract, “A Mouzell for Melastomus, the cynicall bayter of and foule mouthed barker against Evahs sex” (16). Nyquist furthers Speght’s argument by proposing that “mutuall participation” does not remove the gender hierarchy in Paradise. She illustrates that the differences between Adam and Eve cannot be dwindled down simply to the ability to reproduce, a difference of literal sex, but must be widened to showcase the emotional and intellectual hierarchy established between the two sexes (Nyquist 110).

John Halkett further extrapolates on Milton’s perception and description of marriage and gender hierarchy in his *Milton and the Idea of Matrimony*, in which he describes the Fall of Man as a disruption to the previously established harmony between man and woman. He proposes that the Fall of Man “made the achievement of harmony in most cases a *difficulté vaincue*, rather than a natural concomitant of man’s being, birth or station,” underscoring the difficulty of postlapsarian companionship

(98). In addition, his text asserts that prelapsarian companionship is a “natural concomitant,” an idea that I wish to extrapolate upon through textual evidence, focusing upon the dynamics of prelapsarian companionship that counter Halkett’s argument (98).

Throughout my writing I refer to the “patriarchal hierarchy” present within *Paradise Lost*, and this requires explanation. A patriarchy is a social or familial organization wherein which the father or oldest male is the head of the family, and descent and relationship are considered through the male line (OED). In accordance with this definition, God is referenced as both *father* and *monarch*, ruler over all that he has created. God and Nature create Earth, Heaven, Paradise and Hell, as well as angel, man and beast. Consequently, all of God’s creations are thrust into a patriarchal structure. This is the patriarchal hierarchy I will be referencing throughout the coming chapters.

In addition, because I will be discussing Milton’s representation of women from a 21<sup>st</sup>-century feminist point of view, my definitions of misogyny, patriarchy, sexism, and feminism do not apply to a 17<sup>th</sup>-century text. The modern feminist discourses surrounding Milton’s work consciously use words like “misogyny,” “patriarchy,” “sexism,” in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century context, rather than what they mean in 21<sup>st</sup> century critiques. To define Milton as a radical or a conservative, a feminist or a misogynist, is variable based on the time period, the historical context, and the readers themselves. Consequently, while I read *Paradise Lost* as a 21<sup>st</sup>-century feminist, the vocabulary that I use must be conscious of the distance that Milton and his writing had from these

discourses. The female in *Paradise Lost* is not in fact a physical woman as we know of her today. It is as an image, as an idea, that we must read as female in Milton's text.

In my first chapter, I will be focusing on the role of the female body in reproduction. Focusing on the characters of Sin and Eve, I will be analyzing the two characters as deviations from a prior model of reproduction that Milton associates with the character of Nature. Both created without mothers, their later roles as mothers themselves underscore the complicated role that the female body has in maternity and reproduction.

I will then extrapolate upon the role that narcissism plays in reproduction throughout *Paradise Lost*, using a monologue of Eve's in Book Two as the foundation for this second chapter. The male image and male gaze plays an important role in the expectations placed upon Eve as a mother and partner, and this chapter underscores the subjection of the female image to male superiority throughout Milton's poem.

In my third and final chapter, I will be zooming in closer on Adam and Eve's companionship and marriage, highlighting the power dynamics within the relationship. Image and beauty continue to play a large role, separate of reproduction and narcissism, for in Adam and Eve's marriage as a whole, we see the submission expected of the female counterpart and the detrimental consequences of these expectations.

My hope is that this thesis will foster discussion surrounding the importance of and reasoning behind the creation of the female body. The critiques I hold of Milton's presentation of women in *Paradise Lost* can be applied to contemporary expectations placed upon women to be the "help meets" of their male counterparts. *Paradise Lost* is regarded as one of the greatest and most influential pieces of English literature, a

definition given in part because of the depth that Milton achieves within a multitude of controversial, impassioned topics. These topics have not been left behind in 17<sup>th</sup>-century literature, and the role of the female continues to be a polarizing, and often frustrating, topic that requires continued debate and discourse.

## Chapter One

### Reproduction and the Female Body

Chaos umpire sits  
And by decision more embroils the fray  
By which he reigns. Next him high arbiter  
Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss  
The womb of Nature and perhaps her grave  
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,  
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed  
Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight  
Unless th'Almighty Maker them ordain  
His dark materials to create more worlds. (2.907-916)

Throughout *Paradise Lost*, Milton tells the story of creation in repetition, threaded throughout a multitude of different narratives: the creation of heaven, of earth, of Paradise, of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve are created as our first father and mother, and the children that they bear will fill the Earth. In their life together in Paradise, they are to tend to the Garden of Eden, relish in each other's physical and intellectual companionship, and to continue to extol and praise God. "In naked majesty," without postlapsarian shame, the two stride through the Garden together in the "image of their glorious Maker," "imparadised in one another's arms" (4.290-292, 4.506). Their sex is seen as pure, virtuous, and in the service of God, for the children they conceive will continue to honor God as inhabitants of Earth. Eve continues to be referred to as "Mother of the human race" throughout *Paradise Lost*, reminding

readers of the weight and importance placed upon her ability to give birth and continue their virtuous family line (4.475). Through Eve and other female characters within the poem, Milton's writing poses the question of whether motherhood is a position of empowerment or a position of subjugation. After analyzing Nature as the true mother of the universe, I will then focus my attention through the characters of Sin and Eve, two female characters created without participation of a mother. Both characters illustrate the dynamics between the masculine and feminine powers of reproduction, and the role that women are delegated to in bearing children to continue a family. Representing different subversions of creation and reproduction established by the role of Nature in the poem, these characters raise the question: in *Paradise Lost*, what role does the female body play in birth?

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First, the ideal and virtuous model of reproduction must be established, as a framework for the variations and subversions of motherhood that will follow in the narratives and analysis of Sin and Eve. Nature and God are described as the two driving forces behind the creation of the universe in *Paradise Lost*, working in tandem—God as the creator, Nature as the provider of His materials. Personified as female, Nature has a womb, filled with the elements used by God to create worlds. Milton writes,

Air and ye elements, the eldest birth
Of Nature's womb that in quaternion run
Perpetual circle multiform and mix
And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise!

Ye mists and exhalations that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or grey,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold
In honor to the world's Great Author, rise! (5.180-188)

In this passage, the “elements” that “in quaternion run / Perpetual circle multiform and mix / And nourish all things,” are fire, water, earth, and air. Constantly changing and transforming, these elements are “In honor to the world's Great Author,” God, and are used by Him to create the different worlds within the Universe. Heaven, Hell, Earth, and Paradise are all crafted from the elements held in Nature's womb. The raw materials that make up the elements held within Nature's womb are ruled over by Chaos on the edges of Hell. When Satan flies through the edges of Hell in Book Two, we are introduced to Chaos and Night, rulers of this realm that separates Hell from Heaven. Within this realm, the basic parts of the elements intermix wildly, for they have yet to be formed into their true elements, to create any other parts of the Universe. Milton describes,

Chaos umpire sits
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he reigns. Next him high arbiter
Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss
The womb of Nature and perhaps her grave
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight

Unless th'Almighty Maker them ordain

His dark materials to create more worlds. (2.907-916)

Trapped along the edge of Hell, these basic parts of the elements “mixed / Confus’dly,” and “must ever fight,” until God uses them to “create more worlds”. These “embryon atoms” are the ingredients of the elements, still a collection of disjointed parts held on the edge of Hell (2.900). Chaos and Night rule over this womb of matter. Nature’s womb then holds the formed elements, which God uses to create new life.

This personification of Nature establishes a model of creation, where the mother has a womb that holds the materials of life. These materials can be wielded to create life or cause destruction. Throughout *Paradise Lost*, Nature is both the name of the mother of the universe, and the term used to describe a character’s personal substance, such as when God discusses Adam and Eve’s free will, and that he would have to “change / Their nature,” to keep them from sinning (3.125-126). To change one’s nature is to go against what has been decreed by God and Nature themselves. Consequently, to go against the model of motherhood that Nature has established is to pursue a path unplanned, a path unvirtuous. Milton writes Nature into a female role that we, as readers, identify as the role of the human mother that Eve fills. Whereas Eve is the first human mother, the mother of mankind, Nature is the mother of the universe. If Nature is the mother that holds the elements in her womb, and God is the father that uses them “to create more worlds,” Adam and Eve are created as God’s attempt at mirroring this relationship. But in contrast to Adam and Eve’s mirroring of Nature’s virtuous reproduction, the narrative of Sin and Satan in Book Two of *Paradise*

Lost deviates from Nature's model, and illustrates the consequential downfalls of immoral reproduction.

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In Book Two of *Paradise Lost*, when Satan begins his flight to Paradise, he is confronted by two beings at the Gates of Hell: Sin and Death. One of these beings is a fair woman from head to waist, while the bottom half of her body is “a serpent armed with mortal sting” (2.652-653). She is Sin, the daughter of Satan and the mother of Death. She tells the story of her creation to Satan, explaining that she was born from his head. At the time of Sin's birth, Satan is still an angel in heaven, yet his thoughts of resistance and rebellion eventually culminate in a failed uprising against God, which concludes with Satan and his legions being cast down into the pits of Hell. Sin is an embodiment of Satan's heretical thoughts, of his desire to sin against God. She tells her father the story of her birth:

All on a sudden miserable pain  
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum  
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast  
Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,  
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,  
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed  
Out of thy head I sprung; amazement seized  
All the host of heaven; back they recoiled afraid  
At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign  
Portentous held me; but familiar grown,

I pleased, and with attractive graces won  
The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft  
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing  
Becam'st enamoured, and such joy thou tookst  
With me in secret, that my womb conceived  
A growing burden. (2.752-767)

No mother is present in her conception, for she is created entirely of Satan's thoughts. As an embodiment of sin itself, the other angels in heaven "recoiled afraid," "called me Sin, and for a sign / Portentous held me," for their initial reaction is that of fear and mistrust. Yet, over time, Sin wins the affection of the other angels "with attractive graces," stressing the alluring nature that sin possesses. Sin is perceived as attractive to the angels surrounding her—attractive as a female, and attractive as the physical manifestation of an angel's unconscious desire to rise in opposition to the servitude they are cast into under God's rule. Her body and appearance are described as "shining heavenly fair," yet are *also* described as "likest to [Satan] in shape and countenance bright". Therefore, we can extrapolate that Satan's disobedience has not yet affected his external appearance, for he still appears as bright and angelic as the other angels in heaven, but the birth of Sin highlights his internal desire to sin.

The desire that Satan feels towards his daughter is fueled not only by the alluring nature of sin and rebellion, but the image of *himself* that he sees in her. When Sin tells Satan that he "becam'st enamoured" with her after "viewing" his "perfect image" in her, she is clarifying that Satan is not attracted to her, but the image of himself in her. This clarification demonstrates the narcissism of Satan's actions against

his daughter: rather than desiring Sin as a being in and of herself, he desires the image of himself that he sees reflected back at him. This places Sin in a position of subjection, for she is reduced to a mirror. She reflects her father's darkest desires, and he attempts to possess and dominate these desires in raping his daughter. Milton notes the "joy" that Satan feels in raping his daughter, illustrating the satisfaction that Satan feels in sexual domination over his daughter, his reflection.

Sin's body is victim to sexual violence at the hands of her father and son, resulting in a disfiguration of her once "fair" image to that of horror and ugliness, befitting her name. Sin is not born with sinful character or appearance, but is described simply as a woman that is found beautiful to the men around her. It is only after Satan impregnates her with Death, and Death consequently rapes and begets her with the hounds in her womb, that her body is transformed and disfigured. Sin continues her story in Book Two, explaining that the "growing burden" within her womb following Satan's rape of her is Death, who at his birth, tears himself out of her body. She details Death "breaking violent way / Tore through my entrails, that with fear and pain/Distorted all my nether shape thus grew transformed" (2.782-785). Her "nether shape", her genitals and reproductive organs, are torn to pieces after the birth of Death. When we first meet Sin, we are told that the lower half of her body is that of a serpent. The transformation Sin speaks of in this passage is assumed to be that into a serpent. Death's birth destroys her previously female body, but her transformation from "a goddess" "shining heavenly fair," into the monster that Satan encounters at the Gates of Hell is not complete until her son, Death, rapes her as well. She describes the event to Satan:

I fled but he pursued (though more, it seems,  
Inflamed with lust than rage) and swifter far  
Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,  
And in embraces forcible and foul  
Engende'ring with me of that rape begot  
These yelling monsters that with ceaseless cry  
Surround me as thou saw'st, hourly conceived  
And hourly born with sorrow infinite  
To me. For when they list, into the womb  
That bred them they return and howl and gnaw  
My bowels, their repast, then bursting forth  
Afresh with conscious terrors vex me round  
That rest or intermission none I find. (2.790-802)

Sin's bodily transformation into bestial ugliness parallels Satan's descent into sin and heresy, continuing the argument that she is his image. Just as when she is born she is "Likest to [Satan] in shape and countenance bright," and "shining heavenly fair," both she and her father are now descending into more bestial, ugly forms of themselves. Her character is subjected to repeated brutal injury in the form of birth and rape, but while those events are singular, the consequence from these assaults is a permanent transformation of her body into a disturbing creature. As Satan's moral depravity increases, Sin's physical appearance grows fouler. She continues to be his image, his reflection. When the lower half of her body changes into that of a serpent, this physical

transformation foreshadows Satan's own transformation into a serpent in the Garden of Eden.

As an image, Sin is a response and reflection of Satan, making her the vessel of sin and disobedience, rather than the perpetrator. The transgressions that Sin embodies—betrayal of God, incest between a parent and child, and rape—are not her own. She is the victim in these instances, yet she is the character in eternal pain and agony, being continuously eaten alive by the hounds within her womb. It is Satan that goes against God, Satan that rapes his daughter, and Death that rapes his mother. She is a body that represents Satan's disobedience, a body that is raped because of Satan's narcissism and lust, and a body that is raped because of Death's lust towards his mother. There are no scenarios within which she seeks any of these sins of her own volition, for her own purpose. She is a victim being eternally punished for being a victim.

The violence and subjugation instilled upon Sin illustrates the immoral consequences of a deviant form of reproduction, one that goes against the model founded by Nature. Sin represents the warped perception of the female body that arises when it is created to further a masculine image in an immoral relationship. Nature, as the womb that creates the universe, is the establishment of a virtuous reproductive model, and Satan goes against Nature in the creation of Sin. At this point in *Paradise Lost*, Nature and Sin are the only two occasions of a female body in possession of a womb. Nature is the foundation, and Sin is the deviation. The later creations of Adam and Eve are an attempt to right this reproductive deviation, and re-establish virtuous reproduction. They are created in purity as entirely God's children,

in contrast to Sin's abnormal nativity. Their companionship is God's attempt at creating not only a virtuous relationship between man and woman, but virtuous offspring as a result.

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In Book Eight of *Paradise Lost*, Adam relates the stories of his and Eve's creations and marriage to Raphael. He explains his awakening, and consequential loneliness being in Paradise alone. Requesting a companion, Adam tells God:

Thou in Thyself art perfect and in Thee
Is no deficiencie found. Not so is Man
But in degree, the cause of his desire
By conversation with his like to help
Or solace his defects. No need that Thou
Shouldst propagate, already infinite
And through all numbers absolute, though One.
But Man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection and beget
Like of his like, his image multiplied
In unity defective which requires
Collateral love and dearest amity. (8.415-426)

Adam's request to God begins with an assertion of his own incompleteness, which he believes will be filled by a companion in Paradise. He tells God that because "in Thee / Is no deficiencie found," God is "through all numbers absolute, though One." God is individual, is one, and through this oneness, is complete. In contrast, Adam is the only

human in Paradise, and through his oneness, feels incomplete. He tells God that his oneness and loneliness will be “solace[d]” “by conversation with his like.” His “like” would be another human who is similarly incomplete. Companionship, “collateral love and dearest amity” are what Adam believes are the solutions to his incompleteness and loneliness.

With the creation of a companion for Adam in Paradise comes not only “collateral love and dearest amity,” but the possibility of procreation as well. Eve is a beautiful, fair, and fertile woman who can bear Adam’s children. Adam sees children as a possibility for his “image [to be] multiplied,” and “beget / Like of his like.” The language used by Adam in this passage illustrates that to be a female and give birth is to be a vessel for the male image. But Adam underscores that to have children with Eve, their relationship “requires / Collateral love and dearest amity” first and foremost. This directly contrasts to Sin’s narrative. Sin is used as a vessel for reproduction, just as Eve is. But there is no stipulation that children must *follow* a relationship based upon “collateral love and dearest amity” in Sin’s case. Rather, she is raped by her father and son, and the children that she bears as a result (Death and the hounds) are without virtue. Adam and Eve’s children are expected to be virtuous, for they are stemming from a virtuous relationship. Sin is a deviation from the model of birth established by Nature, and Eve is considered the beginning of moral sexual reproduction.

When Eve is created as Adam’s “other half,” she is described as the completion and fulfillment of his “deficiency,” the counterpart to his authority and guidance (4.489). Adam has the seed to create life, and Eve has the womb to hold life. Therefore, the two of them work in tandem to fill the Earth with children. As stated

above, these children are created to continue Adam's image, and Eve is the vessel to carry this image. She yields to his advances, she acquiesces to his knowledge and commands, and she will submit to the role of mother in the future. Consequently, their *virtuous reproduction* is not only based upon "collateral love and dearest amity," but also upon Eve's submission and less-ness in superiority and knowledge to Adam.

Just as Sin is created in the female form and is consequently bound to punishment because of her femininity and fertility, Eve is similarly bound by her fertility. At Eve's creation, she is defined as Adam's other half, his "image," and his submissive counterpart. Adam is her supposed "author and disposer," and she ardently promises him that "what thou bidst / Unargued I obey," even though we, as readers, know that she eventually forsakes this pledge when she eats from the Tree of Knowledge (4.635-636). Since it is Adam's body that created her, Eve feels a responsibility and commitment to Adam as her "head" and "guide" (4.442-443). In Book Four, when Eve describes her awakening and first meeting with Adam, she describes a voice telling her that Adam is:

...He

Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy

Inseparably thine. To him shalt bear

Multitudes like thyself and thence be called

Mother of human race. (4.471-475)

Not only will Eve continue Adam's "image" through their children, she is his "image" herself, similar to Sin's mirroring of Satan. And, as highlighted in Sin's narrative, to be the image of another is to be relegated to a mirror of another, removing personal

individuality. But even though Eve is told that she is Adam's image in Book Four, Adam emphasizes his superiority over Eve in Book Eight by stating that Eve was created less in God's image than he was. He states:

For well I understand in the prime end
Of nature her th' inferior in the mind
And inward faculties which most excel,
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both... (8.540-544)

In this passage Adam asserts that he understands that Eve was made less than him in both her internal and external qualities. Internally, intellectually, she was made "inferior in the mind." Externally, her image was made "resembling less / His image who made us both," highlighting that she does *not*, in fact, resemble God in the same way that Adam does, even though she is Adam's "image." Consequently, Adam's image is prioritized above hers in reproduction, because he more closely resembles God. Eve is simultaneously Adam's image, and a lesser version of Adam's image.

Yet even though Adam states that Eve is made less in God's image than he is, there comes a moment within *Paradise Lost* when Adam expresses insecurity about the power that Eve does hold over him. He questions if God took too much from his body to create her, because he is captivated and overwhelmed by her beauty, to the point that he begins to question his superiority to her. He tells Raphael that he feels "weak / Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance," meaning Eve's glance, even though he is aware that God made her "inferior in the mind" to himself (8.533-541). The idea that Eve could possess autonomous power separate of himself or God does not cross

Adam's consciousness, and rather, he believes that God gave her too much of his rib.
What is powerful in Eve could only stem from Adam. He tells Raphael,

In all enjoyments else
Superior and unmoved, here only weak
Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.
Or nature failed in me and left some part
Not proof enough such object to sustain
Or from my side subducting took perhaps
More than enough, at least on her bestowed
Too much of ornament, in outward show
Elaborate, of inward less exact. (8.534-539)

Here Adam blames nature for either leaving him internally weak, or for giving Eve too much from his side. While Eve is expected to give her loyalty, her obedience, and her body to Adam, he worries that he gave her too much of his. This illustrates the imbalance of power within their relationship, and Adam's need for Eve to need him as a guide and source of knowledge. He worries that while he is incomplete without her, the same does not apply to her. Adam says:

...Yet when I approach
Her loveliness so absolute she seems
And in herself complete so well to know
Her own that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best. (8.546-550)

The language that Adam uses mirrors that used in his request to God for a companion. He tells God that He has no need to “propagate,” for He is “already infinite / And through all numbers absolute, though One,” illuminating that while God is “One,” he is complete, while Adam is “One” and consequently incomplete. Yet in reference to Eve, Adam worries that “she seems...in herself complete,” which would mean that she does not need him as he needs her. For their relationship and resulting children to be deemed virtuous, their relationship must be based upon “love” and “amity,” as stated in Adam’s original request to God for a companion. And in order for there to be “love” and “amity,” Eve must play into the role she has been given—a fertile, submissive body used to further Adam’s image.

As a mother, her body becomes a vessel to carry his children, as a sacrifice expected of her to continue Adam’s image throughout the human race. Although Adam previously states that virtuous reproduction between Adam and Eve “requires / Collateral love and dearest amity,” the passages above highlight the necessity for Eve to maintain a lesser position to Adam in order for their love, and procreation, to succeed. She cannot stray from Adam’s guidance and dominance, because she must be a submissive vessel to carry his image. Adam needs her body to create children, and she must need him reciprocally as her guide. Just as Eve “solace[s] his defects,” their “collateral love and dearest amity” rests upon her need of Adam as well. Adam needs Eve to need him, and also needs her to remain the lesser half of their partnership.

With these stipulations, we see the submission that Eve must be subjected to in order to fulfill the virtuous title of “mother of human race”. If these are the stipulations for such a supposed honor, is this model of reproduction truly virtuous? The creation

of the female body is simply the replication of Adam's image in a feminine body, to be used as a vessel to continue the same image. I argue that this replication is not virtuous reproduction, but the subjugation of the female body for the sake of male narcissism. For Adam and Eve's children to be the supposed perfect examples of virtuous reproduction, the beauty that Eve is given must not overwhelm Adam's reason, and Eve must not feel that she can stray without Adam's guidance. She is a vessel and an image, and cannot be more.

Chapter Two

Female as a Reflection

Milton's introduction of Eve comes in Book Four of *Paradise Lost*, in a monologue that underscores the female role that Eve embodies in a world created by an already-established patriarchy. She wakes alone in Paradise, wondering who she is and where she is. Within this chapter, I will be focusing on Adam and Eve's separate nativity scenes. Adam's nativity scene is told in Books Four and Eight, respectively, and Eve's in Book Four. The majority chapter will be an extended, self-contained analysis of the monologue that Eve delivers immediately after her creation in Book Four, looking at the contrasting elements of this monologue with Adam's creation story. Eve's retelling of her nativity scene is the first instance of her speaking within *Paradise Lost*, introducing us to herself through the story of her creation. Eve's monologue tells the story of her nativity, her discovery of her own image, her first introduction to Adam, and her final submission to the role of wife and mother. She begins and ends the monologue with assertions of her deference to Adam and God, reminding the readers that she has already been subjected to this role, for she is telling a story from the past. She is telling Adam this story as an already obedient wife and companion.

Eve's creation is painted as a completion of a hierarchy previously established in Paradise. Adam has already been created at this chronological point in *Paradise Lost* and feels isolated in Paradise. Eve is created to fill this void, to complete Adam, reflect

his image and bear his future children. Her submission is portrayed as a fulfillment of the male longing for a reciprocal relationship wherein the female counterpart is an image, reflecting the male control. Continuing the idea extrapolated on in my previous chapter, the desire Adam feels towards his wife is fueled by the image of himself that he sees in her. Focusing on Eve's deferential language in her monologue, the contrasting aspects of Adam and Eve's nativity scenes, and the power of narcissism within the text, I wish to extrapolate upon Milton's description of Eve as a reflection for Adam's image, and the consequences that arise from this subjugation.

Before delving into Eve's retelling of her nativity to Adam, we must first understand how her creation came to be. As discussed in my previous chapter, Eve's creation is a response to Adam's request to God for a companion to quell his loneliness in Paradise. He perceives the hierarchy that he has been placed into, with him as lesser than God but higher than the beasts. He asks God:

Hast Thou not made me here Thy substitute
And these inferior far beneath me set?
Among unequals what society
Can sort, what harmony or true delight,
Which must be mutual in proportion due
Given and received? But in disparity—
The one intense, the other still remiss—
Cannot well suit with either but soon prove
Tedious alike. Of fellowship I speak
Such as a I seek, fit to participate

All rational delight wherein the brute
Cannot be human consort. (8.381-392)

Adam sees the beasts within Paradise, “each with their kind...So fitly them in pairs” that God “hast combined,” yet Adam is the only creature in Paradise without an equal (8.393-394). Adam emphasizes that just as he cannot be of equal intelligence to God, he cannot be of equal intelligence to the beasts in Paradise. He feels isolated between God and beast. He understands that he cannot find “harmony or true delight” with those who are “unequals,” and this prompts his request for a “human consort” that can satisfy his craving for intellectual companionship. He continues his request with a quote discussed in Chapter 1, asking for a companion,

...to manifest
His single imperfection and beget
Like of his like, his image multiplied
In unity defective which requires
Collateral love and dearest amity. (8.422-425)

God responds to Adam’s request with a question as to why his companionship is not enough, to which Adam responds that “in Thee / Is no deficiencie found”, for God is perfect, and humans are not (8.415-416). It is this similar “deficiency” that Adam seeks in a companion. He requests another human that he believes will “solace his defects,” “by conversation with his like,” illustrating that he wishes to find a companion that is an equal in their deficiencies (8.418-420). As well, Adam not only seeks “harmony and true delight,” with another human, but hopes to see “his image multiplied” through procreation with this companion. He states that to see “his image

multiplied” through children, the relationship requires “collateral love and dearest amity.” Without this, and if he and his companion are “in disparity,” then their relationship will soon prove “tedious.” Through this request, Adam establishes that the companion he aspires for is one that can fulfill his emotional and intellectual loneliness, with whom he can find mutual love and affection, and with whom he can create more children in his likeness. God answers this request with the creation of Eve.

God promises Adam that he will deliver to him “Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, / Thy wish exactly to thy heart’s desire” (8.450-451). Eve is introduced as “manlike but different sex,” for she is a mirroring of Adam, yet with slight differences—and these differences are exactly what make her lesser (8.471). Rather than being another individual being with the same deficiencies, like Adam requested from God, her deficiencies lead her to be lesser version of Adam. Yet I argue that these deficiencies, seen through Adam’s eyes, aren’t natural, but learned. From the moment of her waking in Paradise, this sense of inferiority is instilled within Eve’s consciousness, I argue as an internalization of the patriarchal lessons imparted upon her.

When looking at the monologue that Eve gives in Book Four, in which she tells Adam the entirety of her nativity story, we can see that Eve herself subverts the equality that Adam requested from God. Telling the story after-the-fact, she places herself in a subordinate position to Adam from the opening lines of the passage. This leads us to question, is her submission a learned trait or a trait she was created with?

At the opening of Eve's monologue in Book Four, she begins with an establishment of her obedience to Adam. This obedience is based upon what she is made of, or rather *who* she is made of—Adam. The first of her praises to Adam reads:

To whom thus Eve replied: O thou for whom
And from whom I was formed, flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom am to no end, my guide
And head, what thou hast said is just and right. (4.440-442)

Within the first two lines, Eve establishes two clarifying identifications: first, that she is made “for” Adam, and second, that she is made “of” Adam. This alludes to 1 Corinthians 11:8-9, which reads, “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. / Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.” She is made of his flesh, she was made for him, and she submits to his reason and guidance. This underscores that what she is made “of” (Adam) determines her destiny. She subjects herself to subservience because of her physical makeup. Eve is created as a “help meet,” as someone to fulfill and enrich Adam's life in Paradise, for he does not feel complete without an intellectual and emotional companion. Eve's identity is assigned a secondary role before she is even created, for she is not an independent being of her own, but rather a response to Adam's sense of loneliness and craving for intellectual companionship. She is made “for” him to quell this loneliness, and the fact that she is made “of” him inextricably links her to him.

Yet Eve is unaware of the reasons behind her creation when she first wakes in Paradise. She does not know that she is destined to be with Adam. Eve's awakening in Paradise begins with a sense of confusion, for she does not know the “where,” “what,”

“whence,” and “how” of her situation, underscoring her “unexperienced thought” at her creation (4.451-452). Her childlike humanity is emphasized when she hears “a murmuring sound / Of waters,” drawing her in like a warm motherly embrace. Within these mothering waters she first discovers a reflection not only of herself, but of an image “Pure as the expanse of Heaven” (4.456). Eve is seeing the Heavens above, but reflected in the water below. Her first experience with the Heavens stands in stark contrast to Adam’s perception of the heavens when he first awakens alone in Paradise. When telling Raphael of his own nativity scene, Adam says,

As new waked from soundest sleep
Soft on the flow’ry herb I found me laid
In balmy sweat which with his beams the sun
Soon dried and on the reeking moisture fed.
Straight toward heav’n my wond’ring eyes I turned
And gazed a while the ample sky till raised
By quick instinctive motion up I sprung
As thitherward endeavoring and upright
Stood on my feet. (8.253-261)

Whereas Eve lies down and considers the water to discover a reflection of heaven, Adam immediately looks up towards heaven and stands up. Milton creates a juxtaposition not only between reflection and object, but also between upward and downward mobility. Eve places herself further from the Heavens, and Adam immediately rises closer to them.

Throughout *Paradise Lost*, to be upright is to maintain virtue, exemplified when Satan first sees Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and describes them as such: “Two of far nobler shape erect and tall, / Godlike erect with native honor clad” (4.288-289). Satan’s description of the two focuses on their being “Godlike erect,” equating their upright stature with virtue and nobility. In contrast to the “far nobler shape[s]” of Adam and Eve, descriptions of Satan highlight his downward mobility throughout the poem. He is first thrown down into the pits of Hell along with the other angels, then after entering Heaven, is transformed from man, to toad, to serpent, pushing him closer and closer to the ground. The lower Satan is, the more animalistic he is described, associating these animalistic tendencies to his evil and immoral inclinations against God. When Satan transforms into serpent, he says,

...where hap may find
The serpent sleeping in whose mazy folds
To hide me and the dark intent I bring.
O foul descent! That I who erst contended
With gods to sit the high’st am now constrained
Into a beast and mixed with bestial slime
This essence to incarnate and imbrute
That to the heighth of deity aspired! (9.160-167)

This passage furthers the correlation that Satan establishes between being a beast and being sinful, for he searches for a “serpent sleeping” to “hide” both him and “the dark intent [he] bring[s].” Through transformation into animal form, especially to one which slithers along the ground, Satan is furthering the distance between himself and the gods

in heaven, with whom he “contented...to sit the high’st,” before being thrown down to Hell. Even as an enemy of God, Satan still believes that to be a beast is below him, for man was created to rule over beast, and angels rule over man. References throughout Milton’s poem on the hierarchy of man over beast allude to Genesis 1:28, which reads,

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Adam and Eve are created as lords, rulers over the beasts created by God, underscoring the intellectual divide between animal and man. Consequently, Satan has not only fallen from heaven, but he is falling further and further away from his humanity and distance to God. Whereas he once was at the very “height of deity” in heaven with the angels, he has now descended into a beast that will eventually fall completely to the ground in punishment after Adam and Eve eat from the Tree of Knowledge.

When Eve discovers the reflected image of heaven, she is lying against the ground like an animal, while when Adam sees heaven above him for the first time, he intuitively stands up, understanding his virtue as an upright man. Both Adam and Eve are unaware of their surroundings when they first awake, and both of their first movements seem to be dictated by instinct. Yet while Eve went “With unexperienced thought and laid [herself] down / On the green bank to look into the clear / Smooth lake that to [her] seemed another sky”, in contrast, Adam looks “straight toward heav’n” with his “wond’ring eyes”, and “gazed a while the ample sky till raised / By

quick instinctive motion up [he] sprung / As thitherward endeavoring and upright /
Stood on [his] feet” (4.456-459, 8.257-260). Eve’s “unexperienced thought” diverges
from Adam’s “instinctive motion”, for she lays herself down next to the water,
paralleling the imagery used to describe Satan and the other fallen angels lying on the
lake in Hell, while Adam conveys a sense of instinctual consciousness that he needs to
become immediately upright.

Eventually Eve is pulled from the water by a voice which tells her that is
necessary for her to abandon the image below in order to find Adam. This intangible
voice can be read as an invisible God, leading Eve away from her alluring image. The
voice tells her:

What thou seest,
What there thou seest, fair Creature, is thyself;
With thee it came and goes: but follow me.
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Thy coming, and they soft embraces, he
Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
Mother of human race. (4.467-475)

When the voice tells Eve that all she sees below her in the water is herself, it shatters
the illusion she previously held that the reflection was another being entirely. Just as she
first experiences heaven in reflected form, she first experiences herself in reflected
form as well. Christine Froula, in her article “When Eve Reads Milton: Undoing the

Canonical Economy”, extrapolates on the effect the voice has over Eve when it tells her that all she sees reflected below is herself. Froula argues that when the voice tells her that “what thou seest...is thyself,” the voice is telling her that “this is not a reflection of herself, but rather this *is* herself”, because she is as “shapeless, as substanceless, as the reflection in the water” (335). Eve’s first praise of Adam within this monologue—“without whom am to no end, my guide/ And head”—exemplifies Eve’s feelings in the present moment with Adam, whereas this moment with the voice brings the readers back to *how* she got to this present moment. Froula continues her argument, writing,

Milton’s Eve brings the threat of woman’s self-articulation into focus: it is the danger posed by speaking from her body, from an experience that exists outside patriarchal authority, as did the untutored, self-reflective consciousness Milton represents as narcissistic. (135)

Eve exists only for a moment without patriarchal authority or restrictions, and it is this female freedom and liberation that the voice aims to immediately quell. The voice is a representation of the patriarchal control over a woman’s consciousness. The voice that emerges to draw her away from the water is the first of the patriarchal lessons instilled upon her “unexperienced thought”.

The lesson that God’s invisible voice instills upon Eve is that to stay and pine over the image of herself in the water is in vain, whereas the love she will find with Adam is her true destiny. Offering an alternative to falling in love with this “shadow,” the voice tells her to “follow” and find Adam, who surpasses the love that she could have found with her image in the water. He places the relationship she will have with Adam above the relationship between her and her image. In telling Adam this story,

Eve states that she learned that it is with “vain desire” that she loves the image, for the image is only “a shadow” that “stays thy coming.” The voice tells her that rather than pursue this “vain desire,” Eve will find a deeper satisfaction with Adam—even though Eve is simply the image of Adam. She is removed from the pool and taught that rather than falling in love with an image, *she* should be the image for Adam to be united with.

Explicitly stated, the voice describes Adam as “he / Whose image thou art,” referring to Eve as the image and Adam as the object. Adam is made in the image of God, and Eve is made in the image of Adam. She is only the reflection of her partner. The voice tells Eve that the reflection she is allured by in the water is simply a “shadow” that “stays thy coming,” and implying that it is in “vain” to be so attached to a superficial reflection of one’s self. Yet by removing her from the pool, and guiding her towards Adam, Eve becomes the very shadow she has been told to leave behind. To be an image of another is to be placed lower on a hierarchical scale, for your identity is defined by being a reflection—you are a “shadow [that] stays / Thy coming” (4.470-471). You cannot escape your shadow, nor can your shadow escape you, therefore inextricably binding Eve to Adam. The image in the pool is to Eve, as Eve is to Adam—yet the relationship between Adam and Eve is not similarly described as in vain.

To extrapolate and analyze Adam’s arguments for why Eve is destined to be with him, we must first analyze Eve’s resistance to her destined marriage with him. When Eve first sees Adam after being led away from the pool by God’s voice, her first instinct is to turn back to the water and the reflected image of herself. She recounts this hesitation to Adam, saying:

Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall,

Under a platane; yet methought less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
Than that smooth watery image. Back I turned. (4. 478-480)

The last use of the word “image” within this monologue is the moment when the voice tells Eve that Adam is “whose image thou art”, and is now used to describe the reflection of Eve. Consequently, we are guided by Milton to see the two (Eve and the reflection) as images, just of different objects (Eve to Adam and the reflection to Eve). Eve is told by the voice that she is the image of Adam, yet before speaking to him, she superficially judges him as less beautiful than the reflection she left behind. If following the line of logic throughout this chapter thus far, we know that Adam is made in the image of God, and Eve is made in the image of Adam—she is told that he is “whose image thou art” (4.472). So if Eve is not initially attracted to Adam, but attracted to the image of herself, what is the difference between these two images?

The difference, argued in the warnings from the voice and Adam, is that to be Adam’s image is to possess substance, while to be the object reflected in water is to possess “vain desire.” In recounting the story to Adam, Eve states that had the voice not pulled her away from the water, she would have “fixed / Mine eyes till now and pined with vain desire” (4.465-466). Milton’s use of the word “vain” emphasizes the narcissism of Eve’s attraction to her image, as well as the futility of that past desire. Rather than pining after an image, she should be the image herself. When Eve attempts to flee back to the pool, he states that she cannot leave him, because to leave him is to leave herself, because she *is* him, and will only find satisfaction as his reflected image. He says,

Return, fair Eve;
Whom flyest thou? whom thou flyest, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear;
Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
My other half. (4.481-488)

This argument proposed by Adam ties back to the idea that Eve's destiny is based entirely on her physical ingredient—Adam's rib. He tells her that he gave her "substantial life," not just meaning that his body gave her life, but that this life was made "substantial" because of him. When Adam says that he gave her "substantial life," he continues by saying "to have thee by my side," consequently defining this "substantial life" as a life spent with him, as his image. Adam was not made *for* Eve, but rather the inverse. Adam instills within Eve the belief that her life is fuller, more substantial, as his image than it would be otherwise after the voice guides her to him. When Adam cries out to Eve, he proclaims that she is his "other half." Adam is insinuating that he is not complete without her, because she is *his* reflection, *his* image, and *his* other half—but is she his? For Eve, *her* reflection, *her* image, and *her* other half is found in the reflecting pool, but she is forced to leave and instead be with Adam, because she is taught that to love her reflected image is futile. By telling Eve that she is created from his rib, Adam implies that she is in debt to him for giving her a "substantial life," and the debt she owes is her life and obedience.

The debt that she feels towards him is highlighted earlier in Eve's monologue, in the opening lines, when she claims that she must give more thanks to God than Adam does, for God gave her Adam. She immediately places herself in subordinate position to Adam, proclaiming that no one can be of equal stature or intelligence to Adam. Yet it is of great importance to keep in mind that these statements she makes to Adam come *after* she has submitted and subjugated herself to Adam, and has internalized the patriarchal lessons instilled upon her by Adam and the voice. She says,

For we to him indeed all praises owe,
And daily thanks; I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
Like consort to thyself canst no where find. (4.445-458)

By returning to the beginning of Eve's monologue, we can now see clearly the establishment and practice of the patriarchal lessons that the voice and Adam have previously taught her. Recalling the Froula quote earlier in this chapter, Eve has been fully indoctrinated into her identity as Adam's shadow, underscoring that her "imagination is so successfully colonized by patriarchal authority" that she has literally "become its voice," and this is showcased in these opening lines of her monologue.

The passage quoted above begins with a unifying "we," meaning Eve and Adam, for they are both grateful to God for the lives they were given, and pious in their praises. While they both see God as their creator, Eve sees it necessary to give more praises, for not only is she obedient and grateful to God, but to Adam as well. She believes that she has "so far the happier lot," because not only does she have God as a

guide, but Adam as well. She believes that she has the privilege of enjoying Adam as a companion and a partner, and has internalized Adam's previous argument that without him, she would not have "substantial life." This moment ties back to just three lines before this passage, when Eve proclaims that Adam is her "guide" and her "head," referencing 1 Corinthians 11:8-9, "...the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God," reminding the readers of the hierarchy that is present within Paradise. This passage exemplifies the debt that Eve feels to Adam for giving her the "substantial life" that she strives for. Yet it is this very life, defined by Adam "substantial," that solely benefits the established patriarchal authority present with Paradise, utilizing Eve as a shadow, a womb, and a submissive reflection of patriarchal control.

Adam perceives Eve as the missing piece to his loneliness, the "other half" of himself that he has been lacking, but the voice looks one step further and focuses on the reproductive abilities that Eve possesses as Adam's image. Her life is to be substantial not only as the fulfillment of Adam's wish for companionship, but also as "Mother of human race" (4.475). Consequently, Eve is defined not only as Adam's "shadow" and "other half," but also as a mother. Through this motherhood she will be continuing an image—the image of Adam, and therefore the image of God. Rather than seeking fulfillment with her reflection in the water, Eve is taught that she must seek fulfillment as an image of another, in order to further the image of Adam through their children. James W. Earl, in his article titled "Eve's Narcissism," touches upon this asymmetrical relationship between Adam and Eve when he writes,

The problem is, of course, that everyone requires such an image, and Adam does not serve as Eve's in the way that she serves as him. Her image is only a shadow in a pool, more transient than even a mother. Adam is not an appropriate symbol of her self; in fact, he can only symbolize to her her own insufficiency. One day she will find the true image of herself, in her children, and she will experience then that narcissistic fulfillment which a man finds first in his mother and then finds restored to him in his wife, and which a woman also finds first in her mother and then again in her baby...what *Eve* needs is a *baby*, to satisfy her desire as she satisfies Adam's. It is the goal of her psychological development, the resolution and satisfaction of her narcissism.

(16)

Earl highlights an integral aspect of Eve's submission: that she must remain a shapeless image in order to create children in their father's image, and it is within these children that she will find her true substance and narcissistic satisfaction. The voice and Adam teach Eve that to strive for substance outside of her relationship with Adam is in "vain," and that she can only find substance not only as a reflection of Adam, but as a tool to continue Adam's image in the future of the human race. Once again, it cannot be forgotten that she is made both "of" and "for" Adam. She is created to be a reflection, a shadow, rather than an independent individual of her own right.

Eve, as a reflection, is given a flimsiness, or malleability, that juxtaposes the physical rigidity of Adam. The juxtaposition between visibility and invisibility is another thread that can be woven throughout the establishment of patriarchal control over Eve's body. Adam is the solid object, Eve is the transparent image that must reflect this

object. Eve is born with “unexperienced thought” that is imprinted with the lessons that Adam and the voice wish to impart, and at the moment that she fully submits to these patriarchal expectations, her reality and perceptions are drastically changed. The moment that we see Eve fully submit, and fall into these expectations, comes after Adam tells her that she cannot leave him, for she *is* him. After Adam tells Eve that she cannot leave him, he reaches out—“with that thy gentle hand / Seized mine”—and Eve “yielded” to his reasoning and physical touch (4.488-489). As soon as Eve yields, her perception of herself, and of Adam in relation to herself, changes dramatically. Contrasting to when she wished to turn back from Adam and return to her reflected image, she now yields not just physically, but emotionally and intellectually as well.

Eve tells Adam that now, she sees “How beauty is excelled by manly grace / And wisdom which alone is truly fair” (4.489-491). “Beauty,” meaning Eve, fully acquiesces to “manly grace,” meaning Adam, underscoring that through this submission, she is establishing the hierarchical divide between them. She fully discounts herself as an equal to him, because she firmly states that her beauty is lesser than his manly grace, and that “wisdom,” meaning Adam’s wisdom, “alone is truly fair.” Eve previously wished to turn away from Adam and return to the reflecting pool, for she first perceived Adam to be “less fair / Less winning soft, less amiably mild, / Than that smooth watery image,” establishing her prioritization of her image’s physical beauty over Adam’s “manly grace.” Within Eve’s fifty-one-line monologue, Milton utilizes the word “fair” five times. Two of these instances are to describe Eve, once by God’s shapeless voice by the reflecting pool, and once by Adam. The voice refers to Eve as a “fair Creature,” and Adam calls out to her, “return, fair Eve” (4.468, 4.481). Two other

occurrences are to describe Adam from Eve's point of view. When she first sees Adam, Eve describes him as "fair indeed and tall," but one line later, she clarifies that she finds Adam "less fair, / Less winning soft, less amiably mild / Than that smooth watery image" (4.477-480). In these examples, "fair" implies attractiveness, physical beauty, in the eye of the beholder. Yet within Milton's final use of the word within this passage (it is used often throughout the rest of the poem), Eve has taken the description previously used to describe the beauty of herself and her reflecting image, and placed it upon Adam's reason and wisdom. She tells Adam that following her submission to him, she sees "how beauty is excelled by manly grace, / And wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (4.489-491). Eve subverts the meaning behind "fair", and applies it to an invisible trait: wisdom. She has been taught to understand that while she finds her own image more physically attractive than Adam, it is not what she sees in Adam, but what invisible traits Adam holds, that are "truly fair."

When Eve prioritizes Adam's reason over her reflected beauty, she is consequently submitting to the masculine reason that has told her that she must be a lesser counterpart to Adam. When she is first created, she possesses "unexperienced thought," but she is beautiful. In a literal sense, she is just a pretty face. But her attraction to her reflection underscores the alluring power of the female beauty, further exemplified by her admittance that had the voice not pulled her away from the reflecting pool, she would have "fixed / [her] eyes till now" (4.465-466). It is this beauty, painted as female narcissism, that threatens the established patriarchal supremacy held by Adam and God. Her beauty is immediately visible to her, but her obedience to Adam must be learned. Later in *Paradise Lost*, when Eve convinces Adam to eat from

the Tree of Knowledge, the influence of her female beauty and sexuality proves overwhelming, for it surpasses the power of his reason. But in this final line of Eve's monologue, when she says that she now sees "how beauty is excelled by manly grace, / And wisdom, which alone is truly fair," she concretely states that she now believes that his reason and guidance surpass the power of her beauty, instituting herself as the lesser counterpart to Adam.

This final statement of male superiority and female submission mirrors the lines of praise that begin Eve's monologue in Book Four, book-ending this passage with tributes to the patriarchal supremacy present within Paradise. Milton underscores the learned obedience of Eve, and the subjugation of the female body into an image for the benefit of the male. Froula writes, "Eve's indoctrination into her own 'identity' is complete at the point at which her imagination is so successfully colonized by patriarchal authority that she literally becomes its voice," which is exemplified by Eve's admittance that she now believes that "manly grace and wisdom" are "alone...truly fair" (329). By the end of her monologue, she has fully internalized the admonitions of God's shapeless voice and Adam. While she awakens with "unexperienced thought," her instinct to look downwards, into the water, to find heaven and herself contradict with Adam's instincts to look upwards, implying that she is created not as an equal, but as intellectually lesser than Adam. Her brief moments of self-realization are clouded by the instructions and admonitions from the voice, and then the final institution of control and submission from Adam. By the end of this passage, Eve has become the "voice" of the "patriarchal authority," for she has subjected herself to the belief that to be in the image of a man, in the service of a man, is to possess "substantial life."

As Adam's wife and companion in Paradise, Eve fulfills his request for companionship, but she does not embody the equality that he asks God for. She places herself in a submissive role to Adam's guidance and reason, instituting herself into the patriarchal hierarchy that was established in Paradise before her creation. At the end of her monologue, she yields to Adam's affections, both physically and mentally. As evidenced by this monologue, she has consciously accepted her subservient role to Adam. She is a mirror to his image, and as his shadow, she remains loyal to his leadership. Although she is not an embodiment of what Adam requests, the role that Eve plays is one that allows Paradise to continue being a place of peace and piety, and for her and Adam's marriage to continue in bliss.

Chapter Three

Marriage and Companionship

With the creation of Eve, Adam finds a companion and wife who helps him tend the garden, who has the ability to bear his children, and who proclaims that she will loyally obey his intellect and reason. She is created both of him and for him, and their marriage is illustrated as the ideal example of pious companionship. In the previous chapter, I extrapolated upon the role of the patriarchal authority within Paradise regarding Eve's perception of her relation to Adam, but in this chapter, I wish to continue to delve into the dynamics of her marriage with Adam. With her creation, a hierarchy is established in Paradise, in which man is superior to woman, but God is superior to man. This founded hierarchy of nature is subverted and destabilized in Adam and Eve's relationship later in *Paradise Lost*, leading to their disobedience against God and consequential dismissal from Paradise. The destabilization of this patriarchal hierarchy underscores the power of the female body over masculine Reason, and man's consequential downfall. To offer the female intellect any power above what God designated at Eve's creation is to disrupt the patriarchal hierarchy within Paradise, and it is only when Adam and Eve fulfill their expected gender roles that marriage finds success.

While the narrative of Eve's creation and awakening comes in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, Adam recounts both his and Eve's creations in the eighth book, in conversation with the angel Raphael. He tells Raphael of a discussion he has with God

on the loneliness he feels as the only human in Paradise, surrounded by beasts “Each with their kind” (8.393). He asks, “In solitude / What happiness? Who can enjoy alone / Or all enjoying what contentment find?,” introducing the belief that true satisfaction can only be found when it is shared with another. He refines his argument, stating that who he seeks is not just any other human, but a companion of equal intellect and stature, because he cannot find true “fellowship” with the beasts who are of lower intelligence than he is (8.388). He says,

Among unequals what society
Can sort, what harmony or true delight,
Which must be mutual in proportion due
Given and received? But in disparity—
The one intense, the other still remiss—
Cannot well suit with either but soon prove
Tedious alike. Of fellowship I speak
Such as I seek, fit to participate
All rational delight wherein the brute
Cannot be human consort. They rejoice
Each with their kind, lion with lioness,
So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined.
Much less can bird with beast or fish with fowl
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape,
Worse then can Man with beast, and least of all! (8.383-397)

This passage brings forth an integral question within Milton's poem: what "harmony or true delight" can be found between two beings who are unequal? He points out that each beast is paired up, "each with their kind," underscoring that when Adam looks around the garden, he sees couples that are matched up per their likeness, with equal intellect, and this is what he desires as well. God asks why his companionship is not enough, to which Adam responds that "in Thee / Is no deficiency found," for God is perfect, and humans are not (8.415-416). It is this imperfection that Adam seeks in a companion, for he believes that if another being is imperfect in the same ways that he is, then they will be equals. Furthermore, he believes that after being given an equal, another creature of similar defects, they will "manifest / His single imperfection and beget / Like of his like, his image multiplied / In unity defective which requires / Collateral love and dearest amity" (8.422-426). He yearns for this "unity defective," where he can find solace in another creature that understands the blessings and calamities that he experiences as a human in Paradise. Just as he cannot be of equal intelligence to God, he cannot be of equal intelligence to the beasts in Paradise. He feels isolated between God and beast, and a human counterpart is the supposed solution. As we know, God answers this request for another imperfect being, an intellectual equal, for "collateral love and dearest amity," with the creation of Eve.

As argued in the previous chapter, immediately following Eve's creation, she is subjugated to the patriarchal authority thrust upon her in Paradise, establishing a hierarchy where she is lower than man. Consequently, she and Adam are not equals, and their "harmony" is not in "mutual proportion," for Eve states that she has "So far the happier lot, enjoying [Adam] / Preeminent by so much odds" (4.446-447). Yet this

is not what Adam requests to resolve his isolation in Paradise. After internalizing the patriarchal lessons instilled upon her (as told in her monologue in Book Four), the hierarchy wherein Adam is superior to Eve seems to be concretely established.

Corinthians 11:3, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God,” outlines the ideal order of nature, of marriage between man and woman, and this order is established by Eve’s obedience to Adam’s guidance and reason. So, while Eve is not the intellectual equal that Adam asked for, God gave Adam a companion that would rather fulfill the stipulations of a blissful, happy marriage—one that upholds the established hierarchy within Paradise.

If arguing that the prelapsarian marriage between Adam and Eve is, in fact, the ideal marriage, we must first define the different clarifications of *what* an ideal marriage is. In the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, Milton gives a brief definition. He writes,

Hail wedded Love, mysterious Law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else.
By thee adulterous lust was driv’n from men
Among the bestial herds to range, by thee
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure
Relations dear, and all the Charities
Of Father, Son, and Brother were first known. (4.750-757)

In this passage, Milton describes love as the rational foundation of domestic life. The founding “reason” of a marriage, of companionship, must be upheld by the male, for it

is Adam who is the embodiment of reason, while Eve is the submissive counterpart. Eve sees Adam as her “guide / And head,” and with Eve as Adam’s submissive counterpart, their marriage flourishes, for Eve does not yet question Adam’s authority over her, and God’s authority over them both (4.4.442). She refers to Adam as her “author and disposer,” mirroring the language that Adam utilizes in his descriptions of God. She continues to extol the superiority that he possesses over her, promising him,

...what thou bidst

Unargued I obey: so God ordains.

God is thy law, thou mine. To know no more

Is woman’s happiest knowledge and her praise.

With thee conversing I forget all time,

All seasons and their change all please alike. (4.634-640)

Eve stresses to Adam that she is undoubtedly obedient to his reason and command, for while Adam is responsible to God, she is responsible first and foremost to Adam. With this vow by Eve, Milton highlights not only Adam’s confidence in Eve’s subjugation, but Eve’s confidence in Adam’s subjugation to God. If the hierarchy remains solid and unwavering, then they will continue in wedded bliss, and the rational foundation of domestic life will not be usurped.

As well, within this passage, Eve emphasizes the love she feels towards Adam in conversation, underscoring that while she is not an intellectual equal to Adam, she can engage in one-sided “social communication” (8.429). Not only does she assert that hearing her husband speak causes her to “forget all time, / All seasons and their change all please alike,” she relates the joy she feels in hearing him speak to her submission to

Adam's reason. She does not strive to be an intellectual equal to Adam, for she believes that "to know no more" than the knowledge she is given "Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise." Eve does not yearn for knowledge from a source other than Adam, for she trusts that just as Adam is her author, God is his. Consequently, what she learns from Adam is what Adam has learned from God, and she does not wish to usurp this order by seeking knowledge from another being. In the eighth book, Adam and Raphael discuss the heavens, the earth, and other celestial motions, and Eve removes herself from the conversation. Milton writes:

Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her ear
Of what was high: such pleasure she reserv'd,
Adam relating, she sole Auditress:
Her Husband the Relater she preferr'd
Before the Angel, and of him to ask
Chose rather: hee, she knew, would intermix
Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
With conjugal Caresses, from his Lip
Not Words alone pleas'd her. (8.48-57)

Her conscious self-removal underscores her respect for Adam's knowledge, for she is asserting her disinterest in learning any information from another being, another man. She is not discounting her own knowledge or intellectual prowess. In fact, we later learn in Book Nine, that Eve was in fact eavesdropping on this conversation. Although she *does* desire the knowledge that Adam is privy to, if she were to state so, the hierarchy of

their companionship would be shaken. Adam must continue to see her as his lesser counterpart.

When Adam asks God for a companion in Paradise, he emphasizes in part that he desires a partner who can “solace his defects” through “conversation with his like” (8.417-419). This passage on Eve’s perception of conversation with Adam underscores that she is, in fact, what Adam asked for in this detail. Whereas the rest of his request can be read as the request for an equal, his request for a partner that can “solace his defects” through “conversation” does not necessarily imply an equal. Rather, he needs a “help meet,” just as God has given him. Yet a caveat is established here. In order for Eve to continue to be Adam’s “solace” through “conversation,” she must remain undoubtedly loyal to him. This loyalty is found on two overlapping planes—knowledge and sex. The information and knowledge that Adam passes on to Eve is intermingled with “grateful digressions” and “conjugal Caresses,” unifying sex with knowledge within their relationship. Not only are Adam and Eve loyal to each other sexually, but Eve is loyal to Adam as her only source of knowledge. And furthermore, Eve relates the receiving of knowledge from Adam with the receiving of sexual pleasure. They are one in the same to Eve, consequently establishing fidelity between the two on both planes. When Eve is seduced by Satan into eating from the Tree of Knowledge in Book Nine, it is commonly read as a sexual betrayal, but can also be read as a betrayal of the established hierarchy of knowledge as well, for sex and knowledge are undeniably intermingled in the marriage between Adam and Eve.

Sexual fidelity is touched upon in Milton’s brief description of “Wedded love,” for it is the conjugal love between man and woman that separates them from the

“adulterous lust” of the beasts in Paradise. Whereas relations within “the bestial herds” are based upon carnal desire, sexual relations between Adam and Eve must be based upon “reason, loyal, just, and pure”—therefore establishing that sex between humans must surpass the lust found between beasts. Just as Milton establishes that reason is the foundation of wedded love, he continues with the clarification that sex between man and woman must be founded in conjugal desire and loyalty. He writes,

Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
His constant Lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
Of Harlots, loveless, joyless, unindear'd,
Casual fruition, nor in Court Amours,
Mixt Dance, or wanton Mask, or Midnight Ball,
Or Serenate, which the starv'd Lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain. (4.763-770)

In opposition to “wedded love” comes the “bought smile / Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unindear'd,” illustrated as a threat to the conjugal love recognized between man and woman. Milton highlights this threat immediately following the first description of Adam and Eve’s sex in Paradise, for at this point in their narrative, they are the ideal example of a marriage in service to God and each other. Sex outside of a committed marriage is defined as “casual fruition,” for not only is it enacted upon without love, but without the ambition of procreation. Adam was created as the first human, whereas Eve was created as the first female. She is specifically given the title “Mother of human race” in Book Four, for the responsibility of procreation falls upon her shoulders, and

becomes her defining characteristic. Raphael tells Adam, “Male he created thee, but thy consort / Female for Race,” underscoring the power given to Eve’s reproductive abilities (7.529-530). Eve must maintain her sexual loyalty to Adam to maintain their “wedded Love,” which is the only “true source / Of human offspring.”

These stipulations—man as the source of reason and knowledge, female loyalty to the man’s intellectual superiority, and sexual fidelity—are the foundations of “wedded Love,” along with an unwavering security in the divine hierarchy within Paradise. In order for these stipulations to remain upheld, Adam and Eve must always place God above all—even the love they have for one another. In Adam’s conversation with Raphael, the angel underscores the importance of keeping God at the top of the hierarchy. He tells Adam,

Be strong, live happy and love, but first of all
Him whom to love is to obey, and keep
His great command! Take heed lest passion sway
Thy judgement to do aught which else free will
Would not admit! Thine and all of thy songs
The weal or woe in thee is placed: beware!
...
Stand fast! To stand or fall
Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.
Perfect within, no outward aid require
And all temptation to transgress repel. (8.633-643)

Raphael touches upon the free will that Man possesses in Paradise, telling Adam “To stand or fall / Free in thine own arbitrement it lies,” with an obvious foreshadowing of man’s fall from Paradise. This warning is directed at Adam, for the responsibility of upholding the hierarchy placed upon him. He has supposed charge over Eve in maintaining her submission and subjugation to himself, and to God through himself. Just as Eve is to be obedient to Adam, Adam is to be obedient to God. Raphael highlights that “passion” is the threat to Adam’s ability to maintain Eve’s submission, for in order to maintain the hierarchy, Adam must not allow himself to believe that Eve is anything more than his lesser counterpart. Passion possesses the power to “sway / Thy judgement to do aught which else free will/ Would not admit”—in other words, passion would cloud Adam’s judgement to the point that would lose his free will, and instead be under the control of Eve. Any sinful temptation that Eve represents is an external temptation, for Adam is “perfect within,” and possesses the internal power to “repel” any “temptation to transgress” the established hierarchy of God over man, man over woman. Eve is to Adam as Adam is to God, but Eve’s continued obedience is reliant upon *Adam’s* continued obedience to God. When the hierarchy in Paradise becomes shaken and eventually subverted, it is not because of Eve’s betrayal of Adam, but rather Adam’s betrayal of God.

The power dynamics previously established between Adam and Eve become unstable as their marriage continues, for Adam’s admiration and love for his wife grows exponentially, until her role as a submissive counterpart becomes blurred by passion and wonder. In conversation with Raphael in Book Eight, Adam dramatically extols the virtues of Eve. He says,

...when I approach
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
 And in herself complete, so well to know
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
 All higher knowledge in her presence falls
 Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her
 Loses discount'nanc't, and like folly shows;
 Authority and Reason on her wait,
 As one intended first, not after made
 Occasionally; and to consummate all,
 Greatness of mind and nobleness thir seat
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard Angelic plac't. (8.546-559)

The language that Adam employs in his description of Eve's virtues underscores the passion that has clouded his previously superior reason. His description is hyperbolic to the point of delusion. "What she wills to do or say" is not in fact "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best," but Adam's once upheld reason has been overshadowed by his overwhelming admiration for his wife, foreshadowing the consequential demise of the hierarchy within Paradise. For *if* Eve is, in fact, the "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest" and "best," then not only has she surpassed Adam, but God as well. He distorts and inverts the established order of nature in his admiration and praises. If "Authority and Reason on her wait," and "All higher knowledge in her presence falls / Degraded," then the

power that Adam once held has been demolished by his passion. If Adam has abandoned his ability to perceive the hierarchy of nature, then he has consequently relinquished his power and ability to rule over beast, and over woman.

In Raphael's response to Adam's praises of Eve, one can see an amalgam of all the definitions of "Wedded love" given above. He tells Adam that he must maintain his foundation of reason, he must be Eve's sole source of knowledge, and he must avoid falling into carnal pleasures. He unifies the order in Paradise with the order of nature, consecrating the hierarchy of superiority as concrete as Nature itself—to disrupt the hierarchy is to disrupt Nature. Again returning to man's free will, Raphael tells Adam that in his admirations of Eve, he is blaming nature for Eve's superiority, when in fact it is his own failing reason that makes him feel submissive to Eve. It is not that Eve *is* in fact as spectacular as Adam perceives, but that his reason is too clouded to show him what is true: that Eve is still the lesser sex. He says,

For what admir'st thou, what transports thee so,
An outside? Fair no doubt and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honoring, and thy love,
Not they subjection. Weigh with her thyself,
Then value. Oft times nothing profits more
Than self-esteem grounded on just and right
Well managed. Of that skill the more thou know'st
The more she will acknowledge thee her head
And to realities yield all her shows
Made so adorn for thy delight the more,

So awful that with honor thou may'st love

Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise. (8.567-578)

Here Raphael differentiates between Eve's internal and external value, and Adam's inability to utilize his reason to differentiate between the two. Externally, superficially, Eve is "Fair no doubt and worthy well / Thy cherishing, thy honoring, and thy love," but Adam's reason has failed him to the point of "subjection" to his wife. While Eve's external beauty holds power over Adam, he must remember that internally, he still maintains intellectual dominance. Raphael tells Adam to remove the clouds of lust from his perception, and "Weight with her thyself, / Then value," highlighting that if passion were removed from the equation, Adam would see her as she truly is—his submissive image. As stated above, if Adam has abandoned his reasonable ability to perceive the established order of Nature, then he has not only abandoned his ability to rule over Paradise, but he is also casting himself further down the hierarchy into the stature of beasts.

The lower that Adam falls in the hierarchy, the less control he has over Eve, for he is no longer perceived as her "guide" and "head". Just as Eve "reserv'd" her "pleasure" for the moments of "Adam relating, [and] she sole Auditress," the roles have now been reversed, with Eve as the source of knowledge and power, and Adam as her auditor (8.50-51). Adam is losing his "self-esteem," which is grounded upon his reason, and consequentially, he now believes that Eve has the intellectual ability to teach him, rather than the inverse. Through relinquishing intellectual power, Adam is relinquishing all power to Eve. Raphael tells Adam that he must regain this power, and when he regains his "self-esteem," "the more [Eve] will acknowledge [him] her head,"

returning back to the “realities” established by Adam’s reason. In other words, the life that Eve lives in submission to Adam is the true reality that must be upheld, not the other way around. In a world within which Eve has power over Adam, this is not reality at all, but rather a false reality plagued by delusion and lust.

Raphael does not discount the love that Adam feels towards his wife, and tells him to maintain this admiration for her—but he mustn’t allow passion to overwhelm this love. He tells Adam, “What higher in her society thou find’st / Attractive, human, rational, love still,” underscoring that Adam must resist seeing her as anything grander, greater, unparalleled than himself or God. To allow passion to overwhelm his feelings towards Eve would no longer be defined as love, according to Raphael. Love is not passion, for passion leads to sin against God.

While Adam tells Raphael that he will, in fact, heed his warnings and uphold his reason against passion, Adam and Eve’s original sin comes to fruition because of his inability to do so. At the moment of the fall, Adam’s love becomes passion, and even more dangerous, his Reason becomes passion. This passion is the catalyst that destroys the hierarchy in Paradise, for Adam not only sees Eve is superior to himself, but superior to God as well. Eve is the first to transgress their marriage fidelity, for she betrays Adam sexually and intellectually by falling for Satan’s seduction, and seeking knowledge from a source other than her husband (the Tree of Knowledge). Yet it is in the female’s nature to submit to male superiority within *Paradise Lost*, and Adam has seemingly abandoned his superior role at this point in the narrative. Consequently, Eve becomes the malleable counterpart to another, Satan. The responsibility to uphold Reason then falls to Adam, but his passion for Eve proves stronger than his obedience

to God, resulting in his subsequent sin, and man's fall from Paradise. Following their sin, the Son tells Adam,

Was she thy God that her thou didst obey
Before His voice? Or was she made thy guide
Superior, or but equal, that to her
Thou didst resign thy manhood and the place
Wherein God set thee 'bove her, made of thee
And for thee, whose perfection far excelled
Hers in all real dignity? Adorned
She was indeed and lovely to attract
Thy love, not thy subjection, and her gifts
Were such as under government well seemed,
Unseemly to bear rule, which was thy part
And person hadst thou known thyself aright. (10.145-156)

Within this passage, it is proven that while Adam asks for an equal, it was never Eve's fate to be so. The Son accuses Adam of making Eve "thy guide / Superior, or but equal," insinuating that to make Eve anything but lesser than himself is to defy God and destabilize the hierarchy. By making Eve "Superior, or but equal," Adam is subsequently "[resigning] thy manhood and the place/ Wherein God set thee 'bove her." Eve was not created to be anything other than a subjected counterpart, a "help meet" to Adam, and by creating a reality wherein which she held more power than that, Adam is defying and disrespecting God's authority. Eve was given the ability to bear Adam's children, and was created "adorned" and "lovely to attract / thy love," but

Adam's "subjection" to her surpasses the power that Eve was ever expected to hold. Females are "unseemly to bear rule," so by Adam giving her power over himself and his reason, he is upsetting the established balance of nature.

In order to resolve the imbalance of nature presented by Adam and Eve's original sin, Eve must return to a submissive role and allow Adam to once again be her "guide" and "head." Following God's and the Son's fury, the passion that once clouded Adam's reason is cleared and he sees Eve as a temptress that lured him into sin. Before Eve returns to the submissive role expected of her, she must first be vilified by Adam to underscore the devastating consequences of a female exerting any power above the station she was given by God. Referred to as a "false / And hateful" "serpent," by Adam, she is aligned with the character of Sin, for both females are representative of the alluring attractiveness of sin. Both embody the contrasting magnetism of beauty and repulsiveness, of good and evil. Adam perceives the danger of the female sex, and proclaims:

O why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heav'n
With spirits masculine, create at last
This novelty on earth, this fair defect
Of nature, and not fill the world at once
With men as angels, without feminine,
Or find some other way to generate
Mankind? (10.888-895)

Previously described as “wisest, virtouousest, discreetest, best,” Eve is now a “fair defect / Of nature,” a perpetrator of sin and misery. No matter her other qualities, Eve has always been undoubtedly defined by her reproductive abilities, as “Mother of mankind,” but now even this is called into question by Adam. He questions the point of Eve’s creation, for are female reproductive abilities worth the misery and sin they bring upon the world? Relating back to Chapter 1 above, we can see that in fact, men have jumped the hurdle of female reproduction and created offspring without a female womb (Satan and Zeus), essentially rendering the female body disposable. As an autonomous being with individual intelligence and power, the female body is a threat to the patriarchal hierarchy established in Paradise, and the reproductive abilities of the body are not judged as important enough to sacrifice female submission. In order for marriage to succeed, for mankind to remain pious, the woman must remain in a perpetual state of subjugation to the patriarchal hierarchy.

It is only after Eve returns to this submissive role that Adam takes her back, returning to their previous marital bliss. In the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, when Satan first sees Adam and Eve walking together in Paradise, Milton writes that they were made, “He for God only, she for God in him” (4.299). Paralleling this language, Eve tells Adam, “Both have sinned, but thou / Against God only, I against God and thee,” highlighting her consciousness of the submissive role she must play (10.930-931). Eve portrays a sense of awareness that she must once again fall into submission to correct the order of nature, and returns to her deferential position. In Book Four, following Eve’s creation, Milton writes that Adam finds delight in “Both of her beauty and submissive charms,” underscoring that what he originally found attractive in his

wife is her docile and obedient qualities. In Book Ten, following their sin, Eve begs Adam to forgive her, mimicking these obedient qualities again. Milton writes,

Soon his heart relented
Towards her, His life so late and sole delight
Now at his feet submissive in distress,
Creature so fair his reconciliation seeking,
His counsel whom she had displeased, his aid.
As one disarmed his anger all he lost
And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon. (10.940-946)

It is only after Eve takes this position “at his feet submissive in distress” that he raises her back up to him, to stand by his side as his “help meet” and lesser half. At this point in the narrative, Milton has traced the relationship between Adam and Eve from God’s creation of Eve as a help meet for Adam, to their ideal marriage and pure conversation, to the point of rupture induced by disobedience and the upheaval of the patriarchal authority, back to their reconciliation through Eve’s establishment of herself as the subservient disciple of Adam and God.

The irony in Adam’s fall, and Milton’s narrative, is that Adam *does* finally love Eve as the companion he originally asked for, and this proves to be his downfall. Before Eve’s creation, Adam asks for an equal, an intellectual companion, one to quell his loneliness and be his help meet. Yet as established in the previous chapter, Eve is thrust into a submissive role almost immediately after her creation, ensnaring her into this patriarchal hierarchy where she is less than man. It is only within this hierarchy that their marriage, their piety towards God, is most intact. When Adam begins to see not

just the feminine, but the sexual, beauty in Eve, separate of her subjugation to patriarchal expectations, is when their marriage and loyalty to God falls apart. The question of who's sin was greater, who is to blame for man's original sin, proves difficult, for how can we blame Eve for the submissive role she was placed into following her creation? Her destiny is crafted by God and Adam, by the patriarchal expectations placed upon her.

Yet no matter the blame, no matter the responsibility, Adam and Eve are both cast out of Paradise for their digressions, joined in their sin. The final lines of *Paradise Lost* illustrate the duo, walking together out of the Garden of Eden: Eve, the subjected mother, Adam the dominant father, both suffering the punishment inflicted upon them by God. Milton writes:

They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow

Through Eden took their solitary way. (12.668-669)

They walk "slow[ly]" out of Paradise, in fear of what they will experience on Earth. After all the anger, the punishment, and the blame following their sin, they are still married to one another. Adam and Eve take "their solitary way," yet in their solitude, they remain unified.

Afterword

O why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heav'n
With spirits masculine, create at last
This novelty on earth, this fair defect
Of nature, and not fill the world at once
With men as angels, without feminine,
Or find some other way to generate
Mankind? This mischief had not then befall'n
And more that shall befall: innumerable
Disturbances on earth through female snares
And straight conjunction with this sex. (10.888-898)

Throughout this thesis, I have used Milton's text to support the argument that not only is Eve a lesser counterpart to Adam, but that this inferiority is forcefully instilled upon her as a necessity to maintain peace and virtue in Paradise. Following the Fall of Man, Eve is portrayed as a woman who abandoned the subservient role that she was expected to uphold, leading to her sin. The alluring nature of her gender and sex consequently leads Adam to abandon his reason and join her in transgression against God. In the quote above, Adam underscores the dissatisfaction and anger that he feels towards Eve simply because she is female. Her femininity has become her greatest liability, because it is her alluring nature that drove Adam to transgress alongside her and eat from the Tree of Knowledge. At the moment of original sin, Adam's love for Eve becomes passion, consequently placing her feminine sexual power above God's power over Adam. Eve's beauty and sex suddenly become vilified when Adam places the female above the divine. She is the motivating force behind Adam's sin, and therefore is illustrated as the one to blame. In the quote above, Adam asks the question

that founded this thesis: is the creation of the female body worth the woe that it will consequentially bring?

For Adam and Eve to create virtuous children, in contrast to the sinful offspring of Satan and Sin, their relationship must be based upon “collateral love and dearest amity” (8.426). Yet in order for this “love” and “amity” to be found, Eve must not actually be the equal that Adam originally believes he desires in **Book Eight**. She must be a submissive help-meet to maintain the hierarchy that has been established by her creation. She is created as a shadow of Adam, and she is expected to continue this image through the children she will bear. Adam must maintain his loyalty to God, and Eve must maintain her loyalty to Adam. Through this structure, Eve must remain loyal to Adam both sexually and intellectually, for knowledge and sexual pleasure are inextricably intertwined throughout *Paradise Lost*.

Eve must be a loyal disciple, vessel, and companion of Adam’s. To be anything more is to usurp the established hierarchy. Eve is the first mother, the first wife, and the first example of masculine dissatisfaction with the female. If Eve had not been created, Adam would continue to be lonely in Paradise, and mankind would not have been born from their relationship, but as well, “this mischief had not then befall’n,” and the Fall of Man would not have come to be. Eve is the force that fuels man’s fall from Paradise. Her beauty and alluring sexuality leads Adam away from his reason, clouding his judgement and causing him to join his wife in her transgression.

In *Paradise Lost*, to be female is to be a vessel for children, a reflection of the masculine image, and the reason behind the Fall of Man. To see the female body through this lens is to belittle and vilify it. From the point of view of a 21st-century

feminist, the female body is a reproductive and autonomous force separate of patriarchal control and domination. Through Milton's presentation of Eve, we see the power of the patriarchal hierarchy in Paradise. But we also see the ability of the female to usurp this hierarchy. Adam asks for an equal and is given a submissive counterpart. Adam himself asks, in Book Eight, "Among unequals what society / Can sort, what harmony or true delight, / which must be mutual in proportion due / Given and received?" (8.383-386). Milton is alluding to his arguments regarding marriage in his *Divorce Tracts* with this question. Eve is crafted as inferior to Adam, and it is upon the foundation of her submission that their devotion to God remains intact. They are unequals, so how can they achieve "harmony or true delight"? The harmony they find is not, in fact, virtuous, for it is based upon female subjugation. In the words of Mary Wollstonecraft:

Liberty is the mother of virtue, and if woman be, by their very constitution, slaves, and not allowed to breathe the sharp invigorating air of freedom, they must ever languish like exotics, and be reckoned beautiful flaws of nature.
(Wollstonecraft 56)

To render women equal to men, women must be allowed intellectual, reproductive, and physical freedom from the patriarchal bindings of society, and these opportunities are not offered to Eve, leaving her a "fair defect of Nature".

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