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ABSTRACT

Milton's early partiality for Ovid once noted, it is customary to assume that his formal apprenticeship to the Latin poet concluded with Elegia Septima, after which, it is argued, he left the service of his first master to follow the more congenial example of Virgil. That this is an over-simplified account of the development of Milton's literary tastes is confirmed by the number of Ovidian reminiscences in the text of Paradise Lost, and also by evidence of a different kind. We have the testimony of Milton's daughter, Deborah, that Ovid's epic, the Metamorphoses, retained its hold on Milton's imagination and remained one of the three favourite works she was most often called upon to read to her father.

So enigmatic and protean a character as Milton's Satan has understandably diverted a great deal of critical attention away from his portrayal of Adam and Eve. However, Milton's characterization of Eve, particularly, repays the closest critical attention. In my thesis, I have concentrated upon the presentation of Eve, where lines that breathe forth an unmistakably Ovidian redolence tend to gather.

When painting his portrait of Eve, Milton employs a special technique. She is not presented to us directly, but obliquely, through the medium of a controlled and inspired evocation of figures from the Metamorphoses. These associative links do not simply provide imaginative colouring, they become in addition the means whereby we apprehend her nature and role in the epic. They become expanding images of surprising potency, relating pointedly to the present and future parts she is to play.

Indeed, this strategy of deliberate allusion to Ovidian mythology performs several, different functions simultaneously. By associating Eve with the bright, vernal beauty of Ovid's mythical settings, Milton establishes his unfallen Eve as belonging to a remote yet familiar world. She is glimpsed as Proserpina, Narcissus and Daphne in quick succession, and then as Ovid's Mater Flora in a pattern of unfolding significance, which provides the means whereby Milton can articulate and expand the Biblical account of Eve's pre-lapsarian experience.

Previous critics have tended to concentrate on the way in which Milton uses certain kinds of imagery to prepare for the Fall. Searching out potential flaws and latent weaknesses, they alert the reader with a knowing wink when a simile or incident warns us of the inexorable sequel. It is admittedly tempting to seize upon one or two memorable strands of mythological identification - whether of Eve as Narcissus or Circe - to the exclusion of others, and to find in them the formative motifs for her portrayal. However, this approach does not do justice to the complexity of Milton's usage; these figurative links define the positive, as well as hint at the negative, aspects of Eve, and seem often to be used with calculated ambiguity by the poet.

Again, some of the most subtle and interesting examples of this narrative technique are those where Milton provides only the first link in a chain of associated ideas, where the relationship is merely suggested or hinted, rather than explicitly stated. Eve is then presented in such a way that the reader enjoys the pleasure of making previously unapprehended connections and exploring for himself the implications of such a correspondence. In these cases, the reminiscence is sufficiently distinct to alert the informed reader while preserving something of the quality of things left unsaid which characterizes Milton's greatest poetic effects.

Keenly aware of the imaginative value of pagan myth, Milton could tap and exploit its poetic power, whilst at the same time establishing Eve as the summa of all other partial embodiments that appear in fractured versions of the true and complete account to which he had access in the Scriptures. Shining through her local manifestations as Narcissus, Daphne, Pomona, Venus and Flora, Eve subsumes and thus transcends her mythical ectypes, which become reflections or 'shadowy types' of Eve herself.

MILTON'S EVE AND OVID'S METAMORPHOSES

by

Amanda Lynn Green

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the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the
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PREFACE

My thanks to Professor G.B. Townend for providing me with a study in the Classics Department during my period of research in Durham; to the secretary and to the coffee-lady there, Isobel Williams and Gladys Hall, for many pleasant coffee-breaks spent in their company; and most especially to my supervisor David Crane for his encouragement and understanding and to Colin my husband for his unfailing good humour and patience.

ABBREVIATIONS

i Abbreviated Titles: Milton's Works

<u>El.</u>	<u>Elegia</u>
<u>Comus</u>	<u>A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle</u>
<u>PL</u>	<u>Paradise Lost</u>
<u>PR</u>	<u>Paradise Regained</u>
<u>SA</u>	<u>Samson Agonistes</u>
<u>An Apology for Smectymnuus</u>	<u>Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnuus</u>
<u>Areopagitica</u>	<u>Areopagitica; for the Liberty of Unlicenc'd Printing</u>
<u>Artis Logicae</u>	<u>A fuller institution of the Art of Logic arranged after the method of Peter Ramus</u>
<u>Defensio Secunda</u>	<u>Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio Secunda</u>
<u>De Doct.</u>	<u>De Doctrina Christiana</u>
<u>Of Reformation in England</u>	<u>Of Reformation Touching Church-Discipline in England</u>
<u>Reason of Church Government</u>	<u>The Reason of Church-government urg'd against Prelaty</u>
<u>Col.</u>	<u>The Columbia edition of <u>The Works of John Milton</u>, gen. ed. Frank A. Patterson (New York, 1931-38).</u>
Bentley	<u>Milton's Paradise Lost: A new edition, by Richard Bentley, D.D. (1732)</u>
Bush	<u>Milton: Poetical Works</u> , ed. Douglas Bush (1969)
Carey	<u>John Milton: Complete Shorter Poems</u> , ed. John Carey (1968; repr. 1978)
Fowler	<u>John Milton: 'Paradise Lost'</u> , ed. Alastair Fowler (1978; repr. 1979)
Hume	<u>The Poetical Works of John Milton ... Together with explanatory notes on each book of the Paradise Lost</u> by P. H. Patrick Hume (1965).
Newton	<u>Paradise Lost ... The second edition with notes of various authors</u> , by Thomas Newton, DD. (1749; 2nd ed., 1750).

Pearce

Milton's Paradise Lost ... With notes, etymological, critical, classical and explanatory. Collected from ... Dr. Pearce ... and other authors, by J. Marchant (1751)

Thyer

The Poetical Works of John Milton with Notes of Various Authors, ed. Edward Hawkins (Oxford, 1824).

ii Abbreviated Titles: By Author

- Adams Robert M. Adams, Ikon: John Milton and the Modern Critics (Ithaca, N.Y., 1955).
- Collett Jonathan H. Collett, 'Milton's Use of Classical Mythology in Paradise Lost' PMLA LXXXV (1970), pp. 88-96.
- Du Bartas Du Bartas his Devine Weekes and Workes, translated by Joshua Sylvester from The Complete Works of J.S., ed. by A. B. Grosart (Blackburn? 1876).
- Evans John M. Evans, 'Paradise Lost' and the Genesis Tradition (Oxford, 1968)
- Fletcher Milton's Rabbinical Readings (Urbana, 1930).
- Nicholson Marjorie Hope Nicholson, John Milton: A Reader's Guide to his Poetry (1964).
- Sandys George Sandys, Ovid's Metamorphosis: Englished, Mythologiz'd and Represented in Figures, ed. by K. K. Hulley and S. T. Vandersall (originally published 1632; repr. in this ed. 1970, Lincoln, Nebraska).
- Sinfield Alan Sinfield, Literature in Protestant England: 1560-1660 (1983).
- Wind Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance (1958).

iii Abbreviated Titles: Books

L A Latin Dictionary, ed. Charlton T. Lewis.

L&S A Greek-English Lexicon, ed., Henry G. Liddell and Robert
Scott.

OED Oxford English Dictionary

iv Abbreviated Titles: Journals and Periodicals

<u>AJP</u>	<u>American Journal of Philology</u>
<u>CB</u>	<u>Classical Bulletin</u>
<u>CE</u>	<u>College English</u>
<u>CJ</u>	<u>Classical Journal</u>
<u>CL</u>	<u>Comparative Literature</u>
<u>CR</u>	<u>Classical Review</u>
<u>EC</u>	<u>Essays in Criticism</u>
<u>ELH</u>	<u>A Journal of English Literary History</u>
<u>ELN</u>	<u>English Language Notes</u>
<u>ES</u>	<u>English Studies</u>
<u>E&S</u>	<u>Essays and Studies</u>
<u>JEGP</u>	<u>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</u>
<u>MLN</u>	<u>Modern Language Notes</u>
<u>MLQ</u>	<u>Modern Language Quarterly</u>
<u>MLR</u>	<u>Modern Language Review</u>
<u>MP</u>	<u>Modern Philology</u>
<u>MQ</u>	<u>Milton Quarterly</u>
<u>MS</u>	<u>Milton Studies</u>
<u>N&Q</u>	<u>Notes and Queries</u>
<u>PMLA</u>	<u>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.</u>
<u>PQ</u>	<u>Philological Quarterly</u>
<u>SEL</u>	<u>Studies in English Literature</u>
<u>SP</u>	<u>Studies in Philology</u>
<u>TAPA</u>	<u>Transactions of the American Philological Association</u>

The above abbreviations will be found, in addition to certain standard abbreviations for books of the Bible and classical works.

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CHAPTER I

Milton's Ovid

I

"Ovid, the good natured libertine" and "favourite poet of our great Puritan"¹

The casual reader may well feel justified in showing consternation, embarrassment or disbelief at this unnatural coupling of names, and such a response would be entirely in keeping with the type-cast image of an unremittingly stern, austere and grave Milton, a most unlikely playfellow of Ovid. Indeed, something of the apparent incongruity of the linkage is evident in the antithetical terms 'libertine' and 'puritan'. We naturally take the simple and easy step of equating 'puritan' with 'puritanical';² we are more readily prepared to see affinities between Milton and Virgil than with Ovid, the most mischievous of the Latin poets.

Those critics who have recognised some form of relationship between Milton and Ovid have tended to dismiss it as an unfortunate boyish excess, fortunately of short duration.³ Brydges, for instance, shows a marked disinclination to admit even to Milton's youthful attraction to the Roman poet. Ovid, he maintains

... was a poet of a more whimsical and undignified kind, of whom it was strange that [Milton] should have been fond, but whom his Latin verses almost everywhere show to have been a great favourite with him.⁴



And later his bewilderment and disappointment break through more stridently still:

It seems extraordinary that Milton should have taken Ovid for his model. I agree with Warton, that it would have been more probable that he would have taken Lucretius and Virgil as more congenial to him.⁵

Those who have discerned a more positive and lasting bond between the two poets have still tended to explain it as an attraction of opposites. E. K. Rand, for example, held that the influence of Ovid served to mellow Milton's own natural, puritan asceticism. He puts the case thus:

Milton's mind was naturally stern, simple, intense, tenacious of purpose, contemptuous of show. Oh happy the day when he became apprentice to the gayest of [the] ancient poets ... On Milton's temperament Ovid had undoubtedly a limbering effect ... Who would not shudder to think what the world might have lost had not Ovid tempered his youth..⁶

It seems all too easy to emphasize one aspect of a complex character, disregarding other features, not quite so prominent at first glance perhaps, but equally significant, until we have refined away all inconsistencies to produce a clear-cut formula, freezing the complexities of human personality, into neat, narrow, rigid patterns.⁷ However valid Rand's critical judgement that Milton was "a typical puritan" with all the worst features that implies,⁸ it loses something of its cogency with each similar reiteration, and by the time it has become a truism, it has little truth left in it.

A close reading of Milton's Latin elegies, though beyond the scope of this study, would be revealing in disclosing other aspects of Milton's complex poetic persona than those popularly focussed upon. These early poems, it is generally agreed, give us more intimate glimpses into Milton's interests than anything he wrote in English at that period.⁹ It seems significant that in Elegia Sexta the author of L'Allegro and Il Penseroso "argue[s] eloquently for both 'gay elegy' and sublime poetry",¹⁰ while in the fifth elegy Milton celebrates the coming of spring as a time of sexual arousal and in the seventh recounts his first brush with the God of Love. In the Elegiarum Liber Milton first discloses the "lifelong capacity for being kindled by feminine beauty which is manifested in his writing from El[egia] 1 to Samson Agonistes."¹¹ As W. R. Parker wryly observes, Milton's "capacity for delight is greater one suspects than many of his biographers,"¹² and critics, one might want to add.

Indeed, when in the Apology for Smectymnus Milton reflected upon his early preferences in literature, he candidly confessed how he fell under the spell of "the smooth Elegiack Poets"¹³ and Ovid was the foremost among them¹⁴ - attracted at least as much by their subject matter as by their art. In this revealing passage he recalls his youthful enthusiasm for the Roman love poets:

Whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous writing, which in imitation I found most easie; and most agreeable to natures part in me, and for their matter which what it is, there be few who know not, I was so allur'd to read, that no recreation came to me better welcome.¹⁵

We must not forget that Milton, as well as being a Puritan, was a man of the Renaissance, and the Renaissance was primarily, as Rand himself has observed elsewhere, an aetas Ovidiana.¹⁶

II

Ovid and the young Milton

Ovid's influence on the young Milton is undeniable and Milton's editors have long recognised the important role played by Ovid in shaping his early works.¹⁷ The young poet's "large debt"¹⁸ to his Roman predecessor at this period has, as we have seen, received much attention, and scholars have generally concurred with Warton's assessment that "In the Elegies, Ovid was professedly Milton's model for language and versification."¹⁹ To appreciate how Ovid's poetry could have exerted such a profound and formative influence on Milton's early works, we need only reflect for a moment on the curriculum, teaching methods and aims of the Renaissance grammar school where the writers of classical antiquity furnished the models for good writing and the path to excellence lay in an accurate rendering of the style of key authors.²⁰ Davis P. Harding's useful research in this area has demonstrated the central position enjoyed by Ovid in the educational system then current and has emphasized the instrumental part that must have been played by St. Paul's School in cultivating Milton's taste for Ovid.²¹

The devotion with which the young Milton applied himself to the study of the whole Ovidian canon, and not simply to the prescribed school texts, is everywhere apparent in the elegies and has prompted Rand to exclaim:

To write them he must have known his Ovid virtually by heart, not merely the Metamorphoses ... but all the poems of Ovid, Fasti and Ibis as well as the poor verses of lamentation poured forth on the shores of the Black Sea, and of course, as Milton is writing elegy, the love poems, Amores with Heroides and the Art of Love.²²

It seems likely then, that with additional encouragement perhaps provided by Thomas Young, who became his private tutor in 1620 or thereabouts, Milton had undertaken to read the rest of Ovid's works on his own initiative either for 'recreation' or as part of a self-imposed scheme of study.²³ For we have it on the authority of Milton himself that: "ut ab anno aetatis duodecimo vix unquam ante mediam noctem à lucubrationibus cubitum discederem",²⁴ and we have the evidence of his nephew and biographer, Edward Phillips, that this time was spent "as well in voluntary Improvements of his own choice, as the exact perfecting of his School Exercises."²⁵

Even in these early works, Milton's manipulation of Ovidian motifs is often subtle, complex and interesting.²⁶ As Hanford has pointed out, Milton's Latin elegies cannot be discounted as "mere poetic exercises or prescriptive tasks"²⁷ nor simply dismissed as servile imitations. Milton handled his model with characteristic independence as Warton noted: "With Ovid in view he has an original manner and character of his own."²⁸ Warton's judgement has been upheld more recently by scholars such as Bradner who stressed that Milton's "poems in the Ovidian manner are extremely personal and characteristic of Milton himself."²⁹

For corroboration of this view, we need look no further than Milton's first elegy, a verse epistle to his great friend, Charles Diodati, recording his 'exile' from Cambridge and describing his pursuits at home in London. Elegia Prima furnishes excellent evidence of Milton's admiration for Ovid and of the creative imitation of Ovidian motifs that distinguishes even his early verses. Hanford maintains that the impelling force which gives "artistic direction" to this poem is "the typical Renaissance ambition to 'overgo' some reputed classic name in his own tongue and upon a kindred theme,"³⁰ and lines such as "Cedite laudatae toties Heroides olim" (l.63) and "Nec Pompeianas Tarpeia Musa columnas/Iactet, et Ausoniis plena theatra stolis" (ll.69-70) certainly suggest that the poem was at least partly inspired by a competitive spirit of friendly rivalry. The saturation of Renaissance culture in that of classical Greece and Rome resulted in the works of Latin authors in particular enjoying something of the strength and vitality of a native tradition. The literary standards Milton adhered to were those of classical antiquity and he was able to meet Ovid with complete intimacy in spite of the lapse of centuries.

In Elegia Prima he pays this ardent tribute to Ovid:

O utinam vates numquam graviora tulisset
 Ille Tomitano flebilis exul agro,
 Non tunc Ionio quicquam cessisset Homero
 Neve foret victo laus tibi prima, Maro.

(ll.21-24)

As Hanford puts it, "There is obviously something here which goes beyond ordinary Renaissance practices of classical illustration" and he goes on to sketch out the background to the rest of the poem thus:

Milton has been meditating on the analogy between his own little exile and the fate of Ovid until he has made a kind of imaginative identification of himself with his Roman predecessor.³¹

Moreover, in a short but suggestive article, R. W. Condee³² has argued convincingly that a reader familiar with the Tristia and Epistulae Ex Ponto - and Milton's contemporaries would be thoroughly conversant with these works - would recognise how the cross-comparison between Ovid's and Milton's own exile operates as a subtly effective organising principle throughout the poem:

the uncivilized place Ovid was banished to is as hostile to poetry and beauty as the place (a university!) Milton was banished from, while London the scene of Milton's exile, is like the cultured Rome that Ovid had to leave and supplies what Cambridge lacks, plays and lovely girls [together with the umbras molles and otia grata so necessary for poetic composition].³³

With the completion of the Elegiarum Liber Primus,³⁴ Milton put aside the elegaic poetry of Ovid as a formal model for his own work. Though couched in strongly contemptuous language, Milton's farewell to elegy appended to Elegia Septima, the last poem in the series, follows the Ovidian tradition and is reminiscent of Ovid's own leave-taking in the Amores.³⁵ Both poets abandon light elegy in favour of more exalted forms according to the well-defined hierarchy of genres. "By the spring of 1630 Milton's apprenticeship

to Ovid the poet of love was at an end"³⁶, but his apprenticeship to Ovid the epic poet was just beginning.

III

Ovid and Paradise Lost: The Position to Date

Critics have tended to assume that the conclusion to Milton's elegies marks the end of Ovid's ascendancy and that his influence is thereafter eclipsed by that of Virgil. E. K. Rand's account of this process is typical: "Even within the limits of this early period", he maintains, "we can note that Ovid sinks more and more into the background and that Virgil comes to the front"³⁷, and elsewhere he states, in the field of literary influence, "Ovid leads at the start, but Virgil wins."³⁸ Yet as Parker has observed, "Ovid captured [Milton's] imagination early and held it long"³⁹ and certainly there is no evidence of a slackening of his hold during the composition of Paradise Lost.

The editorial annotations to Milton's epic fully bear out Adams' impression that the Metamorphoses was one of "the big books in Milton's life ... which shaped his vocabulary, his diction, his very thought repeatedly, throughout his poetic career."⁴⁰ Moreover, we have evidence of a different kind that the Metamorphoses remained one of Milton's favourite books while he was composing the poem, the testimony of his youngest daughter, Deborah. She was often called upon to read to her father when he became blind, and recounted to Dr. Ward that:

Isaiah, Homer, and Ovid's Metamorphoses were books which they were often called to read to their father; and at my [Dr. Ward's] desire she repeated a considerable number of verses from the beginning of both these poets with great readiness.⁴¹

The statement of John Phillips makes a significant addition to the picture; he records that the time "spent in reading" such "choice Poets" was not only "by way of refreshment after the days toyl" but also "to store his Fancy against Morning."⁴²

A brief survey of previous research that has discussed the possibility of Ovidian influences upon Paradise Lost will help to substantiate the view that Ovid remained deeply embedded in Milton's poetic consciousness and will help to suggest how my study differs from, and coincides with, the concerns of other scholars. Milton's direct indebtedness to Ovid's thought and expression in Paradise Lost has been, of course, most clearly established by a succession of able editors from Patrick Hume to Alastair Fowler, and few echoes can have escaped their vigilance. However, the implications of their findings have yet to be thoroughly assessed and explored. Apart from a handful of articles⁴³ and a few stray remarks in studies fundamentally concerned with other issues, work in this field has been, until very recently, confined to two research projects.

In her doctoral thesis, 'Milton and Ovid', Mary C. Brill usefully assembled all the recognised parallels between the writings of the two poets, but as she herself admitted:

My investigation as it is recorded in this dissertation may be regarded as merely the material for a study of the relationship of Ovid and Milton.⁴⁴

Ten years later, D. P. Harding, following Douglas Bush's initiative, pointed to the important part played by Renaissance editions and commentaries in shaping Milton's use of Ovidian material.⁴⁵ However,

Harding argued that the use Milton could make of the Metamorphoses in Paradise Lost was curtailed by his overriding concern for the great Renaissance principle of decorum, "that grand masterpiece to observe"⁴⁶ and that this dictated that he could only draw on those myths where his borrowing would be sanctioned by "at least a quasi-biblical authority."⁴⁷ Consequently, Harding discovers "Milton's debt to Ovid greatest in just those parts of the poem where we should expect to find it so, in the accounts of Creation, Paradise and the Flood."⁴⁸

While it has been widely acknowledged, then, that Milton remained deeply indebted to the Renaissance as well as the classical Ovid for many mythological details and allusions,⁴⁹ the nature and extent of Milton's adaptation of distinctively Ovidian modes of narration and construction has not, until very recently, received any critical attention. However, a recent article by Edward Milowicki and Rawdon Wilson,⁵⁰ and the more lengthy consideration given to 'Figurations of Ovid' in Paradise Lost by Louis Martz⁵¹ particularly, have now pointed to some of the ways in which the narrative strategies adopted by Ovid in the Metamorphoses can be seen to have exerted a more radical and complex influence on the form of Milton's epic than previous scholars had recognised, even those committed to analysing Ovidian elements in the poem.

Since to trace Milton's constant play upon Ovid's Metamorphoses forms an important aim of this study, it will be useful to clarify Milton's position in the Ovidian tradition and thus provide a broader and more secure base for the particular concerns of this thesis. A

thorough exploration of Milton's incorporation of narrative devices from the Metamorphoses would be a very large inquiry and in this chapter there is only occasion to draw out some of the more important implications of Martz, Milowicki and Wilson's findings in order to illustrate some of the ways in which Milton has assimilated elements from the Ovidian tradition in which he was working. Milton was heir to the epic tradition of Homer, Virgil and Ovid. Like them, he also became its master.

IV

Ovid in Paradise Lost: The Substantial Presence

As Martz puts it, while "Ovid's voice is only one of many voices that we hear within Milton's 'various style' ... it deserves to be recognised as equal in importance to any other voice from Greek or Roman poetry."⁵² The great model for the reincarnation of the great epics of Homer, Virgil and Ovid in Paradise Lost, was, of course, the strange re-enactment of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey within Virgil's Aeneid. This said, the unique and enduring quality of Milton's achievement in Paradise Lost is not that it is an imitation of classical epic but that it is an original and successful epic in its own right, as intrinsically Christian and contemporary in meaning as it is ostensibly classical and traditional in form. Nor was this success simply a matter of infusing new content into old forms or even giving new meaning to the forms he inherited. In Milton's hands the epic form evolved still further. Like Virgil and Ovid before him, Milton pushed epic beyond its previous natural bounds.

Like other great writers, Milton worked from within to extend traditional forms. Accepting enthusiastically the aims and ideals of fellow humanists, Milton inherited the Roman reverence for the auctoritas of the Greek genres. From this perspective it was only possible to construct a work worthy of immortality by building upon the strong foundations laid by others. In a famous passage from the Reason of Church Government, Milton revealed his ambition to "leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die!"⁵³

and later - in keeping with the prevailing judgement that reversed the Aristotelian dictum to rank epic rather than tragedy as the highest kind of poetry and the epic poem "the greatest work human nature is capable of"⁵⁴ - Milton expressed a preference for "the Epick form whereof the two poems of Homer, and those of Virgil and Tasso are a diffuse, the book of Job, a brief model "⁵⁵

And indeed, "On the classical side" it has been generally held that Milton followed the example set by Homer, and, more especially, by Virgil, "the supreme model of epic decorum."⁵⁶ The possibility that Ovid's own carmen perpetuum, the Metamorphoses, might also have provided a model for Milton's great narrative has been largely overlooked. This seems at least partly due to a strong tendency to disassociate the Metamorphoses from the epic genre altogether. However, while still in the shadow of Virgil, Ovid's reputation has risen a great deal in the past twenty years or so and as Martz has remarked:

... classical scholars have gradually recovered the view of Ovid's Metamorphoses which Quintilian seems to have taken as generally understood in the generation following Ovid's death: that his long poem belongs to the epic genre⁵⁷

Ovid, of course, wrote his own peculiar brand of epic, and the protean Metamorphoses defies any attempt at too simple and precise categorisation. The Metamorphoses could never be defined as heroic epic in the Homeric or Virgilian mould but nor, finally, can paradise Lost to every reader's entire satisfaction. Some obdurate quality remains to resist this definition, to unsettle the reader and make him uneasy. John Steadman helped to isolate the cause of this

disturbance when he maintained that "Undermining the established epic tradition by destroying its ethical foundations, Paradise Lost is at once epic and counter-epic. If it imitates the established models of heroic poetry it also refutes them."⁵⁸

Milton's account of the war in heaven is the most obvious instance of the difficulty that troubles some readers. It has often been felt that Milton is singularly unsuccessful in his bid to emulate the great battle scenes of the Iliad and Aeneid, and various explanations have been advanced to account for this apparent lapse.⁵⁹ More recently, some critics have suggested that perhaps Milton's manifest imitations of Homer and Virgil in Book VII have misdirected readers and prevented them from asking the right questions about the artistic purpose behind Milton's own treatment of heroic warfare in Paradise Lost. It has been postulated that Milton views the battle from an ironic perspective, and his handling of the action is now often regarded as deliberately parodic.⁶⁰ Moreover, Martz has cast further light on Milton's presentation of the epic conflict by pointing out that in the Metamorphoses Milton would have found "considerable precedent for [the] parodic treatment of warfare,"⁶¹ and indeed, "both poets," as Martz goes on to explain, show "their skill in imitating Homer while at the same time suggesting the ultimate futility of such heroic exploits."⁶²

There are other features of Milton's epic that have previously perplexed or troubled critics which may be more readily understood when viewed in conjunction with Ovid's practice in the Metamorphoses. Let us look, for instance, at how failure to take account of the example set by Ovid in the Metamorphoses has encouraged Francis Blessington

to make some misleading claims about the originality of the narrative voice in Paradise Lost. In his recent study of 'Paradise Lost' and the Classical Epic, Blessington urges that: "The epic voice ... is the most dramatic of Milton's adaptations and breaks with the epic tradition, although it has gone unnoticed."⁶³ He finds this departure from the tradition puzzling because "There was little reason ... to change the impersonal bard of the classical epic into the personal narrator for theological consistency." Furthermore, Blessington notes, "In his Poetics, Aristotle praises Homer for his reticence," and he goes on to emphasize how "Following his mentor, Virgil keeps his own voice low and thus sets the precedent for the rest of the tradition."⁶⁴

However, as Martz has remarked, it is in Ovid once more that Milton would have found "ample precedent for enfolding his own story within the consciousness of his own fictive presence."⁶⁵ For in spite of Virgil's subjective style and empathetic penetration of his characters, Ovid's personality - his consciousness of his reader, of his characters, of himself as narrator - is omnipresent in a way that Virgil's poetic persona is not.⁶⁶ "Ovid's interventions are usually quite brief, but they are," Martz observes, "persistent and pervasive in a way that may remind us of the constant presence of the narrative voice in Paradise Lost."⁶⁷

Again, disregarding the possibility of Ovid's influence on Paradise Lost has led Blessington to contend that "the account of creation is the most drastic change from the classical epic."⁶⁸ In this episode he maintains, "Milton expands one of the smallest details of the Aeneid, Iopas' song of creation (1,740-6), into the fourth

major structural unit of Paradise Lost." ⁶⁹ It seems rather perverse to discount the influence of the Metamorphoses here. Ovid's description of the process of creation forms the first and greatest metamorphosis of the poem and his example seems particularly significant when we recall that there are other scenes of metamorphosis interwoven in Milton's epic which appear deliberately reminiscent of Ovid. ⁷⁰ Among the most notable is Sin's account of her own hideous change which she relates in Book II (ll.746-814). Here the abrupt shift in the narrative mode is strongly suggestive of Ovid's Metamorphoses in which several characters recount the tale of their own transformation. ⁷¹

Indeed, the influence of Ovidian techniques of characterisation is especially evident in Paradise Lost. Martz has noted that "Adam's 'complaint'" in Book X, like Satan's earlier soliloquy at the beginning of Book IV, is "a set piece in the tradition of Ovid's Heroides or the tormented soliloquies in the Metamorphoses." ⁷² More significantly for our purpose, Milowicki and Wilson have maintained that "the Ovidian conventions that shape the characterisation of Eve are very much apparent" ⁷³ and they have demonstrated how in her portrayal Milton develops one of Ovid's strategies for character portrayal which they term 'split awareness.'

In their analysis of this technique they explain how:

Repeatedly in the Metamorphoses, Ovid's heroines are torn between duty and desire, and seek to justify to themselves the pursuit of their passion through reasoning, a form of self-persuasion that has its basis in the rhetorical suasoria that were studied in the schools, but which Ovid adapts to depict psychic division. ⁷⁴

From this perspective, "The initial allusion to the myth of Narcissus" serves to indicate "the psychic division in [Eve's] nature which Satan will manipulate in Book IX" so that "Choice for Eve will lie, as it has for Satan, between a greater and lesser alternative, an upward and a downward way."⁷⁵ Their conclusion too has special interest for us and is worth recording: "Although Eve's character exceeds in complexity and duration, the simpler figures of the Metamorphoses in whom split awareness is not sustained at length, it is," they affirm, "essentially Ovidian."⁷⁶

Critics have commented on the importance of the epic role accorded to Eve in Milton's epic. Joan Malory Webber has acclaimed Paradise Lost as "the first epic in which the active heroic role is shared equally by the sexes,"⁷⁷ while Blessington concedes that "Beside Eve, Penelope and Dido, moving as they are, are minor characters."⁷⁸ He concludes: "It remains one of Milton's major contributions to the epic tradition that he made Eve part of the central action and changes the role of women in epic poetry."⁷⁹ In many ways, Paradise Lost, like the Metamorphoses, is an epic of love.⁸⁰ The greater prominence given to love as a motive force ensured, as a natural corollary, greater emphasis on the female role.⁸¹ It seems of more than passing interest that in the Metamorphoses Ovid gives extensive and significant attention to his female characters, who enjoy at least an equal share in the narrative as their male counterparts. But while Ovid provides us with a gallery of individual portraits, in Milton the 'infinite variety' of woman has one face, Eve's.

By providing so many signposts that lead back to the Metamorphoses, Milton directs the reader to his indebtedness to the Ovidian narrative tradition. And in this way, Milton formally acknowledges Ovid's importance as one of his predecessors in the epic genre and indicates that his own epic should be judged against Ovid's achievement in the Metamorphoses.

Having noted some of the formal elements of Ovid's presence in Paradise Lost, we may now consider some of the less tangible, but no less significant, aspects of Ovidian influence on the poem.

Ovid in Paradise Lost : The Ghostly Presence

... in order to write one must first be convinced that every book ever written was made for one to borrow from. The art is in paying back these loans with interest. And that is harder than it sounds.⁸²

"Allusiveness" has been acclaimed as "one of the chief aesthetic dimensions" of Paradise Lost.⁸³ Milton's art has been recognised as being "principally an evocative art"⁸⁴ and his words as "words of enchantment":

No sooner are they pronounced, than the past is present, and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the burial-places of the memory give up their dead.⁸⁵

The truly effective echo is also a new coinage. It bestows added significance upon the passage in which it occurs, but it also enjoys a whole new range of active meaning. Thus the anonymous author of an Essay Upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients recommends that

... there ought generally to be observed a Medium betwixt a literal Translation and a distant Allusion; as the first destroys the Pleasure we have from what is new, and the latter encroaches on that we receive from Imitations.⁸⁶

This tension between the old and new context accounts for some of the pleasure, excitement and illumination that we get from such an artistic technique. Such bald terms as 'borrowing' or 'debt' are hardly adequate to cover the full range of poetic effects that may

be achieved, nor do they suggest the constant play on the reader's responses and expectations which constitutes one of the main effects to be secured by such an allusive art.

As Milton recognised,⁸⁷ poetry operates through and upon the emotions, often at a subterranean level. Milton's Ovidian allusions add an emotional charge or accent to a passage. Such allusions never exercise a merely decorative or pictorial function; they are employed rather to convey an idea or evoke an emotional response which could not be secured in any other way without loss of meaning or immediacy. Milton uses the medium of mythological shorthand to articulate a complex of feelings and thoughts beyond discourse and as a way of directing and focussing emotional and intellectual attention.

It is difficult to distil what one poet gets from another purely in discursive terms for, as Mark Pattison has maintained in terms that seem suggestive here:

Words, over and above their dictionary signification, connote all the feeling which has gathered round them by reason of their employment through a hundred generations of song. In the words of Mr. Myers, "without ceasing to be a logical step in the argument, a phrase becomes a centre of emotional force. The complex associations which it evokes modify the associations evoked by other words in the same passage, in a way distinct from logical connection." The poet suggests much more than he says, or as Milton has phrased it, "more is meant than meets the ear."⁸⁸

Milton's allusions to Ovid appear in a variety of forms from the overtly borrowed episode, quotation or simile to the obliquely suggestive parallel or quasi-identification.⁸⁹ With some allusions

a direct line of descent can be confidently affirmed, attested by a close parallel in thought and expression, with others, often the more subtle, complex and interesting, Ovid's influence can be detected rather than clearly demonstrated, and then we have to be responsive to other links beside strict verbal parallelism, though at times a name or revealing phrase will impart a distinctly Ovidian flavour to the verse.

As Bush and other critics have remarked: "This veiled kind of borrowing is perhaps the most interesting of all,"⁹⁰ and indeed, we shall find that the oblique allusions are at least as significant as the direct echoes of Ovid. By establishing the relevance of a tale from the Metamorphoses in the background of his own scene, Milton translates, "if only momentarily and by sly indirection,"⁹¹ his own characters into the terms of the original context. By calling attention to similarities other than the immediate point of comparison, Milton releases the "deeper meaning"⁹² of this linkage. As Jonathan Richardson wisely urged, "whoever will Possess His Ideas must Dig for them, and Oftentimes, pretty far below the Surface."⁹³

With such an allusive style, comparison - though only the first step in attempting to grasp the full implications of an allusion - becomes the pivot of criticism. This approach seems particularly valuable today when the Latin language is becoming increasingly inaccessible to the modern reader who, unlike Milton's "fit audience" (VII.31), whose intensive training in Latin literature had fitted them to appreciate Milton's subtle and varied use of classical literature, is not, generally speaking, so well equipped to appreciate

poetry which relies for its full effectiveness and power on the pleasure of recognising the suggestive and original treatment of classical motifs.

Obviously, the potentiality of any allusion or echo can only be fully realised when the reader recognises it. While Bush concedes that if these "intensifying or complicating effects[s are] missed ... the main drift [remains] clear", the loss of such moments of heightened awareness, though "not fatal"⁹⁴ is very real indeed, as I hope to demonstrate during the course of this thesis by analysing in detail Milton's portrait of Eve, where lines which seem to breathe forth an unmistakably Ovidian redolence tend to gather.

"No other poem is so full of ghost influences"⁹⁵ as Paradise Lost. Yet, when we have traced as many echoes as possible back along the ghostly lines of transmission to their sources, Milton's poem remains one of the most original works in the language and his creation of Eve, a marvellous new birth.

Notes

1. Leigh Hunt, London Journal (1834), p.81.
2. cf. Edward Le Comte, Milton and Sex (1978), pp.3-4.
3. See E. M. W. Tillyard Milton (New York, 1930), p.20 and Egerton Brydges The Poetical Works of John Milton with a Life of the Author (1835), p.30.
4. ibid., p.18.
5. ibid., p.29.
6. E. K. Rand, 'Milton in Rustication', SP XIX (1922), pp.132-33;132.
7. More recently, critics have been wary of this tendency towards over-simplification. See, for example, Adams, pp.206-8; Douglas Bush, 'Paradise Lost' in Our Time (Ithaca, New York; 1945); J. W. Saunders, 'Milton, Diomede and Amaryllis', ELH XXII (1955), pp.254-86; David Aers and Bob Hodge, '"Rational Burning": Milton on Sex and Marriage', MS XIII (1979), p.4.
8. E. K. Rand, 'Milton in Rustication', p.132.
9. David Daiches, Milton (1957), pp.20-21.
10. William Riley Parker, Milton: A Biography I (Oxford, 1968), p.70. For a summary of the main readings of this poem see Douglas Bush, The Latin and Greek Poems, pp.112-14 in A Variorum Commentary on the Poem of John Milton, gen. ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (1970).
11. Bush, The Latin and Greek Poems, p.130.
12. W. R. Parker, Milton: A Biography I, p.70.
13. An Apology for Smectymnuus (Col.III.i, p.302)
14. cf. Remedia Amoris ll.395-96.

15. An Apology for Smectymnuus (Col.III.i, p.302).
16. E. K. Rand, Ovid and His Influence (New York, 1928) p.150.
17. See for instance, Poems upon Several Occasions, ed. Thomas Warton (1785); Poetical Works of John Milton: With Notes of Various Authors, ed. Henry J. Todd (2nd ed. 1809); The Poems of John Milton, ed. Thomas Keightley (1859); The Latin Poems of John Milton, ed. and translated by Walker Mackellar (New Haven, 1930) and The Latin and Greek Poems, ed. Douglas Bush, esp. pp.6, 12, 16-17 and 47 of the 'Introduction'.
18. Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry (Minneapolis, 1932) p.252.
19. Poems, ed. Warton, p.xiv.
20. See John Brinsley, Ludus Literarius (1612); Charles Hoole, A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole (1660) and Davis P. Harding, The Club of Hercules: Studies in the Classical Background of 'Paradise Lost', Illinois Studies in Language and Literature L (Urbana, 1962), pp.3-8.
21. See David P. Harding Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature (Urbana, 1946). See also Donald L. Clark, John Milton at St. Paul's School (New York, 1948) and Harris F. Fletcher, The Intellectual Development of John Milton I (Urbana, 1956).
22. E. K. Rand, 'Milton in Rustication', p.111. Rand finds further evidence for Milton's "fondness for Ovid" (Ovid and His Influence, p.165) in Hugh C. Candy's putative discovery of Some Newly Discovered Stanzas Written by John Milton on Engraved Scenes Illustrating Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' (1924). However, Candy's case remains unproven. (See Bush, Pagan Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, pp.252-53.)
23. See D. P. Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, p.40.
24. Defensio Secunda (Col.VIII, p.119).
25. Edward Phillips, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton' from The Early Lives of Milton, ed. by Helen Darbishire (1932), p.54.

26. See D. P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p.17 and Le Comte, Milton and Sex, pp.9-10. See too Le Comte, 'Sly Milton: The Meaning Lurking in the Contexts of his Quotations' in English Studies Collections (1976).
27. James Holly Hanford, 'The Youth of Milton' in Studies in Milton, Shakespeare and Donne (New York, 1925) by O. J. Campbell and, et al. pp.109-14. Bush too recognises that "Milton's Latin verse is a far more central part of the canon than the Latin verse of such contemporaries as George Herbert or Crashaw or Marvell (not to mention Phineas Fletcher and Cowley and others)" ('Introduction' to The Latin and Greek Poems, p.3).
28. Warton, Poems, p.xiv.
29. Leicester Bradner, Musae Anglicanae: A History of Anglo-Latin Poetry 1500-1925 (New York, 1940), p.1.
30. Hanford, 'Youth of Milton', pp.109-14
31. ibid.
32. Ralph W. Condee, 'Ovid's Exile and Milton's Rustication', PQ XXXVII.iv (1958), pp.498-502.
33. Bush, The Latin and Greek Poems, p.47.
34. cf. Col.I.i., p.168. It is interesting to note that the title given to Milton's book of elegies indicates that he had more than one volume planned.
35. Amores III.xv. For a different view see E. H. Riley, 'Milton's Tribute to Virgil', SP XXVI (1929), p.157.
36. D. P. Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, p.57. But see too John M. Major, 'Ovid's Amores III.ix: A Source for Lycidas', MQ VI (1972), p.1, where he argues "that Lycidas, composed several years after Milton has presumably abandoned the 'gay elegy' of Ovid and the others, recalls in theme and tone and form Ovid's Amores III:ix, the beautiful lament for Tibullus."
37. E. K. Rand, 'Milton in Rustication', p.124.

38. E. K. Rand, Ovid and His Influence', p.165.
39. W. R. Parker, Milton: A Biography I, p.31.
40. Adams, p.133. We will have occasion to refer to other works which "Milton knew well and used freely" such as "The histor[y] of ... Raleigh ... Goodman's popular Fall of Man, ... Augustine's City of God, Calvin's Institutes ... the Bible itself, Homer, Virgil ... and Spenser" (Adams, p.164).
41. Dr. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets [ed. George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1905), Appendix O , p.199.
42. John Phillips, 'The Life of Mr. John Milton', from The Early Lives of Milton, ed. H. Darbishire, p.33.
43. Previous writing which discusses some aspect of Ovidian influence on Paradise Lost includes: John M. Steadman, '"Sin" and the Serpent of Genesis 3, Paradise Lost, II, 650-53', MP LIV (1957), pp.217-20; K. W. Gransden, 'Paradise Lost and the Aeneid', EC XVII (1967), pp.281-87; Leslie Brisman, 'Serpent Error: Paradise Lost X, 216-18', MS II (1970), pp.27-36; Kathleen M. Swaim, 'The Art of the Maze in Book IX of Paradise Lost', SEL XII (1972), p.130; Albert C. Labriola, 'The Titans and the Giants: Paradise Lost and the Tradition of the Renaissance Ovid', MQ XII (1978), pp.9-16; Noam Flinker, 'Cinyras, Myrrha and Adonis: Father-Daughter Incest from Ovid to Milton', MS XIV (1980), pp.59-74. See L. P. Wilkinson, Ovid Recalled (Cambridge, 1955), pp.430-37. Other works of interest are introduced where appropriate.
44. Mary C. Brill, 'Milton and Ovid' (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; Cornell University, 1935).
45. D. P. Harding, 'Milton and Ovid: A Study of the Influence of Ovid and His Renaissance Editors and Commentators on Milton's Poetry' (Ph.D. dissertation, Illinois University, 1943; revised and published as Milton and the Renaissance Ovid).
46. Of Education (Col.IV, p.286).
47. D. P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p.111.

48. D. P. Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, p.57. More recently A. C. Labriola has argued that Milton drew on the rich layer of allegorical interpretation that surrounded the Metamorphoses more extensively than Harding's conclusion would seem to suggest ('The Titans and the Giants: Paradise Lost and the Renaissance Ovid', pp.9-16 and see pp.59-60).
49. See Charles G. Osgood, The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems, Yale Studies in English VIII (New York 1900; repr. 1964), pp.xlii-xlv.
50. Edward Milowicki and Rawdon Wilson, "'Character" in Paradise Lost: Milton's Literary Formalism', MS XIV (1980), pp.75-94.
51. Louis L. Martz, Poet of Exile: A Study of Milton's Poetry (1980), pp.203-44.
52. Martz, Poet of Exile, p.216. And cf. Brooks Otis' comment on Ovid's carmen perpetuum : "Whatever the nuances and variations of Ovid's style in the Metamorphoses, it is still essentially one style. The Metamorphoses, in other words, is not a composite of little epics or epyllia but a stylistically unified whole" (Ovid as an Epic Poet [Cambridge, 1966],p.49).
53. Reason of Church Government II (Col.III.i, p.236).
54. Alexander Pope, 'A Receipt to Make an Epic Poem' from The Art of Sinking in Poetry (1728) as quoted in Neo-Classical Criticism 1660-1800, ed. Irène Simon (1971), p.159. cf. Aristotle,Poetics XXVI.
55. Reason of Church Government II (Col.III.i, p.237).
56. Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century : 1600-1660 (Oxford, 1945), p.384.
57. Martz, Poet of Exile, p.204 and Brooks Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet, esp. pp.23-25 and 49-59.

58. John M. Steadman, Milton and the Renaissance Hero (Oxford, 1967), p.xx.
59. See, for instance, Dr. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets I, p.185 and Nicholson, pp.255-57.
60. See Arnold Stein, 'The War in Heaven' in Answerable Style : Essays on 'Paradise Lost' (Minneapolis, 1953), pp.17-37; John B. Broadbent, 'Satire or Self-Parody' in Some Graver Subject : An Essay on 'Paradise Lost' (1960), pp.218-28; Stella P. Revard, 'Milton's Critique of Heroic Warfare in Paradise Lost V and VI' SEL VII (1967), pp.19-39.
61. Martz, Poet of Exile, pp.209-10.
62. ibid., p.210.
63. Francis Blessington, 'Paradise Lost' and the Classical Epic, (1979), p.90.
64. ibid.
65. Martz, Poet of Exile, p.235.
66. An adaptation of Brooks Otis' comparison of the narrative styles of Ovid and Callimachus (cf. Ovid as an Epic Poet, p.318).
67. Martz, Poet of Exile, p.232.
68. Blessington, 'Paradise Lost' and the Classical Epic, p.78.
69. ibid., p.76.
70. Among the most notable examples are: I. 777-92, where as Martz points out, "the change of the giant angels into less than the smallest dwarves ... may suggest a metamorphosis of an Ovidian kind"; the reminiscence of Ovid's story of Narcissus at IV.449-75- the passage "is all the more Ovidian because Milton sets [the story of Eve's first awakening] in the kind of locus amoenus that Ovid so often presents as the scene of a metamorphosis" (Martz, p.219); IX.494-522 and X.504-45. Consider also Satan's other transformations at IV.402-8 and IV.800.

71. See Martz, Poet of Exile, pp.215-16.
72. ibid., p.152.
73. Milowicki and Wilson, "'Character" in Paradise Lost', p.80.
74. ibid., p.78.
75. ibid., p.81;p.80
76. ibid., p.81.
77. Joan Malory Webber, 'The Politics of Poetry : Feminism and Paradise Lost', MS XIV (1980), p.12.
78. Blessington, 'Paradise Lost' and the Classical Epic', p.77.
79. ibid., p.78.
80. cf. Brooks Otis, Milton as an Epic Poet, p.345.
81. See Steadman, 'The Critique of Amor ' in Milton and the Renaissance Hero, pp.108-36.
82. Lawrence Durrell, The Black Book (First published 1938;repr. in this ed. 1977), p.121-22.
83. Jackson I. Cope, The Metaphoric Structure of 'Paradise Lost' (Baltimore, 1962), p.78.
84. D. P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p.1. Throughout this work Harding gives valuable guidance on the less tangible aspects of classical influence on Paradise Lost.
85. Lord Macaulay, An Essay on the Life and Works of John Milton (1868), p.17.
86. An Essay Upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients in his 'Paradise Lost', With Some Observations on the 'Paradise Regained' (1741), p.5.

87. Of Education (Col.IV, p.286) where Milton opposes Logic and Poetry, the latter being "more simple, sensuous and passionate."
88. Mark Pattison, Milton, (First published 1879, repr. 1909), pp.207-8.
89. See Osgood, The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems, pp. xiii-xxx.
90. Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, p.281.
91. cf. D. P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p.61 and A. Bartlett Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic (Princeton, 1966), pp.298-99.
92. See Tillyard, Milton, p.237.
93. As cited by Christopher Ricks, Milton's Grand Style (Oxford, 1963), p.69.
94. Douglas Bush, 'Ironic and Ambiguous Allusion in Paradise Lost', JEGP LX (1961), pp.632.
95. D.P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p.90.

CHAPTER II

The Many Faces of Eve

So enigmatic and protean a character as Milton's Satan has understandably diverted a great deal of critical attention away from his portrayal of the human couple. However, in the last fifteen years or so there has been considerable interest in the relationship of Adam and Eve, largely as evidence of Milton's attitude to women.¹ Distorting preconceptions about Milton the Puritan coupled with misleading notions about Milton the Man - stemming from the difficulties of his first marriage, his advocacy of divorce and his alleged "horror of sex and women"² - have encouraged some critics to condemn him as a patriarchal and misogynistic poet.³ In the most virulent attacks he is accused of subjugating Eve in a lowly and inferior position as Adam's domestic drudge or, at least, of confining her within a primarily domestic role. Such charges do not withstand a close scrutiny of the text.⁴

Once we consider Milton's conception of Eve's role within its cultural and historical context and in relation to the limited range of roles generally accorded women within the epic tradition,⁵ it becomes readily apparent that Eve plays a remarkably varied and active part in the narrative and enjoys a surprising degree of independent power. Yet Eve herself has been strangely neglected by critics.⁶ Like his portrayal of Satan, Milton's study of Eve repays the closest attention, and it seems significant that their portraits display certain notable stylistic features in common.

One of the reasons why Satan seems to figure so largely in our imaginative recollection of the poem must surely lie in the dense layer of imagery - including a number of fine and hauntingly evocative similes - surrounding him. In a comparable way, Eve too attracts many mythological allusions and similes. Indeed, when painting his portrait of Eve, Milton employs a technique peculiar to her in the poem: her character is not presented directly but obliquely through the medium of a controlled and inspired evocation of figures primarily from Ovidian myth. This should not be too surprising since the latter's Metamorphoses in which he gave ancient myth its "unexcelled, final, comprehensive expression,"⁷ infusing it with the freshness and vitality of a world newly born, helped nurture Milton's appreciation of the dangerous beauty of this remote mythological world.

The Biblical Eve is, at times, almost concealed under this dense, suggestive layer of mythological imagery as with striking freshness and audacity Milton both states and hints at Eve's substantial relationship to certain mythological figures. The explicitly noted point of departure in the formal simile - whatever ostensibly occasioned the comparison - accounts for only part of the total effect and is often merely the most overt means by which Milton enables Eve to straddle the pagan and Christian world. Literal belief in such figures is obviously not a pre-requisite for exploiting their symbolic power, undiminished by a transformed world-picture, and their beauty, untarnished by the lapse of centuries. When they are evoked, we pass to areas of feeling and relevance both complex and suggestive where only imaginative truth is required.

As Macaulay once observed, the figures Milton conjures up have "charmed names. Everyone of them is the first link in a long chain of associated ideas";⁸ the imagination cannot rest but glimpses meanings within meanings. Such names cling to the mind long after the immediate basis for their introduction is forgotten. They are never introduced casually; they always contribute substantially to Eve's characterisation, guiding our interpretation and providing important insights into what she thinks, says and does. Although they may appear only once, their presence may be continuously felt through the silent appropriation of images and concepts associated with them.

Eve taps these sources of energy, shining through her local manifestations whether as Narcissus, Daphne, Chloris-Flora and Diana or as Proserpina, Ceres, Pomona and Venus. She subsumes and thus transcends these mythological parallels so that we respond to these literary models as partial expressions of her own comprehensive nature. Moreover, we do not feel that Eve thereby loses inner coherence. Eve's individuality is never engulfed and her character does not appear to degenerate into a succession of unrelated and transitory moods, a tendency which Waldock discerned and deplored in Milton's treatment of Satan.⁹ The cumulative effect of these mythological identifications is rather to intensify than dissipate our sense of Eve's integrity since, with exquisite artistic control, Milton ensures that they cohere in an intellectually and aesthetically satisfying manner.

Paradoxically, Eve is never more powerfully herself than when Milton glimpses her in mythological guise: first as the cold, virginal Narcissus or Daphne, then as the softly sensuous Flora or Venus; now as the frail and vulnerable Proserpina, now as the all-powerful mother-goddess. For Eve retains within herself an inherent complexity, enabling her to hold in solution contradictory attributes. These apparent contradictions are resolved at a much deeper level and are fused together into a pattern of symbolic meaning, a pattern of exceptional grace and intensity. We are not confronted with an arbitrary or indiscriminate use of mythological symbolism, but, as I hope to suggest during the course of this chapter, genuine ambiguities in Milton's characterisation of Eve.

By presenting her through this strategy of deliberate allusion, Milton extends and enriches his portrayal of Eve, endowing her with a mythic dimension that Adam lacks. Duncan indicates this when he observes, "the allusions point toward the superlative qualities of Eve, who contributes much more to the mood and atmosphere of the garden than does Adam."¹⁰ Milton generally avoids these intensifying and complicating effects¹¹ in his portrait of Adam, who consequently seems, at times, wooden and one-dimensional in comparison.

Indeed, while critics have frequently felt the fascination of Eve,¹² Adam has been dismissed by scholars such as Bouchard as "a singularly unsatisfactory character"¹³ and by Broadbent, who declares that: "Adam, waiting for the Fall, is a vehicle rather than a character, the perfect form of manhood waiting for the introjection of personality."¹⁴ Milton's treatment of Adam does not display the

same imaginative freedom as his characterisation of Satan and Eve; like the Father and Son, unfallen Adam carries so much of the weight of theological doctrine that he never achieves the full complexity of individual identity.

Many of those critical studies which have been concerned with Milton's portrayal of Eve tend to concentrate almost exclusively upon the way in which Milton prepares the reader for her Fall. Empson, Harding, Bush, Giamatti and Demetrakopoulos¹⁵ are amongst those who have alerted the reader when a simile, borrowed episode or oblique allusion seems to draw Eve into a web of implication and to warn us of the inexorable sequel. Empson explains how the mythological similes are used "for the vilification of Eve",¹⁶ and from this perspective it is tempting to seize upon one or two mythological correspondences - as between Eve and Pandora, Narcissus or Circe - and find in them the formative motifs for her character. After unravelling a couple of darkly sinister skeins from the mass of inter-connecting threads in this allusive tangle, it is possible to overlook others that lead in a different direction¹⁷ or, more interestingly, are placed under considerable tension.

On the other hand, some critics have attempted to free Eve from any such compromising insinuations before the Fall by appealing to the reader's tact and discrimination, charging him not to unravel the full content of an allusion and thereby cauterize it of any unwelcome implications.¹⁸ In the same vein, Diane McColley insists that:

... as long as she remains unfallen Eve redeems the beauty, the richness of sensory experience, and the erotic delight that the pagan impersonations depict in their fallen and destructive forms.¹⁹

While this is true, something more must be said about Eve's mythological appearances before the Fall. From the outset, Milton uses mythological imagery to convey very complex ideas about Eve. Such allusions cut both ways simultaneously and are the means by which Milton enables the reader to hold in equilibrium more than one point of view.

To clarify this point, let us look briefly at a passage of seemingly calculated ambiguity, where a positive, clear-cut image dissolves into ambiguities before our eyes. I have chosen to examine lines 492-502 in Book IV because, although the image cannot be traced back to Ovid, it is, to my knowledge, the only example of its kind to have received extended critical attention.

Osgood, though he recognises some echoes of "Hera's beguiling of Zeus,"²⁰ gives the obvious innocent interpretation: the description and mythological simile are included to establish Adam and Eve's status as universal parents, and he promptly refers us to the comparable fertility image in Virgil's heralding of the advent of spring in the Georgics:

tum pater omnipotens fecundis imbris Aether
coniugis in gremium laetae descendit.

(II.325-6)

John Knott too maintains that the passage in Paradise Lost is a straightforward celebration of "the majesty of our 'grand parents' and their lordship over nature."²¹ Its application to Eve is entirely innocent and unambiguous: "Here Juno is indirectly associated with the generative force of nature" and Eve thereby embodies "the spirit of surging life"²² at work in the universe. While this is finely said and mainly true, it is not all that may be said about the passage. Knott proceeds to assert forcefully:

In venturing such a comparison Milton could trust the reader to screen out inappropriate thoughts of Olympian quarrels and infidelities ...²³

And yet his reasoning here seems to contain a slight logical flaw; his very disclaimer suggests that these very awkward and disconcerting thoughts have intruded upon him.

The allusion is certainly puzzling. As Harding demands: "Why... this early in the poem does Milton risk a comparison with Jupiter and Juno whose marital relationship was scarcely ideal even by Olympian standards?"²⁴ He goes on, tacitly countering Osgood and Knott:

It does little good to say that Milton had a naturalistic Jupiter and Juno in mind; no amount of explicitness could wholly protect the passage from the surreptitious intrusion of the less flattering associations which had grown up about their names.²⁵

Once Milton had released such powerful literary memories, he could not have eliminated the damaging associations from his comparison. Indeed, it seems clear that he had no desire to do so.

Whaler is not the only critic who has found here an allusion to Juno-Hera's seduction of Jupiter-Zeus in the Iliad. As he puts it:

In the midst of his prelapsarian idyll...[Milton] could not more delicately - or more impressively - suggest by his reference to the fine old Homeric myth that neither Olympus nor Eden can escape connubial deceit.²⁶

This interpretation is given additional confirmation by the link between the present passage and the scene after the Fall when Adam "gan Eve to dalliance () move" (IX.1016). Relying upon the telling use of cross-reference, Milton has consciously adapted elements from the infamous encounter between Zeus and Hera on Mount Ida on both occasions.²⁷ What are we to conclude?

Harding urges that the allusion in Book IV "must therefore be part of the elaborate and largely secret machinery to prepare our minds for the Fall"²⁸ and that "The clandestine discrediting of Adam and Eve ... begins almost with the first lines which described them to us."²⁹ Any lingering doubts that we may be extracting a spurious reading from the passage, one which Milton never intended it to contain, are inadvertently quashed by Gary M. McCown.

"Adam does not merely smile," McCown observes, "he smiles like Jupiter, an epideitic comparison which justifies Milton's estimation of him as a sovereign. Milton's epic similes do not merely describe, then," he explains, "they compliment and evaluate," and he concludes "In presenting Adam and Eve to us, Milton succeeds in heroicizing them into epic exemplars of marital virtue."³⁰

This seems a most unfortunate way of putting the matter; by setting up Jupiter and Juno as 'exemplars of marital virtue' - clearly an untenable position - the false note becomes distinctly audible, especially since this point is to be taken in conjunction with Jupiter as 'sovereign'. For then we may not be able to avoid a sobering reflection of Ovid's who, commenting on the effect of Jupiter's amorous escapades, dryly observes:

non bene conveniunt nec in una sede moratur
amor et maiestas. (Met. II.846-81)

Such larger passages have, to adapt an expression of John Peter's, the "same kind of vitality on a diffuse scale that an oxymoron has succinctly."³¹ On one level, these allusions work together to produce an image of Eve only slightly less than divine, yet we may have reservations, and Milton has carefully intimated what they should be by this telling use of covert allusion. As long as we do not allow preconceived judgements of Eve, based upon notions of Milton's supposed misogyny, to interfere with our reading of the poem, but give a balanced consideration to both sets of derived meanings, positive as well as negative, implicit in any one image, it is only in retrospect that our second thoughts about Eve assume their undeniable importance. Even then, they need not seriously undermine our first impressions but simply complicate or qualify them.

The figure of Eve remains unblurred in its main outlines, but, like a photograph in which the subject has moved slightly, we have one main image and another likeness just in evidence behind, though in this case the second likeness reverses the first, or rather, shows

the subject in a different light. As Demetrakopoulos has observed, "Milton surrounds Eve with ... images and typology that can become evil through the slightest shift of sensibility,"³² the images that magnify her greatness at the same time provide the grounds for impugning her as a character and a symbol.

Seaman has likened Eve's dual aspect to "the double image of martial heroism,"³³ where Christ is the true image of heroic virtue and Satan the false eidolon.³⁴ What contributes so powerfully to the complexity of Milton's presentation of the "double image of woman"³⁵ in Paradise Lost is not only that both image and eidolon are incorporated in one character, but also that this tension has so many different manifestations in the course of the narrative. Those critics that have commented on Eve's double image have invariably seen it as something to be consecutively rather than simultaneously apprehended and have confined their attention almost exclusively to Eve's role as temptress and then redeemer. Seaman's comment is typical of many: "Milton's Eve has been studied as temptress and also as redemptrix, but, in fact, she appears in both roles - a temptress after she has succumbed to Satan, a redemptive figure after the Fall."³⁶

However, as we shall see, a comprehensive balance of opposing forces is fundamental to Milton's conception of Eve. Like a spider's web, where the intricacy of the total design emerges only when all the threads are radiating from the centre under constant, even tension, Eve emerges as a transcendent union of contraries, a powerful synthesis of opposing principles, once all the mythological allusions are interlaced within the fabric of the poem. So too, like the earth itself, 'self-balanced on its centre,' there is nothing static about

Eve's innocence. It is an actively attained state, even in one who has never been out of balance, an equilibrium in which all manner of forces and energies strive for full expression. Thus innocence always trembles on the brink of dissolution for nothing short of perfect balance will serve to maintain it, while the eagerness of innocence to embrace all that may be enjoyed ensures that the means will be found for its destruction.

Notes

1. Previous writing on this subject includes: David Aers and Bob Hodge, "'Rational Burning": Milton on Sex and Marriage', MS XIII, pp.3-34; John S. Diekhoff, 'Eve's Dream and the Paradox of Fallible Perfection', MQ IV (1970), pp.5-7; Marilyn R. Farrell, 'Eve, the Separation Scene, and the Renaissance Idea of Androgyny', MS XVI (1982), pp.3-20; Diane Hume George, 'The Miltonic Ideal: A Paradigm for the Structure of Relations Between Men and Women in Academia', CE XL (1979), pp.864-73; Sandra M. Gilbert, 'Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers: Reflections on Milton's Bogey', PMLA XCIII (1978), pp.368-82; Marcia Landy, 'Kinship and the Role of Women in Paradise Lost', MS IV (1972) pp.3-18; Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, 'Milton on Women - Yet Once More', MS VI (1974), pp.3-20; Diane Kelsey McColley, 'Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of Paradise Lost', SEL XII (1912), pp.103-20, "'Daughter of God and Man": The Subordination of Milton's Eve in Familiar Colloquy : Essays Presented to Arthur Edward Barker, ed. Patricia Bruckmann (Ottawa, 1978), pp.196-205 and "'Summon All": The Separation Colloquy' in Milton's Eve (Urbana, 1983); Virginia R. Mollenkott, 'Milton and Women's Liberation : A Note on Teaching Method' MQ VII (1973), pp.99-103; Don Parry Norford, "'My Other Half": The Coincidence of Opposites in Paradise Lost', MLQ XXXVI (1975), pp.21-53 and 'The Separation of the World Parents in Paradise Lost', PMLA LXXXVIII (1973), pp.69-78; Elaine B. Safer, "'Sufficient to Have Stood": Eve's Responsibility in Book IX', MQ VI (1972), pp.10-14; Kathleen M. Swaim, "'Hee for God only, She for God in Him": Structural Parallelism in Paradise Lost', MS IX (1976), pp.121-49; John C. Ulreich, "'Sufficient to Have Stood": Adam's Responsibility in Book IX', MQ V (1971), pp.38-42; Joan Malory Webber, 'The Politics of Poetry: Feminism and Paradise Lost', MS XIV (1980), pp.3-24.
2. J. R. Hays, 'The Bosom Snake' in The Dangerous Sex : The Myth of Feminine Evil (New York, 1964), p.173.
3. ibid., p.167. And see, for instance, H. J. C. Grierson, Cross-Currents in English Literature of the XVIIth Century (1929), p.155; p.161; Marcia Landy, 'Kinship and the Role of Women in Paradise Lost', pp.3-18; S. M. Gilbert, 'Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers', pp.368-82; Jackie Di Salvo, 'Blake Encountering Milton: Politics and the Family in Paradise Lost and The Four Zoas', p.169 in Milton and the Line of Vision (Madison, 1975), ed. J. A. Wittreich Jr. For the patriarchal emphasis of Protestantism see Christopher Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England (1964), pp.450-51 and Sinfield, p.16.

4. See B. K. Lewalski, 'Milton on Women - Yet Once More', pp.3-20; Dorothy Durkee Miller, 'Eve', JEGP LXI (1962), pp.542-47; M. R. Farrell, 'The Renaissance Idea of Androgyny', pp.16-17; Webber, 'The Politics of Poetry : Feminism and Paradise Lost', pp.3-24.

5. cf. Webber, 'The Politics of Poetry : Feminism and Paradise Lost,' pp.10-12; Blessington, 'Paradise Lost and the Classical Epic', pp.53-54.

6. Special studies of Eve made in the last twenty years or so include the following essays, articles and dissertations: Don Cameron Allen, 'Milton and the Name of Eve', MLN LXXXIV (1959), pp.681-83; Shahla Anand, 'Eve, the Pictorial Snare' in "Of Costliest Emblem": 'Paradise Lost and the Emblem Tradition (Washington D.C., 1978); S. A. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', MQ IX (1975), pp.99-106; William Empson, 'Eve' in Milton's God (1961), pp.147-81; Roy Catesby Flannagan Jr., 'Milton's Eve' (Ph.D. Dissertation; University of Virginia, 1966); Stephanie Ann Fisher, 'Circean Fatal Women in Milton's Poetry : Milton's Concept of the Renaissance Woman' (Ph.D. Dissertation; Minneapolis, 1971); Cheryl Hope Fresch, 'Milton's Eve and the Theological Tradition' (Ph.D. Dissertation; Cornell University, 1976) and 'The Hebraic Influence Upon the Creation of Eve in Paradise Lost', MS XIII (1979), pp.181-99; Northrop Frye 'The Revelation to Eve' in Paradise Lost : A Tercentenary Tribute, ed. Balachandra Rajan (Toronto, 1969), pp.18-47; D. R. Hutcherson, 'Milton's Epithets for Eve', University of Virginia Studies N.S. IV (1951), pp.253-60 and 'Milton's Eve and the Other Eves', University of Mississippi Studies in English I (1960), pp.12-31; John R. Knott Jr., 'Fairest of Creation' in Milton's Pastoral Vision : An Approach to 'Paradise Lost' (Chicago, 1971), pp.209-26; Belle Miller McMaster, "'Accomplish't Eve": The Interpretation of Character, Tradition and Structure in Paradise Lost' (Ph.D. Dissertation; University of Louisville, 1974); D. D. Miller, 'Eve'; J. Max Patrick, 'A Reconsideration of the Fate of Eve', Études Anglaises XXVIII (1975), pp.15-21; Mother Mary Christopher Pecheux, 'The Concept of the Second Eve in Paradise Lost', PMLA LXXV (1960), pp.359-66; D. F. Rauber, 'The Metamorphoses of Eve', Lock Haven Review XII (1971), pp.54-70; Elizabeth Jane Vessels, 'A Mythic Light on Eve : The Function of Mythological Allusion in Defining Her Character and Role in the Epic Action of Paradise Lost' (Ph.D. Dissertation; Fordham University, 1972); Mary Stanley Weinhauf, 'The Two Faces of Eve : The Ideal and Bad Renaissance Wife in Paradise Lost' (Ph.D. Dissertation; University of Tennessee, 1966); the only full length study of Eve is by Diane Kelsey McColley, Milton's Eve.

7. Hermann Fränkel, Ovid, A Poet Between Two Worlds (Berkeley, 1945), p.65.
8. Macaulay, An Essay on ... Milton, p.17.
9. See Arthur J. A. Waldock, 'Satan and the Technique of Degradation' in 'Paradise Lost' and Its Critics (Cambridge, 1947; repr. 1961), pp.65-96. However, D. R. Hutcherson has pointed out the sudden change of perspective whereby Milton's "perfect and majestic creature" becomes merely "a weak and erring individual who is also the symbol of her frail sex". As he observes: "One may well pause to question what has become of the great Eve, the majestic Eve" ('Milton's Epithets for Eve', pp.258-59; p.256).
10. Joseph E. Duncan, Milton's Earthly Paradise : A Historical Study of Eden (Minneapolis, 1972), p.31.
11. cf. D. F. Rauber, 'The Metamorphoses of Eve', p.54 and pp.60-61.
12. See, for example, the comments of D. R. Hutcherson, 'Milton's Epithets for Eve', p.253; Shahla Anand, "Of Costliest Emblem": 'Paradise Lost' and the Emblem Tradition', p.188; Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.209; William Empson, Milton's God, p.163 and Brijraj Singh, Milton : An Introduction (Delhi, 1977), p.52.
13. Donald F. Bouchard, Milton : A Structural Reading (1974), p.55.
14. J. B. Broadbent, Some Graver Subject, p.192.
15. William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (1935), pp.172-79; D. P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, pp.67-85; Bush, 'Ironic and Ambiguous Allusion in Paradise Lost', pp.631-40; Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic, pp.295-355; S. A. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Courtly and Circean Fatal Woman'. Emphasis is also placed upon Eve's Circean role by Steadman, 'The Critique of Amor' in Milton and the Renaissance Hero, pp.108-36; John E. Seaman, The Moral Paradox of 'Paradise Lost' (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971), pp.102-3 and by Leonora Leet Brodwin, 'Milton and the Renaissance Circe', MS VI (1974), pp.58-61.
16. Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, p.172.

17. See, for example, Knott's contention that "The pastoral strain in Eve's literary ancestry is at least as important as her kinship with the seductive women of previous epics" (Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.111).
18. See, for instance, Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.117.
19. McColley, Milton's Eve, p.67.
20. Osgood, The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems, p.49.
21. Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.117.
22. ibid.
23. ibid.
24. D. P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, pp.77-78.
25. ibid.
26. James Whaler, 'The Miltonic Simile', PMLA XLVI (1931), p.1051. Here, Whaler directs us "especially to the termination of the story of Juno's beguiling of Jupiter (Iliad XIV, 346-551)."
27. For further evidence of Milton's desire to enforce this parallel, see Harding, The Club of Hercules, pp.79-80; Frank Kermode, 'Adam Unparadised' in The Living Milton, ed. Frank Kermode (1960; repr. 1962), p.112; Bush, 'Paradise Lost in Our Time', pp.105-6 and 'Ironic and Ambiguous Allusion in Paradise Lost', p.640.
28. D. P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p.80.
29. ibid., p.81.
30. Gary McCown, 'Milton and the Epic Epithalamium,' MS V (1973), p.52.
31. John D. Peter, A Critique of 'Paradise Lost' (New York, 1960), p.39 (as quoted in Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, p.32).

32. S. A. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.105.
33. Seaman, The Moral Paradox of 'Paradise Lost', p.113.
34. cf. Steadman, Milton and the Renaissance Hero, pp.xviii-xix.
35. Seaman, The Moral Paradox of 'Paradise Lost', pp.113-14.
36. ibid., p.114. E. J. Vessels also stresses Eve's dual instrumentality and Kermode too has emphasized "the centrality of the paradox of Eve as destroyer and giver of life" ('Adam Unparadised', p.120).

CHAPTER III

By Types and Shadows: Milton, Myth and Metaphor

At this point, I feel it would be valuable to reflect upon some of the general implications of Milton's employment of figurative links between Eve and various Ovidian characters by examining his use of mythological allusion against the backcloth of seventeenth-century critical opinion. Having considered the ways in which Milton seems to have conformed with, and in turn defied, contemporary theory and practice, we will be better equipped to assess and appreciate the immense imaginative use he made of the Metamorphoses, drawing upon it as a fertile source of imagery for his rich and complex portrayal of Eve in Paradise Lost. But first we must call attention to the guise in which these allusions predominantly appear. The essential core of mythological material, as critics generally observe, is found in a series of elaborate formal similes. Although we will be discussing the contribution of covert Ovidian allusion during the course of this thesis, it seems sensible to base the argument on firm ground, and so, initially in this chapter, I will be confining my comments mainly to a consideration of the implications of Milton's open use of mythological material. But, of course, much of what is said here will be relevant to Milton's deployment of camouflaged allusion.

According to the most fundamental frame of reference then current, language was the 'dress of thought' and figures of speech were conceived of as 'ornaments' of language included as conducive to 'delight'. Amongst these figures the simile was particularly favoured as a means of embellishing verse to enhance the reader's pleasure.

The sensuous and emotional 'pleasure' thus derived from poetry was the distinctive element that distinguished it as a vehicle for conveying matters of serious import or 'truth' from the didactic treatise which would present its argument intellectually, appealing exclusively to the reader's 'reason'.

From this angle, poetry was regarded as pleasing only as the effective means proper to it of furthering its ultimate end of teaching.¹ The serious poet, then, would combine "utile dulci/ lectorem delectando pariterque monendo."² The Horatian dictum proved a handy tool in the hands of Puritan humanists intent on defending secular and pagan poetry; it was used in support of their claim that such literature may move fallen men to virtue.³

Sir Philip Sidney's An Apologie for Poetrie affords fine instances of the logical format of this defensive argument. He affirms that the very pleasure conferred on the reader by poetry is essential to its objective, since it allures readers "to take the goodnes in hande, which without delight they would flye as from a stranger."⁴ Elsewhere in his defence Sidney epitomises this twofold operation of true poetry, "to delight and teach", in his expression a "medicine of Cherries."⁵

However, this suggestive image of the fruitful alliance attained when the opposition between 'profit' and 'delight' is resolved and they act in unison, ultimately derives from the Roman poet Lucretius who, in the first book of his didactic poem De Rerum Natura, gave the fullest and most eloquent expression to the important role poetry may play in

facilitating the promulgation of 'truth'. This passage deserves inclusion, especially since it appears to have exerted an influence, as yet unremarked, upon Milton's own conception of the value of poetry:

deinde quod oscura de re tam lucida pango
 carmina, musaeo contingens cuncta lepore,
 id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur;
 sed veluti pueris absinthia taetra medentes
 cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum
 contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
 ut puerorum aetas improvida ludificetur
 laborum tenus, interea perpotet amarum
 absinthii laticem deceptaque non capiatur,
 sed potius tali pacto recreata valescat,
 sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque videtur
 tristior esse quibus non est tractata, retroque
 vulgus abhorret ab hac, volui tibi suaviloquenti
 carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostra
 et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle
 si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
 versibus in nostris possem, dum perspicias omnem
 naturam rerum qua constet compta figura. ⁶

For in an informative digression on the role of the poet in the Reason of Church Government, Milton indicates his own poetic ambitions, enthusing upon the power of poetry as an aid to the advancement of truth and clearly signalling his adherence to the Lucretian model. Here Milton earnestly advocates that the true poet should be:

Teaching over the whole book of sanctity and vertu
 through all the instances of example, with such
 delight to those especially of soft and delicious
 temper who will not so much as look upon Truth
 herselfe unlesse they see her elegantly drest, that
 whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear
 now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed
 easy and pleasant, they would then appear to all
 men both easy and pleasant though they were rugged
 and difficult indeed. ⁷

Developing Lucretius' position, Milton goes on to contend that, when the potency that resides in the delightfulness of poetry is abused, the reader "lap[s] up vitious principles in sweet pills to be swallow'd down, and ... the tast of vertuous documents [is made] harsh and sour." He thus condemns those "libidinous and ignorant Poetasters" who profane their sacred office⁸ by causing "our youth and gentry" to "suck in dayly" "corruption and bane."⁹

The simile and other such poetic devices employed to embroider the literal sense were considered as the means whereby the poem commended itself and made itself acceptable to the reader. Evidently, "That book is good in vain which the reader throws away"¹⁰ and to ensure the fulfilment of this pragmatic requirement - that a work should please those for whom it was intended - it would seem then not only to justify such figurative departures from the plain, unvarnished truth but render them virtually essential. James Beattie takes this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion in this extract from his Essay on Poetry and Music:

If it appear, that, by means of Figures, Language may be made more pleasing ... it will follow, that to Poetic Language, whose end is to please ...¹¹
 Figures must be not only ornamental, but necessary.

Moreover, the simile was prescribed as the most appropriate ornament for the epic genre, as Pope's advice to the poet with pretensions to write an epic poem to "Season it well with similes"¹² wittily attests. Indeed, the similitudo per conlationem, as opposed to the simple comparison or similitudo per brevitatem, was regarded as a feature particularly characteristic of the epic genre and came to be known as the 'epic simile'.

The long, sustained simile was, therefore, necessary to satisfy the formal demands of decorum, "that grand masterpiece to observe."¹³ Yet the requirements of decorum were more complex: could pagan matter be included with propriety in a poem with a Christian theme? The apparent intrusion of pagan fiction into a poem of sacred truth presented a rather more vexed question.

Of course, "Christian hostility to pagan myth had long before invaded the province of poetry" as M. H. Abrams reminds us,¹⁴ but the movement acquired particular virulence with the addition of ranks of vociferous Puritan divines. Especially notable amongst those strident detractors of ancient myth were Stephen Gosson and William Prynne, who published works particularly antagonistic towards the immorality and sensuous levity of pagan fables.¹⁵ However, ancient mythology was increasingly disparaged for its violation of Christian truth. This problem was further compounded by the rationalistic bias of the new philosophy. Essentially practical, empirical and sceptical in orientation, it inevitably resulted in a concern that the poet should represent, "the Worlds true image",¹⁶ as revealed by "plain reason's light"¹⁷ and verified by scientific experiment.

A number of seventeenth-century theorists agreed that this new, enlightened perspective on nature must effect the eradication of mythology from the poet's materials, for it was now demonstrably contrary to scientific truth. Thomas Sprat in his History of the Royal Society put their position plainly thus:

the Wit of Fables and Religions of the Ancient World ... have already serv'd the Poets long enough; and it is now high time to dismiss them. Truth is never so well express'd or amplify'd as by those Ornaments which are Tru and Real in themselves. 18

There is also ample evidence to suggest that practising poets were influenced by this attitude. Cowley, himself the author of an ode To the Royal Society prefixed to Bishop Sprat's History of the Royal Society, exemplifies the movement away from mythological subjects in favour of those Christian themes which enjoyed "the double advantage of being both marvellous and true."¹⁹ In his preface of 1646, Cowley declared that, "all the Books of the Bible are either already most admirable, and exalted pieces of Poesie or are the best materials in the world for it." Acting upon his belief that "Too long the Muses Lands have Heathen bin;/ Their Gods too long were Dev'ls, and Vertues Sin" in Davideis, Cowley announces his sacred calling as an "Apostle, to convert that World":

T'unbind the charms that in slight Fables be,
And teach that Truth is truest Poesie. 20

Joseph Beaumont's Psyche also illustrates the trend away from paganism: in a note from 'The Author to the Reader', Beaumont records his objective, "That this Book may prompt better Wits to believe, that a Divine Theam is as capable and happy a Subject of Poetical Ornament, as any Pagan or Humane Device Whatsoever."²¹

Coupled with scruples and reservations that Milton naturally acquired from his Puritan background, this anti-pagan movement ensured that Milton would not handle ancient myth directly in major works. Eliminated from the main thrust of the narrative, mythological material was relegated to the formally inferior position of illustrative example. On the other hand, Sylvester, despite his earnest prayer for an "un-vulgar stile":

That I by this may wain our wanton ILE
 From Ovids heires, and their un-hallowed spell
 Were charming senses, chaining soules in Hell²²

occasionally peoples his narrative with Ovidian deities who take an, albeit decorative, part in the action as agents of God. Sylvester describes how God chose for Adam "a happy Seat":

which dainty Flora paveth sumptously
 with flowery VERS inamel'd tapistry,
Pomona pranks with fruits, whose taste excels,
 and Zephyr fils with Musk and Amber smels
 where God himself (as Gardner) treads the allies.²³

This passage indicates by contrast Milton's own exquisite and inspired control of mythological illustration which is always subordinated to his overriding themes. Moreover, it perhaps demonstrates another reason why Milton avoided a direct treatment of mythical figures: these lines from Sylvester seem to diminish inadvertently the majesty of God, putting him on a par with minor rural deities.

However, Milton seems to have encountered opposition to even such indirect usage. C. A. Moore believes the anonymous poem, Order and Disorder or The World Made and Undone to be a veiled attack on Milton's 'adulteration' of the Genesis story with pagan elements.²⁴ Indeed, in the preface, the author explicitly prides himself on only having had "recourse to the fountain of Truth [i.e. Genesis] ... lest any of the pudled water, my wanton youth drew from the prophane Helicon of ancient poets should be sprinkled about the world."²⁵

Yet, remembering that Milton's own religious persuasion would seem to accord with such antipathy, we may well feel justified in expressing surprise that mythological material should be included at all in a Christian epic - even in the less assuming form of illustrative example. However, such surprise would be a hasty and uncritical reaction. As we have seen, Milton was one of the last true heirs of the Renaissance, and, as such, was thoroughly imbued with the values of the humanistic tradition, and much modern scholarship has sought to demonstrate that he was "not a Puritan in the narrow sense, but a Renaissance Puritan, like Spenser, preserving within his Puritanism the Renaissance traditions."²⁶ Like other poets of that period, his mind often moved with agility from the pagan to the Christian world. Moreover, Milton's exceptional breadth of mind enabled him to unite the conflicting ideals of the Renaissance and Reformation to achieve a precarious balance between the claims of beauty and truth, sense and spirit.

On the other hand, Douglas Bush prefers to regard this duality in terms of a dichotomy, where the two sides are sharply antithetical rather than complementary. Bush draws our attention to "the obvious

delight with which, in all his chief poems except the last, [Milton] lavishes beauty of diction and rhythm upon mythological allusions" whilst a "series of astringent footnotes" relegate "myth to the level of pagan fiction not without gratuitous coldness of manner at best and sometimes with Hebraic warmth."²⁷ Bush concludes that "It is a case of a clear divorce between the artist and theologian"²⁸ in Milton, an expression of the divided allegiance that was the heritage of the Puritan humanist. He returns to this apparent "antimony"²⁹ elsewhere, enlarging upon the way in which the similes are "opened and closed with hostile phrases" as though Milton "feels obliged in a sacred poem to label as pagan fiction what his imagination cannot resist."³⁰ So, despite loud protestations of scepticism, Milton succumbs unwittingly to Ovid's charm.

However valid Bush's comments are as generalisations, they do not attend to certain specific patterns which seem to emerge within Milton's use of mythological imagery within Paradise Lost.³¹ It seems significant that those allusions which cluster around Eve, as opposed to those that centre upon Satan and the fallen angels, do not attract the dismissive or even qualifying comments that we might expect from Bush's generalisations. Of course, we find instances of intensifying expressions such as 'more' or 'not so', but these are only to be expected where Milton is intent upon establishing the superlative character of Eve.

Even the evident exception to my proposition to be found in Book V, where Eve appears "more lovely fair" than "the fairest goddess feigned/Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove" (380-82) may not prove

so clearly unambiguous when examined more closely. To what does 'feigned' apply? Is it an 'astringent footnote' relegating the trio of goddesses firmly to the level of pagan fiction as Bush would have us suppose? It is at least possible to read 'feigned' with 'fairest'; indeed, the alliteration in the line supports such a view. If the effect of this alliteration is to tie subtly together what is not openly linked in direct statement, then the lines would suggest that if Eve had entered the divine beauty contest, Paris would have been obliged to revise his judgement in her favour. This interpretation seems more plausible when we recall that this myth had been recently revived to compliment Queen Elizabeth I. She is found to unite the gifts of all three goddesses and is accordingly awarded the prized apple without contention.³²

It is interesting to note that Dr. Johnson, whilst he did not remark upon any discernible pattern or common factor involved, complained that Milton's mythological allusions were "not always used with notice of their vanity."³³ This point had also drawn critical comment from Addison. After considering the dubious propriety of such allusion, he singles out this practice for particular censure:

Another Blemish that appears in some of his Thoughts, is his frequent Allusion to Heathen Fables which are not certainly of a piece with the Divine Subject, of which he treats, I do not find fault with these Allusions, where the Poet himself represents them as fabulous, as he does in some places, but where he mentions them as Truths and Matters of Fact.³⁴

I

Ut Umbra Corpore : Shadowy Types of Eve

With Addison's querulous comment in mind, I now propose to examine Milton's practice of linking certain Ovidian myths with episodes from scriptural history more narrowly from the seventeenth-century perspective. The seventeenth century was pre-eminently the age of Janus "for no period so unmistakably looked backward and forward."³⁶ As Shahla Anand has observed, although the early seventeenth century "faces the age of science and reason", it is "still medieval in much of its outlook."³⁷ In this, as in so many other things, Milton partakes of the prevailing characteristics of the age in which he lived.

While "the ultimate movement of thought in the seventeenth century was away from allegorical and symbolic modes of thought" as "a new school of rationalism looked at classical myth with unblurred eyes",³⁸ the scientific movement, though inexorably undermining the allegorical tradition,³⁹ was slow to offer an effective challenge to the imaginative power of ancient myth as a means of symbolic expression. In connection with this, it is interesting to note in passing that De Quincey was one of the first to defend Milton's inclusion of pagan imagery in the similes specifically on the grounds of their having "something of allegorie in their conceptions which in a measure corrects the paganism of the idea."⁴⁰ More recently, Labriola has argued that "the tradition of the Renaissance Ovid exercised a more substantial influence on the composition of Paradise Lost than scholars have supposed,"⁴¹ and his contention seems

worth exploring further. Indeed, since this tradition exercised such a pervasive influence on seventeenth-century interpretation and adaptation of classical myth, a little needs to be said about it here.

Something of the spirit of the medieval Ovide Moralisé lived on and flourished in the tradition of the Renaissance Ovid. The theory that Ovidian fables were susceptible to allegorical exposition had long proved a useful protective camouflage for the Metamorphoses and, interestingly, this theory was not without Patristic authority. "The Poets, saith Lactantius, did write the truth, though they writ it disguisedly."⁴² Of course, the close correspondence in subject matter between the first book of the Metamorphoses and Genesis gave particularly strong support to the notion that Ovid "had either seene the Books of Moses, or received that doctrine by Tradition."⁴³ "What man is hee," Golding demands, "but would suppose the author of this booke/ The first foundation of his worke from Moyses writings tooke."⁴⁴ From here it was an easy step to argue with some confidence that the vates of the ancient world had deliberately veiled the truth in their work:

As Persian kings did never go abroad with open face,
But with some ... silken scarfe, for reverance of the state:
Even so these folowing in their workes the self same trade
and rate,
Did under couert names and termes their doctrines do emplie,
As that is right hard their meaning to espie.⁴⁵

Accordingly, since the poets had "with fables shadowed so/The certaine truth" it behove the reader "to pluck those/Their dooings, and to bring againe the darkened truth to light."⁴⁶

Others attributed a still more positive value to pagan myth; the anonymous author of An Essay on Milton's Imitations of the Ancients had argued

... if we find the Originals of several Parts of Mythology in Scripture, may not some other Parts of it have been likewise derived from the Tradition of Truth not contained in the concise Account of Things Scripture gives.⁴⁷

Elsewhere, Milton had himself maintained that the stories told by the "sage poets" were "not vain or fabulous" but "taught by the heavenly Muse"⁴⁸ and were symbolic expressions of deep or hidden truths. It has, of course, long been recognised that at "the core of Comus ... is the orthodox allegorical interpretation of the myth of Circe."⁴⁹ The powerful image of Circe and her cup provides an excellent illustration of the way in which mythological narrative could contract into metaphor and deepen into symbol, and various manifestations of this mythic symbol have been traced in the major and minor poems and also in the prose works.⁵⁰ In the same way, the mythological allusions add an important metaphoric dimension to Paradise Lost. Indeed, Ricks has pertinently observed that "Though Milton certainly does not show Shakespearian fertility of metaphor, he creates similar effects by other means"⁵¹ and D. C. Allen has commented on Milton's "method of searching for metaphoric support in heathen culture."⁵²

In doing so, Milton seems to have drawn upon the rich allegorical tradition that still surrounded the Metamorphoses. Harding has remarked that Sandys' commentary, added as late as 1632, is "a convincing

illustration of how sharply medieval tradition had etched itself into the consciousness of the men of the late Renaissance."⁵³ D. C. Allen notes that it "embraces all the known types of readings" and describes it as "a great variorum of adjusted and acceptable symbolism and allegory."⁵⁴

It is highly regarded by Bush too, who believes Milton to have referred to it. He calls it the "greatest repository of allegorized myth in English"⁵⁵ and elsewhere hails it as "one of the latest, fullest and most readable of its kind in English."⁵⁶ Whether or not Milton was familiar with it - and it seems likely that he was - "because it is a virtual synthesis of numerous earlier commentaries" it is probably, as Labriola claims, "the single most useful compendium of traditional allegorical interpretations of Ovidian mythology"⁵⁷ and, as such, we will often have occasion to refer to it for the light it throws upon Milton's adaptations of the traditional allegorical readings of the myths with which he enriches his epic.

Also notable in this connection was the continuing authority and appeal of the syncretist tradition⁵⁸ which regarded the similarities between pagan myth and scriptural truth from a slightly different standpoint. Adherents looked upon Greek and Roman myth as mimetic, "crooked images" that dimly reflect the "one true history"⁵⁹ in the Scriptures. In the Fall of Man, Goodman argued that many of these fables "had some reference to the truth of a historie in Scripture; for as truth is most ancient, so falsehood would seem to bee the shadow of truth and to accomanie her",⁶⁰ likewise Raleigh asserted that pagan mythology contains "Reliques of Truth",⁶¹ vestiges of the original scriptural account, and he discovers "in all the ancient Poets and

Philosophers, the Storie of the First Age, with all the workes and marvailles thereof, amply and lively exprest." ⁶² As Isabel MacCaffrey explains:

For the Renaissance, all myths are reflections, distorted or mutilated though they be, of the "one true history," which differs from them onto - logically. It is the source, the one root from which many thematic branches have sprung. ⁶³

"By breaking into parts the Storie of the Creation" the ancients, Raleigh maintains, "sought to obscure the truth thereof;" ⁶⁴ Milton, in accordance with the syncretist vision of one truth, endeavoured to bring together these fragments of "the virgin Truth" as, to use a mythological image which he himself had employed in the Areopagitica, Isis had gathered the scattered pieces of Osiris. ⁶⁵ As Isabel MacCaffrey puts it, in his mythological similes "Milton was not merely indulging irresponsibly a 'love of classical literature'" ; "They are central to his purpose of variety-in-unity, lending new dimensions to his basically simple themes." ⁶⁶ Moreover, this perhaps explains why Milton "is constantly disclaiming these heathen fancies but as constantly putting them in." ⁶⁷ Bentley disparagingly dismisses the celebrated comparison of Eden with other delightful gardens as

... sillily conducted in its several parts. Not Enna, says he, not Daphne, nor Fons Castalus, nor Nysa, nor Mount Amara, could compare with Paradise. Why, sir, who would have suspected that they could; though you had never told us of it. ⁶⁸

As Bentley's criticism admirably demonstrates, such negative comparisons do not follow the familiar pattern of discursive reasoning; they exemplify the synthetic rather than analytic power of poetry, for as Kermode perceptively notes, "in poetry all buts are partly ands and an elaborate demonstration of the total difference between x and y is undertaken only if they are in some occult manner very alike."⁶⁹

Irrespective of whether or not Milton himself seriously regarded the ancient myths as direct perversions or distortions of Scripture, the mere fact that the poets were still generally accredited as having taken "the ground of all their chiefest fables out/Of scripture"⁷⁰ would have given additional propriety to his comparisons of Eve with mythological figures. Indeed, the anonymous author of An Essay upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients had defended Milton's inclusion of mythological material thus:

Milton might justly have imagined that any circumstance of his Poem, if it was not repugnant to Holy Writ, although it was pretty closely borrowed from some Part of the Heathen Mythology, might not only pass, but that the latter would be look'd on as the Copy; and consequently, would rather tend to increase than diminish the probability.⁷¹

Again, it is interesting to note that in his commentary on the Metamorphoses, intended as a handbook for preachers, Lavinus had identified the allegorical reading of poetic fables with typological interpretation of the Bible: "Nempe quod theologi ... figuram vocavere. poeta fictionem aut fabulam nuncupat."⁷² And indeed, the important rhetorical role played by allegory, typological figurae and figurative language in general was commonly acknowledged in Protestant homiletic theory and practice.⁷³

The close association between the mimetic theory of classical myth and typology is reflected in the language used to describe both. Just as classical myth was referred to as veiling the light of truth or as the shadow that accompanied it, William Guild described how before the "full light of the Gospel" "God did indeed veil His saving truths in shadowy types and ceremonies"⁷⁴ In each case, there is a correspondingly proportional relationship: as the type is to the fully revealed truth or antitype, so is the shadow to the light or the body that casts it.

Moreover, H. R. MacCallum has argued that "the Reformers, despite their antipathy to subtle exegetical speculations were deeply influenced by the typological tradition."⁷⁵ W. G. Madsen concurs with this view, maintaining that "Typological interpretation of the Old Testament was universally practised by both Protestants and Catholics in Milton's days,"⁷⁶ while Maren-Sofie Røstvig would go still further, asserting that "The prevalence of typology was increased rather than diminished by the Reformation."⁷⁷ And indeed, Madsen's study has drawn attention to "references to the doctrine of typology [which] may be found in writings from all periods of [Milton's] life."⁷⁸ In this passage from De Doctrina Christiana, Milton argues that the literal sense of a scriptural passage from the Old Testament includes the typological:

Sensus cuiusque scriptura unicus est;
in vetere tamen testamento saepe est;
composito ex historia et typo.⁷⁹

Recently critics have detected the influence of typological patterning in certain of Milton's poetic works⁸⁰ which proceed 'by types and shadows' from 'shadowy types to truth.'

Strictly speaking, the theory of typology propounded that certain characters and episodes in the Old Testament are symbolic pre-figurations of Christ and events in the New Testament. However, this method of interpretation was extended to include pagan history and myth, for, in the light of Augustine's argument that:

Nam res ipsa quae nunc Christiana
religio nuncupatur ab initio generis
humani quo unde vera religio quae
iam erat coepit appellari Christiani
usque ipse Christus veniret in carne. 81

it became equally possible to attribute the typological function enjoyed by the Old Testament to other pre-Christian sources.

Such a role was evidently ascribed to Hercules. As servator mundi, his labours were held to represent the forces of light, order and reason successfully combating the powers of darkness, chaos and furor. Moreover, his victory over death and subsequent translation into 'Heaven' made him seem a particularly apt and appropriate figura of Christ.⁸² Since it occurs in an overtly anti-pagan context, the most notable instance of Milton's acknowledgement of Hercules as a type Christ is to be found in his early work, On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, where he alludes to the

infant Hercules' first exploit against the destructive forces of evil:

Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damned crew.

(227-28)

Significantly, such a linkage is not confined to a composition of his artistic immaturity. In Paradise Regained where, for the most part, classical allusions are conspicuously absent, Christ's conquest over Satan is imaged through a reference to "Jove's Alcides" triumphant encounter with the "Earth's son Antaeus" (P R IV. 565; 563).

More significantly for our purpose, it is interesting to note that using such conventional figurae, Milton, as Madsen observes, "creates his own types",⁸³ though, of course, used as a rhetorical device in this way, typological patterning does not belong to exegesis proper.

As Christ is pre-eminently the antitype throughout the Old Testament, so Eve becomes, in Paradise Lost, the antitype who, once and for all, reveals and fulfils the meaning latent in those pagan myths which were conceived to be distorted accounts of the Fall. Her 'types' in ancient myth should, however, be more properly termed 'ectypes' since they enjoyed no independent historical existence but were, as we have seen, regarded as pale reflections of Eve herself. Typology thus forms the most comprehensive and historically appropriate, intellectually and aesthetically satisfying, explanation of the admixture of unqualified pagan elements in Milton's portrayal of Eve. Milton presents in a clearly apprehensible pattern, an extensive system of interrelated

images, events and mythological types which carry the fullest range of typological correspondence, illustrating Eve's passage from innocence to experience. Whilst Eve herself transcends and subsumes all such partial expressions of her own comprehensive nature, at times it is intimated that this typological pattern will only be finally fulfilled by 'Mary, Second Eve.'⁸⁴

Such typological patterning enables Milton to enrich his central myth with a suggestive complexity that is not tangential but centripetal. The consummate artistic control exhibited in Milton's handling of these myths, the skill with which he integrates them into the narrative as fine threads are woven into an intricate pattern, ensures that they are made to minister to the overriding truth of his own work, a remarkable achievement. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the persistence of this view-that classical myths were 'shadows of truth'-indirectly furthered the competitive spirit that lay behind the influential Renaissance concepts of imitatio and aemulatio, derived ultimately from Quintilian's 'De Imitatione.'⁸⁵ Assured of the supreme authenticity of the Hebrew rendering, Milton could indulge his mythographical aim of ousting while absorbing the rival versions. Keenly aware of the imaginative value of ancient myth, Milton was able to tap and exploit its poetic power whilst at the same time establishing his Eve as the summa of all other partial embodiments of truth that appear in the fractured versions of the one complete account to which he had access in scripture and to which he gave poetic expression in his epic.

II

The Function of Milton's Mythological Similes

Determining the function of Milton's mythological allusions has, of course, more closely occupied modern critics, untroubled by questions of the propriety of introducing mythological material into an account of events which have themselves come to be regarded as symbolic rather than literal truth. Moreover, the influence of the 'Milton Controversy',⁸⁶ and the 'New Criticism' have combined together to sharpen attention on the 'minuter threads of texture' in Milton's verse.

Rather than confining criticism to general, unfocussed praise for grand effects, broadly conceived and boldly executed, a number of scholars in the last thirty years or so have demonstrated that relatively small units of Milton's composition respond well to close analysis and that his 'Grand Style' does not require him to forfeit "the possibility of delicacy and subtlety".⁸⁷ One important effect of such close readings has been to draw attention to the way in which Paradise Lost is so organised that ideas, events and images echo in correspondence and antithesis from one part to another in a complete system of parallel and cross-reference.⁸⁸ Given this "extraordinary network of parallels and contrasts, especially the minute ones, and ... many other refinements," Bush concludes, "we can hardly imagine that such a fabric 'Rose like an exhalation', that it did not entail much recasting and revision."⁸⁹

Having suggested that Milton's mythological similes play their part in enriching the narrative texture with a layer of complexity that is not tangential, I now propose to introduce briefly some of the different levels upon which they operate and to suggest what distinguishes Milton's similes from those of his predecessors in the epic genre. However, it is interesting to note that previously critics as diverse as Addison and Eliot subscribed to the view that Milton's similes were often nothing more than pleasing digressions to entertain the reader. Addison regards the main function of the simile in an epic poem to be "to amuse and relax the Mind of the Reader, by frequently disengaging him from too painful an Attention to the principal Subject, and by leading him into other agreeable Images."⁹⁰ T. S. Eliot, ever a dangerous ally, commends "Milton's skill in extending a period by introducing imagery which tends to distract us from the real subject" and, in the same vein, praises his "happy introduction of so much extraneous matter."⁹¹

Similarly, Dr. Johnson remarks only in their favour that "they contribute variety to the narrative and produce an alternate exercise of the memory and fancy."⁹² Johnson's comments too are evidently founded upon the traditional justification of such figurative departures, that they provide narrative 'relief', enhancing the reader's enjoyment by the contrast of a brief excursion into a remote mythological world, the realm of fancy, and thus affording necessary refreshment.

Certainly, at these moments of intersection in Milton's continuous narrative, the transverse action of the similes allows us to pause, but only so as to increase our awareness of a sense of gathering and converging significance. For it has been remarked by Whaler that

Milton's similes are more closely integrated into the narrative than those in his epic models. "Milton's similes," Whaler argues, "are organically related to a degree beyond those of his epic predecessors."⁹³ The Homeric simile especially, generally fastens upon a broad resemblance and then gradually drifts away until the vehicle has a rich and full existence, independent of the tenor, whereas "A typically complex Miltonic simile," Whaler observes, "directs each detail to some application in the fable; i.e. homologation rather than heterogeneity between terms is the rule."⁹⁴ This achievement is even more impressive when we recall Milton himself in his early work Artis Logicae, deferring to the wisdom of the Schools:

nullum simile est idem, simile non currit
quatuor pedibus omne simile claudicat.⁹⁵

Milton's similes may appear digressive at first sight because, schematically tight though they are, the similes depend for their full effect as much on what is covertly suggested as on what is expressly said. Macaulay considered the merit of Milton's poetic style lay "less in its obvious meaning than in its occult power", and, commenting upon the expansive quality of Milton's verse in general, which gives full play to the reader's own creative imagination, he observes in a passage of fine criticism:

The most striking characteristic of the poetry of Milton is the extreme remoteness of the associations by means of which it acts on the reader. Its effect is produced, not so much by what it expresses, as by what it suggests, not so much by the ideas which it directly conveys, as by

other ideas which are connected with them. He electrifies the mind through conductors. The most unimaginative man must understand the Iliad. Homer gives him no choice, and requires from him no exertion; but takes the whole upon himself, and sets his images in so clear a light that it is impossible to be blind to them. The works of Milton cannot be comprehended or enjoyed unless the mind of the reader co-operates with that of the writer. He does not paint a finished picture or play for a more passive listener.⁹⁶

Modern critics have also commented on Milton's ability to address the reader to a consideration of something other than the immediate point of comparison, even to invoke what is deliberately excluded. Indeed, Christopher Ricks has claimed that Milton is "at his best when prevented from writing with total directness."⁹⁷ The comparison of Eden with Enna is most commonly cited as an instance of the "sub-
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terranean virtue" of Milton's similes, where affective energy lurks behind or alongside what is ostensibly said. As C. S. Lewis has so perceptively observed:

... the deeper value of the simile lies in the resemblance which is not explicitly noted as a resemblance at all. The fact that in both these places the young and beautiful while gathering flowers was ravished by a dark power from the Underworld.⁹⁹

From this perspective too, then, the mythological similes that link Eve with certain Ovidian figures do not appear to be merely incidental accompanying imagery, but the result of a more significant level of association. They introduce an element of metaphorical

identification and signal vital information about Eve herself. The imaginative colouring thus becomes the very means whereby the character of Eve is presented, as it were, 'athwart' her pagan representatives.

Moreover, because of this suggestive obliquity, the similes do not stand out conspicuously from the text as contrived pieces of engineering in which the rigid constraints of formal equation foreclose further discussion and thought. Milton does not allow the exactions of homology to stifle their imaginative life.

That Milton's similes should communicate their full meaning only via such dark intimations, yielding their real import "circuitously, through a long chain of associated ideas"¹⁰¹ seems especially remarkable when we consider Milton's own caveat:

Movendum autem erat similia sive contractae formae
sive explicatae urgenda non esse ultra eam qual-
itatem quam in utrisque eandem esse propositum
assimilanti erat ostendere: sic magistratus
assimilatur cani,¹⁰² sola nimium fidelitate assimilatur
custodiae ...

Although the Artis Logicae cannot be regarded as the poetics of a practising poet, it is interesting to note that even here, where Milton is discouraging the search for subtle relationships between things compared, he stresses not so much the need for tact and discrimination on the part of the reader to prevent him from unravelling the full content of the image, but rather draws attention to the importance of discovering the writer's own intentions when drawing the comparison.

Milton's similes seldom work at a purely external, reflective level and are never, Collett affirms, "exclusively used for visual, physical description."¹⁰³ So too, as Hartman has shown, Milton's similes rarely deal in straight analogy; his finest comparisons yield magnifying or diminishing effects.¹⁰⁴ Thus, by comparing Eve with mythological figures to her advantage, Milton uses this process of "aggrandizement"¹⁰⁵ to suggest her superhuman excellence, lifting her above the plain of common humanity. As Bush explains, "In Milton, as in other Renaissance poets, the ancient myths are generally symbols of an ideal world of beauty,"¹⁰⁶ and "their usefulness as a descriptive technique in a situation forbidding description" has been remarked upon by Isabel MacCaffrey.¹⁰⁷

Yet the result of these associations is not as simple and unambivalent as this would seem to imply. Milton succeeds in evoking complex feelings about Eve, qualifying as well as intensifying our response, releasing ironic as well as enhancing suggestiveness. The simile, by referring the reader outside the narrative proper and calling attention to something other than the immediate point of comparison, may result in a calculatedly ambiguous and ironic effect.¹⁰⁸ The similes are thus centres of emotional force, evoking powerful literary memories and drawing strength from the reader's recollections which then direct and focus his response. As Isabel MacCaffrey so perceptively noted:

The words are there because of their emotional, value-conferring weight, and though not usually exhaustively descriptive of external attributes, they do succeed in suggesting the attitude that Milton wishes us to take up.¹⁰⁹

In this way, the simile can be employed as a means of artistic preparation to indicate, or even further, thematic developments, and the use of homology naturally facilitates such effects. Whaler has indeed argued that Milton was "the first epic poet to add to the simile the function of prolepsis";¹¹⁰ Milton does not allow us to forget entirely what we already know - that Eve will fall - and this makes possible rich proleptic ironies in which we recognise tacit anticipations of her fall. In this way, as Isabel MacCaffrey puts it, such proleptic imagery becomes "a kind of substitute in reverse for suspense."¹¹¹ Other critics have taken Whaler's lead still further to claim that the very structure and texture of the poem is inherently proleptic. As Ricks concludes, "Prolepsis is surely the key figure throughout Paradise Lost, in the fable itself, in allusion, in simile and even in syntax and word-play."¹¹²

Dr. Johnson was one of the first critics to recognise that one of the major strengths of Paradise Lost would be in the diversification of the narrative by "retrospection and anticipation."¹¹³ Since suspense, the most common driving force of narrative verse was denied to him, Milton rejected a purely linear narrative movement for what MacCaffrey has called "the tacit comment of interconnecting ... threads."¹¹⁴ As MacCaffrey explains, such "narrative slights chronology in favor of a folded structure which continually returns upon itself" and later she adds:

Every incident, every speech, almost every phrase of Paradise Lost casts light back and ahead to illuminate past and future so that we are made aware of the entire myth at once ... repeated words and phrases ... gather significance as they go along and reinforce, even while they borrow strength from, our familiarity with the story.¹¹⁵

The reverberations created by Milton's skilful deployment of key images, significant repetitions and verbal echoes cover immense distances in the poem and relate in a premonitory way important later developments.

Milton thus turns to advantage the reader's familiarity with his story: the full meaning of any simile is not accessible in its immediate context alone ; it is only fully interpretable through a knowledge of the completed fable. For our response to narrative is usually two-fold, we use two different modes of perception: the immediate, our response to the action as it develops from line to line, page to page; and the retrospective, when we look back from the vantage point of the final line and re-arrange the linear pattern of events according to our understanding of their ultimate significance.

Milton's practice offers further rich possibilities; his similes are points of widening perspective at which we become aware of the story and its significance in its entirety. This does not mean we discover different meanings but rather expanded meanings, as the events of the present moment are glimpsed from their ultimate perspective.¹¹⁶ Milton thus makes full use of the kaleidoscopic flexibility of the reader's mind to hold in readiness all these shifting patterns of relatedness.

In the next section, I hope to demonstrate how Milton articulates his portrayal of Eve around the three phases of the unfolding sequence: virgin, bride, mother, enmeshing Eve's past and future in the narrative present and taking the reader beyond the immediate temporal significance of events. In this way, Milton preserves the eternal present of Eden while, at the same time, suggesting that unfallen Eve is not frozen in the timeless stasis of perfection, but at all times enjoys the

potentiality of both development and degeneration. We shall examine in some detail how Milton furnishes the outline for this initial study of Eve through a rapid series of mythological identifications.

For the poets of the Renaissance, the "images and symbols drawn from classical myth were, more than in any period before or since, an instinctive, native language"¹¹⁷ and Milton was "born in time to share [this] centuries-long habit of thinking in figures."¹¹⁸ Although Milton's open use of mythological material is invariably introduced in the formal pattern of the simile, it is organic and metaphorical in effect. Indeed, it is as though Milton's "Heart & Intellect" were "intimately combined & unified" with them and "not merely held in solution ... in the shape of formal Similes."¹¹⁹ They seem rather to be the "incarnation of thought" and not the mere "clothing" for it, the relationship of the simile to the narrative being not so much as "the garb is to the body, but what the body is to the soul."¹²⁰ They are thus fused with the narrative, being an essential part of the meaning and not some kind of separable 'ornament' or 'decoration' included as an entertaining diversion or distraction for the reader. Indeed, the reader's pleasure is likely to be considerably heightened by a more conscious awareness of some of the more significant applications of the mythological simile that we have discussed in this chapter.

Notes

1. cf. M. H. Abrams, 'Pragmatic Theories' in The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (1953, reprinted 1971), pp.19-21. I am indebted to this valuable work on critical theory in this chapter.
2. Horace, Ars Poetica, ll.343-44 from Q. Horati Flacci Opera, edited by Edward C. Wickham (Oxford, 1900).
3. In his defence of the classical poets, and Ovid in particular, Golding adapted the Horatian formula arguing that "Their purpose was to profite men and also to delight", The XV Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, Entituled Metamorphoses, ...Translated out of Latin into English Meeter by Arthur Golding (1584), p.2. But cf. PR IV. 343-47.
4. Sir Philip Sidney, An Apologie for Poetrie from The Prelude to Poetry: The English Poets in Defence and Praise of their own Art ed. Ernest Rhys (first published 1927; reprinted 1970), p.17, emphasis added.
5. ibid., p.30.
6. Lucreti De Rerum Natura I. 933-50, ed. Cyril Bailey (Oxford, second edition 1922; reprinted 1974).
7. Reason of Church Government II (Col. III, p.239).
8. Similarly, Sir Philip Sidney drew an important distinction between "the first and noble sorte, [that] may justly bee termed Vates," the true poets, and mere "versifyers" see An Apologie for Poetrie, pp.17-18.
9. Reason of Church Government II (Col.III, p.239).
10. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets I, p.454.
11. James Beattie, Essays on Poetry and Music (1779, 3rd edition), p.234.

12. Alexander Pope, 'A Receipt to Make an Epic Poem'; this chapter from The Art of Sinking in Poetry (1728) first appeared in The Guardian, no.78, 10 June 1713 and is reprinted in Neo-Classical Criticism 1660-1800, ed. Irène Simon (1971), pp.159-62.
13. Of Education (Col. IV, p.286).
14. M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p.266.
15. See Bush 'Allegory and Anti-pagan Sentiment' in Pagan Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, pp.240-47.
16. William Davenant, 'Preface to Gondibert', reprinted in Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, ed. J. E. Spingarn (Oxford, 1957) II, p.3.
17. John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, 'On Mr Hobbs and his Writings', The Works (1753) I, p.134.
18. Thomas Sprat, The History of the Royal Society of London (1667), p.414.
19. Traced by M. H. Abrams in 'Truth and the Poetic Marvelous', The Mirror and the Lamp, p.267.
20. Davideis I. 37-42 from Abraham Cowley: Poetry and Prose with Thomas Sprat's Life and Observations by Dryden, Addison, Johnson and Others with an Introduction and notes by L. C. Martin (Oxford, 1949).
21. Psyche, or Love's Mystery in XXIV Cantos: Displaying the Inter-course Betwixt Christ and the Soul from The Complete Poems of Dr. Joseph Beaumont, ed. A. B. Grosart (Edinburgh, 1880) I, p.5.
22. Sylvester's Du Bartas II.i.1. 40-43.
23. ibid., II.i.1. 76, 78-82.

24. But cf. Bush, 'Introduction' to The Latin and Greek Poems, where he observes that:

The adaptation of specifically pagan images and phrases to Christian uses and contexts had been one of the conspicuous neo-pagan features of Renaissance Ciceronianism, but the practice was universal and was carried on in entirely good faith among poets in the vernaculars as well as in Latin. (p.15)

25. C. A. Moore, 'Miltonia (1679-1741)', MP XXIV (1926-27), pp.321-22.
26. Frances A. Yates, The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age (1979), p.79.
27. Bush, Pagan Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, p.275.
28. ibid., pp.273-75.
29. ibid., p.275.
30. ibid., p.273 and 'Paradise Lost' in Our Time: Some Comments (New York, 1945), pp.100-2.
31. For an invaluable study of the structural patterning of Milton's mythological imagery in Paradise Lost, see Jonathan H. Collett, 'Milton's Use of Classical Mythology in Paradise Lost', PMLA, LXXV (1970), pp.88-96.
32. See C. H. Collins Baker, Catalogues of the Pictures at Hampton Court (1929), p.47, no.635 (Inv.301), R. C. Strong, Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I (1963), p.79, no.81, cited by Wind, p.83. See too the conclusion to The Arraignment of Paris (V.i.) where Venus, Juno and Pallas yield their claim to the golden apple which is awarded by Dian to Elizabeth in "Praise of the wisdom, beauty and the state,/That best becomes thy peerless excellency (The Works of George Peele: Now First Collected with Some Account of his Writing and Notes by Rev. Alexander Dyce [1828], I).
33. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets I, pp.178-79.

34. 'Defects of the Poem', Spectator, No.297, Feb. 9, 1712, from Addison's Criticisms on 'Paradise Lost', ed. by Albert S. Cook (Boston, 1892), p.39 and cf. Newton's reply in his note to II.8.
36. Grant McColley, 'Paradise Lost': An Account of Its Growth and Major Origins, with a Discussion of Milton's Use of Sources and Literary Patterns (Chicago, 1940), p.1.
37. Shahla Anand, "Of Costliest Emblem": 'Paradise Lost' and the Emblem Tradition (Washington D.C., 1978), p.ii.
38. From a review of D. C. Allen's Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance (Baltimore, 1970) in MQ VII (1973), p.54. See too, Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, p.93.
39. See M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, pp.265-68.
40. Thomas De Quincey, The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey: New and Enlarged Edition in 14 Volumes by David Masson (Edinburgh, 1890), XI, p.404
41. Albert C. Labriola, "'The Titans and the Giants": Paradise Lost and the Tradition of the Renaissance Ovid', MQ XII (1978), p.10.
42. Sandys, p.60.
43. ibid.
44. Golding, The XV Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso Entituled Metamorphoses, p.Avii.
45. ibid., p.xi.
46. ibid.
47. An Essay Upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients in his 'Paradise Lost'. With Some Observations on the 'Paradise Regained' (1741), p.16.

48. Comus, 512; 514. See too Goodman's comments on the divini poetae, The Fall of Man, p.398.
49. Bush, Pagan Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, pp.264-65.
50. See Leonora Leet Brodwin, 'Milton and the Renaissance Circe', MS VI (1974), pp.21-84.
51. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, p.47.
52. D. C. Allen, The Harmonious Vision: Studies in Milton's Poetry (Baltimore, 1954), p.127.
53. Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, pp.24-25; see also Richard F. Hardin, 'Ovid in Seventeenth Century England', CL XXIV (1977) pp.44-62, where he argues that in England as opposed to Italy, Ovid continued to be read in the medieval tradition as a covert Christian who had written erotic fables to convey sacred doctrine and moral wisdom. See too Bush, Pagan Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, where he comments on the "continued flourishing of allegory in the seventeenth, and even in the eighteenth century"(p.240) and cf. Jean Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods, trans. Barbara F. Sessions (New York, 1953), p.79. But, as Ann Moss has pointed out, as early as 1513, Erasmus had denounced the allegorical tradition:"opus cuiusdam Praedicatoris insulsissimum quod omnes Ovidianas fabulas ad Christum accomodat, imo detorquet" (Ovid in Renaissance France: A Survey of the Latin Editions of Ovid and Commentaries Printed in France before 1600, Warburg Institute Surveys VIII [1982], p.26).
54. D. C. Allen, Mysteriously Meant, p.163.
55. Bush, Pagan Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, p.243.
56. In his foreword to Sandys, p.xi.
57. Labriola, 'The Titans and the Giants: Paradise Lost and the Tradition of the Renaissance Ovid', p.10.
58. See Maren-Sofie Røstvig, 'Images of Perfection', in Seventeenth-century Imagery: Essays on Uses of Figurative Language from Donne to Farquhar, ed. Earl Miner (1971), pp.1-24.

59. Sir Walter Raleigh, The History of the World (1614), The first Book of the First Part, Chapter 6, p.91. See too, Northrop Frye, 'A Revelation to Eve' in 'Paradise Lost': A Tercentenary Tribute, ed. B. Rajan (Toronto, 1969), pp.26-27.
60. Goodman, Fall of Man, pp.398-99.
61. Raleigh, The History of the World, p.97.
62. ibid., p.84.
63. Isabel MacCaffrey, 'Paradise Lost' as 'Myth' (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p.14.
64. Raleigh, The History of the World, p.84.
65. Areopagitica (Col. IV, p.338).
66. MacCaffrey, 'Paradise Lost' as 'Myth', p.121 and cf. Frank Kermode, 'Adam Unparadised' in The Living Milton, ed. Frank Kermode (1960), p.113.
67. Kermode, 'Adam Unparadised', p.89. See too Joseph E. Duncan, Milton's Earthly Paradise: A Historical Study of Eden (Minnesota, 1972), pp.36-37.
68. Bentley, note to IV.268ff.
69. Kermode, 'Adam Unparadised', p.89.
70. Golding, The XV Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso Entituled Metamorphoses, p.xi and cf. Sandys, p.65. See too Arnold Williams, The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis 1527-1633 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1948), pp.199-215.
71. An Essay upon Milton's Imitations of the Ancients, p.16.
72. As quoted by Ann Moss, Ovid in Renaissance France, p.32.

73. See H. R. MacCallum, 'Milton and the Figurative Interpretation of the Bible', University of Toronto Quarterly XXXI (1962), pp.397-415.
74. William Guild, Epistle Dedicatorie to MOSES UNVAILED (1620), as quoted by William G. Madsen, From Shadowy Types to Truth: Studies in Milton's Symbolism (1968), pp.77-78.
75. H. R. MacCallum, 'Milton and the Figurative Interpretation of the Bible', p.404.
76. William G. Madsen, From Shadowy Types to Truth: Studies in Milton's Symbolism (1968), p.3.
77. Røstvig, 'Images of Perfection', p.4.
78. See Madsen, 'From Shadowy Types to Truth' in Milton Modern Judgements, p.222
79. De Doct. I.xxx (Col. XVI, p.263).
80. Previous writing on this subject includes: Madsen, From Shadowy Types to Truth; J. C. Ulreich, 'The Typological Structure of Milton's Imagery', MS V (1973), pp.67-86, and 'Typological Symbolism in Milton's Sonnet XXIII', MQ VIII (1979), pp.7-10; Kurt Heinzelman, '"Cold Consolation": The Art of Milton's Last Sonnet', MS X (1977), pp.111-26; John Spencer Hill, '"Alcestis from the Grave": Image and Structure in Sonnet XXIII', MS X (1977), pp.127-40.
81. Duo Libri Retractationum. Beati Augustini (Milano, 1486). De Vera Religione, Liber Unus, XII.
82. See D. C. Allen, The Harmonious Vision, pp.127-31. But see also Leslie Brisman, 'Serpent Error: Paradise Lost X, 216-18', MS II (1970), pp.27-36 for an interesting discussion of the ironic complexity of Milton's allusion to the specifically "Ovidian description of the redemption of the classical hero" (pp.32-33).
83. Madsen, From Shadowy Types to Truth, p.82.
84. See Mother Mary Pecheux, 'The Concept of the Second Eve in Paradise Lost', PMLA LXXV (1960), pp.359-66; and pp.203-4;246, but cf. p.349.

85. Quintiliani, Instituionis Oratoriae Liber X, ed. by W. Peterson (Oxford, 1921), ii. 1-28.
86. For a summary of the main positions in the 'Milton Controversy' see Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, pp.1-21 and Bernard Bergonzi, 'Criticism and the Milton Controversy' in The Living Milton, ed. F. Kermodé, pp.162-80.
87. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, p.23.
88. But note the caveats against 'overreadings' of Milton's imagery given by Adams, p.33; Burton J. Webber, 'The Non-Narrative Approaches to Paradise Lost', MS IX (1976), pp.77-104 and Rosemond Tuve, 'New Approaches on Milton', from Essays by Rosemond Tuve: Spenser, Herbert, Milton (Princeton, New Jersey, 1970), pp.255-61.
89. Bush, John Milton: A Sketch of His Life and Writings (1964), p.142.
90. Here Addison is quoting Boileau's reply to Perrault's ridicule of Homer's "long-tailed comparisons", 'Book I', Spectator No.303, Feb. 16, 1712, p.80. See too Newton's note to XI.8.
91. Proceedings of the British Academy (1947), XXXIII, pp.74-75.
92. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets I, pp.178-79.
93. James Whaler, 'The Miltonic Simile', PMLA LVI (1931), p.1037.
94. ibid., p.1034.
95. Artis Logicae I.xxi (Col. XI, pp.194-95).
96. Macaulay, An Essay ... on Milton, p.16. See too Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, pp.147-48.
97. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, pp.147-48.
98. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost' (Oxford, 1971), p.43.

99. ibid.
101. Macaulay, An Essay ... on Milton, p.30.
102. Artis Logicae I.xxi (Col. XI.,pp.194-95).
103. Collett , p.88.
104. Geoffrey Hartman, 'Milton's Counterplot', ELN XXV (1958), pp. 1-12.
105. Whaler, 'The Miltonic Simile', pp.1035-36.
106. Bush, 'Paradise Lost' in Our Time, p.101.
107. MacCaffrey, 'Paradise Lost' as 'Myth', p.121.
108. See Douglas Bush, 'Ironic and Ambiguous Allusion in Paradise Lost', JEGP (1961) LX, pp.631-40. A. Bartlett Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic (Princeton, New Jersey, 1966), pp.295-355 and D. P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, pp.67-85.
109. MacCaffrey, 'Paradise Lost' as 'Myth', p.102.
110. Whaler, 'The Miltonic Simile', p.1036. However, such similes as Aeneid XII. 450-58, which contain precise homologation between terms and clearly exercise a proleptic function obviously anticipate Milton's usage.
111. MacCaffrey, 'Paradise Lost' as 'Myth', p.87.
112. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, p.105.
113. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, I, p.170.
114. MacCaffrey, 'Paradise Lost' as 'Myth', p.45.

115. ibid., p.87.
116. cf. MacCaffrey, 'Paradise Lost' as 'Myth', pp.81-91.
117. Douglas Bush, Pagan Myth and Christian Tradition in English Poetry, Jayne Lectures for 1967, Memoirs for the American Philosophical Society, vol.72 (Philadelphia, 1968), p.31.
118. Rosemond Tuve, Images and Themes in Five Poems by Milton (1957), p.5.
119. An expression borrowed from S. T. Coleridge, 'To William Sotheby', Friday September 10th 1802, from Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Griggs (Oxford, 1956) Vol.II, p.459.
120. William Wordsworth, 'Upon Epitaphs' from Wordsworth's Literary Criticism, ed. N. C. Smith (1905), pp.126-29.

CHAPTER IV

Virgin, Bride and Mother¹

I

A local Habitation and a Name

In his commentary on the text of Genesis, Evans has suggestively applied Auerbach's characterisation of the style of the Old Testament author known as the Elohist to the Jahwist's account of the creation and Fall of man to be found in the second and third chapters of Genesis

... the decisive points of the narrative alone are emphasized, what lies between is non-existent; time and place are undefined and call for interpretation; thoughts and feelings remain unexpressed, [and] are only suggested by the silence and the fragmentary speeches.²

In his literary elaboration of this bare outline of events Milton set out to supply narrative coherence, to fill these lacunae with context, speech, characterisation and incident.

Dr. Johnson has finely commented on the difficulties involved and Milton's achievement:

Whoever considers the few radical positions which the Scriptures afforded him, will wonder by what energetick operation he expanded them to such extent, and ramified them to so much variety, restrained as he was by religious reverence from licentiousness of fiction.³

As part of his task Milton accepted the challenge to endow the shadowy figure of Eve in Genesis with substance and form.

Let us first remind ourselves of the scanty material afforded by the Biblical account concerning Eve. Before the temptation and Fall, we are merely told that when "for Adam there was not found an help meet for him"

... the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the Flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

(Gen. II.20-24)

In his imaginative reconstruction of this event, Milton transformed the 'Woman' into one of the most fascinating and complex of his literary creations, Eve.

The Scriptural account of Eve's creation positively bristles with unasked and unanswered questions.⁴ Amongst those questions which Milton undertook to answer were: where was Eve removed to immediately after her creation; what did she do before her Maker led her to Adam; what was her response to Adam's declaration, "This is now bone of my bones ..."? This provided Milton with considerable room for interpretation⁵ and he furnished it richly with his own original "invention".⁶

Harding has pointed out that "Being a literalist, that is, believing that the text of Scripture was infallible, Milton felt constrained to observe the limitations imposed" by the letter of the Bible,⁷ but on those occasions when it was vague or unspecific Milton was at liberty to eke out his meagre resources with material both from Christian and Rabbinical commentaries and from hexaemeral and classical literature provided that it in no way countermined the spirit of the Biblical account. To articulate and amplify the dramatic role of Eve before the Fall, Milton seems to have turned chiefly to the latter. Milton evidently turned to Ovid for inspiration when making one of his most significant and suggestive additions to the story as related in Genesis. With great creative insight and

consummate artistry, Milton drew upon two Ovidian myths in particular for his imaginative reconstruction of Eve's first moments of consciousness and her initial response to Adam (IV.449-91). With the creation of Eve the poetic narrative begins to break out of the framework of the Biblical text.

II

The Myrror of Virginitie

The stories of both Narcissus and Daphne are adroitly woven into the pattern of Eve's experience. Milton's use of "the famous story of Narcissus in Ovid"⁸ has been generally remarked by commentators from the earliest editions onwards. And, since it emphatically introduces the thematic motif of the virginal Eve, it thereby prepares us for the fleeting allusion to Daphne at this point which, being less obtrusive and less fully developed, has generally passed unnoticed.

Milton's handling of the Narcissus myth forms an almost unique instance of its kind in Paradise Lost. Evidence for the direct borrowing of Ovidian material is hardly ever so conclusive elsewhere. We do not merely find faint, tantalising echoes, as is the case in his treatment of the myth of Daphne. Although no explicit comparison is drawn between the two, "It is", as Osgood so concisely puts it, "Ovid's story of Narcissus and his love for the face he saw reflected in the water of a spring, except that Eve is put for Narcissus."⁹

Newton's comments too suggest that he felt Milton was making no attempt to disguise his borrowing. Milton, he affirms, "manifestly took the hint", and "expressly imitated some passages" from Ovid's fable.¹⁰ Indeed, Milton openly flaunts his usage of Ovidian material and even takes the opportunity of correcting the translation of others.

As Gransden has pointed out

... the phrase 'with thee it came and goes' is pedantically accurate about Ovid's tenses: the metre shows that 'venit' in 'tecum venitque manetque' is past, not present, though George Sandys, and most modern translations, read 'comes'.¹¹

Since the general resemblance in the basic story line and setting are reinforced by certain structural, thematic and verbal parallels, it seems evident that it was part of Milton's conscious artistic purpose that his reader should recognize the implicit analogy between Eve and Narcissus.

Ovid's fable was most instrumental in helping Milton meet the challenge of conjuring up effectively a unique experience in human history. C.S.Lewis hammers the point home when he says Eve, like Adam, was "never young, never immature or undeveloped" but "created full-grown and perfect".¹² How would it feel to come to consciousness a mature and fully formed adult, yet with no practical knowledge or guidance, to encounter the world with "unexperienced thought" (IV.457)? It would seem natural that such a being would be like an inexperienced child, easily deceived by the delusive appearances of things yet have the feelings of an adult. Narcissus' experience by the pool proved to be the perfect figure to crystallize in the reader's mind this peculiar state of nescience.

By couching Eve's experience in Ovidian terms Milton follows the precepts of Aristotle and Horace as interpreted in Renaissance and Neo-classical theories of poetics for decorous and credible invention. Milton maintains a pleasing equilibrium between novelty and familiarity, the prerequisites for successful creation. The episode strikes us with its freshness and novelty, since the Narcissus myth had never been applied to Eve's experience before in hexameter literature, and with familiarity, since it carries the weight of Ovidian tradition behind it.

For this reason Milton's use of the Narcissus myth was acclaimed by early editors and commentators. Indeed, Milton's treatment was commended because it was felt to improve upon its original in Ovid. Patrick Hume was the first of many to defend Milton's use of the Ovidian episode, arguing that, it was

... much more probable that a Person who had never seen any thing like her self, should be in love with her own faint reflected Resemblance, than that a Man acquainted with the World and himself, should be undone by so dull a dotage.¹³

Newton too adjudged it "much more probable and natural, as well as more delicate and beautiful" than Ovid's Fable, concluding, "our author ... has avoided all [Ovid's] puerilities without losing any of his beauties".¹⁴ It is interesting to note in passing Dr. Johnson's argument that since "The man and woman who act and suffer, are in a state which no other man and woman can ever know" it follows that:

The reader finds no transaction in which he can be engaged; beholds no condition in which he can by any effort of imagination place himself; [and] he has, therefore, little natural curiosity or sympathy.¹⁵

However, by presenting Eve's experience obliquely, athwart that of a familiar mythical figure, Milton would seem to have disposed of "this inconvenience".¹⁶

Yet readers are now so familiar with the proleptic reading of the episode, in which either Eve's error "foreshadows her later credulity"¹⁷ or, more frequently, her admiration for her reflection has a graver significance, betraying to Satan a "faint trace of latent vanity and self-centredness" which he will later put to use, that they exclude the possibility of other layers of meaning and significance.¹⁸ It seems by no means incidental to Milton's purpose that this passage helps to establish Eve's virginal role.

Still as Giamatti has insisted

... it would be a stubborn reader who would refuse to see the narcissism here, as some have done, or who would insist on completely underplaying its implications.¹⁹

Eve caught in the reflection of this Ovidian myth makes an indelible impression on the reader, forming thereby an inseparable aspect of his response to her virginal role, and what follows tends to take some of its significance from this, projecting its own light on the succeeding representation of Eve as Daphne.

Ovid's continuing popularity seems to reside largely in his art as an image-maker. Time has not eroded the magical beauty and psychological truth of certain of his images, and to the forefront of these is to be found the figure of Narcissus. Ever since Ovid's treatment of the myth, the haunting image of Narcissus gazing vainly at his reflection in a pool of water has arrested attention and proved an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artists as diverse as Edmund Spenser in the sixteenth century and Salvador Dali in our own: Spenser's Britomart, having fallen in love with the image of Artegall that appears as she gazes into the magical "looking glasse" of Merlin, likens her seemingly hopeless predicament to that of Narcissus,²⁰ while Salvador Dali has captured in lurid colours the stark image of Narcissus' barren and wasteful love.²¹ On the one hand Milton's handling of the motif is like Spenser's in that ultimately "the point of Eve's narration is the contrast rather than the comparison with the original Narcissus", Eve will find "fulfilment" and not pine with "vain desire",²² on the other hand we cannot altogether purge the image of its dark and threatening features as Milton's vision appears surprisingly close to Dali's in mood and thematic image.

Like Narcissus, Eve is "adorned" with such "perfect beauty" (IV.634) as is bound to inspire love in the beholder. Like Narcissus too, she is fascinated by her own loveliness:

cunctaque miratur, quibus est mirabilis ipse:
 se cupit imprudens et, qui probat, ipse probatur,
 dumque petit, petitur, pariterque accendit et ardet.

(Met.III.424-26)

Eve proves unable to distinguish reality from appearance, substance from shadow; "spem sine corpore amat, corpus putat esse, quod umbra est" (Met.III.417), and, like Narcissus, because of her ignorance of the true nature of her situation "quid videat, nescit; sed quod videt, uritur illo" (Met.III.430).

Commenting on this scene, Marjorie Nicholson has argued that:

It seems entirely possible to explain Eve's supposed 'narcissism' by saying that Eve was still an infant and just now created - and her experience was that of any child for the first time noticing its reflection in the mirror or water.

While this is a suggestive point, it is not strictly accurate. It disguises, by its emphasis on Eve's "childlikeness", what Milton is at pains to stress. In keeping with the general consensus of opinion that Eve "was created as at the age of twenty"²⁴ the emotions elicited by the lovely figure in the water are clearly not infantine; they are, on the contrary, those of a woman, mature and ripe for a husband. In accordance with the purpose for which she has been created, Eve reveals her nature to give 'sympathy' and 'love', but because of her removal from Adam's side this has been ironically deflected from its natural and proper object.

Narcissus appealed to the timeless spectators, the trees around him:

"ecquem, cum vestrae tot agantur saecula vitae,
 qui sic tabuerit, longo meministis in aevo?"

(Met.III.444-45)

Milton's reader could cite one character who had very nearly suffered the same wasteful end. Eve recognises what would have been her fate had not a warning voice intervened

. . . there I had fixed
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire.

(IV.465-66)

Unlike Narcissus, Eve is drawn away from the pool by the mysterious voice. In Paradise Lost it is the voice of the Lord; in the Metamorphoses it is the voice of the poet himself. Ovid feels impelled to intervene personally in his own narrative in a futile attempt to avert the fate of his character Narcissus:

credule, quid frustra simulacra fugacia captas?
quod petis, est nusquam; quod amas, avertere, perdes!
ista repercussae, quam cernis, imaginis umbra est:
nil habet ista sui; tecum venitque manetque;
tecum discedet, si tu discedere possis!

(Met. III.432-36)

These lines obviously find their verbal and structural counterpart in Milton's lines

... 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 thy soft embraces.

(IV.467-71)

However, Eve's instructor is in a more advantageous position, having explained the delusory nature of her experience, he can offer her an alternative that Narcissus has already rejected. In place of a doomed and frustrate love, a life of barren self absorption, he promises one which will satisfy her longings, and a more exalted role as "Mother of [the] human race". It is as if Eve were responding to Ovid's sly parting injunction, "tecum discedet, si tu discedere

possis!" (Met.III.436), when she poses the rhetorical question, "what could I do/But follow straight, invisibly thus led?" (IV.475-76).

Yet on encountering Adam, Eve wilfully turns back to the illusory self-image, her reflection in the water, as Narcissus had done "ad faciam rediit" (Met.III.474), even after his climactic realisation "iste ego sum: sensi, nec me mea fallit imago" (Met.III.463). If the initial effect Milton sought by linking Eve with Narcissus was to render convincingly her unique situation, her 'inexperienced thought', the extension of the comparison encourages the reader to include the association of Narcissus as the arch symbol of destructive self-love²⁵ who lived a life of sterile waste and involved Echo in his own ruin. Milton has reversed the sequence of events in Ovid: Narcissus first spurns Echo and then suffers his fate in retributive justice; Eve likewise rejects Adam, but after judging him by her ideal of beauty, herself.

One of the most impressive and immediately striking features of this passage in Paradise Lost is the unfamiliar and unusual perspective it gives upon events. We look at what followed Eve's creation from the point of view of Eve herself. We have only to consider the account of Eve's creation given in the third person narrative of Sylvester's Du Bartas to appreciate the novelty of this approach.²⁶ In Du Bartas as in Genesis not a thought is given to the Woman's feelings and response; at this point she is simply a figure classified entirely by gender, and there is, of course, no question as to whether she will be willing to fulfil the role for which she has been created, a 'help meet' for Adam. In Paradise Lost, however, we do not find a generic type of 'Woman' but, as the use of her personal name throughout implies,²⁷ an individual, Eve, whose assent to Adam's suit cannot be simply assumed.

For an instant the familiar fable forces a revision in our expectations, and trembles on the brink of tragedy. Will Adam suffer

the same fate as Echo, "for ever to deplore/Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure" (VIII.479-80)? The dislocation is momentary, however, as Adam swiftly asserts himself and overcomes the passive role of Echo temporarily foisted upon him. Adam is not an 'echo' of Eve, on the contrary Eve is the 'image' of Adam as Eve was herself explicitly instructed (IV.471-72). So at this juncture the roles of Narcissus and Echo no longer seem appropriate and the tableau is almost imperceptibly transformed from one of Narcissus gazing enamoured at his own reflection into one of Phoebus' ardent pursuit of Daphne. Milton exhibits his assimilative genius here to advantage; it is displayed in the way in which he coerces these two episodes from Ovidian myth into fruitful collaboration.

Milton's covert allusion to the story of Daphne, and the illuminating light it throws upon Milton's narrative has been generally overlooked. Yet, although the most explicit reference is only fleeting,²⁸ once recognised, Daphne, like Narcissus, lingers in the memory as a figure of particular symbolic significance. Douglas Bush is the only critic, so far as I can ascertain, to have previously noted this allusion, and he merely records that "Adam's words apparently echo those of the amorous Apollo to the fleeing Daphne (Ovid, Met.I.504f.)", in support of his argument that here Milton is hinting at Adam's vulnerability by suggesting "the germ of his excessive devotion" to Eve.²⁹

However, Bush does not proceed to consider the next link in this chain of associated ideas. The natural corollary of linking Phoebus and Adam is, of course, a pairing together of Eve and Daphne, especially since Adam is never given a mythological role independently of Eve. Again, the association is prompted by the tableau Milton encourages us to visualize; from line 481 onwards the scene suggested is one of

pursuit and potential rape so graphically delineated by Ovid in the Metamorphoses. This provides some justification for speculating upon the significance of a more complex series of correspondences and certain implicit parallels between the two couples.

Like Daphne, Eve herself is not "uninformed/Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites" (VIII.486-87), but also like Daphne she turns her back on all this implies "nec, ^{quid Hymen.} quid Amor, quid sint conubia curat" (Met.I.480). It is as if Eve too had been struck by Amor's leaden arrow "quod fugat [amorem], obtusum est et habet sub harundine plumbum" (Met.I.471), for on encountering Adam she flies the very name of love. Adam gives chase and hotly pursues her with pleading words, while she, like Daphne, we must imagine

... fugit ocior aura
illa levi neque ad haec revocantis verba resistit.

(Met.I.502-3)

For the first lines of Adam's speech (IV.481-82) with their emphatic reiteration of "fly'st", "Return fair Eve,/Whom fly'st thou? Whom thou fly'st, of him thou art", clearly indicate that Eve is in full flight and is not inclined to risk stopping and making a reply. Adam's words audibly echo Phoebus' desperate appeal and follow his line of reasoning. Phoebus assumes that Daphne shuns him because she does not know who he is:

... nescis, temeraria, nescis,
quem fugias, ideoque fugis ...

(Met.I.514-15)

The stressed repetition of fugire is noteworthy, so too the emphatic reiteration of "nescis", which may have suggested to Milton a thematic motif peculiar to Narcissus, Daphne and Eve.

The ardent young gods of Ovidian myth are never renowned for

their patience; they never woo with gentle persuasive speech for long

... sed enim non sustinet ultra
perdere blanditias iuvenis deus, utque movebat
ipse Amor, admisso sequitur vestigia passu.

(Met. I.530-32)

The brutal image of a savage hunting dog closing in upon its defenceless prey immediately follows to suggest the imminent rape of Daphne by

Phoebus:

ut canis in vacuo leporem cum Gallicus arvo
vidit, et hic praedam pedibus petit, ille salutem;
alter inhaesuro similis iam iamque tenere
sperat et extento stringit vestigia rostro,
alter in ambiguo est, an sit comprehensus, et ipsis
morsibus eripitur tangentiaque ora relinquit:
sic deus et virgo est hic spe celer, illa timore.

(Met. I.533-39)

But what of Adam and Eve? When words prove insufficient to sway her, impatient of delay and overcome by ardent passion, does Adam too prepare to use violence? Surely not. And yet, if we look closely at Eve's closing words, "with that thy gentle hand/Seized mine, I yielded" (IV.488-89), which discreetly draw a curtain over the scene, such a question may not seem quite so outrageous or fanciful.

Her words are obviously influenced by her present happiness but even so the mild epithet "gentle", which suggests that Adam was prepared to use conciliatory measures, is placed in a position of almost unbearable tension with the aggressive verb "seized" which is held back to open the next line and so gives the reader a slight jolt. It seems to imply that Adam was unwilling to tolerate any further delay. For an oblique commentary on these lines we may turn to the scene of lovemaking after the Fall. Indeed, Adam himself suggests such a comparison when he confesses to Eve

... never did thy beauty since the day
 I saw thee first ...
 ... so inflame my sense
 With ardour to enjoy thee...

(IX.1029-32)

With that "Her hand he seized"; but Eve was now "nothing loth" (IX. 1037; 1039). Critics have drawn attention to the dramatic shock of encountering Adam's vocabulary here, particularly the expressions "play", "enjoy thee", "seized" (IX.1027, 1032, 1037), after the reverence hitherto shown in his speech to Eve.³⁰ But while the impact of these lines from later in the poem is evidently stronger, the effect is similar.

This interpretation seems justified in part by the unelaborated choice of verb, 'yielded' to denote Eve's compliance. This seems to have been deliberately left ambiguous: either Eve complied with Adam's demands after coming to recognise his due rights, or it may imply that Eve realistically, but begrudgingly, gave way to the stronger physical force.

In connection with this apparent ambiguity, let us consider the respective marital fates of two Ovidian goddesses to whom Eve is more than once compared by Milton, Flora and Pomona. Flora, like Eve, relates her own story which proves to be remarkably similar to Eve's in several respects:³¹

ver erat, errabam: Zephyrus conspexit, abibam.
 insequitur, fugio: fortior ille fuit,
 ...
 vim tamen emendat dando mihi nomina nuptae,
 inque meo non est ulla querella toro.

(Fasti.V.201-2; 205-6)

Her will was forced, it must be conceded at once, but all has turned out for the best, as she herself hastens to assure us, for she now enjoys a happy marriage and a more exalted position. She is no longer a mere "nymphe campi felicitis" (Fasti V.197), but a goddess, "Mater ...



florum" (Fasti.V.183).

Pomona, like Daphne, "Veneris quoque nulla cupido est" (Met.XIV. 634) and had no desire to marry, but when Vertumnus, tiring of persuasion, decided to resort to force, she fortunately felt the 'mutual wound' just in time, and Ovid delicately withdraws from the scene:

vimque parat: sed vi non est opus, inque figura
capta dei nympha est et mutua vulnera sensit.

(Met.XIV.770-71)

Was Eve following the line of least resistance when she 'yielded' to Adam, or was she too finally pierced by Amor's golden arrow (Met. I.470) as Milton elsewhere implies (IV.763)?

Adam's own recollection and interpretation of the sequence of events leading from Eve's creation to their first encounter and eventual union (VIII.460-520) also casts an illuminating, retrospective light upon the earlier account, which, as we have seen, is given entirely from Eve's point of view. However, the episode is again regarded from the partial perspective of an individual who necessarily enjoys only a limited insight into the overall situation. And indeed, Adam's description displays certain subtle and interesting differences of emphasis from Eve's own account.

Adam recalls his own feelings and aspirations as Eve approached, "Led by her heavenly maker" (VIII.485). His experience is the direct reverse of that of Eve and Narcissus, for Adam, as he wonderingly muses, found his own image embodied in a distinct and separate individual: "I now see/... my self/Before me" (VIII.494-96).

But for Eve must come the realisation that she is not the only 'subject'; other needs and desires beside her own impinge upon her; those of another for whom she herself is the 'object'.³² She discovers that she was not made for herself alone but was intended for union

with another, for Adam goes on to exclaim within her hearing

... woman is her name, of man
 Extracted; for this cause he shall forego
 Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
 And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.

(VIII.496-99)

Her separateness is threatened by invasion from another; she feels Adam's complete otherness at this point. Like Daphne, she recoils from admitting such claims upon her and holds aloof from contact. It is not surprising to find that Freudian psychologists have interpreted Daphne's flight "as symbolizing a girl's instinctive horror of the sexual act".³³ We may now more fully appreciate the artistic purpose behind Milton's replacement of Narcissus's erotic ardour, his desire for sexual union with his image (Met. III.427-29; 450-53) with Eve's more restrained and distancing "looks/Of sympathy and love" (IV.464-65, emphasis added).

This is not an isolated difficulty. A similar, unresolved tension underlies our first introduction to Adam and Eve. A number of critics have commented on the way in which the description of Eve's hair (IV.304-11) becomes symbolic, at least on one level of interpretation, of their sexual relationship.³⁴ Indeed, on the strength of this passage, Lieb has gone so far as to conclude that "Eve must be sexually dominated by the superior force and thus yield herself as the hair would yield itself to higher rule".³⁵ The "dishevelled" (IV.306) state of Eve's tresses thus

... implied
 Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
 And by her yielded, by him best received,
 Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
 And sweet reluctant amorous delay.

(IV.307-10)

Most critical discussions of the passage have tended to focus upon the significance of the final line. While B.A. Wright was not

the first to admire this line,³⁶ he seems to have been the first to note that it was a "close translation" of Ars Amatoria II.718:

Crede mihi, non est veneris properanda voluptas,
Sed sensim tarda prolicienda mora.

(Ars Am. II.717-18)

and to argue that

... this quotation from Ovid is meant to show unmistakably [Milton's] view that physical love is an essential and inseparable part of human love at its best, as he had argued in the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.³⁸

However, other readers have found the line more troubling.

Their unease seems to stem directly from Milton's use of "reluctant" which, it is interesting to note, has no equivalent in the Ovidian original.³⁹ Patrick Hume was the first commentator to direct our attention to the derivation of the word, "Reluctant, of Reluctans, Lat. struggling, of Reluctari, Lat. to strive" but made no further comment.⁴⁰ More recently, Le Comte has made explicit what Hume's note left implicit:

Milton's "reluctant" has the etymological indication of a certain amount of struggling, reinforcing the gradualness of "Yielded with coy submission".⁴¹

As so often in the poem, the etymological force of a word may be felt to contribute strongly to a passage's possible significance.⁴² Here the literal Latin meaning of reluctari taken together with other faint warning notes heard elsewhere, may bring an otherwise submerged and ill-defined feeling of uneasiness nearer the surface. But I would not wish to overstate the case. Rather than encouraging us to cultivate strongly ambivalent feelings towards sexual relations, Milton seems more concerned with implanting a seed of uncertainty about sexuality which will only bear fruit in Satan's temptation of

Eve. 43

As the pattern of emphasis and choice of conjunction in these lines subtly reveal, "and though divinely brought/Yet ..." (VIII.500-1), Adam too is clearly uneasy and disturbed by his recollection of Eve's initial reluctance, and he makes several attempts to reach a satisfactory explanation. Initially he attributes her disinclination to certain decorous and maidenly reservations; "her innocence", "virgin modesty" and "virtue" (VIII.501-2) militated against an immediate and willing compliance. Yet, he goes on to suggest, perhaps in an attempt to justify to himself his intrusion upon her, that it was a mere display of reluctance on her part; she "would be wooed, and not unsought be won" (VIII.503). The desire for union was mutual, but so that he might prize "her worth" (VIII.502) and value her compliance more highly she "retired,/The more desirable" (VIII.504-5). Adam implies that chastity, like beauty, is a weapon of Venus, but that paradoxically it inflames the passion it attempts to restrain.

It also seems significant that Adam glosses over his pursuit of Eve in two short clauses bare of all circumstantial detail, "seeing me, she turned;/I followed her" (VIII.507-8). Likewise, the actual moment of consent is passed over unelaborated before the generalized distancing lines

... she what was honour knew,
And with obsequious majesty approved
My pleaded reason.

(VIII.508-10)

However, the references to Eve's yielding (IV.310; 489) and submission (IV.310; 498) taken together with her "meek surrender" (IV.494), an expression that appears significantly in the description which immediately follows her account of Adam's pursuit, must prompt the question "what battle has she lost?"⁴⁴

Again, C.S.Lewis has encouraged us to imagine Eve "blushing like the morn" as Adam led her "[t]o the nuptial bower" (VIII.510-11) because of her "self-consciousness" at being so highly "valued".⁴⁵ But we may also recollect how Daphne who sought to enjoy perpetua virginitas (Met.I.486-87) responded when "nuptial sanctity and marriage rites" (VIII.487) were mentioned in her presence: "pulchra verecundo suffunditur ora rubore" (Met.I.484). It also seems suggestive that when Ovid recounts how the virgin goddess, Diana, was surprised bathing by Actaeon, he relates the incident as a violation of her scrupulous chastity, describing the effect on her outraged modesty with these words:

qui color infectis adversi solis ab ictu
nubibus esse solet aut purpureae Aurorae,
is fuit in vultu visae sine veste Dianae.

(Met.III.183-85)

So here Eve seems to resemble more closely the exemplar of severa virginitas (Met.III.254-55), Diana herself.

When we first encounter her, then, Eve is associated with the virginal figures, Narcissus and Daphne, and seems to share something of the cold, aloof brightness of the moon-goddess, Diana, while Adam shares something of the nature of the ardent sun-god, Phoebus.⁴⁶

This face of Eve betrays its negative aspect when it proves inimical to her proper casting as bride and mother. Eve's initial association with Narcissus and other virginal figures thus barely conceals latent tragic implications other than those usually focussed upon by critics. Although these are never fully developed nor their potential released, this strand of suggestion is woven into the web of implication enveloping Eve from the outset, and its very inclusion forms a most subtle means of brushing away the film of familiarity that gathers on a story so well known.

For, on the face of it, the reader's very familiarity with, and unreflecting acceptance of, the data of Milton's narrative, would pose an insuperable difficulty. Indeed, the logic of Dr. Johnson's argument seems irrefutable: such familiar "truths"

... being therefore not new, they raise no unaccustomed emotion in the mind; what we knew before we cannot learn; what is not unexpected cannot surprise.

But in a judiciously balanced assessment Johnson does go on to concede that such "known truths"

... may take ... a different appearance, and be conveyed to the mind by a new train of intermediate images. This Milton has undertaken and performed with pregnancy and vigour of mind peculiar to himself.⁴⁷

In the flashback to Eve's first meeting with Adam, Milton conveys her experience through 'a new train of intermediate images' and succeeds in producing an effect of familiarity and unpredictability combined. Stripping away the veil of familiarity, he discloses a strange vista. The mechanically smooth running of the narrative momentarily falters and looks set to run out of control. Eve no longer acts like an automaton set in motion by God, a Pygmalion statue, totally responsive and infused with life as an answer to Adam's prayers but like an autonomous human being, actively exercising her power of choice, and choosing to reject Adam. We no longer find the idyll of unmixed delight nor the ecstasy which we expected must monotonously define unfallen relationships. Milton has stirred the dry bones of Genesis to a strangely independent life and vitality.

Although God guides Eve to Adam, marriage and motherhood as her best option, the burden of responsibility for her own life, the future of Adam, and the human race ultimately devolves upon her shoulders. The decision to accept or reject Adam is hers alone.⁴⁸ This is not a tangential complexity; it coheres not only with

Narcissus' rejection of all other claims upon him but that of self, but also with Daphne's withdrawal from society, her rejection of the expected role of wife and mother, and her denial of her father's claim that she 'owed' him a son-in-law and grandchildren. In God's speech to Eve he delicately pronounces her nubility and defines her future roles as bride and mother according equal emphasis to each: to the satisfaction of her yearning for love which she will thereby obtain: "him thou shalt enjoy/Inseparably thine"; and to the promotion to a more exalted position as "Mother of [the] human race" (IV.472-73, 475)

So too Britomart, Spenser's exemplar of chastity, is not conceived as vowing perpetual virginity. Virginity is not regarded as an end in itself but purely as a temporary state before her eventual fulfilment and fruition in marriage to Artegall and in the "famous progeny which from them springen shall" (*Faerie Queene* III.iii).

Virgin, bride and mother are thus three parts spanning the continuum of natural human development from genesis to fruition, figured also, like man's spiritual evolution, in the steady growth of a flower, from the first green shoots and uplift of the bud, the spreading of the petals to the pride of the seed-head (V.479-83), and in the unfolding of the seasons from spring to autumn. It thus follows their retardation at any one stage of development is both unhealthy and unnatural. After God has led her from maidenhood to wedlock Eve recoils from Adam and seeks to revert to her prior condition.

To see herself in relation to Adam and the future human race would seem necessarily to involve Eve in a kind of self-annihilation so that she can be reborn to assume her new roles of expanded meaning, sloughing off her old, restricting self-definition which was in terms of self alone. Yet because of the exceptional circumstances that prevail in Eden, untouched by the infection of

mortality and decay, this process does not even entail the erasure of her previous self.

Initially, I used the images of the growth of a flower and the cycle of the seasons to illustrate this process, but these analogies are in part misleading for in the fallen world they imply loss as well as change. The former implies the withering and fall of the petals, while in the rhythmic cycle of the seasons as we experience it, spring and autumn themselves imply winter. However, since in Eden "flowers" may flourish with "their fruit" (V.482) and "spring and autumn" dance "hand in hand" (V.394-5), Eve too may share in this special state of inclusive simultaneity, enjoying the fruitfulness of motherhood while preserving the essential qualities of her virgin state.⁴⁹

But while Eve attempts to exclude Adam from her world, clinging to her individuality and singleness, there exists a great tension between her life-giving and life-denying potential. Her potential for good and evil is thus initially defined in terms of fruitfulness and sterility. There seems a very real danger that her positive potential will be thwarted. The scales are poised; the balance may tip the wrong way as in the case of Narcissus and Daphne.

III

Sterilis Amor

From this perspective Daphne as well as Narcissus may be seen as allotropic manifestations of the same element of destructive sterility latent in Eve. While Golding continues to hold Daphne before us as the model of an exemplary chastity, "A myrror of virginitie":

Which yeelding neither unto feare, nor force, nor flatterie
Dooth purchase everlasting fame and immortalitie⁵⁰

and Sandys too extracts the same moral from Ovid's tale that "Daphne

is changed into a never-withering tree, to shew what immortall honour a virgin obtaines by preserving her chastity",⁵¹ for some poets in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the fate of Daphne came to bear a very different interpretation.

Spenser, raised in the Petrarchan tradition of the fair, proud mistress who remained icily aloof, impervious to her admirer's fiery passion, was quick to perceive and exploit the obvious correspondence between his frustrated passion and that of Phoebus. For when Petrarchan romantic love was coupled with the new Protestant emphasis upon married love as "the ambition of virginity", and marriage as "a state in it selfe, fame more excellent than the condition of single life",⁵² it was natural that the traditional moral of the tale should be reversed and that the consummation of love should become the overriding value. In accordance with this inversion of values the significance of Daphne's metamorphosis was also reversed; instead of a reward for the virtuous preservation of her virginity it became a punishment meted out for excessive pride.⁵³

In Spenser's Amoretti the example of Daphne's unhappy fate is employed in an attempt to persuade his lady to relent towards him and her "gentle brest inspire/with sweet infusion". Let the "laurell leaf", he admonishes,

... put you in mind
of that proud mayd, whom now those leaues attyre:
Proud Daphne scorning Phoebus louely fyre,
on the Thessalian shore from him did flie;
for which the gods in theyr reuenge full yre
did her transforme into a laurell tree.⁵⁴

Phoebus' desire, his "louely fyre", is seen as inherently good and beneficial, like the sun's life giving rays with which it is appropriately identified. Spenser proceeds to point a moral very different from the orthodox when he concludes in the final couplet:

Then fly no more fayre loue from Phebus chace,
but in your brest his leafe and loue embrace.

Again, it is interesting to note that even Milton's famous celebration of chastity, Comus, takes account of this understanding of Daphne's metamorphosis. There it is similarly used by Comus as an exemplum of retributive justice, like Anaxarete's transformation, it is a punishment that deprives those who have denied the life of the senses of sensation itself

... if I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or as Daphne was
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

(Comus 658-61)

Although it must be stressed that Milton himself is not directly countenancing this interpretation since it is put in the mouth of the extreme sensualist Comus, yet its very inclusion is significant. The emphasis thrown forward on the suggestive compound "Root-bound" helps ensure that it remains a hauntingly powerful evocation of the life-denying aspect of Daphne's chastity.

Milton's lines seem to be inspired by two lines in Ovid's account of her transformation in which he relates how "torpis gravis occupat artus" and "pes modo tam velox pigris radicibus haeret" (Met.I.548; 551). The first line seems to suggest the encroaching inertia that infects the body as death becomes imminent, while the second through the juxtaposition of "velox" and "pigris" establishes the tension between what is gained and what is lost through the transformation, a tension which Ovid himself makes no attempt to resolve.

According to one possible line of interpretation, then, Daphne's rivalry with Diana (Met.I.476) had cost her dearly; she lost her very humanity by it. Daphne had only been able to evade the consequences of Phoebus' pursuit and preserve her virginity by metamorphosis. She had craved perpetual virginity as a boon from her father, urging as a precedent Jupiter's assent to his daughter Diana's request:

"da mihi perpetua, genitor carissime," dixit
 "virginitate frui: dedit hoc pater ante Dianae"

(Met. I. 486-87)

But when her outstanding beauty threatened to end her virgin state her father was obliged to transform it. The tree's beauty may be 'ever green' but it is also sterile (Met. I. 496) when compared with the promise of fruitfulness that was implicit in the nymph's beauty and the consummation of love.

The two divergent readings of the Daphne myth we have briefly discussed thus depend upon an inherent ambivalence in the concept of metamorphosis itself. Since the same myth could be used to support conflicting ideals, Daphne's story became a shifting symbol giving form to an ambiguity. Although we do not usually find that succeeding treatments retain the same ambiguity of the Ovidian account⁵⁵ - the poet or commentator tends to affirm emphatically the nature of his summum bonum, whether it is the achievement of love or the more orthodox moral value of chastity - when we first encounter Ovid's tale reset in Paradise Lost, Milton seems to have preserved something of this ambivalence of value.

At the conclusion of this episode, however, Milton resolves the ambiguity, leaving no doubt as to which 'beauty' he finds preferable. It is interesting to find that he allies in judgment with Comus. We must, of course, allow for a crucial difference in context: in the unfallen world sensuous delight is inherently good; paradise is no place for an ascetic denial of pleasurable sensation. For Eden is a garden of voluptas, a garden of Venus to be presided over by Eve herself.⁵⁶ When Eve finally succumbs to Adam, Milton celebrates the supremacy of the dynamic power of love over a passive, enclosed symbol of chastity.

Although whether at first Eve actually consents or merely submits to Adam's embraces is left discreetly veiled in ambiguity, Eve ceases

to resist his approaches actively. Whereas Daphne's fine but frigid beauty had inspired Phoebus with a love she could not reciprocate (Met.I.488-89), Eve, apparently transfixed by Love's golden shaft, is led from virginal seclusion to the bower of nuptial bliss.

In Paradise Lost, then, the Daphne myth is superseded, being no longer compatible with Eve's expanding experience. Another organizing image is found and secured to help amplify and articulate her role in the epic. The story of Flora as Ovid recounts it in the Fasti provides Milton with important material for this consecutive phase, relating pertinently to Eve's role in this part of the epic and defining its positive aspects.

IV

The Bride

As the narrative convention in mediaeval and early Renaissance paintings permitted consecutive episodes from a story to be depicted as separate scenes in a single but composite design, so in a comparable manner Eve's reminiscences enable Milton to interweave events of the past with the narrative present. Portrayed in the background is the reluctant maiden, unwilling to submit to her lover's caresses, whilst in the foreground, and gaining greater prominence thereby, stands the happy bride, eyes flashing with open desire, enjoying the poise and confident assurance that the consciousness of beauty beloved confers.

While the radiant vision does not entirely dispel the penumbra of half-glimpsed, half-developed conflicts, the scene resolves itself into a brief but delicately executed vignette which assures us of their present idyllic relationship. Milton conjures up a scene of innocent but unequivocal sensuality; Eve finishes speaking and

... with eyes
 Of conjugal attraction unreproved,
 And meek surrender, half embracing leaned
 On our first father, half her swelling breast
 Naked met his under the flowing gold
 Of her loose tresses hid; he in delight
 Both of her beauty and submissive charms
 Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
 On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds
 That shed May flowers.

(IV.492-501)

Here Milton has "dared to represent Paradisaal sexuality"⁵⁷ candidly rejoicing at the termination of Eve's virgin state and the consummation of love. The realities of desire and enjoyment are not evaded but sheathed in mythological simile.

In many ways Eve fulfils the role of Flora,⁵⁸ Ovid's lady of spring and flowers, perennial symbols of love and beauty. However, at this juncture the analogy remains unstated, though an explicit comparison is made, rather, surprisingly, between Adam and Eve and Jupiter and Juno. We have already discussed some of Milton's possible motives for venturing to illustrate unfallen sexuality by reference to such ironically inappropriate exemplars of marital virtue.⁵⁹ Their marriage couch was notorious as the scene of recrimination for a certain party's infidelity rather than for displays of rapturous affection. And perhaps Flora has this in mind when she testifies: "inque meo non est ulla querella toro" (Fasti V.206). But another curious feature of this simile remains to be considered.

This mythological allusion may be regarded as an example of the "traditional meteorological interpretation of myth" which, as Bush has remarked, is "rare in Milton".⁶⁰ Significantly, this allusion to the birth of flowers in May bears a substantial relationship to Ovid's account of the origin of flowers in the fifth book of the Fasti devoted to the month of May. Ovid there implies that the latter myth has a similar aetiological significance. His unique, so far as

can be ascertained, identification of the earth nymph Chloris (cf.

"Χλωρίς, ἄ, ὄν ... pale green; cognate with "χλόη, ἦ the first green shoot of plants", L & S) with the Roman goddess of flowers, Flora (cf. "florus, adj. ... of flowers" derived from "flos, oris, m. ... I. Lit., a blossom, flower", L) as the two phases, 'before' and 'after' of a metamorphosis, "Chloris eram, quae Flora vocor" (Fasti V.195; emphasis added), explains the transformation of the bare earth in springtime as the cold earth is warmed by the spring breeze.

The story of Zephyr's ardent pursuit of Chloris, their marriage and her subsequent elevation to the rank of goddess of flowers is related by Ovid alone of the Roman poets. Until Chloris became Flora through her fruitful union with Zephyr, the westerly wind who warms the cold earth in spring, the earth had been of one colour:

prima per immensas sparsi nova semina gentes;
unius tellus ante coloris erat.

(Fasti V.221-22)

The fertilising agency of Zephyr causes the spring flowers to burst forth, casting a variegated mantle over the earth to signify the advent of spring. Indeed, even as Flora relates her story to Ovid to mark her spring festival she breathes out "vernas ... ab ore rosas" (Fasti V.194).

The dominant motifs of Ovid's tale of Zephyr's love for Chloris/Flora: married love, fulfilment, and fruitfulness thus suit Milton's account of Adam's love for Eve. Significantly, when Milton attempts to portray Adam's feelings of tender affection aroused by the beauty of his newly won bride as she slumbers in the nuptial bower, Milton explicitly likens Adam to Zephyr and Eve to Flora (V.11-16).

Unlike the fleeting comparison of Eve to Pales (IX.393), we do not merely glimpse Eve as Flora. The impression persists and is sustained by a number of correspondences which are peculiarly apt and suggestive. Just as Zephyr had endowed Flora with her especial role

as guardian of flowers as his wedding gift:

hunc meus implevit generoso flore maritus
atque ait 'arbitrium tu, dea, floris habe.'

(Fasti V.211-12)

Adam delegates special responsibility for the flowers of Eden to Eve.

The "flowers/Embordered on each bank," disclose "the hand of Eve"

(IX.437-38).

Like Flora who describes her happy position thus:

vere fruor semper; semper nitidissimus annus,
arbor habet frondes, pabula semper humus.
Est mihi fecundus dotalibus hortus in agris;
aura fovet, liquidae fonte rigatur aquae.

(Fasti V.207-10)

Eve is pictured in a magical garden where "Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill" watered the plants (IV.229-30), against a backcloth of perpetual spring where "vernal airs":

Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance
Led on the eternal spring.

(IV.264-68)

So too, in another related passage, Milton refers again to the dance of the Horae. Like Flora's garden, Eden enjoys simultaneously the fairness of spring and the fruitfulness of autumn for: "spring and autumn here/ Danced hand in hand" (V.394-95). It seems hardly coincidental, then, that Flora, too, later in the same passage from the Fasti quoted above, had described the daily approach of the Hours and Graces to her garden, suggesting the rhythmic regularity that patterns the day, and bearing comparison with the dance that Eve herself presides over in Eden:

roscida cum primum foliis excussa prius est,
et variae radiis intepuere comae,
conveniunt pictis incinctae vestibus Horae
inque leves calathos munera nostra legunt.

protinus accedunt Charites nectuntque coronas
sertaque caelestes implicitura comas.

(Fasti V.215-20)

It seems likely that Flora as well as Daphne was present in Milton's thoughts as he shaped Eve's role in this part of the epic. Indeed the stories of Daphne and Flora prove to be surprisingly complementary, easily dovetailing to give additional narrative coherence to Milton's own account. Here Milton again displays his mastery of the art of poetic integration, of assimilating different source materials and fusing them together to form a new whole. These two Ovidian myths are made to merge together almost imperceptibly and act in unison.⁶¹ Milton thus skilfully interweaves together two separate strands to form a new pattern of meaning which is brought to bear upon the new situation in his own work.

To recapitulate: both myths include a metamorphosis after a pursuit and rape or attempted rape. However, the emphasis accorded these common narrative elements differs significantly in each case. Apollo's pursuit and Daphne's flight are central to her story and are thus narrated at length with meticulous regard to vivid, pictorial detail by Ovid. While Flora's account includes mention of her flight from the pursuing Zephyr, it is clearly peripheral to the main theme of her story and is accordingly passed over in a perfunctory manner. In Flora's case the metamorphosis does not involve a change of shape but is rather a refining or sublimating process; she progresses from virgin to bride, from nymph to goddess, whereas Daphne retains her virgin state but in direct consequence loses her human form and eventually even sentience itself.⁶² Daphne's metamorphosis effectively curtails her story, Flora's opens up new possibilities, and a role of expanded meaning and significance.

Flora's story can thus be seen to take over where Daphne's left off, the latter's situation is summarily restated, her story resumed and transposed into a finer key. When they are thus combined there is

a sense of musical continuity, like a variation upon a theme which changes and develops without losing its essential identity.

C.S.Lewis insists that we can never associate either Adam or Eve with the "simple", "primitive", "naïf" or "inarticulate".⁶³ However, I feel Eve is, to some extent, transfigured by her acceptance of Adam and consequent exaltation to the role of bride and future "mother of mankind" (V.388). It seems to parallel the process which transforms the virgin nymph, Chloris, into Flora, the bride of Zephyr, and Mater Florum.

"In the Fasti," as Edgar Wind has pointed out, "the transformation was introduced as a playful piece of etymology" in which Ovid "supposed that the Greek name Chloris ... had changed into the Roman name of the goddess Flora"⁶⁴; "corrupta Latino/nominis est nostri littera Graeca sono" (Fasti V.195-96). But Ovid also implies that the change involved a more profound metamorphosis, not only in the earth but in Flora herself. She herself acknowledges the change and draws a distinction between her present and former self: "Chloris eram nymphae campi felicitatis .../... quae fuerit mihi forma, grave est narrare modestae" (Fasti V.197; 199). The transformation is symbolized in the change of her attire, her bareness is exchanged for a robe, richly embroidered with flower-shaped motifs as befits her new role as the resplendent flower goddess and herald of spring. Ovid's inquiry into why she is only seen clothed in such iridescent garments, "cultu versicolore" (Fasti V.356), and his tentative explanation - "an quia .../et color et species floribus omnis inest?", immediately confirmed by the goddess herself (Fasti 357-59), would seem to support this interpretation.

Indeed, it seems even more pertinent to note that 'Chloris' as well as connoting 'greenness' implies 'unripeness' ($\chi\lambda\omega\rho\acute{o}s, \acute{\alpha}, \omicron\nu$... metaph, unripe" cf. " $\chi\lambda\acute{o}\rho\eta, \acute{\eta}$, the first green shoots of plants", L&S),⁶⁵ whilst 'Flora' suggests fullness and maturity and holds the promise of fruitfulness (Fasti V. 261-68). It is, moreover, a thematic progression that is restated in Milton's

description of the process of creation. Raphael recounts how after the Son's fructifying word

... the bare earth, till then
 Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,
 Brought forth the tender grass whose verdure clad
 Her universal face with pleasant green,
 Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered
 Opening their various colours, and made gay
 Her bosom smelling sweet ...
 ... [and] earth in her rich attire
 Consummate lovely smiled.

(VII.313-19; 501-2)

So too, it is interesting to recall that when Raphael seeks to illustrate unfallen man's potential for spiritual refinement by an example of this sublimating process at work in the world he chooses to liken the way in which "body" may "up to spirit work" to the development of a plant

... from the root
 Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
 More airy, last the bright consummate flower
 Spirits odorous breathes.

(V.479-82)

At this point we may conveniently return to, and take issue with, C.S.Lewis's influential claim that the instantaneous maturity of Eve and her relationship with Adam is, following Genesis, a datum of Milton's account. While his study seems in many ways an accurate assessment of Milton's characterization of Eve and his handling of unfallen human relationships, it nevertheless significantly omits even a brief consideration of the implications of Eve's speech of recollection - the first words she utters in the poem and the only record we have of her first moments of consciousness - in order to concentrate upon the assured and formal manner which subsequently characterizes their marital relationship.

Emphasizing the way in which "Until they are fallen and robbed of their original majesty, they hardly ever address each other by their names, but by stately periphrases", C.S.Lewis concludes "Their life together is ceremonial - a minuet".^{65a} Marjorie Nicholson has similarly stressed

this decorous and stately manner, seemingly concurring with Lewis in her impression of Adam and Eve as: "Beautiful moving and statues, ... models of a great impassivity".⁶⁶

However, this ignores the initial energy displayed by Eve; when in full flight she has no time to respond to Adam's 'stately periphrases'. She is as reticent as Daphne in her similar predicament. If Eve has a statuesque quality at this point, it must be a statue modelled by Bernini and instinct with life and feeling. Yet, as in the case of Flora, after Eve's marriage there remains little obvious trace of such reserves of that unrestrained vigour which animates the initial scene of flight and pursuit; we find instead the poise and easy assurance of the first bride and future mother of mankind.

Unlike the transformation of Daphne, then, the 'metamorphoses' of Chloris and Eve may be likened to a sublimating process which also encompasses a change of attitude in the 'victim' herself, and is thus achieved to the mutual satisfaction of lover and beloved. The pursuit and subsequent metamorphosis has, therefore, beneficial rather than tragic consequences, and so there persist no lingering doubts as to what is lost as a result of the process of transformation. Regarded in this way, the experiences of Flora and Eve are made to seem closer in actuality as well as in spirit and thematic importance than we might previously have expected.

As happy young brides they live in an idyllic garden where love is open and frank and where romance is real and imminent from dawn to dusk. Adam wakes and

... on his side
Leaning half-raised, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamoured, and beheld
Beauty, which whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice
Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whispered...

(V.11-17)

This passage evokes an exquisitely poetical and powerful visual impression of marital felicity for which Ovid can only supply the barest of hints as Flora indicates, "inque non est ulla querella toro" (Fasti V.206).

The promise of beauty is thus sweetly fulfilled as the virgin becomes a bride, and potentially, a mother. The triadic sequence, virgin-bride-mother, corresponding to the unfolding pattern we have been tracing, Chloris-Flora-Mater florum, is thus now complete. Eve, the bride, is framed not only by her past as the reluctant maiden, but also by her future as the prospective mother of mankind. By articulating his initial study of Eve around the three phases of this developing sequence Milton is able to enmesh the past and future in the narrative present, taking the reader's awareness beyond the immediate temporal significance of events.

This gradual process of becoming thus seems to take place both inside and outside of time. As usual Milton has it both ways; on the one hand he preserves the impression of a prelapsarian state of innocence, the timeless stasis of perfection; on the other Eve breaks out of the eternal present and the mould of frozen perfection and thus displays a potentiality for development, and, more ominously, for degeneration or stagnation.

V

Mater Florum

Holding out the prospect of both sexual fulfilment and the realisation of a unique role as the mother of mankind, God had sought to assure the virgin Eve that she would attain all possible personal satisfaction by marrying Adam, encouraging her with these words

... I will bring thee where no shadow stays
 Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
 Whose image thou art, him thou shall enjoy
 Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
 Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
 Mother of human race.

(IV.470-75)

And, as we have seen, the section we have been considering closes appropriately enough with a brief but significant sketch of Eve's present relationship with Adam in which there is a distinct emphasis placed upon their sexuality and potential fertility.

The prelusive reference to Eve as "our general mother" (IV.492) strikes the keynote, subtly preparing us for the significant suggestion that in Eden the mere act of Adam's smiling upon Eve results in a kind of symbolic impregnation and parturition.⁶⁸ Adam smiles

... as Jupiter
 On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds
 That shed May flowers.

(IV.499-501)

The latter terms of this simile implicitly correlate Eve with the 'clouds that shed May flowers', forming thereby the first strong link in a chain of recurrent associations forged by Milton between Eve and the flowers of Eden. This general association crystallizes more particularly to suggest the relations between a mother and her children. The simile

just quoted, in which Eve by analogy gives birth to the flowers in spring, serves to intimate this relationship and encourages us to identify Eve herself as a mother of flowers.

With maternal solicitude and a mother's 'tender hand' she nourishes, fosters and raises her young charges, the "fruits and flowers" which as yet fill "Her nursery" (VIII.44, 46; emphasis added).^{68a} Her ample maternal feelings are naturally displaced temporarily to these fragile and sensitive plants which she can mother as substitutes for her yet unborn children. They in turn respond to her care and devotion and

... at her coming sprung
And touched by her fair tendance gladlier grew.

(VIII.46-47)

Her divine power to promote growth stresses the peculiar, instinctive bond between Eve and the plants of Eden which she loses with innocence, and which Milton singles out for discreet emphasis as one of the first effects of eating the forbidden fruit. Indeed, her very presence now seems to blight them, the flowers nearest her wither as "all the faded roses shed" their petals (IX.893), just as when Flora neglected her office and withdrew her nurturing power:

*lilia deciderant, violas arere videres,
filique punicea languida facta croci.*

(Fasti V.317-18)

After the sentence of exile has been pronounced by Michael, Eve cannot contain her grief which breaks out in a lament for the flowers she must leave behind in Eden. In this highly charged apostrophe to the flowers of Paradise, which because of its intensity of feeling and pointed detail has sounded to many like a mother's passionate grief for her lost children,⁶⁹ we learn that the flowers of Eden had been reserved for Eve to name

... O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last

At even, which I bred up with tender hand
 From the first opening bud, and gave ye names,
 Who now shall rear ye to the sun, or rank
 Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?

(XI.273-79)

This seems a particularly significant addition to Genesis by Milton which helps confirm, ironically at the very moment when she loses it forever, Eve's role as Flora, Mater Florum.

As the flower precedes, implies and holds promise of the fruit, so Eve in her 'floral' connection is also profoundly associated with a significant constellation of images that connote abundance, fertility and fruitfulness. Indeed, Flora is quick to affirm that this associative cluster is by no means to be relegated to a peripheral position in the complex of ideas that surround her divinity. She is eager to dispel the vulgar notion that attributes to her concern only for pretty garlands and, thereby, to correct the view that would assign her a strictly limited sphere of influence:

forsitan in teneris tantum mea regna coronis
 esse putes? tangit numen et arva meum.

She then proceeds to reason thus:

si bene floruerint segetes, erit arva dives;
 si bene floruerit virea, Bacchus erit;

eventually reaching the conclusion that,

nos quoque idem facimus tunc, cum iuvenalibus annis
 luxuriant animi, corporaque ipsa vigent.

(Fasti V.261-64; 273-74)

As "Ver praebet flores" and "Poma dat autumnus" (RA. 188;187), Eve like Flora becomes a composite figure personifying the especial gifts of both seasons. Milton seems almost to imply that both the vernal beauty of the 'bright consummate flower' and autumn's cornucopian fruitfulness will be found together in Eve as in Eden, where "spring and autumn.../Danced hand in hand"

(V.394-5), as in Flora and her "fecundus hortus" (Fasti V.209) where it is yet ever spring.

In this way, Eve glimpsed as Flora provides an expanding image of surprising potency. It continues to relate pointedly to Eve's present and future roles, defining their positive aspects. Most obviously, it illuminates Eve in her present capacity as a young bride with especial tutelage of flowers. But the constant and loving attention she devotes to 'her nursery' also gives the reader ample evidence of her fitness as the designated mother of mankind and helps him to bear this future role in mind. Restated in another key then, Eve imaged as Mater florum doubles to suggest and foreshadow her mothering of the human race.

Stressing the virtuality of Eve's motherhood before the Fall enables Milton to accomplish two objectives. He can enhance the prestige of, and give greater prominence to, Eve in her dual role as bride and mother whilst at the same time extricating himself from the danger of becoming embroiled in vexed questions about the consequences of prelapsarian sexuality, questions which admit of no adequate solution and which have baffled many a commentator on Genesis 'in wandering mazes lost'.

Sylvester, on the other hand, despite loud protestations to the contrary, finds himself wandering for a hundred lines or so "unprofitably in nice questions, concerning the Garden of Eden" and prelapsarian lovemaking in particular:

What children there they earned, and how many,
Of whether sex; or whether none or any;
Or how (at least) they should have propagated,
If the sly malice of the Serpent hated,
Causing their fall, had not defil'd their kin,
And unborn seed, with leprosie of sin.

If voyd of Venus; sith unlike it is,
Such blessed state the noble flowr should miss
Of Virgin-head; or, folk so perfect chaste
Should furious feel, when they their loves imbrac't,

. . .

Or, whether else as men ingender now,
Sith Spouse-bed spot-less laws of God allow,
If no excess command; sith else again
The Lord had made the double sex in vain.

. . .

Search whoso list . . .
 I will not waste my travell and my seed
 To reap an empty straw, or fruit-less reed.⁷⁰

However, in Paradise Lost, as LeComte points out:

There is no fussing over such old questions as whether, if the first couple made love before the Fall, they conceived, in which case their first offspring would be free of original sin; or, if they did not conceive, why not (as part of a perfect coition)?⁷¹

Despite the views of Augustine and Irenaeus on this issue,⁷² Milton could find adequate Biblical authority to sanction his inclusion of sexual love in the prelapsarian world in God's command that the male and female "Be fruitful and multiply"⁷³ which antedates the Temptation and Fall. Milton seems to allude to this temporal sequence in his triumphant conclusion to the initial part of his paean to "wedded love":

Our maker bids increase, who bids abstain
 But our destroyer, foe to God and man?

(IV.748-49)

This is, indeed, prefaced by the more speculative tone of

. . . nor turned I ween
 Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
 Mysterious of connubial love refused.

but the dismissive lines which directly follow:

Whatever hypocrites austerely talk
 Of purity and place and innocence,
 Defaming as impure what God declares
 Pure.

(IV.741-43, 744-47)

emphatically express his positive attitude to the possibility of unfallen sexuality.

Further justification for its inclusion may have resided, as Fletcher argues, in Rashi's interpretation of Genesis IV.1 which is otherwise thought to exclude the possibility of sexual love before the Fall. The

latter's commentary on the line from Genesis, "And Adam knew Eve his wife", reads:

Before he had sinned and had been banished from the Garden of Eden, even then had conception and birth (begun). Had it been written and then the man knew it would then be understood that only after having been banished were children possible for him.⁷⁴

In Milton, however, I feel we may occasionally detect a subtle shift in emphasis; references to the prolific fruitfulness of the human pair tend to cluster around Eve, rather curiously, to the exclusion of Adam.

VI

Mother Of All Things Living

It seems noteworthy that in his address to Eve, God accords both aspects of her future role as wife and mother equal weight and emphasis. Moreover, he plays upon the connotations of her name which was generally held to be derived "from a Hebrew verb which signifies to live".⁷⁵ Again, Adam, in his divinely ordained capacity as 'name giver', with 'sudden apprehension' intuits her nature and, immediately and instinctively, calls her 'Eve'.

It should be stressed that this goes directly contrary to tradition; according to commentators, who laid great stress upon this point, the name 'Eve' was given by Adam to his wife only after the Fall: "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living".⁷⁶ Newton is clearly alluding to this traditional view when he remarks that before the Fall Eve is only so called "by way of anticipation", since until that point she had simply been called "Woman, because she was taken out of . . . Man".⁷⁷ Fowler too speculates upon this in his note on the passage, concluding significantly that Milton

. . . may be deliberately correcting the conventional chronology, to enhance the status of sexuality and motherhood.⁷⁸

One of the most striking instances of Milton's tendency to link the feminine principle, and Eve in particular, to abundance, fruitfulness, vitality and life occurs at the outset of Raphael's visit to Eden. As C.S.Lewis perhaps rather perplexedly remarks, "The angel hails [Eve] more ceremoniously than Adam".⁷⁹ Moreover, it is in her capacity as the prospective mother of mankind that he salutes her. The emphasis is more curious when we consider that Rashi in his commentary on the Bomberg Bible with which Milton was familiar "had interpreted Genesis", as we have seen, "to mean that the man who is to subdue and dominate the female, is commanded to be fruitful and multiply, and not the woman".⁸⁰

Paying tribute to Eve's promised, prodigious fruitfulness, Raphael exclaims:

Hail mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb
Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons
Than with these various fruits the trees of God
Have heaped the table.

(V.388-91)

on which "ample square", Milton hastens to add, "from side to side/
All autumn piled" (V.393-94). The analogy drawn between Eve's future offspring and the fruit of the Garden is notable not only on a quantitative basis, for it also forms one of recurrent intimations of an underlying affinity between the abundance and fertility of Eden and Eve herself.

Indeed, in her role as Mater florum, Eve becomes the genius loci, maintaining the fertility of the Garden and infusing vibrant life into the plants. Witness the impressive description of her withdrawal from the discussion of astronomy, "where", as S.A.Demetrakopoulos has remarked, "we sense her celebration of her own fertility as a microcosmic Earth goddess"⁸¹; "Eve"

Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,
To visit how they prospered bud, and bloom,
Her nursery; they at her coming sprung
And touched by her fair tendance gladlier grew.

. . .

With goddess-like demeanour forth she went;
 Not unattended, for on her as queen
 A pomp of winning graces waited still,
 And from about her shot darts of desire
 Into all eyes to wish her still in sight.

(VIII.44-47, 59-63)

Confronted with such an account of Eve's powerful influence, the reader is more than inclined to agree with Adam that, deprived of her informing presence, the fertile Garden of Eden would rapidly become a dark, desolate wasteland of "wild woods forlorn" (IX.910).⁸²

In her care of fruits as well as flowers and in her association with autumn as well as spring, Eve subsumes the role of the peculiarly Ovidian figure, Pomona. Sandys' note upon her nature and function is clear and instructive; he describes her as, "the Godesse of the Hortyards and their fruitfull productions, taking from thence her name".⁸³ In his exquisite rendering of her story in the Metamorphoses, she is characterized by Ovid in terms that bear direct comparison with Eve

. . . qua nulla Latinas
 inter hamadryadas coluit sollertius hortos
 nec fuit arborei studiosior altera fetus;
 unde tenet nomen; non silvas illa nec amnes;
 rus amat et ramos felicia poma ferentes.

(Met. XIV.623-27)

This general association is promptly confirmed by an open comparison. Raphael greets Eve as she stands before her 'silvan lodge' and this is immediately likened to 'Pomona's arbour'. The simile then evolves into a comparison of Eve herself with 'the wood-nymph' or 'hamadryad', as Ovid calls her.

According to the mythological tradition the union of Pomona and Vertumnus was responsible for the ripening of fruit in autumn, as Sandys explains, "in the declination of the yeare [Vertumnus] marries with Pomona; in that all fruits come then to maturity". We might reasonably

expect that the natural corollary of pairing Eve and Pomona would be a similar linkage of Adam and Vertumnus, especially since the god founded his reputation upon his tending and patronage of the fruitful gardens:

nam quid ego adiciam, de quo mihi maxima fama est,
hortorum in manibus dona probata meis?⁶⁴

However, such an association seems to have been purposefully withheld by Milton.

So too, it is interesting to note that on the one occasion when Adam is explicitly likened to Zephyr he does not appear in the guise of the wind god as a fertilising agent whose fructifying breath impregnates his lawful wife, Flora. Rather, as we have seen, this association is included to suggest Adam's tender affection for Eve, his perpetually fresh wonder at her beauty and the softness of his whisper as

. . . he on his side
Leaning half-raised, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamoured, and beheld
Beauty, which whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice
Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whispered thus. Awake . . .

(V.11-17)

If we stand back and ignore the delicate brush strokes, focussing our attention rather upon the organising design of the picture, we may perceive how Adam gravitates toward Eve, irresistibly attracted by the powerful magnetism of her beauty. From this vantage point it seems possible that the correlation of Adam and Zephyr and Eve and Flora originates ultimately from Eve's dynamic presence which exerts its compelling influence over Adam even whilst she is asleep.

The conclusion seems almost inescapable that while Eve's name is repeatedly coupled with those mythological figures who serve to body

forth her substantial relationships to ancient fertility goddesses, thus enveloping her in the numinous aura of a quasi-divine beauty, Adam is rarely so linked.

Although there is no shortage of formal titles that explicitly refer to Adam's important role as "our first father" (IV.495), the severe appellations, "the patriarch of mankind" (V.506), and "our primitive great sire" (V.350), serve rather to identify him with the Hebraic character Abraham; they instil respect and indicate authority, but they do not suggest the creative spirit incarnate in man.

Yet an apparently obvious exception occurs, as we have seen, shortly after our first introduction to the human pair. We are naturally led to expect that here Adam and Eve will illustrate the moral lesson of:

How beauty is excelled by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.

(IV.490-91)

and that Adam, as Eve's "author and disposer" (IV.635), is superior to her "in the prime end/Of nature" (VIII.540-41). The episode ostensibly fulfils our expectations as Eve "with eyes":

Of conjugal attraction unreprieved,
And meek surrender, half embracing leaned
On our first father, half her swelling breast
Naked met his under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid: he in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds
That shed May flowers; and pressed her matron lip
With kisses pure.

(IV.492-502)

Eve is passive and receptive here where Adam is active and assertive, submissive where he is dominant. However, on closer examination, we may experience the disconcerting feeling that what Milton is actually showing us is something quite different. Suddenly somewhere the polarity reverses.

The shift of emphasis is at first imperceptible, but the cumulative force of select, vivid detail culminates in a most impressive picture of Eve's vital presence. As Rauber astutely observes, "the dynamic notes of the description" cluster around Eve: " 'her swelling Breast' and 'the flowing Gold' of her hair"⁸⁵ and, of course, her eyes flashing with "conjugal attraction". The counter-balancing or correcting movement, initiated by such emphatic expressions ^{as} are "unreproved", "meek surrender", and "superior love", does not wholly counter-act the centripetal pull towards Eve who effectively dominates the picture. Rauber would take this point even further by urging that here Eve has become "the earth goddess herself, over-shadowing in her great power the poor, trembling ephemeral male."⁸⁶ We have come a long way from the "professed moral"⁸⁷ of the episode.

VII

The Source of Life

Critics have often commented upon the pre-eminent importance assigned to the creative process by Milton in Paradise Lost. Indeed, Rajan concludes that for Milton "goodness is fertility"^{87a}, while Le Comte enthusiastically declares that the poem is

... a hymn to creation, a creation at many levels, ranging from the brooding of the Dove and the demi-urgic mission of the second person of the Trinity to the poet's own nightly intercourse with his Muse that brings the poem to birth.⁸⁸

On the other hand, looking at these various levels of the creative process, Marcia Landy argues that they share one feature in common : they are regarded as an exclusively masculine prerogative by Milton.

She maintains that:

The principle of creativity, the highest principle of the cosmos is denied to woman. The Father and Son bound the cosmos. The male poet creates the epig⁸⁹ and the author and disposer of woman is her husband.

So too, Sandra Gilbert has insisted that as Paradise Lost is an example of the "patriarchal etiology that defines a solitary Father God as the only creator of all things", the poem illustrates "the historial dispossession and degradation of the female principle".⁹⁰ However, such a view is something of an over-simplification and, in Gilbert's article at least, serves only to take us back to the old stereotype and "Milton's well-known misogyny".⁹¹ We may now conveniently examine Milton's account of the process of Creation, the way in which he manages "somehow to introduce a female element into a purely masculine cosmic scheme"⁹² and then trace the steps whereby Eve gathers to herself a constellation of images primarily associated with the Father's "effortless plenitude".⁹³

The Father's love and goodness is manifested in the richness and variety of creation effected through "His Word" (VII.175), the Son, in the company of the Holy Spirit. The Father announces his intention to "create/Another world" in these words addressed to his Son

... my Word, begotten Son, by thee
This I perform, speak thou, and be it done:
My overshadowing spirit and might with thee
I send along, ride forth, and bid the deep
Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth,

. . .

So spake the almighty, and to what he spake
His Word, the filial Godhead, gave effect.

(VII.163-67; 174-75)

Milton's insistence upon the instrumentality of the Word and Spirit here seems indistinguishable from his position in De Doctrina Christiana where the question is given fuller and more analytical treatment. The Word, he argues:

non principalem, quia tum pater ipse a quo solo omnia non esset principalis; non sociam, quia tum non diceretur, pater verbo et spiritu, sed cum verbo et spiritu creavit; vel pater, verbum, et spiritus creantur: quae formulae loquendi in scriptura nusquam inveniuntur.⁹⁴

Moreover, in the passage from Paradise Lost quoted above, the emphasis is placed upon the Son as the active agent of creation while the role of the Spirit in the creative process is left undefined. This too is in accordance with the position adopted by Milton in his theological treatise. There Milton casts doubt upon the validity of identifying the Spirit as a separate person in the divine nature and clearly relegates it to a subsidiary role in creation. The "Spiritus Dei", he maintains

... est virtus potius divina, quam persona aliqua ...
 Nam si persona erat, cur spiritus nominatur, filius reticetur, cuius opera factum esse mundum toties legimus; nisi potius Christus is fuit, quem Spiritum in vetere testamento aliquoties dictum supra ostendimus. Ut sit, si personam omnino volumus, non alia tamen quam ministra dumtaxat videtur fuisse: postea enim quam Deus coelum et terram creaverat, spiritus tantummodo incubabat, superficiei aquarum iam creaturarum.⁹⁵

However, in spite of the apparent correspondence between the Father's words and Milton's stand in De Doctrina Christiana such a view of the Holy Spirit is not typical of the impression we receive from the poem as a whole. Whether or not in a theological dispute Milton would have argued that the Spirit is always either an aspect of the Father or Son, in his imaginative representation in Paradise Lost the Spirit is an active participant in the creative process whose role, if different, is no less important than that of the Son,⁹⁶ and creation is a result of their cooperation, "The king of glory in his powerful Word/And Spirit" set forth to create "new worlds" (VII.208-9; emphasis added).

Indeed, we may distinguish two discrete but complementary processes⁹⁷ at work, and as Watkins has perceptively pointed out:

Milton has fused them so skilfully that we do not at first realize he is using two distinct methods in dramatizing Creation, two different sets of images and symbols: abstract and concrete, spirit and matter, mind and body, the spontaneous existence as if by magic with the spoken word and natural biological evolution through time.^{97a}

These two modes of operation are associated with the Son and Spirit respectively.

The Son and Spirit are seen working in conjunction not only in the main account of Creation in Book VII (ll. 225-42), but even in the opening lines of the poem their complementary actions are suggested.⁹⁸ At first we hear how "In the beginning ... the heavens and earth/Rose out of chaos" (I.9-10) with the effortless power inherent in the word that the Devils can only parody in Pandaemonium (I.692-711), but then we learn that even "from the first" the Spirit too:

Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss
And madest it pregnant.

(I.19-22)

Incidentally, we may draw a parallel here between the two creative processes described above and those envisaged by Ovid in the first book of the Metamorphoses. For Ovid too, Creation wore a double aspect, though they did not occur contemporaneously as in Milton's account. The first phase of Creation, recounted in lines 5-75 is a twofold process in which firstly order is imposed on the warring elements of Chaos, and then follows the cosmic task of organising the constituent parts of the Universe and lastly of Earth itself. The second phase, the re-creation of life after the Flood, is conveyed in a number of parturitive images to which we may return later. For it is in the first phase that Ovid's influence is most immediately apparent.

Milton held the ancient but unorthodox view that the Creation was not ex nihilo.⁹⁹ In De Doctrina Christiana he introduces his comments on the question thus:

Materia autem prima quae fuerit, varie disputatur. Moderni plerique volunt ex nihilo emerisse omnia; unde et ipsorum credo sententia orta est. Primum autem constat, neque Hebraeo verbo נִחַד , neque Graeco κτίζειν , neque Latino creare, idem quod ex nihilo facere significari: immo vero unum-
quodque horum idem quod ex materia facere passim significat.¹⁰⁰

As Fletcher has pointed out, Milton "conceived of the Act of Creation as an ordering of the elements, already existent in Chaos, not the creating of those elements themselves".¹⁰¹ Fletcher goes on to propose that this might in part, at least, be due to the influence of Ibn Ezra's refutation of the idea of creatio ex nihilo set forth in the Rabbi's commentary on the first chapter of Genesis.¹⁰² However, whether or not Milton drew his "basic conception of Creation" as an arrangement of pre-existent elements from Rabbinical commentaries or elsewhere, "the elaborate conception of Creation as Milton has poetically embroidered it in the poem" seems closer to the Ovidian account than to other available sources.¹⁰³

The similarity between Genesis and the opening lines of the Metamorphoses had long been felt to be so impressive that some explanation was required. Indeed, as Ann Moss indicates, Lavinius was not alone when he postulated that:

Either Ovid was directly inspired by the Holy Ghost, or he knew the Pentateuch through Moses' pupils the Egyptian philosophers, and their Greek disciples, Plato and Pythagoras.

And as she proceeds to point out, "Such a theory" was not without "patristic authority and was by no means a novel way of justifying a pagan author".¹⁰⁴ Similar explanations are still to be found in the more recent commentaries of Golding and Sandys. Golding indeed claims the support of

(... those not of the rude and vulgar sort
 But such as have of godlinesse and learning good report)
 That think the Poets tooke their first occasion of these things
 From holie Writ as from the well where all wisdome springs.

before he exclaims:

What man is hee but would suppose the author of this booke
 The first foundation of his worke from Moyses writings tooke.

arguing that

Not onely in effect he dooth with Genesis agree,
 But also in the order of creation,¹⁰⁵ save that hee
 Makes no distinction of the dayes.

Sandys too begins cautiously before concluding on a more positive note

... although by not expressing the originall he seems to
 intimate the eternitie of his Chaos: yet appeares in the
 rest so consonant to the truth, as doubtlesse he had either
 seene the Books of Moses or received that doctrine by
 tradition.¹⁰⁶

Since the theory that Ovid's description of the Creation was based
 on Genesis was still current in his own day, Milton could, as Harding
 suggests,

borrow details from his description without violating in the
 eyes of his contemporaries that principle of decorum,
 which he once stated was "the grand masterpiece to observe".¹⁰⁷

Moreover, we have evidence of a different kind, the testimony of Milton's
 youngest daughter, Deborah, that seems to confirm that he regarded the
 first book of the Metamorphoses as particularly significant for his
 purpose. Dr. Johnson records how "She could repeat the first lines of
 ... the Metamorphoses ... by having often read them" to her father.¹⁰⁸

But leaving the question of creatio ex nihilo and Ovidian influence
 aside for the moment, let us return to the two processes of creation
 identified in Paradise Lost with the actions of the Son and Spirit
 respectively. From the first perspective Creation is envisaged as a

process of organising and ordering the confused matter of Chaos, establishing "order from disorder" (III.713) by the power of the verbal fiat.^{108a} This suggests a rational process directed by the conscious will, and this seems confirmed by Milton's use of the mathematical symbol of the "golden compasses" wielded by the Son "to circumscribe" the "bounds" of the created Universe (VII.225-31). From the alternative perspective, Creation is seen as a cosmic act of impregnation by the Spirit resulting in the miraculous 'births'¹⁰⁹ of the Days. Here, in his differentiation of the roles of the Son and Spirit in Creation, Milton may at first glance appear to be adopting a more orthodox position than in De Doctrina Christiana. For St. Thomas Aquinas speaks of the Son as "artifex rerum artificatarum" and the Spirit as "vivificator", and Garrigou-Lagrange explains Aquinas' conclusion, "Deus Pater operatus est creaturam per suum Verbum, quod est Filius; et per suum amorem, qui est Spiritus sanctus",¹¹⁰ thus:

Deus operatur per intelligentiam et voluntatem.
Atqui Filius procedit per modum intellectualem ut
Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus per modum amoris.
Ergo sic dici potest: Deus Pater creavit per suum
Filius et per Spiritum Sanctum.

However, on closer examination it becomes readily apparent that while in Paradise Lost an essential part of the fundamental formula of the Universe is amor, it is clearly a rather different kind of love than Christian theologians or even Platonic philosophers normally have in mind.¹¹² For Milton's imaginative account of Creation involves him in the rather dubious orthodoxy of representing the Father 'loving' the world to life through the operation of his Spirit. In Paradise Lost, then, a transcendent sexual love becomes a cosmic creative force.

Significantly, it is the Father's mouthpiece for the instruction of mankind, Raphael, who indicates that "two great sexes animate the world" (VIII.151). God in his infinitude comprehends both sexes for, as Summers has observed, "The ordinary masculine and feminine roles are

joined in divine fertility: both of the 'great Sexes' find their origin in God.¹¹³ The active or 'male' principle manifests itself in the divine will to create; the passive or 'female' principle is embodied in Chaos,¹¹⁴ containing in potential all the teeming life of the world. The mere sexual application of this is obvious, but the principle goes far beyond ordinary sex-role stereotypes as such.

Moreover, such imagery accorded with his belief that the Creation was not effected ex nihilo, "omnia simplici verbo Dei facta esse",¹¹⁵ since it presupposed not only a masculine "vivificator"¹¹⁶ but a feminine "womb of nature" (II.911). Thus Milton argues in De Doctrina Christiana:

Ex materia igitur quacunq̄ mundum fuisse conditum palam est. Actio enim et passio relata cum sint, nullumque agens extra se possit agere, nisi sit quod pati queat, materia nimirum, Deus ex nihilo creare hunc mundum videtur non potuisse non ob virium, aut omnipotentiae defectum, sed quia necesse fuit aliquid iam tum fuisse¹¹⁷ quod vim eius agendi potentissimam patiēdo reciperet.

That everything rests upon the stimulation of the all-potential matter of Chaos by the dynamic, creative energy of the Spirit of God, as divine life is mysteriously infused into matter in a transcendent sexual act, is emphatically pronounced in the first lines of the poem as the Spirit

. . . with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss
And madest it pregnant.

(I.20-22)

"The Act of Creation" here described, as Fletcher perceptively comments, is "the impregnation of the stuff of Chaos by the Spirit of God".¹¹⁸

There has been considerable discussion of the significance of Milton's use of "brooding" here for the Hebrew verb in Genesis I.2 translated in the Authorised Version and Revised Version as "moved".¹¹⁹ Taken in conjunction with his description of how

. . . on the watery calm
 His brooding wings the spirit of God outspread,
 And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth
 Throughout the fluid mass . . .

(VII.234-37)

this surely implies that the Spirit is not envisaged as merely surveying the scene but is rather regarded as a life-giving force, the vivificator, active in creation.¹²⁰ Again, this is significant because it suggests a more independent role for the Spirit which he discusses only to reject in De Doctrina Christiana. There he comments that while the expression Spiritus Dei may be variously interpreted:

Nunc patris potentiam atque virtutem, illum imprimis afflatum divinum omnia creantem ac foventem significari: quomodo locum illum Gen. i. 2. spiritus Dei incubabat, multi intelligunt et antiqui et recentiores. Quamquam illic filius intelligendus videtur potius, per quem pater omnia creasse toties dicitur.¹²¹

Moreover, 'brooding' and its Latin form incubabat, employed by Milton in De Doctrina Christiana, as Hume first noted, suggest the particular action of the mother bird as she imparts vital warmth to her young as they hatch. Hume remarks that it is a

. . . Metaphor taken from Birds sitting and hatching their young ones, which is here extremely heightened by Dove-like, God's Holy Spirit having visibly descended on his Son, the Blessed Jesus, in that soft Similitude, the Emblem of Meekness and Innocence, Matth. 3.16.¹²²

It is noteworthy that only Ovid of the Roman poets seems to use incubare in this sense. Recounting the fate of the loving couple Ceyx and Alcyone transformed into birds he relates:

tunc quoque mansit amor nec coniugiale solutum
 foedus in alitibus: coeunt fiuntque parentes,
 perque dies placidos hiberno tempore septem
 incubat Alcyone pendentibus aequore nidis.
 tunc iacet unda maris: ventos custodit et arcet
 Aeolus egressu praestatque nepotibus aequor.

(Met. XI.743-48)

A myth that Milton had indeed turned to his own account in the early work, On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, where he uses it as a token of Christ's "reign of peace upon the earth" (1.63) beginning in "the winter wild" (1.29):

The winds with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kissed
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.¹²³

(11.64-68)

Thus too the Spirit of God like the mother bird, Alcyone and "the birds of calm", broods on a miraculous "watery calm" (VII.234). However, that the Spirit "brooding . . . madest it pregnant" seems to be, as Fowler has astutely observed, "Not a mixed metaphor, but a deliberate allusion to the Hermetic doctrine that God is both masculine and feminine".¹²⁴

While not denying Cope's suggestive argument that Milton did at times choose "sexuality as the chief image of evil . . . in Paradise Lost", I would like to take issue with the implications of his claim that "when sexuality enters the poem, it enters as Sin"(II. 750-809).¹²⁵ His assertion that sex is "the obscene, awkward means by which Satan and the material world can ape God's creative fiat"¹²⁶ disregards the role of the Spirit in Creation and also the transcendent importance that Milton thus attributes to the 'two great sexes' animating the world.

The fruit of this cosmic intercourse was the conception of the earth, seen here dramatically as a developing foetus:

The earth was formed, but in the womb as yet
Of waters, embryon immature involved,
Appeared not.

(VII. 276-78)

While these lines may owe something to Sylvester's likening of Chaos to an

. . . Embryon, that within a Weeke
Was to be born: for that huge lump was like
The shape-less burthen in the Mother's womb,
Which yet in time doth into fashion come . . .¹²⁸

there is nothing to compare with the daring simultaneity of effect whereby the placental waters which encompass the maturing embryo are seen to act as seminal fluid, impregnating the whole surface of the "great mother" (VII. 281) as she develops. Following the Spirit's own prolific example, the fertilising process is repeated on a lower plane in the sublunary world of nature and matter as

. . . over all the face of earth
Main ocean flowed, not idle, but with warm
Prolific humour softening all her globe,
Fermented the great mother to conceive,
Satiated with genial moisture.

(VII. 278-82)

This is directly parallel to Ovid's account of the generation of new life after the Flood. Warmth and moisture work in fruitful conjunction to impregnate the fertile and receptive womb of Tellus

. . . vetus umor ab igne
percaluit solis, caenumque udaeque paludes
intumuere aestu, fecundaque semina rerum
vivaci nutrita solo ceu matris in alvo
creverunt faciemque aliquam cepere morando.

(Met. I.417-21)

Tellus gravid with the teeming life of the world "edidit¹²⁹ innumeras species" (Met. I.436, emphasis added). Similarly, Milton's 'great mother', when her time is ripe:

Opening her fertile womb teemed at a birth
Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms,
Limbed and full grown.

(VII. 454-56)

As the creative process initiated by the Spirit is thus repeated, vestigial traces of Milton's early poetic conceptions of the female archetype, the constellation of images that cluster around the idea of fruitful womanhood, become more pronounced. Although Le Comte maintains that in Milton's mature

work, "The references to Mother Earth and Mother Nature in the early, including the Latin, poetry have metamorphosed into praise of God's fecundity",¹³⁰ I would argue that the process is more complex than such a wholesale transformation suggests.

As the fertilising process continues and earth is mounted sexually by the sun who "Shot down direct his fervid rays to warm" her "inmost womb" (V. 301-2), we cannot help but remember that the sun is earth's "lustly paramour"¹³¹ elsewhere in Milton's poetry. Moreover, we may also recall how in Elegia Quinta: In Adventum Veris the dynamic female figure of Tellus usurps the male prerogative, taking the initiative into her own hands of actively seeking the sun's fructifying embraces:

Cum to Phoebo tuo sapientius uteris igni,
Huc ades, et gremio lumina pone meo.
Sic Tellus lasciva suos suspirat amores.
Matris in exemplum caetera turba ruunt.

(El.V. 93-96)

The succession of active verbs: "cupit amplexus" (1.56); "cupit" (1.57); "quaerit amores" (1.71); "poscit . . . toros" (1.72); effectively demonstrate that hers are the lineaments of sexual arousal and unashamed desire. And it is interesting to note in passing that Mother Earth, as portrayed here by Milton, shares some of the attributes of the Lucretian Venus Genetrix. Just as all other creatures are quick to follow their mother's example in adventum veris, so Lucretius celebrates how as soon as "species patefactast verna diei" at the "adventum" of Venus, birds and beasts

. . . ita capta lepore
te sequitur cupide quo quamque inducere pergis.
denique per maria ac montis fluviosque rapaces
frondiferasque domos avium camposque virentis
omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem¹³²
efficis ut cupide generatim saecula propagent.

Earth tempts the fervid sun, paradoxically enough, with her "frigora . . . umbra" (1. 85) and "humentes . . . rosas" (1. 90). We may at least make a

subliminal connection between this seductive retreat and the "cool bower" (V. 300) to which Adam retires at noon and which is said to shower roses from its "flowery roof" (IV. 772-73) at night upon the embracing couple as they sleep. Indeed, the way in which the passage immediately turns from the sun mounted upon the earth to Adam and Eve seems to suggest some emblematic correspondence between the two.

We are perhaps justified, then, in seeing Mother Earth, Mother Eve and the Venus Genetrix as part of the same imaginative complex with fruitfulness at the centre. However, the tension we have previously noted between the male and female roles increases when we come to sense that the "prime end/Of nature" (VIII. 540-41) is creativity, since this is fundamentally connected with woman as the manifest "source of life" (XI. 169). For she has control of the door through which life comes into the world, holding the ripening 'fruit' in her womb until the time of release. Moreover, there is also the primitive yet deep seated feeling that life is produced by a self-sufficient Nature whose self-fecundation is independent of a male generative principle. This conception appears briefly in Ovid as Tellus repopulates the world with living things: "Cetera diversis tellus animalia formis/sponte sua peperit" (Met. I.416-17). It reappears, surprisingly, in Milton, for only two lines before the description of the sun's intercourse with the earth, we find that in Eden, virgin Nature produced as a result of her own volition and

Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art; enormous bliss.

(V. 295-97)

Furthermore, "The sun, for all its shining, is in itself barren"¹³³ as Raphael informs Adam. Moreover, as David Aers and Bob Hodge have pointed out, this makes an indirect but complex comment on the position of Eve herself.¹³⁴ When Adam asks "about hierarchies in Heaven" and why the

"sedentary earth" is "Served by more noble than her self" (VIII.32-34), in Raphael's reply:

The parallel with human sexuality is explicit: the earth as female, the sun as male. The lesson is clear too. The apparent excellence of the active male principle is illusory: without the earth it is barren, since its beams find their 'vigour' in the fruitful earth. So man, in spite of doctrine to the contrary, exists for woman?¹³⁵

As instrumental to her fruitfulness?¹³⁶

We may now more fully appreciate the feeling of converging significance and the substantial relationship that seems to subsist between Eve and the "fruitful earth" (VIII.96), the great mother. Eve herself subsumes these associations to take on superhuman stature - even by pre-lapsarian standards. In Paradise Lost we do not expect to find a poetic restatement of the systematic theology of De Doctrina Christiana; poetry is not the result of discursive thinking nor solely an act of the conscious will. Being more 'simple, sensuous and passionate' it may tap the well-springs of deeper feelings in the subterranean caverns of the imagination. And while the mystery of life and love that begets life remains, the figure of the 'great mother' cannot be ousted from the universe of the imagination, not even by a theology with such a patriarchal emphasis as seventeenth-century Puritanism.

It is strangely paradoxical, however, that Eve's substantial relationship to the 'great mother' goddess, whether personified as Tellus, Mater florum or Nature pregnant with teeming life, the door through which life comes into the world, the very 'source of life', finds its fullest expression after her fall. It is when the "much-humbled" Eve (XI. 181) has shed her 'goddess-like demeanour', and the numerous aura of her presence has been extinguished that Adam, in an address strongly reminiscent of Lucretius' hymn to Venus Genetrix, through whom "genus omne animantum/concipitur"¹³⁷, hails her:

Eve, rightly called, Mother of all Mankind
Mother of all things living, since by thee
Man is to live, and all things live for man.

(XI. 159-61)

NOTES

1. This title was suggested by D. F. Rauber's stimulating but fundamentally unsound article, 'The Metamorphoses of Eve' in which he argues that Milton "has carefully reproduced in Eve [the] potent pattern of virgin, bride and mother" that characterized "the Great Goddess ... who is worshipped in various triads which correspond to the cycle of the vegetative year" (p.64). Unfortunately, Rauber, while professing to follow Robert Graves' conclusions (The Greek Myths: I [Revised edition, 1960], esp. pp. 13-17), has seriously distorted the latter's theory to suit his own argument. It is interesting to note that Rauber has suppressed the final element of the triad as unfolded by Graves, "the crone", by replacing her with 'the mother', thus dividing the second person of Graves' trinity, "the nymph" or "nubile woman" into two separate figures. According to Graves, the Great Goddess and matriarch comprised three distinct aspects "maiden, nymph (nubile woman) and crone" and he explains how, since "the moon's three phases" and "the sun's annual course"

... recalled the rise and decline of her physical powers - spring a maiden, summer a nymph, winter a crone - the goddess became identified with seasonal changes ... and thus with Mother Earth who, at the beginning of the vegetative year, produces only leaves and buds, then flowers and fruits, and at last ceases to bear.

(p.14)

It is a tribute to Milton's Eve that Rauber, perhaps unconsciously, dismisses the possibility of her ever being touched by the withering hand of time.

2. E. Auerbach, 'Myth and Reality in the Old Testament', S.B.T. xxvii (1960), 45-48, as quoted in Evans, pp.21-22.
3. Dr. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets I, pp.182-83.
4. cf. Evans, p.22 where he remarks upon the narrative difficulties of the third chapter of Genesis.
5. The point made by Marcia Landy is suggestive:

The ingredients of the myth of the Fall are constant ... but character, situation, and motive vary, and the variations are as significant as the basic common elements.

('Kinship and the Role of Women in Paradise Lost', p.5)

6. See Adams, p.144, where he comments upon the success with which Milton has filled out the outline figures of Genesis into human shape "by finding appropriate motive and language".
7. D. P. Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, p.67.
8. Newton, note to IV. 458.
9. Osgood, The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems, p.xxi.
10. Newton, note to IV. 458.
11. K. W. Gransden, 'Paradise Lost and the Aeneid', p.284.
12. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', p.116.
13. Patrick Hume, note to IV. 461.
14. Newton, note to IV. 458.
15. Dr. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets I.p.181.
16. ibid., p.181.
17. Maurice Kelley, This Great Argument: A Study of Milton's 'De Doctrina Christiana' as a Gloss on 'Paradise Lost' (Princeton, N.J., 1941), p.150.
18. Douglas Bush, 'Ironic and Ambiguous Allusion in Paradise Lost', JEGP LX(1961), p.638. Bush concludes elsewhere that Milton's "Preparation for the fall begins here with Eve's speech" (John Milton: A Sketch of His Life and Writings [1964]. p.160).

Some account of the main branches of critical interpretation must be given here. For most recent critics the passage is seen to be charged with potential meaning. Arnold Stein ominously notes that Eve's "first recorded act is one that flirts with self-love," concluding, "Dramatically it is just right, pointing out the possibility without prejudicing the case" (Answerable Style: Essays on 'Paradise Lost' [Minneapolis, Minn., 1953], pp.92-93). Giamatti too, though he insists that the episode should not lessen "our immediate estimate of Eve", observes that "this overt

suggestion of narcissism" provides "a repository of doubt for later exploitation" (The Earthly Paradise, p.316). On the other hand, others have sought to defend Eve and purge the passage of its unwelcome implications. Marjorie Hope Nicholson, for instance, has claimed that "It seems entirely possible to explain Eve's supposed 'narcissism' by saying that Eve was still an infant, just now created - and her experience was that of any child for the first time noticing its reflection" (p.242). John Halkett has followed Nicholson's line and argued that "Eve's vanity is not the focal issue of Eve's account" (Milton and the Idea of Matrimony: A Study of the Divorce Tracts and 'Paradise Lost' [1970], p.106). Similarly, John Peter, replying to Millicent Bell's argument that "Eve's admiration for her own reflection (iv.461-7) betrays a quality of 'dainty vanity' in her", insists that "The incident is actually one of the most engaging glimpses we have of Eve's artless simplicity" and is "only one instance of the many revelations Milton gives of her charm or femininity" (A Critique of 'Paradise Lost', p.102). "But", as Giamatti maintains, "it would be a stubborn reader who would refuse to see the narcissism here ... or would insist on completely playing down its implications" (The Earthly Paradise, p.316).

Nevertheless, Knott has deplored what he feels to be the undue emphasis upon the psychological probing of Eve's potential weaknesses, complaining: "It is a rare critic who does not touch on the narcissism of Eve's fascination with her image in the lake" (p.109). Still, as Stanley Fish has pointed out, "What the reader cannot possibly do is ignore the problem (the eighteenth-century commentators were already debating it) once the Ovidian allusion is recognized. The presence of Narcissus, even at a remove, is a puzzle" (Surprised by Sin: The Reader in 'Paradise Lost', [California, 1971] pp.218-19). Some of the most important ramifications of the Ovidian themes of 'reflection', 'image', 'subject' and 'object' here are traced by Cleanth Brooks in 'Eve's Awakening' reprinted in Milton: Modern Judgements, ed. Alan Rudrum (1969) pp.173-188).

19. A. B. Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise, p.316.
20. Spenser, Faerie Queene III.ii.18, from Spenser: Poetical Works, ed. J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt (1970).
21. Salvador Dali, The Metamorphosis of Narcissus (1934), Tate Gallery Collection, T.2243.
22. Summers, The Muse's Method, p.98.
23. Nicholson, p.242.

24. See Evans, p.40, and C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', p.116.
25. Thus the text of the poem does not support Burton Jasper Webber's argument that since Milton

... makes no reference to the climax of [Ovid's] account, wherein Narcissus recognizes that he is looking at himself and persists in his passions ... [w]hen Milton suggests a comparison of Eve's case to that of Narcissus, then, he omits the material which makes Narcissus an emblem of self-love.

(The Construction of 'Paradise Lost'
[1971], p.214)

26. Sylvester's Du Bartas, 'Eden', I.vi.1.1030f, p.81. Note too the way in which he tends to exclude Eve from the picture of life in Eden to focus upon Adam and his pursuits (II.i.1.70-635, pp.100-4). As D. R. Hutcherson has observed, "The first real interest in Eve in many versions of the tradition is at the beginning of the temptation" ('Milton's Eve and the Other Eves', p.20).
27. cf. Newton's note to XI. 159:

Eve rightly call'd mother of all mankind, Gen.III.20.
And Adam called his wife's name EVE, because
she was the mother of all living. He called
her before Ishah, Woman, because she was
taken out of Ish, Man, Gen.II.23.

- Woman is her name, of Man

Extracted -

as it is express'd VIII.496. But now he denominates her Eve or Havah from a Hebrew verb which signifies to live, in firm belief that God would make her the mother of all men, and of the promis'd seed particularly. Our poet had call'd her Eve before by way of anticipation.

Newton's note, quoted in full above, provides a useful commentary on the significance of her name to which we will return again later.

36. Witness Walter Savage Landor's enthusiastic response to lines 309-10: "I would rather have written these two lines than all the poetry that has been written since Milton's time in all the regions of the earth" (quoted by Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.91).
38. B. A. Wright, N&Q CCII (Jan-Dec.1958); New Series vol.5 no.1, (Jan.1958), p.341.
39. Ovid's "prolicienda" comes from prolicere "to allure forth, lead on, incite (poet.)"(L).
40. Patrick Hume, note to IV.310.
41. Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.91. In the light of this, Demetrakopoulos' remark that Eve "is never pictured as anything other than rather obligingly accepting Adam's advances", is shown to be something of an over-simplification of their complex relationship. See 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.102.
42. "The effect" of such Latinate English is, as Adams observes, "that of an overlay; one sees and responds to the English word at the same time that one is aware of a Latin word behind the English, with its own impact and impetus" (p.191). See too Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, p.63.
43. This point is further developed in the chapter which follows.
44. David Aers and Bob Hodge, "'Rational Burning": Milton on Sex and Marriage', MS XIII (1979), p.27.
45. But he too has some reservations see 'Unfallen Sexuality', C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', pp.122-24.
46. A brief discussion of some of the implications of solar and lunar imagery in relation to Adam and Eve included in 'Appendix I: The Sun and the Moon'.
47. Dr. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets I, pp.182-83.

48. Daniel Rogers' comments on the subjection of women in marriage in his essay on Matrimoniall Honour (1642) cast an interesting side-light on Eve's position here. To those who argue that it is "an hard task for a woman so farre to deny her self" as to be subject to another, he answers, God

... puts this burden of subjection upon no woman who takes not the yoke of marriage upon her selfe; which the Lord doth force upon none, but allows each woman to be her owne Refuser, and to chuse for her self (if she can) such a man, as she can yeeld subjection unto ...

(pp.259-60)

49. This point is further developed in the next two chapters, 'Venus-Virgo' and 'Fruitful Flowers'.
50. Golding, The XV Bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, p.Aii.
51. Sandys, p.74.
52. Daniel Rogers, Matrimoniall Honour, p.7; Christian Oeconomie translated by Thomas Pickering (1609), p.11.
53. See Christine Rees, 'The Metamorphosis of Daphne in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century English Poetry', for an excellent account of changing interpretations of the myth during this period.
54. Spenser, Amoretti, Sonnet xxviii.
55. According to Rees, Ovid's attitude is unambiguous: in "the story as told by Ovid ... the metamorphosis into a laurel is the consequence of Daphne's own request, and its continual greenness immortalizes her virgin honour, without hint of regret for sterility" (pp.252-53), but this does not take account of Ovid's reference to Phoebus' "sterilem ... amorem" (Met. I. 496).
56. A point made by Kermode in his essay 'Adam Unparadised', pp.89-90.

57. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', p.122.
58. See Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, pp.115-16.
59. See pp.38-40.
60. Bush, note to IV. 499-501. Newton and subsequent editors follow Hume in associating the passage with Georgics II. 325f. which "represents Jupiter operating on his spouse for the production of all things."
61. See 'Appendix II: Botticelli, Milton and Ovid' for an iconographical gloss on the way in which the two myths may co-operate together.
62. There is even the suggestion that her suffering is intensified by the retention of human consciousness. See Met. I. 553-56.
63. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', p.116.
64. Wind, p.101.
65. And compare E. K.'s gloss on Cloris in his notes on 'April' in The Shepheardes Calendar.
- 65a. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', p.119.
66. Nicholson, p.239.
67. As B. K. Lewalski observes "the text of the poem does not sustain the assertion" made by Marcia Landy ('Kinship and the Role of Woman in Paradise Lost', p.9) "that the recognition of Eve as mother is prior to and sanction for her roles as lover and spouse" ('Milton on Women - Yet Once More', p.9).
68. See Lieb, The Dialectics of Creation, pp.70-71.
- 68a. For a very different interpretation of Eve's relationship with the flowers of Eden see S. A. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman' where he maintains that as "Archetypal Flower Goddess, she ascends over them. They become precursors of her future Circean herd" (p.105).
69. See Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.114, and for further discussion of this passage see pp.243-45.
70. Sylvester's Du Bartas, 'Eden', II.i.1.654-63, 668-71, 708-13.

71. Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.92. Lindenbaum too notes Milton's determination to overcome the "difficulties implicit in the idea of an unfruitful act of intercourse commanded by a God who wished to see man increase and multiply" ('Lovemaking in Milton's Paradise', MS VI [1974], p.280).
72. Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.89 and note 19 on p.135.
73. Genesis I.28.
74. Fletcher, p.206.
75. Newton, note to XI.159.
76. Genesis III.20.
77. Newton, note to XI.159.
78. Note to IV.474-75; Fowler, p.222.
79. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', p.121.
80. D. R. Hutcherson, 'Milton's Eve and the Other Eves', p.16.
81. S. A. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.103.
82. cf. the effects of Flora's withdrawal of her tutelary influence from the "fertilis hortus" (Fasti V. 315f.).
83. Sandys, p.661
84. Sexti Properti Carmina IV.ii.41-42, ed. E.A. Barber (Oxford, 1953).
85. D. F. Rauber, 'The Metamorphoses of Eve', p.61.
86. ibid.
87. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p.74

- 87a. B. Rajan, 'Simple, Sensuous and Passionate', in Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. A. E. Barker (New York, 1965), p.13.
88. Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.85.
89. Marcia Landy, 'Kinship and the Role of Women in Paradise Lost', MS IV (1972), p.11.
90. Sandra Gilbert, 'Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers', p.368; p.374.
91. ibid., p.374.
92. W. B. C. Watkins, An Anatomy of Milton's Verse (Baton Rouge, 1955), p.60.
93. Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.88.
94. De Doct. I.vii (Col. XV, pp.6-8).
95. De Doct. I.vii (Col. XV, pp.12-14).
96. It is interesting to compare Milton's poetic invocation of the Spirit in the first lines of the poem (I.17-19) with Lucretius' moving prayer to Venus in the opening lines of De Rerum Natura, since, according to their respective theories neither power could be invoked.
97. Fletcher distinguishes "two aspects of Creation" (p.81) but regards them as "two distinct phases" (p.79, emphasis added) in which "the act of Creation" or "the ordering of the elements" is succeeded by the process of creation, "the creation of the Earth and its manifold forms of life" (pp.80-81). But note, on p.128, "The Act of Creation" has become "the impregnation of the stuff of Chaos by the Spirit of God."
- 97a. W. B. C. Watkins, An Anatomy of Milton's Verse, p.62.

98. With its echo of Luke I.35, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee", and Mary's response "be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke I.38), there is perhaps even a suggestion of creation verbo et spiritu in the words of the Father at VII.163-65.
99. In the Summa Theologica I.XLV.5, St.Thomas Aquinas had maintained that "Creare est ex nihilo aliquid facere"(12th edition; Paris, 1880). In his authoritative commentary, Commentarius in Summam Theologicam S. Thomae (De Deo Trino et Creatore), (Taurini, 1943), R. Garrigou-Lagrange affirms the orthodox position thus: "Ergo omnia originem habent a Deo et quidem ex nihilo, non autem ex materia praeexistente et non producta" (p.248).
100. De Doct. I.vii (Col.XV, pp.14-16).
101. Fletcher, p.81. Such a position is not, of course, sanctioned by any of the commentaries discussed by Arnold Williams in The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis 1527-1633 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1948), pp.45-49.
102. ibid., pp.82-85.
103. Although Milton's description of chaos shows some similarities to Sylvester's account (I.i. 258-95; p.21), "it is well to remember", as Williams reminds us, "that Milton's chaos is not the product of the creation of heaven and earth, but the pre-existing material which the Word used to create the World" (The Common Expositor, p.49).
104. Ann Moss, Ovid in Renaissance France, p.34.
105. Golding, The XV Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, p. Avii.
106. Sandys, p.49.
107. D. P. Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, p.67. Harding has demonstrated how strongly Milton's description of Chaos resembles the Ovidian. He has also shown the way in which Milton has secured many of the Latin poet's suggestive details for his own account, while indicating that his influence is not confined to such poetic detail (pp.67-76).

108. Dr. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets I, pp.158-59, and see Appendix O, p.199. However, Johnson proceeds to cast doubt on this evidence reasoning that:

Of a book written in a language not understood the beginning raises no more attention than the end, and as those that understand it know commonly the beginning best, its rehearsal will seldom be necessary.

While this seems a valid argument, it may be at least possible that Johnson has missed the point here, that the opening of the Metamorphoses was a particular favourite of Milton's and that he therefore desired to hear it more often. Moreover, we may remember that John Phillips recounted Milton's custom of spending his "Evenings ... in reading some choice Poets, by way of refreshment after the day's toyl and to store his Fancy against Morning" (The Early Lives of Milton, ed. H. Darbyshire [1932], p.33).

- 108a Indeed, this is the only point of view in Uriel's account (III. 708-21).
109. Fletcher p.125 points out that the idea of "Creation ... as a birth process" was not uncommon in the seventeenth century. He cites the example of Timothy Bright's A Treatise on Melancholy (1613) in which the latter describes how "the Spirit of the Lord did as it were hatch, and breed out all living things" (pp.54-55).
110. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica I.XLV.6, pp.374-75.
111. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, Commentarius in Summam Theologicam, p.268.
112. Compare, for instance, "Spenser's mixture of the creation of Genesis I:1 with the Empedoclean concept of Love, or Concord, chaining the discordant elements into order", Colin Clouts Come Home Again, ll.846-62 (Arnold Williams, The Common Expositor, pp.49-50). And cf. Sandys:

Then [Ovid] proceeds to the description of that confused Masse, which the Platonists call the undigested World, as the World the digested Chaos: ordered as they say by Love ... which was no other then that harmony in Nature created by the Almightyes Fiat.

But see O. B. Hardison Jr., 'Written Records and Truths of Spirit in Paradise Lost', MS I (1969) p.156, where he relates "the sexual implications" of incubabat "to the tradition of Christian Neoplatonism".

113. Summers, The Muse's Method, p.93.
114. On another level, the region of primeval chaos again reflects this fundamental duality, for the warring elements are depicted as being ruled over by a king, Chaos personified, and by "Night .../The Consort of his reign" (II. 962-63).
115. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, Commentarius in Summam Theologicam, p.248 (emphasis added).
116. St. Thomas Aquinas refers to the Holy Spirit's role as "vivificator" in the Summa Theologica I.XLV.6, p.374.
117. De Doct. I. vii (Col. XV, p.18)
118. Fletcher, p.128.
119. ibid., pp. 127-29. But see Kitty Cohen's article, 'A Note on Milton's Semitic Studies', MQ IV (1970), pp.7-10, where she argues that without denying the presence of "significant Hebraic elements in Paradise Lost" we need not attribute Milton's usage here to the influence of Rabbinical commentary. She concludes:

It is unlikely that Milton was influenced by a Jewish Rabbi rather than by centuries of Christian exegesis stemming in this case from Basil the Great and by St. Jerome or by Buxtorf's Lexicon, which he knew.

(p.9)

Again, the possible influence of Sylvester's Du Bartas should not be discounted. See I.1 330-41, p.22.

120. cf. II. 583-86. Note that when the sun takes over this role as vivificator of the created universe the sexual imagery becomes more explicit.
121. De Doct. I.vi (Col. XIV, pp.358-60).

122. Patrick Hume, note to I.21.
123. In his note to line 68, Carey mentions "Aristotle, Historia Animalium v 8, and Pliny x 47" as possible sources for this idea but not the passage from the Metamorphoses.
124. Note to I. 17-22; Fowler, p.43.
125. Jackson I. Cope, The Metaphoric Structure of 'Paradise Lost' (Baltimore, 1962), p.80; p.81.
126. ibid., p.82.
128. Sylvester's Du Bartas I.i. 298-301, p.21.
129. Edere, L "II. Esp. A. To bring forth. 1. Lit., of a parent, to give birth to, bear, produce, beget" as in Met. V.517 and VI.336.
130. Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.85.
131. On the Morning of Christ's Nativity (L.36).
132. Lucretius, De Rerum Natura I. 7120.
133. Blamires, Milton's Creation, p.190.
134. David Aers and Bob Hodge, "'Rational Burning': Milton on Sex and Marriage", pp.19-20.
135. ibid.
136. This passage also prompts Blamires to ask tentatively, "Is the Miltonic Eve, correspondingly pregnable by Adam, more important than we thought?" (Milton's Creation, p.190).
137. Lucretius, De Rerum Natura I. 4-5.

CHAPTER V

Venus-Virgo

I

Celestial Beauty

In his translation of Du Bartas, Sylvester had stressed that Eve's beauty, though appropriately softer and more feminine than Adam's, was hardly to be distinguished from his.¹ But Milton's Eve, as Hutcherson remarks, "stands apart from, and far above the line from which she is descended."² In Paradise Lost, beauty is Eve's especial attribute.³ However, her beauty becomes a source of genuine ambiguity, forming the single most significant factor that complicates a just appraisal of Eve, and, as such, a proper understanding of its implications is central to our understanding of man's Fall.

The luxuriant mass of associated concepts - beauty, love, springtime and flowers - which cluster around Eve through her partial identification with Flora, is subsumed within a more exalted configuration as, with a slight adjustment of focus, Eve is seen to be assigned the role of Venus herself, the goddess of beauty and love. The link is forged indirectly through the association of Eve with the myrtle and rose, the two plants singled out by Ovid and other classical poets as especially sacred to Venus and used, as Ovid explains in the Fasti,⁴ in the rituals connected with her festival in April, the spring month dedicated to her worship: "formosa Venus formoso tempore digna est" (Fasti IV.129).

"Milton's Eve", Hutcherson exclaims, "has a rare physical beauty clothed in great poetry".⁵ Her "golden tresses" have reminded more than one reader of Homer's χρυσή Ἀφροδίτη and Virgil's Venus aurea.⁶ Once again, Milton's portrayal of Eve may call to mind the work of Botticelli. For as in Botticelli's famous celebration of love and beauty, The Birth of Venus, Eve's physical magnificence is summed up in the beauty of the "flowing gold" (IV.496) of her hair, wantoning in its own looseness or waving with its own natural grace:

She as a veil down to the slender waist
Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils.

(IV.304-7)

With this exception, Milton avoids particularization in his description of Eve's physical beauty. As Thyer has observed, while "Most great poets have laboured in a particular manner the delineation of their beauties, (Aristo's Alcina, Tasso's Armida, and Spenser's Belphoebe)" Milton "has very artfully mentioned the charms of [Eve's] person in general terms only".⁷ Yet, as Hutcherson concludes, "The effect that Milton achieves is ... unequalled."⁸

Milton does not attempt to convey a minutely detailed impression of Eve's beauty, preferring instead to suggest its presence obliquely either by describing the reaction that her beauty excites in the beholder, or by comparing it with some ideal form of beauty. A powerful example of the effect of Eve's pre-eminent beauty is to be found early in Book V, when Adam wakes and is surprised to discover Eve still asleep beside him:

... he on his side
 Leaning half-raised, with looks of cordial love
 Hung over her enamoured, and beheld
 Beauty, which whether waking or asleep,
 Shot forth peculiar graces.

(V. 11-15)

The emphatic placing of "Beauty" at the head of line 14 and the omission of the possessive adjective 'her' equates Eve with beauty itself.

"Perfect beauty" (IV.634) thus becomes incarnate, not thinly personified, but substantially embodied, in Eve.

We are never far from such reminders of the magnetism and potency of her beauty. There is Adam's impressive homage to Eve as the consummation of creation "so lovely fair":

That what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now
 Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained.

(VIII. 471-73)

and we have Satan's testimony too. To Satan she seems not just "fair" but

... divinely fair, fit love for gods,
 Not terrible, though terror be in love
 And beauty.

(IX. 489-91)

Moreover, in the narrator's eyes "She is not only graceful but queen of the graces as the Heathens supposed their Goddess of love to be."⁹ As Spenser explains, the Graces "on men all gracious gifts bestow" that "adorne the mynde" and teach the "skill men call Ciuility"¹⁰ which separates man's life from the beasts'. In classical literature, it is Venus, "Multaque cum forma gratia mixta fuit" (Arts Am. II.570), who is the source of this civilising power:

mille per hanc artes motae; studioque placendi
 quae latuere prius, multa reperta ferunt.

(Fasti IV.113-14)

In Paradise Lost it is Eve who exerts this influence.¹¹ Adam himself recalls how "her looks ... infused/Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before" (VIII.474-75) and rejoices in the "Sweete semblaunt, friendly offices that bynde,/And all the complements of curtesie"¹² that issue from her in

... those graceful acts,
 Those thousand decencies that daily flow
 From all her words and actions mixed with love
 And sweet compliance.

(VIII.600-3)

Eve is first explicitly compared with the goddess of beauty and love in a simile which serves to establish the superlative nature of her loveliness. It is Eve that holds the gift of love in her power as she stands before us:

Undecked, save with her self more lovely fair
 Than ... the fairest goddess feigned
 Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove.

(V.380-82)

A comparison that stimulates the imagination to body forth so radiant a picture merits further consideration.

Milton suddenly projects us into a fabled world. We are momentarily encouraged to glimpse a tableau of the Judgement of Paris as so often depicted by Ovid. Eve takes the place of Venus at the centre of the picture, and Raphael imperceptibly merges into the figure of the divine "nuntius ales" (Her. XVI.68), Mercury. This transformation

has been adroitly prepared for a few lines previously, when Milton had described how "Like Maia's son he stood,/And shook his plumes" (V.285-86). With Adam we are cast in the role of arbiter formae, who must pronounce "vincere quae forma digna sit una duas!" (Her. XVI.69-70).¹³ Though all seem fair, we are compelled to overturn Paris' decision, "vincis utramque, Venus" (Ars Am. I.248)¹⁴ in favour of Eve.

Although I would not wish to argue too strongly that Milton had any of these particular references to the judgment of Paris in mind, it is interesting to note that in the Ars Amatoria, Ovid also emphasizes the setting of the contest, specifically the testing quality of the searching sunlight to expose any blemishes on the undraped figures:

Luce deas caeloque Paris spectavit aperto
Cum dixit Veneri "vincis utramque, Venus."

(Ars Am. I.247-48)

It is Eve's radiant and flawless beauty as she stands naked outside her "silvan lodge" (V.377) in the light of the midday sun, ready to welcome her heavenly guest that inspires this tribute from Milton. He could scarcely have devised a more striking comparison to suggest her transcendent physical beauty.

Such excited outbursts upon the part of the narrator would seem to provide, as Lindenbaum has observed, evident "authorial endorsement of Adam's and Satan's enthusiasm for Eve."¹⁵ But perhaps one of the most striking tributes to Eve's beauty as an independent and active force at work within the poem is the way in which "her heavenly form/Angelic" (IX.457-58) temporarily overawes even Satan's "malice":

... and with rapine sweet bereaved
 His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought:
 That space the evil one abstracted stood
 From his own evil, and for the time remained
 Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
 Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.¹⁶

(IX.460-66)

With such passages in view, it is hardly surprising if Eve's beauty no longer seems merely a matter of outward ornament. They certainly reveal a more complex attitude than those who would assume that Milton's own considered judgment is neatly contained in Satan's rejection of beauty as "a trivial toy" that "stands/In the admiration only of weak minds" (P.R. II. 220-22) might readily imagine. We can more fully appreciate the exalted position accorded Eve's pre-eminent beauty if we look at it from the perspective of Renaissance Neoplatonism.

Let us first examine it in the light of a passage from Spenser's An Hymne in Honour of Love, where he considers the origin of man's attraction to beauty and concludes that even in his fallen condition, man "in choice of love":

... doth desyre
 That seemes on earth most heavenly, to embrace,
 That same is Beautie, borne of heavenly race.

(11.110-12)

Spenser continues his meditation in lines most pertinent to our purpose:

For sure of all, that in this mortall frame
 Contained is, nought more divine doth seeme,
 Or that resembleth more th' immortall flame
 Of heavenly light, then Beauties glorious beame.

(11.113-16)

From this point of view, beauty is "the mirrhour ... of heavenly light" (1.196) and is thus a manifestation of God in Eve. We may more fully appreciate the profound significance of associating Eve with Venus "unde movetur amor" (Her. XVI.78) when we remember that "love .../ Leads up to heaven, is both the way and guide" (VIII.612-13). Beauty is thus a link in the chain which may unite Adam with God. If we further consider that "Throughout the exchange between Raphael and Adam[on the theme of love in Book VIII], M. assumes," as Fowler points out, "familiarity with the Neoplatonic ordering of different kinds of love,"¹⁷ we have good authority for assigning human love and beauty an important role in the divine scheme.

It is important to remember that in Renaissance Neoplatonism earthly and heavenly love were no longer placed in simple opposition. Human love became an image or type of heavenly love and as such shared to some extent in the celestial glory. Thus the two types of love symbolized in Plato by Aphrodite Urania and Aphrodite Pandemos were elaborated by Pico della Mirandola into a threefold division: amore celeste, umano e bestiale.¹⁸ In the same way, Raphael differentiates heavenly from earthly love, and Adam defends the mystery of human love as different in kind from the act of copulation "common to all kinds" (VIII.597). And indeed, this division seems implicit also in Raphael's admonition to Adam that "true love"

... refines
 The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
 In reason, and is judicious, is the scale
 By which to heavenly love thou mayst ascend,
 Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause
 Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.

(VIII.589-94)

Fowler provides an excellent commentary on these lines:

Raphael here expounds the very familiar Neoplatonic distinction between divine or celestial Love; human or terrestrial love; and bestial love. The first (M.'s heavenly love) is the love of the contemplative, belonging to mind alone. The second (true love) is the force that drives a man to propogate the earthly image of divine beauty, but may also, in its ideal form, lead him to the first ... The third (sunk ... pleasure) is experienced by him who 'stoops to debauchery, or, even worse, abandons for sensual pleasures a contemplative state already attained' (Panofsky²143).¹⁹

To this I should only wish to add that the first two kinds of love may be regarded rather as complementary phases of a recurring process that 'refines the thoughts and heart enlarges' as "What descends to earth as the breath of passion, returns to heaven in the spirit of contemplation."²⁰ Indeed, we may distinguish some similarities with the divine cycle fundamental to Neoplatonic thought in which God exerts his influence on the world. Beauty emanates from God, inspires rapture and draws man back to him in a tripartite rhythm of emanatio - raptio - remeatio,²¹ as Ficino explains in his commentary on Plato's Symposium:

Circulus ... prout in Deo incipit et allicit,
pulchritudo: prout in mundum transiens
ipsum rapit, amor; prout in auctorem remeans
ipsi suum opus coniungit, voluptas. Amor²²
igitur in voluptatem a pulchritudine desinit.

Moreover, if we pause to reflect briefly upon the role assigned to the Graces in this process, its relevance to Paradise Lost becomes still clearer and "Milton's description of Eve as Queen of the Graces" is seen to embrace "large themes" when regarded "through the lenses of Neoplatonism."²³ In the philosophical mythology of Neoplatonic thought,

the trinity of the Graces bound in a perpetual circle of grace: giving - accepting - returning, became an inclusive symbol of this rhythm of love in which, as Pulchritudo - Amor - Voluptas, they "unfolded" "the unity of Venus."²⁴ Indeed, the classical grouping of the Graces "una aversa pingitur, duae nos respicientes"²⁵ acquired a transcendent meaning representing pictorially the Neoplatonic metaphysic of Love as Desire aroused by Beauty in which, as Wind explains, "the first benefit (Pulchritudo) descends from the Beyond to us, and ... the enraptured Grace (Amor) 'turns back' from us to the Beyond (Voluptas)."²⁶ Put another way, Love is the mediating power which translates Beauty into Joy and enables man to ascend towards God.

Moreover, "if we remember that Pico della Mirandola, in describing 'la violenza dello amor celeste', borrowed his images from a flaming passion"²⁷ and that Plotinus too had advised his pupils to model their expectation of spiritual joy on what they knew of the joys of the senses, likening it to the passion of lovers particularly, we may appreciate more fully the exalted function accorded human love in paradise. Love is pre-eminent among the delights of Eden as Milton repeatedly emphasizes. The paradisum voluptatis is found to be incomplete without Eve, and to Adam their love is "the sum of earthly bliss" (VIII.522).²⁸

This view is given countenance by Raphael, who, having explained how flesh and spirit are placed upon the same continuum so that flesh may be refined into spirit, intimates that the joys of heaven are those of paradise repeated in a 'finer tone.' Pressed on this point by Adam, Raphael concedes that heavenly spirits too express their love

in sexual union and suggests the bliss of such heavenly union by emphasizing the completeness and totality of angelic intercourse. Just as for Adam Eden is no Paradise without Eve, Raphael admits that there would be no happiness in heaven without such transcendent, sexual love:

... Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
 Us happy, and without love no happiness.
 Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
 (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
 In eminence, and obstacle find none
 Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars:
 Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace,
 Total they mix, union of pure with pure
 Desiring.

(VIII.620-28)

II

The Fairer Image

Pressed to its logical conclusion, the line of argument followed in the preceding section would lead to the conclusion that Eve is "the link between Adam and beatitude: the love she inspires is an invitation to learn what man can know of God."²⁹ However, such a view would run contrary to our understanding of Milton's famous statement of the relationship of the sexes to God and each other: "He for God only, she for God in him" (IV.299).

In the more familiar view of Milton's theological scheme, "the relations of the two to Deity are through the superior of the two, the man."³⁰ In this configuration, Adam is "the medium by which Eve is divinely created and through which Eve unites with God."³¹ Adam is nearer to God's image; Eve "In outward" resembles "less/His image who made both" as Adam himself recognises (VIII.543-44). Drawing on the authority of St. Paul, Milton had elaborated this point elsewhere. When discussing the significance of the verse from Genesis, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him," (I.27) Milton had argued

... had the Image of God bin equally common to them both, it had no doubt bin said, In the image of God created he them. But St. Paul ends the controversie by explaining that the woman is not primarily and immediately the image of God, but in relation to the man. The head of the woman, saith he, I Cor. II. is the man: he the image and glory of God, she the glory of the man: he not for her but she for him.³²

Their first lesson in Eden apparently illustrates this hierarchy of value in which feminine "beauty is excelled by manly grace/And wisdom" (IV.490-91). Accordingly, if "the mind/And inward facilities ... most excel" then Eve is "inferior" to Adam "in the prime end/Of nature" (VIII.540-42). However, Adam finds it difficult to abide by this clear-cut and unequivocal assessment of their relative importance in the divine scale. Although Adam recognises that he more directly resembles God's image, Eve is yet the "Fairest resemblance of [their] maker fair" (IX.538), and it is her "loveliness" (VIII.547) that makes her seem the culmination of creation, "one intended first, not after made/Occasionally" (VIII.555-56).

Moreover, it is as well to remember: it is Eve who draws the lesson that beauty is excelled by wisdom; Adam paints a different picture in which "wisdom in discourse with [beauty]/Looses discountenanced, and like folly shows" (VIII.552-53). Since the scene Adam conjures up here seems ominously to anticipate the opposition of forces and outcome of the gardening debate, it should give us pause.

In response to Adam's dilemma Raphael urges him to:

... weigh with her thy self;
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.

(VIII.570-74)

But Adam finds it impossible to follow this deceptively easy formula for managing his relationship with Eve. And, bearing in mind Peter Lindenbaum's suggestive point that "much of Milton's most effective

and affective writing has gone into the descriptions of her," it is hardly surprising if Adam, and at times the reader too, finds he "cannot get this crude weighing operation to come out right."³³

There is thus some degree of tension between our imaginative apprehension of Eve, suffused in the warm glow of poetic ardour, and the coldly calculated assessments made about her. For Eve is so much more than the sum of the plain discursive statements made about her. The cumulative weight of powerful evocative associations, primarily mythological, tends to overwhelm the bare rational appeals of Raphael to Adam, 'weigh with her thy self;/Then value,' or his curt dismissive reference to her fair "outside" (VIII.568), entirely discounting the almost numinous aura that seems to emanate from her beauty. Indeed, his voice often sounds alone, drowned by the rapturous tones of Adam, Satan and, at times, the poet himself, a most unlikely chorus.

Moreover, the ecstatic references to "ravishment" (V.46, IX. 541), "vehement desire" (VIII.526) and "transported" delight (VIII. 529-30) suggest the extremity of feeling associated with her presence. Significantly, in Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas such heightened expression is reserved for Adam's communion with God.³⁴ While there is "no suggestion of Christ in the spouse in Paradise Lost", the imagery of religious sexuality "so marked in Milton's milieu as to be flirted with even in the language of many Puritans"³⁵ is engrossed by Eve.

Before the Fall, then, Eve's beauty begins to appear less like a created thing, merely a physical quality and a matter of externals only, than a force in its own right, operating independently. While we have already seen the potency of "beauty's heavenly ray" (IX.607) exerted as an almost supernatural power for good, disarming Satan "Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge" (IX.466), other references to her "Beauty, which whether waking or asleep/Shot forth peculiar graces" and "darts of desire" (V.14-15 , VIII.62; emphasis added) suggest that it is also a potentially dangerous weapon that leaves Adam "here only weak/Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance" (VIII.532-33).

At such times Eve, "divinely fair, fit love for gods," (IX.489) does not appear a modest and humble vicar of a more exalted love; the love she offers seems less a means to an end than an end in itself, not merely "the sum of earthly bliss" (VIII.522; emphasis added) but, despite Raphael's extolling of the virtues of angelic intercourse, the highest good imaginable. The significance of this is plain when we remember what Milton never allows us entirely to forget, that "In the act of disobedience Adam simply chooses Eve over God: he rejects human love as a means and deifies it as an end."³⁶

Goodman's reflections in The Fall of Man seem pertinent at this point. Since beauty, like other "allurements of the world ... though in themselves they are meenes to stirre up love and thankfulnesse to God; yet through our abuse they might be an occasion of our fall," he had stressed "If I love beauty, I will first love him, and fasten mine eyes upon him, that is the fountain of beauty, and beauty itself."³⁷

Augustine too had explained how beauty, like every created thing: "Cum enim bona sit, et bene amari potest et male, bene scilicet ordine custodito male ordine perturbato."³⁸ In the event, Eve's beauty does not bring Adam nearer to God but causes him to break the chain that binds him to his Creator and "the link of nature" (IX.914) draws him down the scala naturae. So Adam violates the hierarchy of creation when he allows, in Bush's words, "idolatry of a creature to become his ultimate principle of allegiance."³⁹

Indeed, the terms in which Adam couches his description of the power of Eve's presence are disquieting. Eve completes his creation or rather recreates him as her creature. Using vocabulary which immediately recalls Raphael's recent account of the creation, Adam explains how Eve "infused":

Sweetness into [his] heart, unfelt before,
And into all things from her air inspired
The spirit of love and amorous delight.

(VIII.474-77)

Just as the Spirit of God had "infused" the world with "vital virtue" (VII.236) and God had "breathed" into Adam "The breath of life" (VII.525-26), Eve literally 'inspires' (L, inspirare "I lit., to blow upon, breathe into, inspire') Adam and universal nature with 'the spirit of love'.

Purvis Boyette hails Eve as "the creator of nothing less than human love and the inspiration for erotic love not only in man but in nature."⁴⁰ But, as Arnold Stein has observed, there is a "troubling quality about this use by Adam of the image from the primary creation" and he proceeds to argue persuasively that Eve "seems - by the metaphor he grants her - to be creating him in turn and in her image."⁴¹

At this point, the potential danger lies inert; it becomes active when Satan succeeds in persuading Eve herself to 'attribute overmuch' to the significance of her fairer image. Seeing herself in the mirror of such adulation, it is hardly surprising if she too finds self-knowledge and a proper sense of her human limitations difficult to maintain. Drawing her back to a state of narcissistic self-absorption in her own beauty, Satan lures Eve to her Fall.⁴²

Satan's first approach is to celebrate her position as the Venus of universal nature, "nature's desire":

In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still too gaze.

(V.45-47)

This resembles Adam's tribute to the dynamic power of her presence, and indeed Eve rises "as at [his] call" (V.48). What makes Satan's temptation so cunningly effective is that his words are so devilishly near the truth. What makes his address dangerously disruptive of the rightful order of things and not a simple statement of fact is its preface, "heaven wakes with all his eyes,/Whom to behold but thee" (V.44-45). This posits Eve's central position in the divine scheme: not only does heaven as well as earth find its completion in Eve, but God too, it is subtly intimated, rejoices in his contemplation of her 'divine semblance' as in the "divine similitude" of his Son (III.384). From here it is an easy step for Satan to urge her claim to "high exaltation" (V.90) as "a goddess" "among the gods" (V.77-78) by virtue of her 'celestial beauty'.

The second temptation follows the pattern outlined above. Satan encourages Eve to regard herself as the earthly and heavenly Venus "hominum divumque voluptas"⁴³ who should be worshipped as such:

Fairest resemblance of thy maker fair,
 Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
 By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore
 With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
 Where universally admired; but here
 In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
 Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
 Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
 Who sees thee? (And what is one) who shouldst be seen
 A goddess among gods, adored and served
 By angels numberless, thy daily train.
 So glaz'd the tempter, and his proem tuned;
 Into the heart of Eve his words made way.

(IX.538-50)

In this way, Satan appeals to Eve's awareness of her superior beauty; there is, he maintains, "no fair to thine/Equivalent or second" (IX. 608-9).⁴⁴ He then manipulates this argument not only to suggest that the creation is summed up in herself alone and not in Adam or in them both collectively, but even to blur any sense of her inferiority to her Creator. Only with the Fall does it become possible to consign Eve and her beauty to a clear and unequivocal position in the hierarchy of being, and the Son's demands of Adam become unanswerable:

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 above 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 know thyself aright.

(X.145-56)

Once Eve has fallen, amore umano and celeste become mutually exclusive paths for Adam. As Goodman had reflected in The Fall of Man:

If I see the shadow before me, then the light is
behind me; if the light be before me, the shadow
is behind me ... the love of heaven and earth
cannot together subsist, no man can serve two
masters.⁴⁵

Paradoxically, as Adam elevates human love above divine love, he falls under Eve's 'Circean charm' and into amore bestiale. Burning in lust (IX.1009-16), he is "sunk in carnal pleasure" (VIII.593).

But despite Demtrakopoulos' protestation that "From the beginning of her creation, [Eve's] sinister attractiveness partakes of Circean witchery",⁴⁶ it is important to remember that until the Fall, Milton is careful to maintain a balance, albeit at times a precarious balance, between beauty's power to promote, or interfere with, man's spiritual life. Even Milton's brusque dismissal of Adam as "fondly overcome with female charm" (IX.999) is not his final word on the "charm of beauty's powerful glance" (VIII.532-33) for:

... beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possessed, nor can be easily
Repulsed.

(S A 1003-6)

In Paradise Lost, though Eve's beauty becomes an instrument of evil, it is finally an instrument of reparation and redemption: Adam cannot long resist "Creature so fair his reconcilment seeking" (X.943).

In conclusion, let us consider again the simile which explicitly links Eve with Venus, this time in the context of the lines that directly follow, as Eve:

Undecked, save with her self more lovely fair
 Than ... the fairest goddess feigned
 Of three that in Mount Ida strove,
 Stood to entertain her guest from heaven; no veil
 She needed, virtue-proof, no thought infirm
 Altered her cheek. On whom the angel Hail
 Bestowed, the holy salutation used
 Long after to blest Marie, second Eve.

(V.380-87)

Eve's erotic sensuousness is cleansed of any hint of provocative sensuality by the immediate association with the Virgin, as Milton deftly changes the scene from a Judgement of Paris to an Annunciation tableau. The shift in emphasis acts as a counter-poise and casts a retrospective light by which Eve is seen to embody the dual nature of love both sensuous and chaste in its physical and spiritual manifestations. A transcendent union of contraries is thus rendered by this curious adjustment of focus and frozen in a transitory gesture as Raphael hails the naked Eve.

But even in this most innocent of moments, Milton reminds us of what he never allows us to forget, that the pressure of contrary forces will ultimately prove too difficult to sustain. "Hypnotically sexual" and "endowed with a mysterious, magical and highly powerful eroticism"⁴⁷ Eve proves too great a distraction to man's spiritual life. The second Eve will not be a second Aphrodite.

III

The Virgin Majesty of Eve

While Eve remains unfallen, she unites chaste and sensuous love. Milton resolves the conflict between the two opposing ideals of chastity and erotic love by a stroke of original genius: the disjunction between virgin and bride is mended in the state of innocence. Even after her marriage to Adam, Eve continues to retain many of the qualities associated with her virginal role, and Milton makes subtle and suggestive use of this motif. Until the Fall, Milton draws attention to her virginal aspect at carefully chosen moments in the narrative. Indeed, it is reiterated with ominous suggestiveness as Eve parts from Adam to garden alone; she will return "deflowered" (IX. 901) by the serpent.

The prime classical symbol of chastity was, of course, the virgin goddess, Diana, to whom Eve is directly compared. Moreover, in the same way as Venus, goddess of love and loveliness acts as a synthesizing and organizing image around which are clustered partial embodiments of her nature, Milton achieves a similar skilful patterning of interrelated images, events and exemplary types centred upon the virgin goddess, Diana.

The obverse of Venus is thus Diana; in Paradise Lost they become complementary aspects of a single, composite figure, Eve. For Eve retains within herself an inherent complexity, enabling her to hold in solution contradictory attributes. She encompasses diametrically opposed positions; the element of sensuousness and softness in Eve's nature is offset by a certain virginal coldness and independence.

That Eve has subsumed the roles of virgin and bride seems to be intimated initially in the first passage describing the nuptial bower, "The roof":

Of thickest covert was inwoven shade
Laurel and myrtle.

(IV. 692-94)

Editors have generally noted that Virgil had similarly linked the laurel and myrtle together in a passage from the Eclogues:

et uos, o lauri, carpam et te, proxima myrte,
sic positae quoniam suavis miscetis odores.

(II. 54 - 55)

But, as Fowler points out, "at this juncture M. must intend more than an elegant allusion" ⁴⁸ to the mutually enhancing fragrance of the shrubs noted by Virgil in the passage above. The emphatic position of the operative words 'laurel' and 'myrtle' suggest that it is more than a passing detail.

In Fowler's opinion "the trees seem rather to symbolize the complementary roles of Apollo and Venus, male and female, mens and anima" ⁴⁹ and this would accord with the mythological roles assumed by Adam and Eve elsewhere. ⁵⁰ However, this seems to constitute only one facet of the possible emblematic significance contained in the passage, and indeed, as Fowler himself perceptively concludes: "The force of the passage lies in the suggestion of a comprehensive polarity." ⁵¹

On one important level of interpretation, it seems to signify emblematically the reconciliation of chastity and love. The myrtle was, of course, the plant especially sacred to Venus, the goddess of

love, and is constantly associated with her in the works of the poet of love himself, Ovid. The laurel is only connected with Apollo through his unrequited love for Daphne; he only adopted it as his emblem after her metamorphosis, and the prime association of the laurel surely remains with Daphne herself. In his commentary on the fable as recounted by Ovid in the Metamorphoses, Sandys enlarges on the symbolic significance and congruence of her transformation into laurel:

She is said ... to fly [Apollo's] pursuit, in that [laurels] affect the shadow; and to repel the fire of lust, in not being scorched by the Sunne or lightning.

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The laurel thus forms the true "image of her beauty and chastity".

The reconciliation of these seemingly discordant qualities, chastity and love, is perhaps best understood in the light of contemporary applications of the motif of the Venus-Virgo. The two opposing goddesses of the classical pantheon, Venus and Diana, were occasionally fused into one hybrid figure in the Renaissance. An authoritative source for this composite figure was at hand in a verse from the first book of the Aeneid "in which Venus appears disguised as a nymph of Diana, the goddess of love as a devotee of chastity :

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Virginis os habitumque gerens et virginis arma."

Milton might have become acquainted with this motif from a variety of sources. He would certainly have been familiar with the dense layer of imagery with which the virgin queen, Elizabeth I surrounded herself. She seems to have developed the potentialities of the figure of the Venus-Virgo for her own portraiture; she was

frequently depicted as Diana by artists, composers and poets alike, but in such a way as often seemed to point to the cult of Venus in disguise.⁵⁴

Instances of this distinctive motif appear in the work of Spenser, one of Milton's acknowledged masters. In the proem to Book IV of the Faerie Queene, Spenser addresses Elizabeth as "The Queene of love" and then in the succeeding stanza reminds us of Diana's severa virginitas by praying that Venus' son "with drops of melting love" may assuage Elizabeth's "vse of awfull Maiestie" and "haughtie courages".⁵⁵

But, of course, something of the same tension runs throughout the sonnet sequences of this period, and Elizabeth's poetic persona owes something to the descriptions of the ideal lady of Petrarchan convention.⁵⁶

IV

Species Secunda Virginitatis

In the eyes of Protestant and Puritan preachers, marriage had been "stained with the unjust aspersions of Popery."⁵⁷ William Perkins had condemned the findings of "the Councell of Trent", protesting that since it "opposeth marriage and chastitie; it plainly determineth that in marriage there is no chastitie."⁵⁸ By ending the opposition of marriage and chastity, the Reformers hoped to put an end to the "Popish magnifying of virginity" at the expense of marriage.⁵⁹

Thus Phineas Fletcher glorifies both married love and virginity in The Purple Island, according equal merit and distinction to each. Fletcher emphasizes the close relationship between the virgin and bride by representing them as twin sisters, equally beautiful and equally chaste. "Agnia chaste was joyn'd in Hymen's ties" and:

Upon her arched brow unarmed Love
Triumphing sat in peaceful victorie;
And in her eyes a thousand chaste Graces move
Checking vain thoughts with awfull majestie.

while the eyes of Parthenia, "Choice nymph, the crown of chaste Diana's train"

... timely warmth themselves not warm, inspire;
These kindle a thousand hearts with hot desires
And burning all they see, feel in themselves no fire.⁶⁰

Indeed, in his treatise on Christian Oeconomie, William Perkins went further and claimed that marriage was "a state in it selfe, farre more excellent, than the condition of single life"⁶¹ and Daniel Rogers similarly concluded that marriage was "the Preservative of Chastitie" and "the ambition of Virginitie".⁶² Such an emphasis is not only to be detected in the work of Protestant preachers; the poet, Spenser, likewise assigned to marriage a new dignity and respect. As Sinfield has observed:

The Fairy Queen, book III, is about Chastity but gives most of its attention to the Reformation ideal of chaste marriage ... Belphoebe represents virginity but she is twin-born with Amoret who is married chastity: "And 'twixt them two did share/The heritage of all celestial grace" (III. vi. 4). Despite this declared equality, Belphoebe is relatively neglected whilst Amoret is "trained up in true femininity ... To be th' ensample of true love alone,/Lodestar of all chaste affection." (III. vi. 51-52).⁶³

Moreover, the union of chastity and love is celebrated in Spenser's famous exemplar 'of Chastitie', Britomart. Spenser rejected a negative conception of virginity in favour of an active and positive expression of 'uncloistered virtue'. But, significantly, bearing in mind the Protestant and Puritan Reformers' enthusiasm for 'wedded love', Britomart draws her peculiar strength, her chastity, from her love for Artegall. As Haller has pointed out, Milton would scarcely have failed to notice that "what made Britomart so sufficient in herself, so secure, so chaste, was married love".⁶⁴

While Haller's observation remains a valuable insight, we might qualify it by noting that it is her secure expectation of married love that in fact sustains her. What distinguishes Milton's treatment of

the theme of married love and chastity is that by defining virginity not as total abstinence from sexual love, but as fidelity to one lawful partner, Eve is able to combine the roles of virgin and bride with daring simultaneity of effect. Some strong support for such a view lay to hand in Calvin's authoritative argument:

Primus gradus castitatis est sincera virginitas:
secundus fidele coniugium. Ergo species secunda
virginitatis, est matrimonij casta dilectio.⁶⁵

Calvin's definition of a second kind of virginity in the chaste love of matrimony seems to provide important additional clues as to the motive underlying Milton's continuing association of Eve with a number of famous mythological maidens, even after her marriage to Adam, when she is no longer, at least in the usual technical sense of the word, a virgin.⁶⁶ This referential system becomes most dense at certain crucial points in the narrative, and these, as I have intimated earlier, appear to conform to a pattern. Eve's successive encounters with Adam, Raphael and Satan seem to be cast as oblique trials or tests of her chastity. Indeed, Eve's chastity becomes one of the chief expressions of her innocence, and figures forth a different order of meaning in which her virginity is a spiritual quality as well as a physical condition.

On Raphael's arrival in Eden, Eve is associated with the virgin wood-nymph, Pomona. The first link is forged between them indirectly through Eve's special responsibility for "ramos felicia poma ferentes" (Met. XIV.627), and this connection is then strengthened by a more explicit allusion, as Raphael accompanies Adam "to the silvan lodge"

... that like Pomona's arbour smiled
With flowerets decked and fragrant smells;

(V. 377-79)

Yet consider how the passage continues as Eve, "Undecked save with
her self more lovely fair/Than wood-nymph":

Stood to entertain her guest from heaven; no veil
She needed, virtue-proof, no thought infirm
Altered her cheek.

(V. 380-81; 383-85)

In his comments on verse 384, Fowler renders "virtue-proof invulnerable
through her virtue", but immediately notes that

... the expected meaning on the analogy of other
such compounds (e.g., shot-proof)...must have
occurred to M - proof against virtue. Proof, then,
against Raphael, the angelic virtue (l. 371)?

This remark seems pertinent, especially since the reference to Raphael
as "the angelic virtue" has occurred only a dozen lines previously,
and the use of the compound form in its usual sense is to be found
elsewhere in Milton's poetical works.⁶⁷

Eve's meeting with Raphael is thus discreetly established as
some kind of trial of her chastity, which she passes with no discernible
difficulty on her part.⁶⁸ That this is not a wilful misreading of the
episode is in part confirmed by the narrator's exclamation as Eve
"Ministered naked" (V. 444) to her husband and their angelic guest

... If ever, then,
Then had the sons of God excuse to have been
Enamoured at that sight;

(V. 446-48)

The narrator's curious outburst clearly alludes to the enigmatic opening to the sixth chapter of Genesis:

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply
on the face of the earth, and daughters were born
unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters
of men that they were fair; and they took them
wives of all which they chose.

(Gen. VI. 1-2)

Moreover, by indirectly suggesting the possibility of the very thing that he is apparently at pains to deny, Milton ensures that these lines reflect glancingly on Raphael also.⁶⁹ Although on this occasion the possibility is mentioned only to be immediately rejected, the reader cannot avoid speculating upon the possibility of some kind of liaison developing between a son of God and this daughter of man, Eve.⁷⁰ For while Milton protests that in the hearts of the unfallen:

Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy
Was understood, the injured lover's hell.

(V. 448-50)

we have already seen the effects of 'fierce desire' and 'jealousy' at work within the fallen Satan. Observing Adam and Eve embrace, Satan turned aside:

For envy, yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained.
Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two
Imparadised in one another's arms
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss, while I to hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
Among our torments not the least,
Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines.

(IV. 503-11)

And Adam recognises Satan's plan "to disturb":

Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
Enjoyed by us excites his envy more.

(IX. 263-64)

Fletcher has remarked upon the appearance of such "strange vestiges of various rabbinical conceptions of Satan's jealousy of Adam"⁷¹ to motivate his enmity towards the human pair, and Hutcherson has briefly noted that "Yosippon, the Apocalypsis Moses, Beresith Rabbi, and Rashi, among others, state that Satan was motivated by his jealousy of Adam's conjugal relations with Eve."⁷²

Although Milton "never quite used the story of how the Sons of Elohim saw the daughters of men that they were fair ... he often referred to it" and, as Fletcher goes on to observe perceptively, "In some curious manner sexual desire entered into the warfare between good and evil."⁷³ Referring to these opening lines from Genesis VI (quoted above), Fowler remarks how:

Some early commentators took these verses to mean that the fallen angels lay with the daughters of men (e.g., Philo, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian), and M. himself allows us to dally with this surmise in an ambiguous passage at iii 461 ff.⁷⁴

Moreover, Milton gives countenance to this view in Paradise Regained, where it is plainly stated that the fallen Angels in their guise as classical gods, lay with the daughters of men.⁷⁵ Although in Book XI, the demythologizing book, this interpretation is exploded by Michael, at this juncture the mere mention of the myth is calculated to stimulate an undefined foreboding in the reader. For while, as

Stein rightly observed, "The scattered hints of Satan's sexual rivalry for Eve ... are never allowed to become more than hints", they seem "deliberate enough" and form an important thread in the poem's imagery, subtly preparing the reader for Eve's temptation and Fall, the context in which it is placed, and the language in which it is couched: the seduction of Eve by Satan.

V

The Trial of Virtue

Editors and critics alike have singled out for praise "the
⁷⁷
 fragrant cloud of pagan myths" with which Milton envelops Eve as she
 withdraws from Adam

... like a wood-nymph light
 Oread or dryad, or of Delia's train,
 Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self
 In gait surpassed and goddess-like deport,
 Though not as she with bow and quiver armed,
 But with such gardening tools as art yet rude,
 Guiltless of fire had formed, or angels brought.
 To Pales, or Pomona thus adorned,
 Likeliest she seemed, Pomona when she fled
 Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her prime,
 Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

(IX. 386-96)

However, it is a passage not without difficulty. Attention has
 naturally tended to focus upon the curious emphasis of the last three
 lines, and Fowler has observed that it is a passage "so discriminatory
 as to consist mainly of qualifications".⁷⁸ Martz comments on the
 prevalently Ovidian atmosphere at this point, but claims that the
 unifying factor among all the figures mentioned is that they are all
 "beneficent spirits and deities of nature".⁷⁹ In this he concurs with
 Pearce, who had noted the obvious logical connections between Pales,
 Pomona and Ceres. "All three goddesses", he reflects, were

... like to each other in these circumstances,
 that ^{they} were handsome, that they presided over
 gardening and cultivation of ground, and that
 they are usually described by the ancient poets
 as carrying tools of gardening or husbandry in
 their hands.⁸⁰

Yet these are not perhaps the most remarkable features that unite them. As so often in Milton's similes, we become aware that the real energy of the lines seems to lurk somewhere alongside or behind what is expressly said. As the simile unfolds, it becomes increasingly apparent that what the figures share in common is their virgin state; it is particularly notable in connection with Pomona and Ceres, since Milton's lines openly anticipate its loss in each case. As Eve leaves Adam to garden alone, her innocence hinges upon her chastity.⁸¹

It is at this point that Eve is directly associated with the virgin nymphs of Diana's band, and then with the "queen o' the woods", (Comus 1.445) Diana herself. Eve is likened to the regal Diana whose "stern frown" was "feared" by "gods and men" (Comus 11.445, 444) in order to emphasize Eve's 'virgin majesty' and to help explain Adam's sudden submission to her. It is a quality that commands Adam's respect and deference and which helps create the "awe/About her, as a guard angelic placed" (VIII. 558-58); it is recognised by Satan, too, in her "awful brow, more awful thus retired" (IX. 537).

Indeed, as Eve confidently sets out for "the groves" with 'goddess-like deport' we may remember the Elder Brother's account of the "hidden strength" that chastity imparts to its true adherents:

She that has that is clad in complete steel,
 And like a quivered nymph with arrows keen
 May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths,
 Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds,
 Where through the sacred rays of chastity,
 No savage fierce, bandit, or mountaineer
 Will dare to soil her virgin purity.

(Comus 418-26)

But our response to his confident assumption that "no evil thing ...
 /Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity" (Comus ll. 431, 436) must be
 qualified by the chastening reflection that the Lady has just left
 with the disguised Comus, just as Eve, too, will accompany Satan in
 the guise of a serpent. For Satan, like Comus, is only momentarily
 overcome "With sudden adoration, and blank awe" (Comus l. 451).

The comparison with Diana and her train accentuates another
 more ambivalent aspect of Eve's virginal role, her determination to
 play an active and independent part in the struggle against Satan:
 "Eve loth to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her
 going apart, the rather to make trial of her strength" alone.⁸² Indeed,
 these lines from Milton's summary of 'The Argument' may remind us of
 the self-reliant individualism that is the ethos of epic heroism, and
 characteristic of those martial viragines that feature in heroic epic.

Satan plays upon Eve's desire for distinction. He presents the
 eating of the apple as a heroic deed, a death defying feat by which
 she will snatch a great destiny for herself and for mankind. Eating
 the apple is argued to be a sign of active courage, a higher test of
 virtue than passive obedience and restraint. In this context, we can
 understand the peculiar force of Satan's representation of his challenge
 to her "dauntless virtue".⁸³ This expression seems to draw its strength

from the primary signification of the Latin virtus (L, "manliness, manhood, strength, vigor, bravery, courage") rather than the secondary meaning and the more usual English sense (L, "Goodness, moral perfection, high character, virtue").

Blessington has argued that Milton's image of the "fallen flower spreads throughout the poem and associates Eve with the fallen heroes of the classical
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epic", but as Steadman has perceptively argued, the false standards of the heroic order have already been discredited in the actions of Satan, and the glory of martial heroism is extinguished by the war in heaven.⁸⁵ Moreover, in the second invocatio, which prefaces Book IX, Milton makes it plain that the inward Christian virtues of patience and obedience
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should be considered "Not less but more heroic" than deeds of physical valour.

Ironically, then, the self-willed assertiveness and determination to confront Satan alone which Eve displays in the gardening debate, seems to suggest that she is already in the grip of temptation. And it is interesting to note in this connection that Augustine had suggestively observed that, for Eve to have fallen, she must have already had in her mind a certain love of her own power and a certain
87
proud self-presumption. This in turn may remind us of the Elder Brother's warning. He had affirmed that the true virgin may safely pass through danger with "unbleached majesty", provided she did not venture out "in pride or presumption" (Comus||429-30).

A still more ironic light is cast upon Eve's departure, when she is seen to lack the "dread bow" of "the huntress Diān", the "arms of chastity" (Comus 11.440, 439). This view of Eve thus weaponless prepares for the diminuendo effect whereby her 'goddess-like deport' becomes the "nymph-like step" of some "fair virgin" (IX. 452) of the countryside, and seems to confirm her "mistaken self-concept as heroic".⁸⁸ This point assumes additional significance when we recall the other occasion on which we have observed Eve withdrawing to garden alone. Hodge and Aers have commented on the "images of masculine aggression"⁸⁹ that attend her departure here, but Diana, as well as Cupid and Apollo, was armed with "bow and quiver" (IX. 390) and in the cult of Venus-Virgo, Diana and Venus share the same weapons.

The note of foreboding is further strengthened by her resemblance to the pastoral figure of Pomona, who similarly "nec iaculo gravis est, sed adunca dextera falce" (Met. XIV. 628). Martz maintains that this Ovidian reminiscence serves to surround Eve with an "atmosphere of
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purity and harmlessness" but the allusion is charged with other, more sinister overtones. Although Martz points out that "Milton has given the allusion an ominous twist by referring to the time when, he says, she 'fled Vertumnus'", even in Ovid's Metamorphoses this is not the
91
"amusing and harmless story" that Martz claims it to be.

Darker strands are woven into her tale, not only in Vertumnus' readiness to resort to force to secure his will, but by penetrating her orchard, albeit in the innocuous guise of an old woman, Vertumnus performs a symbolic act of violation which itself foreshadows the closing lines of Pomona's story. Indeed, the lines in which Ovid

describes the enclosed garden in which Pomona shuts herself away, clearly draw upon the ancient tradition of the hortus conclusus as a symbol of virginity with subtlety and economy:

vim tamen agrestum metuens pomaria claudit
intus et accessus prohibet refugitque viriles.

(Met. XIV. 635-36)

In the Metamorphoses, Ovid destroyed the illusion of an inviolable pastoral world. While Ovid's pastoral settings played a decisive role in fixing the ideal of the locus amoenus for Western literature, they have only "the external trappings of pastoral, but not the spirit".⁹² Ovidian scenes draw upon the idyllic quality of the pastoral landscapes of Theocritus and Virgil, only to invert its usual significance, so that when destructive violence invades the seemingly tranquil pastoral world, it comes with redoubled force. The remote seclusion proper to the pastoral retreat begins to shed its natural associations of peace and refuge in a sudden reversal of our expectations. The enclosed quality of Pomona's garden should suggest safety and protection, but when Vertumnus proves able to breach her defences, it serves to heighten our sense of her isolation and helplessness. In such a world, innocence is never preservable, and virginity may only be perserved at the expense of recognisable human life.

In representing Satan's assault on Eden and on Eve, Milton draws upon Ovid's subversion of the pastoral values of Theocritus and Virgil, and we find a similarly close thematic interplay between the violation of a virginal landscape and the rape of a female victim. Indeed, it is first found in Satan's abrupt entrance into Paradise.

Moreover, Satan's evasion of the angelic guard on this occasion, and then again on the night of the dream temptation and on the fatal morning of the Fall, help to instil in the reader the apprehensive feeling that Eden is similarly bare of protection, and "exposed" to sudden attack, even while we acknowledge that Eve is "Secure from outward force" and that "within [herself]/ The danger lies" (IX. 348-49).

As Satan easily forces an entry into the seemingly inaccessible garden, Le Comte comments on its likeness, here, to a mons Veneris,

... a rural mound the champaign head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied.

(IV. 134-37)

The expression "Access denied" had been used by Ovid to describe Pomona's orchard, "accessus prohibet" (Met. XIV. 636), as we have seen, and, in addition, Le Comte has pointed out that "this language ... had been used of a woman" by Milton himself "in the Doctrine and Discipline: 'Nor is that freedom of access granted ...'". It appears again when Satan seeks 'access' to Eve, but his physical approach is now as devious as his temptation will be. The "sweet recess of Eve" (IX. 456), in which she gardens alone, may well remind us of other, fatally inviting "seductos recessus" of doomed Ovidian victims.

As Eve is glimpsed supporting the rose with the myrtus coniugalis, she forms 'an ironic "emblem of the dependence of unfallen bliss upon conjugal virtue". Although Eve shares Pomona's innocent amor and studium for gardening, it seems significant that, as Fowler had

previously observed, Eve had been determined to leave Adam for this "pair of plants associated by Ovid with a goddess' defence of her virtue".⁹⁸ As the roses bush round to veil Eve "in a cloud of fragrance", Milton's subtle use of allusion recalls the incident in the Fasti, when Venus:

litore siccabat rorantes nuda capillos:
 viderunt satyri, turba proterva deam.
 sensit et opposita texit sua corpore myrto.

(Fasti IV. 141-43)

But the unsuspecting Eve will be as "mindless" (IX. 431) of the disguised Satan and the "ambush hid among sweet flowers and shades" (IX. 408), as the unwary Pomona who likewise paid no heed to the warning signs which should have helped to penetrate Vertumnus' disguise:

adsimulavit anum cultosque intravit in hortos
 pomaque mirata est "tanto" que "potentior!" inquit
 paucaque laudatae dedit oscula, qualia numquam
 vera dedisset anus.

(Met. XIV. 656-59)

More ominously still, Eve voluntarily leaves the protective ring of her flowers to follow Satan "Beyond a row of myrtles" (IX. 627). As Blamires and other readers have noted, "Eve's decisive 'Lead then'" is "an ironic phrase, since she has just rejected her husband's guidance so recently".⁹⁹ Moreover, the full complexity of the irony attached to Milton's likening of Eve to Pomona at the very moment when she fled Vertumnus now becomes apparent. As every reader of Ovid would know,¹⁰⁰ Pomona never fled Vertumnus, she yielded to him. "Hers was not a

simple case of rape", Knott wryly notes.¹⁰¹ Just as Eve had previously fled from Adam, as Daphne fled from Apollo, so here she is seen, as Empson observes, "flying from the society of Adam and will not fly (it is a reproach against her) from Vertumnus, the god of autumn and of the Fall".¹⁰²

Both Adam and Satan are thus involved in this allusion. It is another indication that Satan will try and usurp the position that is rightfully held by Adam. While in the dream temptation "the real relationship between Adam and Satan, his supplanter, is made explicit",¹⁰³ it is also suggested in the poem's mythological imagery. As Satan approaches Eve, Milton concedes

... pleasing was his shape,
And lovely, never since of serpent kind
Lovelier, not those that in Illyria changed
Hermione and Cadmus, or the god
in Epidaurus; nor to which transformed
Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline was seen,
He with Olympias, this with her who bore
Scipio the height of Rome.

(IX. 503-10)

According to Empson, the first comparison "implies that Eve turned into a snake and became Satan's consort" and "the last two comparisons treat the Fall as a sexual act",¹⁰⁴ while Rudat has remarked how "after first comparing Adam to the impregnating Jupiter, Milton in [this] later simile compares Satan to the father of the gods, namely to the Jupiter who on two occasions had turned into an impregnating serpent".¹⁰⁵

This explicit linkage of Satan's deception of Eve, disguised as a beautiful "enamelled" (IX. 525) serpent, and Jupiter's seduction of Olympias, and Scipio's mother in that form, may remind us that, in a less familiar myth, recounted by Ovid alone of the Roman poets, Jupiter likewise "luserit" Proserpina in the guise of a "varius serpens" (Met. VI. 114). And this, in turn, may throw some light on the contentious final lines of the simile, with which we started this discussion, where Eve seemed "Likeliest"

... to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

(IX. 394-96)

While modern critics are prepared to concede that Milton sometimes "strains and distorts grammar for special effects", the good Doctor, Bentley, could hardly suppress his righteous indignation at this evident sign of the editor's meddling:

But what Monster of a Phrase is that,
Virgin of Proserpina, Virgin of her Daughter?
Anyone else that was minded to speak
Human language would have said,
Likest Ceres in her prime, not Mother yet
of Proserpina by Jove.¹⁰⁹

As so often, Bentley's fulminations help to bring into focus some complexity in Milton's thought or expression which might otherwise have been passed over without comment.

Bentley's strictures drew forth this suggestive observation from Pearce who, after confessing it to be "one of the most forced expressions in this whole poem", goes on to remark:

I have met with some gentlemen, who thought that
the last of these verses ought to be read thus,

- or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin, or Proserpina from Jove

He adds:

And this reading at first sight is very apt to
please and persuade one of its genuineness, because
it frees the text from that hard expression, virgin
of Proserpina.¹¹⁰

Moreover, although Ricks has peremptorily dismissed "the censorious attempts to rephrase [this] magnificent compression, 'Yet Virgin of Proserpina from Jove'", he does proceed to draw attention to Milton's "fluid syntax", singling out for especial mention and praise his
111
subtle use of 'or' elsewhere in the poem, and Adams has developed this point further. Although he, like Ricks, makes no mention of the possibility of emending 'of' to 'or' in line 396, his explanation for the "special Miltonic fondness for 'or' as a connective" seems particularly suggestive here. He claims that it

... perhaps derives from the frequently unresolved character of Milton's allegory, mythology and cosmology ... he often wants us to keep in mind 112
three or four swift, glancing comparisons at once.

Pearce finally discounts the proposed emendation on the grounds that

... when we consider the matter farther, it will
be found that Milton could never have intended
to compare Eve with Proserpina, because she had
nothing to do with husbandry or gardening, on
account of which only this comparison is introduced.¹¹³

However, the arguments which he adduces here against the amendment are not especially cogent when we consider the metaphorical effect of so many of Milton's similes, where 'more is meant than meets the ear'¹¹⁴ and the "facade of logical connections" is pared away to reveal the true value of the simile, which lies considerably deeper than the superficial point of comparison. Indeed, as C. S. Lewis has wisely observed, "The Miltonic simile does not always serve to illustrate what it pretends to be illustrating".¹¹⁵

The case seems further strengthened when we reflect upon the profound identification of Eve with Proserpina established earlier in the poem.¹¹⁶ Moreover, through this association of Eve with Proserpina, the fair flower gathered by gloomy Dis (IV. 270-71), the sexual implications of the recurrent flower motif in Paradise Lost come into play and reflect Eve's loss of innocence with greater complexity. It is also interesting to recall in passing how the penetration of the enclosed garden and the plucking of the flower had been similarly brought together as explicit emblems of lost 'virgin purity' by the chorus of Puellae in this passage from Catullus' epithalamium:

ut flos in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis,
ignotus pecori, nullo convulsus oratro,
quem mulcent aurae, firmat sol, educat imber
- - -
multi illum pueri, multae Optavere puellae:
idem cum tenui carptus defloruit ungui,
nulli illum pueri, nullae optavere puellae:
sic virgo dum intacta manet, dum cara suis est;
cum castum amisit polluto corpore florem, 117
nec pueris iucunda manet nec cara puellis.

That Proserpina's lost virginity was symbolised by Ovid in the
 118
 flowers lost in the abrupt translation to the Underworld is made clear
 in the highly charged description of the loss as a virgineum dolorem
 (Met. V. 401). For Eve too, death and lost virginity seem equipollent;
 the garland in Adam's hand withers "and all the faded roses shed"
 (IX. 893) as he discovers Eve "deflowered, and now to death devote"
 (IX. 901). In such a context "deflowered" is double edged, not only
 does it powerfully suggest Satan's successful seduction of Eve (OED,
 "Deflower I trans. to deprive [a woman] of her virginity; to violate,
 ravish), but it also derives additional strength from the literal
 meaning of the original Latin verb deflorescere (L, "to drop blossoms,
fade, wither") as in the poignant lines from Catullus' epithalamium
 quoted above. Milton thus draws together the concrete and abstract
 meanings of the verb into fruitful conjunction, and both have a
 substantial bearing on our interpretation of the significance of Eve's
 fall.

Whether or not Milton intended drawing an overt allusion to
 Jupiter's seduction of his daughter, Proserpina, into the web of
 mythological connections surrounding Satan and Eve, Svendsen is surely
 right when he observes that "Satan's lust has been so established
 earlier in the poem, and in the tradition, that the inference of sexual
 119
 sin is inescapable" at this point. This interpretation is given
 further support when we note, with Cope "The choice of sexuality as
 120
 the chief image of evil at crucial points" in the narrative. Indeed,
 in accordance with Basil's allegorical reading of the Scriptural passage
 recording the genesis of sin and death: "when lust hath conceived, it
 bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death",¹²¹

the first sin is figured through Satan's incestuous dalliance with his own daughter Sin.

As well as displaying some of the characteristic features of Spenser's Error and Phineas Fletcher's Hamartia¹²², Milton's personification of sin is evidently indebted to Ovid's account of the hideous transformation of Scylla in the Metamorphoses. Milton takes particular pains to alert us to this parallel, not only by distinctly Ovidian verbal echoes (Milton's rendering of "Cerberos^e rictus" [Met. XIV. 65] as "Cerberian mouths" [P L II. 655] being perhaps the most obvious), but also by his open allusion to "Vexed Scylla bathing in the sea that parts/Calabria from the hoarse Trincrian^a shore" (II. 660-61). In Ovid's tale, she is a pathetic victim of Circe's lust for Glaucus, but it seems of more than passing interest that, according to Sandys:

Scylla represents a virgin; who so long as chaste in thought, and in body unspotted, appears of an excellent beauty, attracting all eyes upon her, wounding the Gods themselves with affection. But once polluted with the sorceries of Circe; that is, having rendered her maiden honour to be deflowered by bewitching pleasure, she is transformed to a horrid monster.¹²³

The allegorical history of Scylla's metamorphosis thus seems to contribute additional overtones of meaning which substantially support the central metaphorical tendency which we have been discussing here.

It is, then, perhaps not so surprising to detect traces of a thematic configuration in which Eve is closely aligned with Sin and which, at the same time, brings into play the traditional antithesis between Eve and the Virgin Mary: "Mors per Evam: vita per Mariam."¹²⁴ 125
Despite his hostile denunciation of the typological correspondences

drawn by Irenaeus between Mary and Eve, Milton was well aware of the poetic possibilities of such patterning. Indeed, on two occasions, Hume remarks, Milton openly

... styles the Blessed Virgin Marie, the second Eve, who brought forth the Lord of Life who brought life and immortality to the sons of the first sinful Eve who brought forth Death.¹²⁷

A. B. Chambers has also commented on two aspects of the basic typological relationship between the Temptation and Annunciation. He points out that

... sin entered the world when Eve hearkened unto the serpent's words just as Christ entered the world when Mary hearkened unto Gabriel's; [and] secondly, that not only Christ but also sin was normally said to have been conceived and born.¹²⁸

And it is interesting to note, in connection with this point, that more than one critic has drawn attention to the parallelism between the dream temptation in which Satan appears to Eve as "One shaped and winged like one of those from heaven" (V. 55) and Gabriel's Annunciation to Mary.¹²⁹

The correspondences are striking enough to suggest that Milton was drawing upon and elaborating the patristic tradition, in which the Temptation and Annunciation were held to be typologically related.

"According to one standard view", recounted by Chambers,

... when Gabriel brought the Annunciation to the Virgin, he quite literally enunciated God's Word: the Word entered Mary's ear, she conceived, and the Word became flesh. "Per aurem," Augustine said, "virgo impregnabatur". Thereby, Bernard added, the "antidote" for our poisoned condition entered the world "by the same way as the poison".¹³⁰

Likewise, the serpentine and sexual symbolism of Satan's attempt to corrupt Eve in the dream temptation is made sufficiently clear when we encounter him, "'Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve (IV, 800),' shooting 'venom' (804) into her like semen the seed of illicit thoughts".¹³¹ While, of course, the dream itself is no more than an adumbration of the Temptation proper, the fruit of Satan's symbolic impregnation of Eve here remains the same, sin and death.

VI

No evil thing ...
 Hath hurtful power o'er true Virginitie

In any case, Eve's association with the compliant Pomona, her
 132
 promiscuous readiness to accompany Satan and finally, the most damaging
 133
 association of all, with the temptress, Circe, begin to cast doubts
 upon her 'solid virtue' and force their significance upon details and
 events which might otherwise have seemed innocent enough. While it is
 only in retrospect that certain half-formed reservations become more
 sharply defined and fall into a pattern of undeniable importance, from
 the outset we cannot feel altogether easy about these apparent
 contradictions in Eve's nature, which are conveniently epitomised in
 the paradoxical figure of the Venus-Virgo.

Let us look again at Eve's departure from the astronomical debate.
 As she withdraws, we are told, "A pomp of winning graces"

... from about her shot darts of desire
 Into all eyes to wish her still in sight.

(VIII. 61-63)

"She leaves," comments Stein, "under circumstances that emphasize (and
 create the opportunity for emphasizing) at once her genuine charms,
 134
 [and] her potentially dangerous charms", and Ricks has demonstrated
 how "the potential danger ... is expressed in the potential syntax":

At first, desire seems absolute, and as such potentially dangerous and prophetic of the Fall ... the hesitation is maintained by the delaying phrase 'into all Eyes' - after which, and only after which, is the desire defined as still innocent: 'to wish her still in sight'.¹³⁵

Moreover, this motif of sensual temptation seems deliberately introduced by Milton in our first encounter with Adam and Eve as she flashes at Adam "eyes/Of conjugal attraction unreproved" (IV. 492-93; emphasis added), for otherwise "unreproved" would involve the reader in an unnecessary complication. It must, it seems to me, be included to give us pause: should Adam have reproved such glances? We must make a conscious effort to exorcise any doubts we may have momentarily entertained before we can conclude that such glances were 'unreproved' because in Paradise open desire was still innocent. Moreover, it is important to remember the movement is completed and the potential danger here fully realized when, after eating the apple, both become inflamed with "Carnal desire" and burn in lust as Adam "on Eve":

Began to cast lascivious eyes, [which] she him
As wantonly repaid.

(IX. 1013-15)

The link between both episodes is further strengthened by the significant allusion on both occasions to Hera's successful seduction of Zeus on Mount Ida, in an attempt to distract him from the larger concerns of man's destiny. We may recall too that in Sylvester's Du Bartas it is "With wanton glance of Beautie's burning eye" that Satan¹³⁶ "snares hot Youth in sensuality".

Again, in the eyes of Giamatti and Le Comte, her departure
 "smacks too much of Venus' 'follow-me'" exit in in Marino's Adonis:

Into the green and shady cloister there
 With show of modesty she now withdraws,
 Now covers, now reveals her guarded charms;
 She, as her own abductor, steals away.
 She now turns pale, then shows her pallid limbs;
 Each gesture seems by chance, yet all is art.
 Aloofness coy and studied carelessness 137
 Give added charm to her fair, naked limbs.

And indeed, in Adam's account of Eve's initial response to his suit,
 her resemblance to Marino's Venus is even more pronounced. Adam's
 words contain an ironic counterpoint—that he himself is unaware of—which
 begins to suggest to the reader that perhaps Eve's appearance of "virgin
 modesty" (VIII. 501) is coy, calculated and affected. For she

... would be wooed, and not unsought be won,
 Not obvious, not obtrusive but retired,
 The more desirable.

(VIII. 503-5)

reminding us that in Paradise Regained "virgin majesty" (P R. II. 159)
 is merely another ploy to seduce and ensnare mankind which the daughters
 of Eve have perfected:

Skilled to retire, and in retiring draw
 Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.

(P R. II. 161-62)

And again, to those familiar with Milton's early verse, the lines
 describing Eve's retreat from Adam, quoted above, may insinuate a
 comparison with the half-hearted flight of a mountain nymph from
 Faunus:

Atque aliquam cupidus praedatur Oreada Faunus,
 Consulit in trepidos dum sibi nympha pedes,
 Iamque latet, latitansque cupit male tecta videri,
 Et fugit, et fugiens pervelit ipsa capi.

(El. V. 127-30)

With this in mind, Eve's resemblance to "a wood-nymph light/Oread or dryad" (IX. 386-87) is troubling and ambiguous. Not only does it subtly suggest, as Bush has noted, her "physical grace and mental
 138
 unawareness" but it may also be an ironic pointer to the moral laxity she will show in readily following Satan.

Having remarked upon Eve's close association with Flora, Knott protests that "we could never suspect Eve of Flora's wantonness".
 139
 However, Milton's cultivation elsewhere of such ambivalent feelings regarding Eve's moral character renders her resemblance to Flora suspect. Bearing in mind that throughout her history, Flora had been regarded as a goddess of dubious moral standards, it seems likely that Milton had intended such damaging associations to form part of our response to this linkage.

Ovid himself had explained why a "turba ... meretricia" frequented the Floralia, good-humouredly reminding us that Flora was not a straight-laced goddess "non est de tetricis, non est de magna professis" (Fasti V. 349, 351), while Augustine had found occasion to remark upon the moral licence with which the games of her festival were customarily celebrated: "qui ludi tanto devotius, quanto turpius
 140
 celebrari". More recently, Patrick Hume, commenting upon Milton's open allusion to Flora early in Book V, had seen fit to mention the tradition that:

Flora was a Woman of lascivious Life, who leaving
 a great mass of money, got by her lewdness, to the
 City of Rome was honoured with a festival; and to 141
 sweeten her Reputation, made the Goddess of flowers.

This tradition had also been "cited approvingly by E. K. in his notes to Spenser's March eclogue" where he refers to Flora as "a famous harlot".¹⁴²

Milton thus succeeds in implanting in the reader's mind shadowy doubts about the possibility of combining chastity with sexual desire, Diana with Venus, and of preserving sensuousness without sensuality - even in Eden. Indeed, his first description of Eve is disturbing. It begins innocently enough. As is frequently noted, the length of "Her unadorned golden tresses" which she wears "as a veil down to [her] slender waist" (IV. 303, 304) is evidently of symbolic importance, clearly alluding to the words of St. Paul in Corinthians XI. 15, where he maintains that "if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering or a veil". However, a number of critics have been understandably disconcerted by the reference that follows in the next line to Eve's "wanton ringlets" (IV. 306), and the allusion, if there is one, to Bishop Hall's representation of the straying soul as a woman with a "loose lock erring wantonly over her shoulders",¹⁴³ merely compounds our sense of uneasiness. This disturbing impression is deepened still further when we reflect that Milton had referred to the corruption of the Church in remarkably similar terms, complaining that: "Her chaste and modest voile" had been "overlaid with wanton tresses ... and all the gaudy allurements of a whore".¹⁴⁴

Again, Harding's argument that Milton was seeking to create

... in this strangely troubling description of Eve ... the richly ambiguous effect of Horace's untranslatable phrase, simplex munditiis, in the famous Fifth Ode to Pyrrha. "Unadorned, adorned the most", the yellow haired Pyrrha combines voluptuousness with a sophisticated simplicity to conquer and betray the hearts of men.¹⁴⁵

conveys additional disturbing overtones and qualifies our response still further. Remembering Milton's "permanent view of ... sensuality as, if not the chief of sins, at least a source and symbol of most others"¹⁴⁶ and the later emphasis on Eve's 'Circean charm', the discreet suggestion at the outset, of what Harding has called "a lurking, potentially destructive sensuality in Eve",¹⁴⁷ is clearly not without significance.

In Eden, then, the apparently dissonant values of chastity and love come together for a time and are held together harmoniously in a pattern of exceptional grace and intensity, but Milton makes us aware that the threat of discord is always present. Although Eve's manifestations as Venus and Diana, or as other, related deities and figures associated with those two great goddesses, primarily serve to magnify her beauty, splendour and power, they, at the same time, implicitly provide the grounds for arraigning her later both as a character and as a symbol. From the outset, she encompasses both the positive and the potentially negative qualities that characterize both aspects of the complex figure of Venus-Virgo. That Milton was able to make such contradictory forces work together in her characterisation accounts for some of the power of his portrayal of Eve and the widely different responses to her.

As so often in Paradise Lost, we do not find an arbitrary or indiscriminate use of mythological symbolism, but an inherent ambiguity, the strain of which can only be released with the Fall. While the spiritual virginity of innocence can never be repaired, the significance of Milton's association of Eve with the famous, Ovidian exemplar of

faithful married love, "chaste Pyrrha" (XI. 12) and his telling choice of epithet here should not be missed. Milton could have hit upon no more fitting a way of representing her reconciliation to Adam and recovery of God's favour after her seduction by Satan.

Notes

1. Sylvester's Du Bartas I.vi.1044-53.
2. Dudley R. Hutcherson, 'Milton's Eve and the Other Eves,' p.18.
3. cf. Jewish tradition which, while conceding Eve's "beauty and grace" emphasized that she "was but as an ape compared with Adam" (Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews [Philadelphia, 1925] I, p.68 and 60, as quoted by D. R. Hutcherson, 'Milton's Eve and the Other Eves', p.13).
4. Fasti IV. 133-44.
5. D. R. Hutcherson, 'Milton's Eve and the Other Eves', p.15.
6. See Newton's note to IV.305.
7. Thyer's note to IV.304.
8. D. R. Hutcherson, 'Milton's Eve and the Other Eves', p.15.
9. Newton's note to VIII.40 and cf. Spenser, The Faerie Queene VI.x.21. 4-9.
10. Spenser, The Faerie Queene VI.x.23. 1-2, 9.
11. The same point is made, though less delicately, in Sylvester's Du Bartas I.vi.1017-23.
12. Spenser, The Faerie Queene VI.x.23. 5-6.
13. Though in this case the rivals flanking Eve are Venus and the goddess of fruit trees, Pomona.
14. cf. Remedia Amoris, 711-12.

15. Lindenbaum, 'Lovemaking in Milton's Paradise', p.290.
16. And cf. Adam's words at IX.309-10.
17. Fowler, note to VIII.579-85; p.427.
18. Commento II, xxiv. (ed. Garin III, i, p.524-31), as cited in Wind, p.139.
19. Fowler, note to VIII.589-94; p.428.
20. Wind, p.109.
21. ibid., p.40.
22. Ficino, De Amore, II, 2, as quoted in Wind, p.50.
23. Purvis E. Boyette, 'Milton's Eve and the Neoplatonic Graces', Renaissance Quarterly, XX (1967), p.341. This interesting article seems to have been inspired by Wind's reading of the Neoplatonic significance of the imagery in Botticelli's Primavera.
24. Wind, p.39. cf. Spenser, The Faerie Queene VI.x.15, where he describes the Graces as "daughters of delight,/Handmaidens of Venus, who "to men all gifts of grace do graunt,/And all, that Venus in her selfe doth vaunt,/Is borrowed of them."
25. See Wind, p.52 and Seneca's account of the classic grouping of the Graces, De Beneficiis I.iii.
26. Wind, p.52.
27. Commento III, ii. (ed. Garin, p.537), as cited in Wind, p.121, and see too p.69.
28. Lindenbaum considers we have "very good cause to consider both that Milton himself viewed ["the gift of prelapsarian love"] as the crown of Eden's blessing and that he wanted us to think so too" ('Love-making in Milton's Paradise', p.283).

29. Boyette, 'Milton's Eve and the Neoplatonic Graces', p.341.
30. Fletcher, p.179.
31. Lieb, The Dialectics of Creation, p.149.
32. Tetrachordon (Col. IV, p.76). Hume was one of the first commentators to recognise the significance of this chapter of St Paul's Letter to the Corinthians in his note to IV.290.
33. Lindenbaum, 'Lovemaking in Milton's Paradise', p.289.
34. See Sylvester's Du Bartas II.i.1.434.
35. Cope, The Metaphoric Structure of 'Paradise Lost', p.82.
36. Halkett, Milton and the Idea of Matrimony, p.122.
37. Goodman, The Fall of Man, p.200, p.152.
38. S. Aurelii Augustini De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos, with an English translation by George E. McCracken in the Loeb Classical Library (1957), XV.xxii (IV, pp.542-44).
39. Bush, John Milton, pp.162-63.
40. Purvis E. Boyette, 'Something More about the Erotic Motive in Paradise Lost', Tulane Studies in English XV (1967), p.29.
41. Stein, Answerable Style, p.82.
42. It is worth noting that in the theological scheme of the poem, Eve is firmly set in an ordering, limiting and controlling context. The portrayal of her beauty as a thing in itself - independent, self-absorbed - begins to make it look as though she is freeing herself from her proper context. Eve is precisely not, and ought not to think of herself as the goddess of beauty with all the independent self-absorption that connotes. See Hazlitt, 'On the Character of Milton's Eve' for some interesting observations on

the way in which "Eve is not only represented as beautiful, but with conscious beauty" (The Complete Works of William Hazlitt. ed. P. P. Howe [1930], IV, pp.105-8, emphasis added). In his commentary on Ovid's account of the melancholy end of Narcissus, Sandys draws a parallel with another "fearful example ... of the danger of self-love in the fall of the Angells; who intermitting the beatificall vision by reflecting upon themselves, and admiration of their owne excellency, forgot their dependence upon their creator" (p.160) and D. C. Allen has indicated the way in which the fates of Satan and Eve begin to reflect upon one another through the image of Narcissus in his essay, 'Milton's Eve and the Evening Angels', MLN LXXV (1960), pp.108-9.

43. Lucretius, De Rerum Natura I.i.
44. cf. VIII.405-7.
45. Goodman, The Fall of Man, p.158.
46. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.99.
47. ibid.
48. Fowler, note to IV.694, p.235.
49. ibid. Fowler concludes this list of complements with "reason and virtue", but this seems to push the meaning of the passage a little too far. The myrtle is not usually used as an emblem of virtue.
50. See Fowler's note to IV.301-8, p.213 and Newton's note to IV.305.
51. Fowler, note to IV.694, p.235.
52. Sandys, p.74.
53. Wind, p.73. On p.74, Wind also notes how this verse appears as an alternative reverse design on the medal of Giovanna degli Albizzi; the Venus-Virgo is thus 'unfolded' in the Graces, Castitas-Pulchritudo-Amor, just as the Graces are 'infolded' in the Venus-Virgo.

54. See Wind, p.75.
55. Spenser, Faerie Queene IV.iv.9; v. 5, 4, 8.
56. See Leonard Forster, The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism (Cambridge, 1969), pp.122-47.
57. Daniel Rogers, Matrimoniall Honour, pp.11-12.
58. William Perkins, Christian Oeconomie, p.112.
59. Rogers, Matrimoniall Honour, pp.11-12.
60. Phineas Fletcher, The Purple Island x.24-25, from The Complete Works of Giles and Phineas Fletcher, ed. Frederick S. Boas (Cambridge, 1909), II.
61. Perkins, Christian Oeconomie, p.11.
62. Rogers, Matrimoniall Honour, p.7.
63. Sinfield, p.63.
64. William Haller, "'Hail Wedded Love'" in Milton: Modern Judgements, p.304.
65. Insitutio Christianae Religionis Ioannis Calvinii (Lavsanne, 1576), IV.xii.28, p.312.
66. But cf. Mother Pecheux, 'The Concept of the Second Eve in Paradise Lost', where she argues that "The effect of this series of references is rather "to focus attention on what might be called the spiritual virginity of Eve" (p.362, emphasis added).

67. Arcades l.89, and cf. Northrop Frye's suggestive comment on this line in his essay, 'The Revelation to Eve' in 'Paradise Lost: A Tercentenary Tribute' ed. B. Rajan (Toronto, 1969), where he remarks: "A forest so dense that the (male) sky is shut out, as in the 'branching elm star-proof' of Arcades, may be a symbol of natural virginity, the abode of Diana" (p.23).
68. Milton's observation that "Her husband the relater she preferred/ Before the angel" (VIII.52-53) seems especially revealing in this context.
69. Although Raphael seems not to share the general enthusiasm for Eve's 'fair outside' (VIII.567-68), the narrator specifically notes that as she departs from the discussion on astronomy "darts of desire" are "shot/Into all eyes to wish her still in sight" (VIII.62-63, emphasis added).
70. cf. Evans, p.33, where he comments on the fusion of the myth of the fall of the watcher angels with the fate of Eve.
71. Fletcher, pp.185-86.
72. D. R. Hutcherson, 'Milton's Eve and the Other Eves', p.20.
73. Fletcher, pp.184-85.
74. Fowler, note to XI.621-22, p.595. Augustine too, introduces the question "utrum praevaricatores angeli cum filiabus hominum concubuerint" in De Civitate Dei III.v. (I,p.278), and returns to it again at XV.xxiii (IV, p.546).
75. P R II. 174-91.
76. Several recent studies have drawn attention - if only in passing - to the sexual overtones in Satan's seduction of Eve. See Fletcher, p.186; Svendsen, Milton and Science, pp.167-70; Halkett, Milton and the Idea of Matrimony, p.125; Dustin H. Griffin, 'Milton's Evening', MS VI (1974), pp.259-76, p.265 especially; Thomas H. Blackburn, "'Uncloister'd Virtue": Adam and Eve in Milton's Paradise', MS II (1970), p.128; Marshall Grossman, 'Dramatic Structure and Emotive Patterning in the Fall', MS XIII (1979), p.204; Northrop Frye, 'The Revelation to Eve', in 'Paradise Lost: A Tercentenary Tribute', ed. B. Rajan, p.24; Milowicki and Wilson, "'Character" in

- Paradise Lost', p.82; Wolfgang E. H. Rudat, 'Godhead and Milton's Satan: Classical Myth and Augustinian Theology in Paradise Lost', MQ XIV (1980), pp.17-21; and, particularly, Le Comte, Milton and Sex, pp.78-81. See also Stein, Answerable Style, p.59, where he suggests that Milton's allusion to Asmodeus (IV.168) may be an "anticipatory suggestion of Satan's love for Eve" and Fowler, note to IX. 489-93, p.467, where he argues that "As with the first temptation, M. comes very near to presenting the second as a seduction." cf. Sylvester's Du Bartas, II.i.2.76-84 and 302-15.
77. Martz, Poet of Exile, p.136.
78. Fowler, note to IX.387-92, p.459.
79. Martz, Poet of Exile, p.136.
80. Pearce, note to IX.393.
81. cf. Fowler's note to IX.270, p.453.
82. From 'The Argument to Book IX', Fowler, p.433.
83. IX.694.
84. Blessington, 'Paradise Lost and the Classical Epic', p.55 and cf. Giamatti's suggestion that "In the drooping heads of the flowers and the implied fate of Eve there seems to be woven a reminiscence of the melancholy end of Euryalus ... (Aeneid, IX, 435-437)" (The Earthly Paradise, note 30, pp.328-29). While neither critic mentions the more telling allusion to Catullus, XI.22-24 and LXII. 39-47 (see p.201), the association of Eve with other heroic characters is significant. Although her independent role is anticipated by Camilla and Britomart, amongst others, Webber's observation that "Paradise Lost is the first epic in which the active heroic role is shared equally by the sexes" ('Feminism and Paradise Lost', p.12) should not be overlooked. Note too Demetrakopoulos' contention that "To Milton a self-reliant and independent woman is aggressively lewd and lascivious" ('Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.102).
85. John M. Steadman, Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol (Chapel Hill, 1959), pp.23-43 and Milton and the Renaissance Hero (Oxford, 1967), esp. pp.1-42.

86. IX.14.
87. Augustine, De Genesi ad Litteram XI.xxx.
88. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.100.
89. Hodge and Aers, '"Rational Burning": Milton on Sex and Marriage', p.20.
90. Martz, Poet of Exile, p.137.
91. ibid., p.136.
92. Charles Paul Segal, 'Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses', Hermes: Einzelschriften, Heft 23 (Wiesbaden, 1969), p.82. Interesting light has been cast on the ambivalence of feeling Ovid attaches to nature in the Metamorphoses by this and another important essay, Hugh Parry, 'Ovid's Metamorphoses: Violence in a Pastoral Landscape', TAPA XCV (1964), pp.268-82. Martz has also recognised the importance of their findings for the light they shed on Milton's own subversion of the pastoral mode (see The Poet of Exile, p.229) and this part of my argument is heavily indebted to their studies. For a different view, see G. Stanley Koehler, 'Milton and the Art of Landscape', MS VIII (1975), p.6, where he finds Eden enjoys the "seclusion proper to the pastoral retreat," but as Knott has observed, "The elegaic note ... in Paradise Lost where Eden is rarely seen without ominous shadows belongs to a more sophisticated kind of pastoral" ('Symbolic Landscape in Paradise Lost', MS II [1970], p.47).
93. cf. IX.340-41.
94. Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.77
95. ibid. See too, C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', p.49
96. cf. Met. XIII.902.
97. Fowler, note to IX.426-31, p.463.
98. Fowler, note to IX.216-9, p.451.

99. Blamires, Milton's Creation, p.226 and compare XII.614. While the Lady is likewise ready to test the strength of her virtue and follow Comus (Comus ll.328-29), in the case of Eve, we are given no evidence that she is aware that her 'trial' has begun.

100. Commentators have been troubled by this verse. In an attempt to answer Bentley's objection "that Eve is not here said to be like Pomona always, but when she fled Vertumnus" Pearce argues:

Milton's meaning is, that she was like Pomona, not precisely at the hour when she fled Vertumnus, but at that time of her life when Vertumnus made his addresses to her, that is when she was all in her perfection of beauty as described by Ovid ...

(note to IX.393)

However, as so often, Bentley's strictures point to some hidden meaning and help to alert us to a significance beyond the immediate.

101. Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.119.

102. Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, p.185.

103. See Fowler, note to V.35-37, p.258.

104. Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, p.175; see also pp.185-86, where he mentions the rabbinical tradition which made Satan the father of Cain.

105. Rudat, 'Godhead and Milton's Satan: Classical Myth and Augustinian Theology in Paradise Lost', p.17. See too, Le Comte, Milton and Sex, pp.79-80. However, Rudat goes on to discount this possibility and to suggest that the serpent is, after all, merely a "phallic symbol" (p.17). Yet Milton has deliberately drawn attention to the ancient tradition "that sometimes Serpents have been in love with women, manifesting all the signes of wanton affection" (Sandys, p.424). Svendsen directs us to Camerarius' The Living Librarie as a reference for Milton's examples of the amorous inclinations of serpents (Milton and Science, pp.169-70). But there is another possible source nearer to hand in the passage from Sandys, quoted above, which continues:

A Serpent was said to have been found about Olympia's bed, that night wherein she conceived with Alexander; which gave a colour to the claime of his descent from Jupiter. The like the Romans divulged of Scipio Africanus, both reports no doubt but proceeding in part from the Serpents amorous inclination.

(p.424)

Moreover, Bush has noted an Ovid-Sandys connection in the preceding allusion to "Hermione and Cadmus" (cf. Met. IV.572-603), while Fowler points out that Hermione is "not an Ovidian form" (note to IX. 505-10, p.469), Bush has observed that it is "Sandys regular form, in text and commentary" (Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, note 96, p.282).

106. See H. J. Rose, A Handbook of Greek Mythology, (Sixth edition, 1958), p.51.
107. (L, "I Lit., of colour and appearance, variegated, parti-coloured", etc.)
108. Adams, p.89.
109. Bentley, note to IX.393.
110. Pearce, note to IX.393.
111. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, p.85.
112. Adams, p.118.
113. Pearce, note to IX.393.
114. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', p.42.
115. ibid.
116. For a further discussion of Milton's association of Eve with Proserpina, see pp.227-32 and pp.243-47.
117. The poems of Catullus with a translation by F.W.Cornish in Catullus, Tibullus and Pervigilium Veneris in the Loeb Classical Library (1913, rev. and repr. 1962), LXII.34-47
118. Parry has drawn attention to the "violent erotic imagery in which Pluto's descent into Hades is couched" ('Ovid's Metamorphoses: Violence in a Pastoral Landscape', p.275).

119. Svendsen, Milton and Science, p.170.
120. Cope, The Metaphoric Structure of 'Paradise Lost', p.80.
121. See Fowler, note to II.727-28, p.125.
122. See Fowler, note to II.650-66, p.120.
123. Sandys, p.645.
124. Harding offers strong evidence that suggests Milton intended the reader to link Eve with Sin from the outset (The Club of Hercules, pp.74-75). Consider too Empson's argument that Milton associates Eve with Sin through the mythological allusion to Proserpina (Some Versions of Pastoral, p.173).
125. St. Jerome, Epistola XXII.21 from Patrologia Latina, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1878-90), XXII. Col.408, and cf. Lieb's conclusion that just as "Satan has fathered Death in Sin ... he has fathered death in Eve" (The Dialectics of Creation, p.179).
126. Of Prelaticall Episcopacy (Col.III.i, p.94).
127. Hume, note to V.387.
128. A. B. Chambers, 'Three Notes on Eve's Dream in Paradise Lost', PQ XLVI (1946), p.191.
129. See, for example, Svendsen, Milton and Science, p.265; Pecheux, 'The Concept of the Second Eve in Paradise Lost' pp.359-66; Lieb, The Dialectics of Creation, p.184; Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.79.
130. Chambers, 'Three Notes on Eve's Dream in Paradise Lost', p.191.
131. See Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.78.
132. See Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.119.

133. X.884. For a consideration of some of the implications of Eve's Circean role, see, for example, Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.100; Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise, pp.329-30; Seaman, The Moral Paradox of 'Paradise Lost', pp.102-12; Brodwin, 'Milton and the Renaissance Circe', p.60.
134. Stein, Answerable Style, p.91.
135. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, p.98
136. Sylvester's Du Bartas I.i.658-59.
137. Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise, pp.321-22; Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.94-95.
138. Bush, John Milton, p.164.
139. Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.117.
140. Augustine, De Civitate Dei II.xxvii.
141. Hume, note to V.16.
142. Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.116.
143. See Fish, Surprised by Sin, pp.92-94.
144. Of Reformation (Col. III.i, p.25)
145. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p.72.
146. Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, p.266.
147. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p.72.

CHAPTER VI

Fruitful Flowers

In a recent article, G. S. Koehler has argued that Paradise Lost reflects Milton's growing "tendency to favor trees over flowers in natural description." He finds their lack of prominence in Eden particularly remarkable since "The use of flowers as an aspect of landscape" was "a feature of his early poetry."¹ Koehler attributes their conspicuous absence from the listing of fish, birds, animals, insects and trees at the creation simply to a change of taste on Milton's part: the poet no longer seems "to find flowers effective as part of a larger scene," Koehler reflects.²

Though it must be conceded that, if their relative importance were to be gauged by the number of lines exclusively devoted to them, flowers would not appear to have any major significance in the poem, the possibility remains that Milton is reserving them for a more important function than purely visual ornament. Poetic images make their impact through intensive rather than extensive use, becoming freighted with suggestive associations and emotive power. And indeed, as we have already had occasion to notice, some of the most memorable passages about life in Eden centre upon or are accompanied by the presence of flowers.³

However, these passages⁴ are not merely centres of emotional force, they are focal points of narrative and thematic importance too. Milton's handling of floral imagery is both rich and complex and, when its implications are fully assessed, it seems to provide an indispensable

key to Eve, her character, role and relationship to Adam, and thus, to a deeper understanding of their Fall.

It rapidly becomes evident that flowers appear with remarkable consistency in passages having a specific relation to Eve, her person and province, or they are seen to form her immediate environment.⁵ While Adam tends to be associated with trees, he is first glimpsed by Eve "fair ... and tall,/Under a platan" (IV.477-78), the association between Eve and flowers runs deeper to the point of identification and beyond to metamorphosis: she is the "fairest" of flowers (IX.432) as she is the "fairest of her daughters" (IV.324).

As we have seen, the initial effect of associating Eve with the mater florum, Flora, and flowers in general, is to render her physical presence more glorious than ever. Aesthetically, the relationship does more good than harm, deepening rather than diminishing our impression of transcendent physical beauty. Indeed, as we have noted previously, Eve's beauty is promoted until it seems virtually divine, her "heavenly form/Angelic" (IX.457-58) is seen to be "more lovely fair" than that of the "fairest goddess" (V.380-81), the queen of beauty and love herself.

However, Milton's profoundly ambivalent attitude to 'female charm' complicates our response to the attractive power of beauty from the outset. This ambivalence finds expression in the image of the flower, a unifying device of admirable economy, which holds in a state of suspended equilibrium two aspects of Eve placed in dramatic conflict. The flower spans the spectrum of her being: at one end it represents Eve in her most powerful and enduring manifestation as the mother

goddess; at the other, it represents beauty at its most vulnerable and transitory as Proserpina, while midway between the two extremes, the opposing forces meet and shade into one another in the figure of Narcissus, the most famous of the Ovidian metamorphoses of human beings into flowers.

An unspoken but nonetheless emphatic and unforgettable association between Eve and Narcissus is made with Eve's first words in the epic. Narcissus, apparently inviolable, proved vulnerable because of his exceptional beauty. Eve reminds us of Narcissus in her proud, virginal singleness and apparent self-sufficiency. As Narcissus' loveliness proved fatally attractive, Eve's dazzling beauty tends to blind its admirers to her human limitations. Eventually, her virginal hauteur leads her to confront Satan alone, while the shield she relies upon, her beauty and chastity, prove pitifully inadequate for such an encounter.

It is thus impossible to give an adequate restatement of the significance of Eve's association with flowers; its full import is not easily paraphrasable because it incorporates a dialectic tension, a meshing together of opposing forces. Moreover, this tension cannot be resolved by simply favouring one set of implications at the expense of the other because Milton insists that we are aware of both simultaneously. We may not choose finally between them until the fatal morning of the Fall, when the paradox dissolves as Eve, like Proserpina, another "unsupported flower" (IX.432), is "gathered" (IV.271) by a force from Hell. At this critical point, the outlines of Proserpina and Eve seem to coincide without remainder, and the

intervening lines temporarily pale into insignificance as we feel the inexorable pressure that has led to this moment of identification.

Milton was clearly concerned to forge powerful figurative links between Eve and Proserpina. However, I believe that the significance of this poetic association is even more far-reaching than is generally recognised, and that an attempt at a fuller understanding of its implications will sharpen our appreciation of the unique qualities of the pre-lapsarian world and what was lost with innocence.

I

Raptus Virginis

In a brief but illuminating article, John E. Parish has already called attention to the "subtle use" Milton makes of "Ovid's story of the rape of Proserpina"⁶ (Met. v.385-571) for his portrayal of Eve. Nevertheless, some of his observations require qualification whilst others could be strengthened by additional evidence from the equally significant account of the raptus virginis to be found in the Fasti⁷ (IV.417-620). Moreover, his main concern to establish that Eve is like the mother as well as the daughter and, indeed, that she "more nearly resembles Ceres ... than Proserpina,"⁸ unnecessarily diminishes the importance of Eve's relationship to the latter. Eve is, rather, a composite of both Proserpina and Ceres, the virgin and the mother, the flower and the fruit that bears the seed.

Parish finds the association of Proserpina with Eve to be only "cautious" on Milton's part; "once having suggested the resemblance between Proserpina and Eve, he wants to subdue the comparison," Parish maintains.⁹ Significantly, Parish fails to take into account the key passage which, by repeating the same floral motif, draws Eve and Proserpina together with an irresistible figurative movement. When those celebrated lines:

... Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpina gathering flowers
Her self a fairer flower by gloomy Dis
Was gathered.

(IV.268-71)

are considered in conjunction with these lines from Book IX, as Eve stood:

... oft stooping to support
Each flower of slender stalk, whose head though gay
Hung drooping unsustained, them she upstays
Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while,
Her self, though fairest unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.

(IX.427-33)

we must conclude that Milton intends more than the mere suggestion of a figurative link. The latter passage contains a clearly audible variation of the pattern established in Book IV. Such lines, so outstanding in their incomparable expression of the pathos and poignancy of loss we are helpless to prevent, stun us with a lyric beauty so compelling that they merit extended consideration.

The lines in Book IX, then, provide an echo sufficiently distinct to alert the discerning reader, whilst preserving the quality of things left unsaid which characterizes Milton's greatest poetic effects. He guides our imagination with an unobtrusive pressure into the channels in which he proposes it to flow. ¹⁰ Moreover, this figural repetition confirms our speculation that the importance of the earlier passage resides rather in its 'subterranean virtue' than in its surface significance. ¹¹ Milton is ostensibly comparing one beautiful landscape with another, the Garden of Eden to the setting of Ovid's story, the 'field of Enna'. "But, of course," as C. S. Lewis perceptively explains:

... the deeper value of the simile lies in the resemblance which is not explicitly noted as a resemblance at all, the fact that in both these places the young and the beautiful while gathering flowers was ravished by a dark power risen up from the underworld.¹²

It is customary for critics and editors to indicate the ironic effect of the allusion. Douglas Bush in his note on the passage describes the simile as "a veiled anticipation of the fate of Eve," ¹³ but once having acknowledged this general proleptic function, we are far from exhausting the content and power of the image or tracing its repercussions and reverberations throughout the poem. Milton's handling of the story of Proserpina's rape is rich and complex; beyond such broad resemblances lie certain salient points of contact which I intend to discuss in this chapter.

Eve resembles Proserpina, of course, in her maidenly innocence, loveliness and vulnerability, providing a focal point for our feelings of nostalgia at all that was lost with the Golden Age and Eden. These rather general parallels are enforced in several particulars. From a typological perspective, Proserpina's eating of the pomegranate in a garden after her abduction by Dis with no thought for the terrible consequences of her action:

... quoniam ieiunia virgo
solverat et, cultis dum simplex errat in hortis,
poeniceum curva decerpserat arbore pomum.

(Met. V.534-36)

has an obvious figural relation to Eve's plucking and eating the apple in Eden. Moreover, its mysterious significance cannot be fully explained rationally, but remains the condition of her freedom, and unfulfilled, condemns her to remain under the power of the lord of the underworld, to "death devote " (IX.901). In his commentary on the lines of Ovid quoted above, Sandys observes, it was

... a fatall liquorishnesse, which retaines
her in Hell; as the Apple thrust Evah out
of Paradiçe, whereunto it is held to have a
relation.¹⁴

Like Eve's, Proserpina's loss ushered the scythe of devouring time into an atemporal world, hitherto an inviolable pastoral landscape, uninfected by change, decay and death. It was then that perpetual spring (Met. V.391) made way for the cycle of the seasons, and flowers were exchanged for fruit.

As this would seem to indicate, Milton draws heavily upon the story of the raptus virginis as a seasonal myth. The division of Proserpina's time between the upper and lower worlds was traditionally held to account for the cycle of the seasons and the consequent variations in the earth's fertility:

Iuppiter ex aequo volventem dividit annum:
 nunc dea, regnorum numen commune duorum,
 cum matre est ^{totidem} totidem cum coniuge menses.

(Met. V.565-67)

Sandys' gloss upon Ovid's lines reads thus:

... the seed , which is Proserpina, while the sun is on the south of the Aequinoctiall, has hid in the earth, which is Pluto: but when he travells through the Northerne signes, it shouteth up, and growes to maturity; and then Proserpina is said to be above with Ceres.¹⁵

Moreover, it is instructive to note that elsewhere in the poem Milton seems to be developing the resemblances between Pluto or Dis - as he is called by Ovid and Milton - and Satan. Satan discloses marked affinities to the Ovidian god in his various manifestations as Winter, Lord of the Underworld, Death and ravisher.¹⁶

Satan, like Dis, when unsuccessful in his bid for supreme authority in heaven, concludes it "Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven" (I.263). Like Dis, Ovid's infernus tyrannus (Met. V.508),¹⁷ Satan exercises absolute power as 'tyrant' of hell. Their respective realms are lands of shadow, "opaci ... mundi" (Met. V.507), "tenebrosa sed(is)" (Met. V.359), of "darkness visible" (I.63) and "doleful shades" (I.65).¹⁸ Besides these obvious, general correspondences in situation

and role, Satan and Dis have certain salient features in common.

Milton assigns to Satan "the gulf/Of Tartarus" recording how it "open[ed] wide" its "fiery chaos"(VI.53-55) to receive him and his fellows. Predictably, Dis occupies "Tartara" (Met. V.371, 423; Fasti IV.605), but more noteworthy seems Ovid's unique location of the realm of chaos "possidet ¹⁹ ... inane chaos" (Fasti. IV.600). As rulers of a "universe of death" (II.622), they are both naturally aligned with all that is 'adverse to life'. As Lords of the Underworld they share a natural affinity with darkness. Witness Satan's revealing exclamation, "O sun ... how I hate thy beams" (IV.37) and Ovid's telling observation

... et rex pavet ipse silentum,
ne pateat latoque solum retegatur hiatu
inmissusque dies trepidantes terreat umbras.

(Met. V.356-58)

A pattern of oppositions thus begins to emerge fundamental to the architectonics of the poem in which God and Satan address themselves to the world antithetically: one with vitalizing warmth, the other with deathly coldness.

This and other related 'contraries' grow in complexity and proliferate throughout the poem. Analysing them into specific pairs of antitheses does no more to suggest the full scope and complexity of Milton's achievement than would resolving a musical composition into its constituent chords. The symphonic orchestration seems too extensive and intricate to have been painstakingly planned to conform with a predetermined scheme; it gives the impression rather of having been composed by a poetic imagination possessed by an overriding shaping principle.

The influence of the poetic identification of Satan with Dis persists throughout. It is organic, providing a unifying point that gives dramatic substance and animation to the fundamental opposition in imagery and concept that extends and ramifies throughout the poem. The contrariety of God and his adversary is disclosed in the thematic opposition: life and death; light and dark; fertility and barrenness; creation and uncreation, which pervade the poem but perhaps are given their most complete expression in Book VII (ll.236-39), one of those nodal points in the narrative web where threads of profound thematic importance seem to converge and then radiate away again as God infuses "vital virtue" and "warmth"

... but downward purged
The black tartareous cold infernal dregs
Adverse to life.

In these three lines we find a condensed restatement of God's solar action and an anticipation of his purgation of the contagion of Satan, while the cumulative effect of the verse-filling asyndeton of the final line is to mass together the different areas of meaning signalled by the equation of Satan and Dis.

The appositeness of Milton's poetic association of God with the sun needs little further comment. Goodman hails God as the "sunne
20
of joy" and Milton himself celebrates God as the source of light in the prologue to Book III. Elsewhere such lines as "on his Son with rays direct/Shone full" (VI.719-20) clearly illustrate that the Father is to be envisaged as radiating grace in a manner comparable to the
21
way in which the sun emits its life-giving rays.

Again, it seems pertinent to take account of Lolette Kuby's illuminating study in which she argues that Milton only uses "'cold' and other words denoting coldness ... with the presence or influence of Satan, and after the Fall, as a sign of the devil's infection of the material world." Of course, the identification of Satan with the north is not Milton's own invention. "The traditional association of the north with evil," Fowler explains,

goes back to patristic applications of Is. xiv.12-14 to the fall of Satan: 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! ... For thou has said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of congregation, in the sides of the north.'²²

Yet Milton's reiterated linkage of Satan with the north and all that connotes (coldness, darkness, storms, etc.) displays all the consistency of a leitmotiv and is put to purposeful use throughout the poem. As Fowler goes on to observe, "The localization of Satan adds point to several other passages such as the simile ... at i.351ff,"²⁴ where the reference to the "frozen loins" of the "populous north" "is a kind of horrible parody of one of [Milton's] favourite ideas, the fertility that comes from God and God's symbol, the Son."²⁵

Indeed, as MacCaffrey maintains, "The idea of barrenness [is] consistently associated with death and evil in Paradise Lost,"²⁶ and it seems significant that while gentle showers, "fructifying dews" and the sun's "resplendent rays" were regularly employed by the emblemists to signify the fertilizing action of supernal grace in the soul,²⁷ the heart seduced from God by Satan was depicted as "Lock't up by"²⁸

cloud-brow'd Errour." "These duskie clouds that make so dark a night"²⁹
 interpose between the soul and the vital rays of grace that issue from
 the "sunne of righteousnesse" and the "light of Truth."³⁰

This seems of particular interest when we recall the way in which Satan's assault on Eve is imaged after the manner of an emblematic conceit as Eve herself, the "fairest unsupported flower," is discovered "From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh" (IX.432-33). For the first time, dark storm clouds gather overhead and besmirch the perfect blue sky of the eternal spring and threaten to blot out the sun's beams. The mind's eye is invited to anticipate the violence wreaked by the cloudburst, the devastation it will leave in its wake, the destruction or the physical effect. More specifically, we are encouraged to visualize a flower beaten down, its beauty ruined, its petals scattered. The lines derive something of their affective energy from the consequent tension that arises from looking before and after the event together with the accompanying suggestion of the irreparable damage to be sustained.

As Eve stands centre-stage while Satan lurks menacingly in the periphery of our vision, the poignancy of her utter unpreparedness for the forthcoming encounter also heightens the emotive quality of the verse. For the helpless reader, powerless to intervene yet bitterly aware of the consequences of the imminent encounter, must witness the relentless onrush of impending disaster, as Turnus can only look on at the inexorable advance of Aeneas' black column which approaches:

qualis ubi ad terras abrupto sidere nimbus
 it mare per medium (miseris, heu, praescia longe
 horrescunt corda agricolis: dabit ille ruinas
 arboribus stragemque satis, ruet omnia late),
 ante volant sonitumque ferunt ad litora venti.

(Aeneid XII.451-55)

Milton's lines are further suffused with affective overtones by the underlying cluster of associations which link Eve with Proserpina and the latter's violent abduction by a force from the underworld. The abruptness of the assault and the chiaroscuro effect of a shadow passing over the luminous landscape of perpetuum ver are predominant motifs in both of Ovid's account of the rape. The darkness that appropriately cloaks a power risen from Hell is suggested by Ovid's use of select detail, and attention is drawn to this by Sandys' comments on the "black horses ... signifying darknesse, burning night, and conscious terrors; well suiting with that sad Monarch, and monarchy." As Dis³¹ urges forward his dusky steeds, "caeruleis equis", our attention is³² focussed upon their reins "obscura tinctas ferrugine habenas" (Met. V.403). This particular collocation, obscura ferrugine readily prompts recollection of the famous Virgilian line depicting the sun covering his head with dark clouds to shield himself from the outrage of Caesar's murder:

ille etiam extincto miseratus Caesare Romam
 cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine texit

(Georgics I.466-67)

Such general associative links seem to sustain and reinforce our impression of the inevitability of imminent catastrophe. Eve will bend before an irresistible external force that she cannot withstand

alone. The identification of Eve with Proserpina invests her with the poignancy of the latter's predicament, intensifying the feeling that Eve too is an innocent victim of a conspiracy of fate.

However, Milton demands that we both compare and contrast her situation with Proserpina's. Unlike Proserpina, Eve deliberately exposes herself to unnecessary danger, wilfully putting herself at risk. ³³ Moreover, the assault Eve must withstand is not an attack by a supernatural physical force, but a spiritual temptation. As St. Chrysostom ³⁴ observes, "the Devill may suggest, compell he cannot"; Eve is, paradoxically, both victim and agent of the tragic process. The lines in which Adam laments her loss: "Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote" make her the victim of an evil external to her, while "Rather how has thou yielded to transgress/The strict forbiddance, how to violate/The sacred fruit forbidden! (IX.900-4), returns the responsibility for her actions to Eve herself.

This brings us to consider the role of the metaphorical identification of Eve with the flowers as a herald of impending doom, Eve's death or the symbolic meaning. In line 901, Milton encapsulates the effects of the first three degrees of death examined in detail in De Doctrina Christiana. Eve is defaced; Milton glosses this first degree of death thus in the prose tract and attributes it directly to the Fall: "unde et maestas oris humani imminuta, animique turpis demissio secuta est." ³⁵

Taken together with deflowered, it epitomizes the loss of that primaeva
³⁶
gloria that man will never recover in this world.

Eve's fall does not lead to immediate physical extinction or dissolution, but to spiritual death, mors spiritualis: "Secundus mortis gradus ... Et haec quidem mors lapsum hominis eodem momento, nedum eodem die consecuta est."³⁷ However, by her action, Eve forfeits the original, privileged condition of man, in which it was posse non mori, she is thus condemned to death, to death devote. Temporal or bodily death, mors corporalis remains an inescapable physical fact of life for the duration of the world and this is the Tertius mortis gradus.³⁸

It seems noteworthy that Adam's striking summary of the extent of death's power over Eve appears just after the garland of faded roses has become in truth a wreath for Eve. Moreover, it is important to remember that this critical act of the drama had opened with the clearest expression of the underlying identification of Eve with the flowers that glowingly surround her. As Fowler comments, "The syntax and images" of lines 425-31 "have worked to identify Eve very closely with the roses (note the ambiguous agreements, and such echoes as stooping/drooping)" and in lines 432-33, "the identification," as we
³⁹
have noted, "is made explicit." Appropriately, then, the fate of the flowers is involved in Eve's; they participate in, and re-enact her fall, as the emphatic plummeting movement of the alliterative "Down dropped" suggests, anticipating the heavy alliteration of line 901.

Eve glimpsed as a flower suddenly blasted by the violent onset of a storm may also remind us of another powerful evocation of doomed innocence to which this image seems to bear, at least, a figural

resemblance.⁴⁰ Milton's early essay in the mythopoeic manner, On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough, begins:

O fairest flower no sooner blown but blasted,
Soft silken primrose fading timelessly,
Summer's chief honour, if thou hadst outlasted
Bleak winter's force that made thy blossom dry.

(11.1-4)

In the succeeding stanza, it is alleged that Winter has attempted to follow the example of "grim Aquilo his charioteer" who "By boisterous rape the Athenian damsel got" (11.8-9).

It is Ovid who tells this story (Met. VI.682-713), and his account would appear to have provided a likely model for the first movement of Milton's poem, stanzas I-III. As the protagonist in Ovid's tale, the North Wind is naturally portrayed as a monarch himself, and the poet frequently emphasizes the cold northerliness appropriate to this wind-god as gelidus tyrannus (Met. V.711). Ovid further accentuates his vehement and wintry aspect when the god reveals his intention of resorting to violent means to secure his will, such force being consonant with his identity as the northerly gales which assault the earth in icy, withering blasts:

apta mihi vis est: vi tristia nubila pello,
vi freta concutiō nodosaque robora verto
induroque nives et terras grandine pulso.

(Met. VI.690-92)

However, the narrative situation outlined in the first three stanzas of Milton's early poem more closely resembles the rape of Proserpina by Dis and of Eve by Satan, since the outcome in each case

is the same, the female victim is consigned to the power of death. Although these general parallels in situation may not seem very remarkable, they are reinforced by marked similarities in image and detail.

Let us look more closely at certain operative expressions in the first lines of the poem. Perhaps the most striking element is the rich extended metaphor of the dead girl imaged as a flower withered by the icy touch of Winter, which is death. The portrait of Winter may possibly anticipate that of the regal Death, who "with his mace petrific, cold and dry" (X.294), afflicts nature "with Gorgonian rigor" (X.297) after the Fall. Begotten in the image of his father, "the prince of darkness" (X.382), Death discloses another facet of Satan's character so often concealed behind the mask of heroic grandeur.

The dead child was the 'fairest flower' as was Eve herself until blighted by the baneful influence of sin and death incarnate in Satan. Both blooms fade: one "timelessly," (l.2) or "unseasonably" as the editors gloss it; the other outside of the familiar process of time, yet ironically, by so doing she grants access to the scythe of devouring time, to winter and to rapacious death, those forces which gather all subsequent flowers. The image of flowers fading thus has a curious resonance and reverberative power, introducing a train of associated ideas and images.

Indeed, from a slightly different perspective, Fowler observes:

The image derives iconographical precision from the fact that roses were a symbol of human frailty or the mutability of happiness. 43

Let us expand this point. Earlier in the poem, Milton draws upon the tradition that the rose which grew in Eden was "without thorn" (IV.256); when man fell from grace the rose acquired the thorns of sin, keeping its beauty and fragrance as reminders of the lost paradise.

The rose's exquisite but transient beauty became proverbial in the works of classical and Christian writers alike. Associated with fleeting time, the rose was a general symbol of evanescence, especially of man's youth, beauty and happiness. It thus became a memento mori to men doomed to die that they should make use of the short time allotted to them, an image to give point to the carpe diem topos. As Ovid observes: *Flora "monet aetatis specie, dum floreat uti,/contemni spinam cum cecidere rosae"* (Fasti V. 353-54), while in the same vein, Comus admonishes the lady:

If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languished head.

(Comus 11.743-44)

Though Parish draws attention to a possible link between the emotionally charged lines in which Adam and Proserpina drop flowers,⁴⁴ he recognises that Milton fittingly reserves for Eve Proserpina's⁴⁵ lament for the lost flowers. He also directs our attention to the way in which Milton skilfully transposes the power of Ovid's celebrated lines to his own verse:

... et ut summa vestem laniarat ab ora,
collecti flores tunicis cecidere remissis,
tantaque simplicitas puerilibus adfuit annis,
haec quoque virgineum movit iactura dolorem.

(Met. V. 398-401)

These haunting lines, which so finely intensify the pathos of her loss, were likewise remembered by Shakespeare when he made Perdita exclaim:

... O Proserpina
For the flowers now that, frighted thou lets't fall
From Dis's wagon! 46

Milton himself draws upon the pathos of Ovid's lines and reworks the sentiments therein briefly, poignantly and unforgettably when Eve, after learning that she is to be expelled from Eden, exclaims:

O unexpected stroke, worse than of death!
Must I thus leave thee Paradise? .../... O flowers,
That never will in other climate grow,
My early visitation, and my last
At even, which I bred up with tender hand
From the first opening bud, and gave ye names,
Who now shall rear ye up to the sun ...

(XI.268-69; 273-78)

Joseph Addison discerningly singled out this speech for especial praise. He found, "the sentiments are not only proper to the subject, but have something in them particularly soft and womanish." Yet with Parish we "might have expected Addison to recognise the source of that something."⁴⁷

Even so, I feel Parish fails to identify the source of the emotion conveyed in these lines and to gauge it accurately. "Expulsion from Paradise," he remarks, "is certainly not a stroke worse than death, but to Eve - so like Proserpina! - it seems so."⁴⁸ For "The flowers she drops," he maintains, are "a trivial loss by adult standards" though "to her at this moment [they provide] a further cause for grief."⁴⁹

To take the last point first, Proserpina's loss is not really so very trivial. In Ovid too, the lost flowers may be regarded as a comprehensive symbol, 'where more is meant than meets the ear.' Most obviously they suggest a whole way of life, an innocent, carefree girlhood spent with simple, like-minded companions. This life style is thoroughly encapsulated in the flower-gathering expedition. Ovid selects for particular emphasis the childlike pleasure and absorption of Proserpina and her companions in the following lines from the Fasti:

tot fuerant illic, quot habet natura, colores,
 pictaque dissimili flore nitebat humus.
 quam simul aspexit, "comites accedite" dixit
 "et mecum plenos flore referte sinus."
 praeda puellares animos prolectat inanis,
 et non sentitur sedulitate labor.
 pars thyma, pars rorem, pars meliloton amat.
 plurima lecta rosa est, sunt et sine nomine flores;
 ipsa crocos tenues liliaque alba legit.
 carpendi studio paulatim longius itur,
 et dominam casu nulla secuta comes.

(IV.429-44)

Significantly, in the lines which preface her lament for the flowers, Proserpina calls upon the companions of her youth from whom she has been forcibly torn, but she cries most urgently for her mother:

... dea territa maesto
 et matrem et comites, sed matrem saepius, ore
 clamat ...

(Met. V.396-98)

The sudden violence of her journey to the Underworld reflects the abruptness of these rites of passage; she must exchange the roles of maid and daughter for those of wife and queen. Arethusa describes to Ceres this 'new' Proserpina:

illa quidem tristis neque adhuc interrita vultu,
 sed regina tamen, sed opaci maxima mundi,
 sed tamen inferni pollens matrona tyranni!"

(Met. V.506-8)

Milton has subtly restated the feeling that accompanies a sudden, violent wrench from one sphere of life to another, but has deliberately transposed it to another key. I am surprised that Parish, who is so concerned to demonstrate that Eve "is more like the mother [Ceres] than the daughter [Proserpina]," appears not to notice the fundamental difference between the two. Eve is not presented with the girlish simplicitas which is clearly the key note of Ovid's portrayal of Proserpina.

Milton composes a skilful variation upon this theme, one which is more in accord with Eve's fertile and mature role as mater florum. Even Fowler seems to overlook this important dissimilarity when he claims that Eve is "carefully portrayed as the gatherer and guardian of flowers." This assertion is imprecise and the inaccuracy is significant; Eve is never seen gathering flowers. Though occasionally accorded a virginal role, she is not assigned the maidenly, but girlish, occupation of picking flowers; she is only depicted in a nurturing and protective attitude towards them. The "aborets and flowers/
 Embordered on each bank" all give evidence of the caring "hand of Eve" (IX.437-38).

However, when openly alluding to the fate of Proserpina in Book IV, Milton does appear to invite us to share the ironic perspective from which Ovid so frequently regards his virginal characters. Ovid

often makes ironic play of the reversal of roles whereby the virgin huntress - hunting being another 'typical' maidenly occupation - becomes herself the hunted, the prey. In the same way, the gatherer of flowers, Proserpina, is herself gathered by Dis. Similarly, Milton highlights the tragic irony of Eve's situation at the point when her fatal encounter with Satan is imminent. Intent upon her task of supporting her flowers, she is oblivious to all else, even the precariousness of her own position: "mindless the while/Her self, though fairest unsupported flower" (IX.431-32). So too, Proserpina, smitten by studium carpendi, is so engrossed in gathering the praeda inanis, that she imperceptibly abandons the protective ring of her companions and thus allows herself to become the prize of Dis.

Yet, it is instructive to note in this connection how ably Milton controls the perspective from which we view the events of the poem. By the time we read the passage containing Eve's lament in Book XI, we are already beginning to perceive that there is to be some compensation for the loss that has been sustained. Mary the virgin mother and rose 'without thorn' will fulfil the promise of virgin innocence and fruitful motherhood, while Eve herself will leave behind the symbolically fertile roles of mater florum and frugum genetrix to become mother of mankind. Still, as her mournful words expressively illustrate, Eve, like Proserpina, is not immediately reconciled to her new role and prospective environment in an unfamiliar world, 'forfeit to death'.

In Book IX and by far the greater part of Book X, though, Milton naturally accents loss more than ultimate restoration. I would thus prefer to alter the emphasis of Parish's conclusion. He claims that:

"Though wanting to evoke the pathos of the story of Proserpina, Milton intends to stress fruitful motherhood more than ravished innocence,"⁵² since "before dawn of the next day" after the Fall, he argues, "Eve, through the grace of God, has been restored to her original role - or to one even more exalted"⁵³ as a type of the virgin mother, Mary. While this is true, it is not all that might be said. This line of interpretation too easily discounts the tone and atmosphere of passages in the intervening portion of the poem which join together with an inexorable movement to underscore the utterly negative effects of the Fall at this point.

Our interest in the optimistic counter-movement which gathers strength towards the close of the poem, the pronounced rhythm in the final books of "falling and rising again, of sorrow and joy,"⁵⁴ must not be allowed to obscure the fact that at a narrative level the poem records an irreparable loss. Though eventually the poem certainly holds out the hope that death may paradoxically become the door to life, in Book IX, and almost throughout Book X, this aspect is not dwelt on by Milton. The image of the faded roses is a powerful reminder that life and death are now linked with an indissoluble bond, and the lost flowers become an enduring symbol of all that was lost with the Fall.⁵⁵

II

Forfeit to Death

Let us look again at the simile in Book IV, lines 268-71. We have already observed how this simile affords a fine instance of the homology between terms which Whaler found to be characteristic of Milton's simile. When closely examined, it yields a number of correspondences in which Enna parallels Eden, Proserpina Eve, and Dis Satan. However, so far we have neglected to mention the concluding lines of the simile:

... which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world.

(IV. 271-72)

How are we to explain this shift of interest from the daughter to the mother? And, how are we to identify the second term of the final pair? Critics have found it difficult to answer these questions fully, and have, it seems to me, only succeeded in providing us with partial explanations. Let us look first at how Whaler addresses himself to the problem.⁵⁶

Having duly noted the first three "happy homologues", he inquires somewhat perplexedly:

But what of Ceres? The poet lets Ceres wander through eleven splendid monosyllables without so much as a suggestion of a homologue unless it be with God himself.

Whaler is finally forced to conclude that the mention of Ceres' grief and search is a logical digression arising from the emphasis Ovid accorded to this part of the story. Thus the reference could be assumed to "gratify our memory and keep our attention from scattering." However, his tentative suggestion of a possible correspondence between Ceres and God is indicative of one of the two major lines of interpretation since favoured by critics.

K. M. Swaim, for instance, confidently asserts that as "Enna parallels Eden, Proserpina Eve, Dis Satan ... Ceres - by suggestion and medieval tradition - [parallels] Christ," while Christopher Ricks, 57 albeit more cautiously, concludes:

Ceres' pain does perhaps suggest the terrible pain that comes into the world after the Fall, and the conjunction of this with the word "cost" perhaps suggests though it does not state - the suffering of Christ. 58

So too K. W. Gransden's observation that "'all that pain' is often said to be moving because it makes us think of Christ's pain" seems reasonable since the emphatic, monosyllabic movement of "all our woe" (I.3) is undoubtedly recalled by "all that pain" (IV.271).

But although Gransden readily allows that this should form part of our response to the lines in question, he prefers to read "all that pain," as if it were said in a dismissive voice, an allusion to the "fuss about nothing which takes up so many hundreds of lines in Metamorphoses V and Fasti IV." 59 However, I feel this is a little unlikely, unless we are to imagine Milton implicitly asserting thereby: this story of loss is merely fabulous, and the pain mere fiction, but

I am relating the true account of our great loss. Still, such a disparaging intonation would ruin the exquisite beauty of the early part of the simile which so many critics and editors have praised. Moreover, this would not conform with Milton's practice elsewhere of exploiting rather than simply exploding Ovidian myth.

At this point, it may be instructive to remember that when regarded from a typological perspective, certain pagan myths were held to reflect truth, though dimly and in distorted outline. Whether or not literally untrue, a myth could still be symbolically appropriate and capable of displaying prefigurative significance. Milton seems at least partly engaged upon transforming an emotionally charged pagan myth into an image of Christian truth.

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Both Proserpina and Eve become to 'death devote' after suffering from that same 'fatall liquorishnesse,' but the intercession of Ceres, appealing to Jupiter, on the one hand, and the Son's appeal to the Father on the other, ensure that "the bitterness of death/Is past" (XI.157) for Proserpina and Eve. Mercy is extended, mitigating the severity of the penalty. In both cases loss is combined with eventual reunion, tragedy with ultimate triumph.

Viewed in this way, the respective fates of Proserpina and Eve begin to fall into the familiar pattern of loss and restitution, whereby episodes from pagan myth and Old Testament history seem to prefigure the release of the Christian soul from death. We may thus trace a definition of salvation that evolves through "shadowy types to truth" and "flesh to spirit" (XII.303), from a physical external event to one that is inward and of spiritual significance. The

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progression is cumulative and the restoration of Eve seems to lay midway along this continuum, partaking of both kinds of release. We may, therefore, detect the emergence of a tripartite typological framework:

Pagan myth (ectype), Hebraic history (type), Christian fulfillment
(antitype)

And, as a natural corollary to this, we may also isolate three types of mediation effected by, in ascending order, Ceres, the Son and Christ.

At this point, it would seem convenient to reflect upon the dimly discerned presence of another mythical ectype whom Eve meets, mingles with and eventually subsumes at a subterranean level of poetic meaning. Their respective outlines, when traced, are found to match closely: she is another figure "Forfeit to Death" (X.304), another example of tragic waste and loss, but one who must remain forever in Death's clutches after the briefest reunion with her grieving husband. I mean, of course, Eurydice.

The possibility of there being a submerged allusion to the Orphean myth is considerably enhanced by several factors. Critics have often commented upon Milton's life-long preoccupation with the myth, and casual reference to his use of the tale is scattered in various works of criticism on Milton. Perhaps the most significant of these passing acknowledgements to the strength of Milton's attachment to this myth is D. C. Allen's telling remark: "From the flats of the first Prolusion through the later ranges of Paradise Lost, Milton accents the legend of Orpheus in a way that suggests self-identification."⁶²

As the type of the poet betrayed by a hostile world, his words lost in the ingens clamor (Met. XI. 15-16) of the mob, Milton overtly identifies himself with Ovid's "Threicius vates" (Met. XI.2) in the prologue to Book VII when he calls upon his Muse to

... drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
Both harp and voice.

(VII.32-37)

Milton had previously employed the expression "barbarous dissonance"⁶³ to describe the din made by Comus and his band (Comus. l.549) who are thus appositely - since Comus is said to be the son of Bacchus - likened to the furious Maenads who attack Orpheus.⁶⁴ Moreover, although his ears are not attuned to the words of the spirit, Comus is yet held in rapture by the beauty of the Lady's song as the beasts were charmed by the voice of Orpheus.

Of more significance to Paradise Lost structurally and thematically, is the story of Orpheus' doomed love for Eurydice. The archetypal tale of love and premature loss, it is accredited by certain critics with a tacit but nonetheless powerful influence upon the shape and feeling of a poem, written while Milton was composing Paradise Lost, the moving and deeply personal nineteenth sonnet. Indeed, J. C. Ulreich has claimed that "Milton's identification with Orpheus defines the emotional content of the poem."⁶⁵ The scene in the closing couplet: "But O as to embrace me she inclined/I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night"/ (ll.13-14), despite the partial reversal of roles - for it is

his dead wife who would embrace him - inevitably recall Orpheus' forfeiture of Eurydice, as described by Ovid in the Metamorphoses:

nec procul afuerunt telluris margine summae:
 hic, ne deficeret, metuens avidusque videndi
 flexit amans oculos, et protinus illa relapsa est.
 bracchiaque intendens prendique et prendere certans
 nil nisi cedentes infelix arripit auras,
 iamque iterum moriens non est deconiuge quicquam
 questa suo (quid enim nisi se quereretur amatam?)
 supremumque "vale," quod iam vix auribus ille
 acciperet, dixit revolutaque rursus eodem est.

(Met.X.55-63)

Thus Ovid concludes the tragic tale of Orpheus and his "half-regained Eurydice."⁶⁶

Significantly, Milton glimpses his wife in a dream-vision, his account beginning: "Methought I saw my late espoused saint ...", while Adam too first sees Eve in a similar, dream-like state as he recounts the episode to Raphael: "Abstract in a trance methought I saw ..."⁶⁷ (VIII.462). These distinct echoes in situation and expression appear in passages of first person narrative and seem especially notable when considered in conjunction with the outcome in each case. As reality obtrudes upon sleep, Milton suffers an Orpheus-like forfeiture of his wife - perhaps an implicit comment upon the frustrating limitations of the fallen world - while Adam in Paradise wakes to find his dream reality. Adam reaches out to embrace not an insubstantial, evanescent shade or spirit, but a tangible, radiant being, "such as [he] saw her in [his] dream" (VIII.482). Yet first he has to endure a temporary loss which proves surprisingly comparable to that of Milton's, and thus, indirectly, to that of Orpheus.

Adam movingly conveys his sudden pain and emptiness upon her unexpected loss in these lines:

She disappeared, and left me dark, I waked
To find her, or for ever to deplore
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure.

(VIII.477-80)

The imagery and movement of the first line contains audible echoes of the final lines of Sonnet XIX.⁶⁸ Moreover, Adam's expression of his dramatic decision to deny himself all the forms of pleasure that Paradise could offer if she were not restored to him, seems to suggest Orpheus' similar renunciation.

The purport of these lines seems at first glance perplexing, the pain inflicted gratuitous. Why should Milton, albeit briefly, deliberately suggest the possibility of a tragic outcome, overlaying it with overtones that link it with other marriages that will end in premature separation? It seems reasonable to infer, remembering Milton's practice elsewhere, that he is tacitly anticipating that critical moment in the poem when Adam will lose Eve a second time; he will risk falling into the hands of death with her than endure life without her.

Again, there is a slight reversal of roles: it is the woman who breaks the sole condition of freedom and life. Unlike Eurydice, who submits to her fate passively and uncomplainingly, Adam desperately seeks to understand why she has failed to comply with the condition, demanding of Eve:

... how hast thou yielded to transgress
The strict forbiddance, how to violate
The sacred fruit forbidden!

(IX.902-4)

As once before he woke to find the brightness of Paradise eclipsed without the radiant presence of Eve, again Adam cannot envisage living alone in 'wild woods forlorn.'

But Adam's initial reaction to "The fatal trespass done by Eve", paralysis of body and "inward silence" of mind as he "Astonied stood and blank" (IX.889-95) recalls the benumbing shock experienced by Ceres when she finally learns the truth behind Proserpina's disappearance, that she has been claimed by the Lord of the Underworld. Her response is likewise conveyed through an image of petrification:

Mater ad auditas stupuit ceu saxea voces
attonitaeque diu similis fuit.

(Met. V. 509-10)

Especially noteworthy is Milton's choice of 'astonied', which, like 'attonitae', heads the line in which it appears. In his note to line 890, Bush gives "dazed" as an equivalent, but since Milton's fondness for playing with the etymology of Latinate words is so notorious, this gloss seems to depart unnecessarily from the derivation of the word. Besides the obvious relationship with 'attonitus,' hence 'thunderstruck,' 'astony' was often held to be derived from 'stoney' and was used "as petrified" (OED). Thus it appears at least possible that through the connotative value of 'astonied' Milton has economically condensed into one word both of Ovid's images conveying shock.

But as well as recalling the stunned silence with which Ceres received the news of Proserpina's fate, Adam, struck senseless by the initial shock of finding Eve "lost" and "to death devote" (IX.901,902)

also resembles Orpheus in his dazed bewilderment at discovering Eurydice wrested from him a second time by death:

Non aliter stupuit gemina nece coniugis Orpheus,
 quam tria qui timidus, medio portante catenas,
 colla canis vidit, quem non pavor ante reliquit,
 quam natura prior saxo per corpus oborto.

(Met.X.64-67)

Moreover, it seems interesting to note in passing the remarkable similarity between the portrayal of Proserpina gathering flowers with her gay, young companions, as depicted graphically by Ovid in the Metamorphoses and the Fasti, and that of Eurydice in the first lines of 'A snake killeth Eurydice,' one of a number of short poems modelled upon stories from the Metamorphoses believed by Hugh Candy,⁶⁹ amongst others, to have been composed in Milton's early youth, inspired by his ardent admiration for the Latin poet, where the scene is set thus:

Whilst Eurydice amongst the Naiades
 Under the shaddow of the verdant trees
 Excerpt the trembling flowers amongst the grass
 grown high with time ... 70

These general parallels seem more significant when we recall that Ovid's account of this episode is deliberately terse and sparing of detail:

exitus auspicio gravior: nam nupta per herbas
 dum nova naiadum turba comitata vagatur,
 occidit in talum serpentis dente recepto.

(Met.X.8-10)

Noteworthy too is the purposeful but meandering progress of the snake towards Eurydice, "who with moeanders towards her doth reele" (l. 5) which may anticipate the devious approach of Satan, in serpent form, towards Eve. Again, the following line, "Till he his teeth had fastened to her heele" (l. 6) may suggest, whether coincidentally or not, the terms of the curse pronounced upon the snake in Eden:

Between thee and the woman I will put
Enmity, and between thine and her seed;
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel

(X.179-81)

The fundamental correspondences between Eurydice and Eve are clearly discernible: Eurydice dies after being bitten in the heel by a snake while being pursued by a would-be ravisher; Satan combines the roles of ravisher and serpent.⁷¹ Although no direct reference is to be found to the tale of Eurydice in Paradise Lost, when this myth is considered with Milton's open use of the Proserpina-Ceres motif - to which it has certain obvious affinities - it may seem of some thematic and structural significance.

Notably, it easily falls into the tripartite pattern of the progressive definition of salvation previously discussed; a mediator intercedes on behalf of those 'Forfeit to Death.' In each instance, life or resurrection had been conditional upon abstinence of some kind; in each case this condition had been broken. For Orpheus, the failure to fulfil the terms of Eurydice's conditional release proved fatal. As the young Milton may have expressed it, Eurydice's return is granted:

Conditioned he see her not with his eyes
 Til he Avernus past: but's wandring sight
 Breaketh this law, and so he lost her quite. ⁷²

Ceres, on the other hand, by interceding with Jupiter on behalf of her daughter, ensures the partial restoration of Proserpina to the sunlit world, despite her 'fatalliquorishnesse.' But Eve's release from the clutches of Death is envisaged upon two distinct levels: on the physical level it too is only partial, following Adam and Eve's prayers of repentance intercepted by the Son and brought to the Father, Death is "Defeated of his seizure many days/Given ... of grace" (XI.254-55); on the spiritual level, the redemptive sacrifice of Christ, freely allowing himself to fall into the power of Death, "Redeem[s them] quite from Death's rapacious claim" (XI.258). Christ's words are of a diviner strain,⁷³ and his harrowing of Hell would have "quite set free/[the] half-regained Eurydice." ⁷⁴ (L'Allegro 1.149-50).

Some readers would naturally feel uneasy about too precise a poetic equivalence between Ceres and Christ that such an emphasis on her mediatorial role seem to imply. Ricks is especially wary of pushing the relationship too far, and sensibly advocates a degree of caution. He maintains that here

... precise correspondence must surely be thought to give way to looser suggestiveness. Ceres cannot be Christ, in the sense in which Eve is Proserpina; the most obvious thing is that the sexes are wrong.

But while Ricks' second point, that too simple an equation of Ceres with Christ is "intolerable" because "Eve is herself later explicitly compared to Ceres," also seems valid, it also seems at least suggestive

that Eve is herself assigned a Christ-like, mediatorial role later in the poem.

It seems useful to remember Collett's timely warning that "Whaler's system of one-for-one equations for the details of the similes demands a rigidity that obscures part of the meaning" by foreclosing further discussion and thought. We should then allow for differing degrees of correspondence and for the poetic identification of Ceres with Christ to form only one possible level of significance. Whilst Ceres in her mediatory and suffering role in some ways anticipates Christ, a more flexible approach might also view her as another image of Eve herself.

Indeed, Collett has argued that Eve is "a composite both of the innocent Proserpine and the sorrowing Ceres," that is Proserpina is the pre-lapsarian, and Ceres the post-lapsarian Eve. While this is a suggestive point, we must not forget that Eve, in all her primal glory, seemed "Likeliest ... to Ceres in her prime" (IX.394-95). With this in mind, let us now consider Milton's direct comparison of Eve with Ceres and attempt to ascertain its significance. The simile's importance is undoubtedly accentuated by its position in the narrative, occurring at a crucial stage in the action as Eve is about to leave Adam and innocence behind her.

The simile gains further emphasis, as we have seen, from the unusual terms of the comparison, for Eve resembles Ceres when she was "in her prime/Yet virgin," and if the reading is correct, "of Proserpina from Jove" (IX.395-96). Fowler glosses "prime" thus: "in her best time; before the loss of Proserpina brought cares and suffering

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 upon her." This would seem then, to be an 'inverted' use of the Ceres figure to suggest Eve's pre-lapsarian rather than post-lapsarian condition. Moreover, as Empson has pointed out in a brilliant note on the passage, "the very richness of the garden makes it heavy with autumn. Ceres when virgin of the queen of Hell was already in her full fruitfulness upon the world."⁷⁹

III

Flowers and their Fruits

Empson's comment signals another level of meaning that we may conveniently explore here, especially since it would seem to provide an interesting variation upon a thematic pattern we have already discussed in relation to Eve. We have previously examined the triptych depicting Eve in her three-fold aspect as virgin, bride and mother, and we concluded that although this triadic structure seemed to suggest a cumulative process - the first phase representing a state that was potential rather than actual, the second being partial rather than complete, till both are fulfilled in the final stage of the progression - the three aspects were not wholly discrete or merely sequential, but profoundly complementary.

This reading would seem to accord with the unique quality that Milton insists distinguishes Eden from the fallen world, what we may call the prospect of enduring simultaneity. Let us enlarge upon this point. In the fallen world, the conditions of the seasons are mutually exclusive: spring must be exchanged for autumn, autumn for winter.

Time, whether regarded as linear or cyclical, is a postlapsarian dimension when change involves loss or even death. Eve's primal state thus perfectly reflects that of the paradisaical Garden in which the fresh, floral beauty of "spring/Perpetual ... with vernant flowers" (X.678-79) combined with the luxuriant fruitfulness of "All autumn piled" (V.394).

The flowers and fruit are thus not two points spaced along a continuum, but are found together outside the process of seasonal change. Proserpina, the young maiden, is seen by Ovid against a backcloth of perpetuum ver, surrounded by spring flowers in her native element, whilst her mother, Ceres, as frugum genetrix (Met. V.490), suggests the ripe fruitfulness of autumn. In this way, the composite image of Eve as both Proserpina and Ceres, maiden and mother, can be held to represent the distinctive quality of Eden which Eve shares as presiding spirit of a Garden where "spring and autumn/Danced hand in hand" (V.394-95). Indeed, as we shall see, their fate and fecundity prove inextricably bound together.

However, some critics tend to overlook the fertile role assigned to Eve before the Fall. Koehler, for instance, insists that "As fruit, the flower was no longer in Eve's sphere." Yet the text of the poem fails to sustain such an assertion. Naturally, I would not wish to deny that Milton emphasises Eve's especial relationship with flowers. Even so, we cannot ignore the number of references which follow in rapid succession in Book V and which unmistakably indicate that fruits are also to be considered within the scope of Eve's province. Particularly notable is the way in which Eve naturally assumes the instruction of

Adam upon the different qualities of the fruits around them, and the open comparison of Eve with Ovid's protectoress of fruit trees, Pomona. This movement of association culminates in her appearance in the guise of both frugum genetrix and mater florum as she departs from her bower "that like Pomona's arbour smiled" (V.378) to tend both the "fruits and flowers" that fill her "nursery" (VIII.44; 46).

It might be argued that these references are merely included to illustrate more fully Eve's domestic role,⁸¹ but, as if to confirm that the relationship runs deeper, Raphael, observing the fruits Eve has piled high on the "ample square" (V.393) of the table, makes explicit the unmistakable correlation between her destined fruitfulness and that of the Garden, embodied in the fruits heaped before them:

Hail, mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb
 Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons
 Than with these various fruits the trees of God
 Have heaped this table.

(V.388-91)

As Raphael's exclamation reveals, Eve's fruitfulness is implicit in the luxuriant abundance of the Garden. She is virtually pregnant with the teeming life of the world. Yet K. M. Swaim continues to maintain that "fruit is a postlapsarian category."⁸²

However, the potentiality for fruitfulness is certainly no greater after the Fall than before it. Indeed, Adam and Eve had been charged before the Fall with two, positive commands which were essentially complementary: to dress the garden and keep it and to increase and multiply. In short, to be fruitful in the fullest sense. Early in Book V, in a passage multilayered and replete with

suggestiveness (ll.209-219), Adam and Eve are glimpsed performing the function for which they were created. Their actions, as well as ensuring the fertility of the Garden, symbolically enact the joining of female to the male in marriage, and thus look forward to the fruit of Eve's womb, the numerous progeny of which will fill the world and "multiply a race of worshippers" (VII.630), the desired end of their prelapsarian existence. The fruit of the Garden and the fruit of Eve's womb are thus again unmistakably correlative.

Moreover, it seems significant that it is His observation of Adam and Eve thus tending the Garden which directly moves God to pity man's ignorance and prompts Him to send His messenger, Raphael, to enlighten their ignorance of the evil force which will threaten their happiness. This use of juxtaposition, implying a causal relationship, would seem to support the view that, at this juncture, man's gardening activities were a perfect physical counterpart to prayer and a positive act of worship.

It seems anachronistic, then, when speaking of the earthly Paradise, to speak, as K. M. Swaim has done, of the "merely material garden" ^{82a} since Milton affirms that until the Fall, no clear-cut dichotomy existed between the physical and the spiritual. 'Flesh' and 'spirit' did not signify mutually exclusive, disparate realms of being, rather they were, it seems, to be regarded as states differing in degree rather than kind, placed upon an orderly but nonetheless fluid continuum on which being and becoming tend to merge. The possibility of interanimation between contiguous orders of being, and the vision of the cosmos as one, massive, living organism reaching

towards God, are all graphically conveyed by Raphael, the spokesman upon celestial matters, through a simple but significant and effective image.

Raphael indicates the process of sublimation whereby, "body [may] up to spirit work, in bounds/Proportioned to each kind" (V.478-79) by likening it to the process whereby a plant evolves through different stages of growth, each part being integral to the composition of the whole:

... So from the root,
Spirits lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More airy, last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes.

(V.479-82)

The image, then, is not merely employed by Raphael as a vehicle for conveying abstract ideas; it does not simply stand for or represent something else, but is a concrete, living example of the dynamic principle Raphael seeks to illustrate. The process to which it refers is not only symbolized through it, but embodied in it. It is interesting to note here, in passing, that the "confusion of matter with spirit" ⁸³ so deplored by Dr. Johnson in Raphael's account of the battle in heaven, can be elsewhere in the narrative one of its principal strengths, instilling fresh life into the traditional conception of the scala naturae or Great Chain of Being, the fundamental, organizing image upon which the universe was structured.

Since no discrepancy existed between the physical facts and their spiritual meaning, there is no need even to impose upon gardening, the central activity in Paradise, spiritual significance. For unfallen

man, the spiritual values of life were concentrated in, and expressed through, the physical medium. However, with the loss of the external, physical Paradise, which itself reflected an inner harmony of being, spiritual values were internalized, and a wide gulf was disclosed between the life of the senses and the spirit. Spiritual conceptions had then to be grafted on to the simple, original stock and thus, within the references to 'fruit' and 'seed' in the final books, resides another, distinct order of meaning.

This is not to suggest that the vein of meaning in prelapsarian imagery may be exhausted at the surface, but rather that it conveys abstract ideas only as a natural part of the literal and immediate sense. The distinguishing quality of prelapsarian imagery, then, is the remarkable, sustained consonance between the idea and the concrete expression of it. Thus, the macrocosm, or perhaps more accurately, the 'mesocosm' of the Garden is carefully contrived to exemplify, echo and interpret the microcosm, or little world of man. That each is the affirmation of the other explains the fluency of movement between external nature or the garden and the inner being of man. The mind is its own place only after the Fall.

However, in accordance with her optimistic view of the Fortunate Fall, whereby "Eve is deflowered" (IX. 901) to become
 84 fruitful," K. M. Swaim feels, unlike Empson, that the emphasis in lines 395-96 of Book IX "is on the unrealized fruitful potential of
 85 the goddess" Ceres. Yet it seems reasonable to assume that, as the primary plot of the epic centres on the loss of primal happiness and original earthly perfection and harmony, Milton would, at this critical

juncture, enhance the blissful prospect that lay in store for unfallen man. And it seems likely, then, that he would choose this crucial stage in the narrative, as Eve leaves for her fatal encounter with Satan, to intensify our sense of loss by sharply posing, through the presentation of a fruitful Ceres, unscarred by sorrow and suffering, the painless path to fruitfulness, originally offered to man by God, but lost to him through sin. This reading would also account for the deliberate, albeit temporary, exclusion of Proserpina - and thus of the associations of pain, transience, winter and death her name inevitably invokes - from the picture. The alternative possibility remains unrealised; the pattern of human life is abruptly propelled along a new trajectory. Satan's premature gathering of Eve introduces a progression that involves age and decay, moving inexorably toward death in the familiar, tripartite pattern:

Spring	Summer/Autumn	Winter
virgin	nymph	crone

As this pattern demonstrates, the critical distinction between the conditions that obtain before and after the Fall largely centre upon the disparate nature of the paths by which man may reach the same final destination of "Godlike fruition" (III. 307), of union with God.⁸⁶ This is profoundly significant since it belies the common, uncritical assumption that Milton subscribed unreservedly to the perilous doctrine of the felix culpa.⁸⁷

It is important to remember that man's final goal remains the same both before and after the Fall. Michael reveals to the fallen Adam how, after Satan and "his perverted world" have been dissolved :

From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined,
 New heavens, new earth, ages of endless date
 Founded in righteousness and peace and love,
 To bring forth fruits joy and eternal bliss.

(XII.548-51)

And in these lines, man is clearly appointed once more to that same, final destiny foretold to him by Raphael before the Fall. For as thus envisaged by Milton, the primal Paradise was not absolute, there remained in prospect a greater happiness to which man might aspire. Raphael had related to Adam and Eve the Father's pronouncement ordaining the future promotion of mankind; he prescribed that they would remain in Eden only

... till by degress of merit raised
 They open to themselves at length the way
 Up hither, under long obedience tried,
 And earth be changed to heaven, and heaven to earth,
 One kingdom, joy and union without end.

(VII.157-61)

Milton, as we have noted, is careful to suggest what man has forfeited with the Fall: the gradual, gentle metamorphic process of refinement and eventual translation and apotheosis as, "all to spirit" turned, he would have made a "winged ascen[t]/Ethereal" (V.497-99). As the figure delineating the evolution of a plant admirably illustrates, it is to be conceived as a natural and easy, though, as other horticultural images make clear, by no means effortless, transformatory process, utterly devoid of the pain and suffering associated with change that involves a kind of death or loss. After the Fall, and the consequent invasion of death into every aspect of life, this type of "mortal change" (X.273) becomes inherent in the very nature of things,

and is especially evident, as we shall observe, in the conditions affecting fruitfulness. In the postlapsarian world, then, man must endure an agonizing struggle "in sharp tribulation" (XI. 63), confronting the many faces of death before his endeavours may bear fruit.

At this point we must briefly pause to mention the truly diabolic cunning of Satan who, by building his specious arguments upon proportion and hierarchy of being - matters which Raphael had so carefully stressed and explained to Eve as well as to Adam - couches his temptation of Eve in terms so devilishly near the truth. Moreover, by recalling, but subtly distorting, the nature of the promised elevation of mankind, Satan deviously defines 'death' to further his own purposes, assuring Eve:

So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
Human, to put on gods, death to be wished,
Though threatened.

(IX.713-15)

Satan thus discloses a subtle perversion of the end of human existence, the goal from which he is seducing her. He suggests to Eve that she may anticipate the gradual ripening process outlined by Raphael, and seize immediately in her grasp the fruit of a life by "long obedience tried" (VII.159). The fruit thus "harshly plucked" (XI.537) brings us back to the flowers of innocence shed in a premature process of forced fruitfulness with which we began this part of our inquiry.

In her interesting article, K. M. Swaim perceptively analyses
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"The effect of storms on flowers." According to her definition, a storm is "a violent bombardment of fructifying rain, an attack that

the Fall, the promised future offered to mankind, significantly figured through the evolution of a plant, "by gradual scale sublimed," from the root to the culminating "flowers and their fruits" (V.479-82), reveals the process to be one of renaissance rather than resurrection, continual rebirth taking place in the continuous unfolding present characteristic of time in unfallen Eden, a process in which flowers do not have to be relinquished for fruit.

In a world in which the uniquely tempered climatic conditions ensure the simultaneity of the flowering and fruiting processes in the spiritual and physical Garden, the withering blasts of a storm must be regarded as wholly baneful and noxious in themselves, leading only to barrenness and infertility. The storm may thus be seen to anticipate the consequences of the abrupt and premature end of paradise, brought about by the invasion of sin and death, who, "With travail difficult" (X.593), bring to birth a new world in which the balance has been disrupted to produce violent extremes. The uniform climate designed to foster growth is now characterized by harsh extremes that mar and impede it. Milton grimly catalogues the dramatic effect of this general dislocation:

... The sun
 Had first his precept so to move, so shine,
 As might affect the earth with cold and heat
 Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call
 Decrepit winter, from the south to bring
 Solstitial summer's heat.

(X.651-56)

The 'wandering planets' are instructed how to form conjunctions: "Of noxious efficacy and when to join/In synod unbenign," so too the fixed stars are taught:

Their influence malignant when to shower,
Which of them rising with the sun, or falling,
Should prove tempestuous.

(X.660-64)

Moreover, these changes in the nature of the heavenly bodies wrought:

Like change on sea and land, sideral blast,
Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,
Corrupt and pestilent.

(X.693-95)

Gentle breezes, "vernal airs" and the "whispering soft" Zephyr, who
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made "ease more easy," are exchanged for intemperate gales as

... from the north
Of Norumbega, and the Samoed shore,
Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice
And snow and hail and stormy gust and flaw,
Boreas and Caecias and Argestes loud
And Thrascias rend the woods and seas upturn;
With adverse blast upturns them from the south
Notus and Afer black with thunderous clouds
From Serraliona; thwart of these as fierce
Forth rush the Levant and the ponent winds
Eurus and Zephir with their lateral noise,
Sirocco and Libecchio, thus began
Outrage from lifeless things.

(X.695-707)

Ovid more concisely records such a radical change to extreme, adverse conditions that militate against growth and fruitfulness following the loss of Proserpina. The land is cursed:

fertilitas terrae latum vulgata per orbem
 falsa iacet: primis segetes moriuntur in herbis,
 et modo sol nimius, nimius modo corripit imber;
 sideraque ventique nocent, ...
 ... lolium tribulique fatigant
 triticeas messes et inexpugnabile gramen.

(Met. V.481-86)

Such difficult conditions and the "noysome weeds" which infest the ground may well remind us of the terms of the sentence pronounced upon Adam and Eve by the Son, which on both the literal and metaphorical levels of meaning centre upon the agonizing struggle for fruitfulness in the new conditions that will obtain in the fallen world. The otium of Adam's 'sweet' and 'pleasant' gardening labour is a garden which naturally tended to overabundance is replaced by onerous toil, tilling ground now cursed to bring forth "Thorns and thistles .../Unbid" (X.203-4). By a common process of metaphoric transference, these were generally held "to argue the weeds of man's mind," the vices which are as "weedes growing in our owne garden issuing from the corrupted roote of our nature."⁹⁴

For her part, Eve was 'to multiply a race of worshippers' with the ease with which she effortlessly gathered "All seasons,ripe for use" (V.323). Children, we are encouraged to imagine, would develop till, to adapt an image used ironically by Milton later in the poem, "like ripe fruit [they drop]... or be with ease/Gathered, not harshly plucked, for [life] mature" (X.535-37). Now she must bring her children "In sorrow forth." 'Harshly plucked,' they will be torn from her in the pangs of labour. "Hope not," Sylvester's Christ admonishes Eve,

... thy fruit so easily to bring forth
 As now thou slayst it: henceforth every Birth
 Shall torture thee with thousand sorts of pain
 Each artrie, sinew, muscle, joynt and vein,
 Shall feel his part; besides fowl vomitings,
 Prodigious longings, thoughtfull languishings,⁹⁵
 With change of colour, swoons and many others.

While Sylvester insists on furnishing us with an exhaustive account of the extremity of her travail, Milton is content to suggest obliquely -
 this aspect of forced fruitfulness.⁹⁶

To insist, then, without due qualification, on the fortunate outcome of the Fall, that "*fructiosior culpa quam innocentia*,"⁹⁷ is to strive against the current of feeling evoked by the initial emphasis on "all our woe" and the "loss of Eden" (I.3-4), the tragic invocation to Book IX and the relentless episodes of death and disaster in Michael's survey of the history of mankind. Of course, this is not to deny that the strand of optimism has its proper place in the narrative web, but pursuance of only one line of meaning to the exclusion of others that lead in very different directions may result in a rather perverse reading of events. Thus, K. M. Swaim is led to argue that Adam and Eve's punishment, "the sweat of the delving Adam's brow" and the "pains of Eve's childbearing" make work and love "richer and more fruitful processes despite [the] apparent change for the worse, through the addition of the dimensions of pain, sorrow and guilt."⁹⁸

The effects of Satan's action are utterly noxious and irremediable in themselves, resulting in barrenness and death in the Garden as well as in Eve, as the world was blighted by the loss of Proserpina. As Adam slowly realizes, death is "not one stroke ... bereaving sense" (X.809-10);

life in the fallen world has become "a long day's dying" (X.964),
and Milton makes the same point in De Doctrina Christiana:

In corpore autem labores, aerumnae,
morbi, quid aliud sunt, nisi corporalis, quae
dicitur, mortis praeludia? 99

Yet ultimately, this results in an even greater celebration of the restorative power of God's grace. For with the planting of the seed, the potentiality for fruitfulness and new life is restored, and all the evils that followed closely in the train of Satan, Sin and Death, and were aspects of their power, storms, winter and death itself, become subsumed into the divine rhythm of growth, whereby evil is turned to good, becoming part of the now difficult seasonal process 'of pinching cold and scorching heat,' whereby flowers must give way for fruit: 100

... else had the spring
Perpetual smiled..with vernal flowers.

(X.678-79)

I would thus like to alter Miss Swaim's points of emphasis. According to her theory, storms are a necessary part of the process whereby flowers yield to fruit. I would prefer to say that we have fruit in spite of the storms, but at the cost of flowers. Lost flowers eloquently testify to the irremediable residue of suffering now inherent in the nature of things, following the premature end of the earthly Paradise. Moreover, since this condition was no less a place than a condition of mind, they focus our nostalgia for all that was lost with the Fall and Eve.

Notes

1. George S. Koehler, 'Milton and the Art of Landscape', MS VIII (1975), p.11.
2. ibid.
3. In her article, 'Flowers, Fruit and Seed: A Reading of Paradise Lost', MS V (1973), p.157, Kathleen M. Swaim has argued: "Flowers give Eden its unique quality, describing a sensuous physical world of wonderful beauty and freshness, but offering also a number of abstract ideas" about the state of innocence. Moreover, as Joseph Duncan points out, "Milton's Paradise ... is more flowery, more wild and much more fragrant than Virgil's Elysium" (Milton's Earthly Paradise: A Historical Study of Eden [Minneapolis, 1972], p.32). For the influence of the Ovidian locus amoenus on Milton's paradise, see p.195.
4. See: IV. 269-70, 333-34, 451, 690-703, 772-773; V. 379-80; VIII. 44-47; IX. 218-19, 425-33, 838-41, 892-93, 901, 1037-42; XI. 273-81.
5. cf. Swaim, 'Flowers, Fruit and Seed', p.161.
6. See John E. Parish, 'Milton and the Rape of Proserpina', ES XLVII (1967), p.332.
7. Parish quibbles over the extent of Ovidian influence on Book IV ll.268-69, declaring: "Ovid's description, however, is not really of a field" ('Milton and the Rape of Proserpina', p.333), and in Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries (Chapel Hill, 1955), DeWitt T. Starnes and Ernest W. Talbot have raised a similar objection. They maintain that "in Ovid Proserpina is gathering lilies in a beautiful 'grove': no field is mentioned" and, therefore, Milton may have been influenced by "Ortelius' map, in which 'Enna' is marked with the legend 'Campus Ennensis'" or by "the very first lines in Stephanus' account of Proserpina":

Proserpina, Iovis et Cereris filia, quae cum in
campus Ennaeis flora legeret, a Plutone rapta est.

This challenge requires further consideration. In the Metamorphoses, Ovid places Proserpina in a grove outside the city of Henna: "Haud procul Hennaeis ... a moenibus altae" (Met.V. 385), and we might argue that Milton is likewise using 'field' in a general sense to indicate a rural as opposed to an urban setting (OED 2, "The country as opposed to a town or village"). But this is to exaggerate the difficulty. The problem seems to stem directly from confining attention to only one of Ovid's versions of the tale. Both are located at Henna, but in the Fasti, we find Ovid setting the scene thus: "est culto fertilis Henna solo" (IV. 422), while, even more suggestively, are the lines which begin his account of Ceres' desperate search for her daughter:

sic dea nec retinet gemitus et concita cursu
fertur et a campis incipit, Henna, tuis.

(Fasti IV. 461-62; emphasis added)

Such references from the Fasti should adequately account for Milton's reference to the "field/Of Enna" (IV. 268-69). However, it is interesting to note that in Book IX the setting for Satan's initial assault upon Eve as he lurks "hid among sweet flowers and shades" (1.408) has more in common with the scene of the rape as Ovid outlines it in the Metamorphoses. There Ovid directs our attention to the brightly coloured flowers that contrast with the shade cast by the overhanging branches as two of the most distinctive features of the scene: "frigara dant rami, tyrios humus umida flores" (Met.V. 390). In both cases, then, the setting seems to have symbolic suggestiveness, tacitly anticipating the overwhelming of the bright flower by the world of perpetual shadow, as darkness threatens to cut off the flowers from the life-giving sunlight. Consider too Martz' general observation that "both of Ovid's great treasuries of ancient myth tend to cohere within the context" of Milton's allusions (Poet of Exile, p.227).

8. Parish, 'Milton and the Rape of Proserpina', p.334.
9. ibid.
10. cf.C.S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', pp.44-45.
11. See p. 72.
12. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', p.43.

13. Note to IV. 268-72.
14. Sandys, pp.256-57.
15. ibid., p.260.
16. For Dis as raptor see Met. V. 395-96 and 402-3. For the other aspects of the Ovidian Dis see Met. IV. 436-38.
17. cf. I. 348 and IV. 394.
18. And note too, both espy their victims when on a solitary mission of reconnaissance to safeguard the security of hell.
19. cf. I. 251-52.
20. Goodman, The Fall of Man, p.152.
21. cf. II. 585-86.
22. Lolette Kuby, 'The World is Half the Devil's: Cold/Warmth Imagery in Paradise Lost', ELN, XL. ii. (Summer 1974), p.184.
23. Fowler, note to V. 689, p.301.
24. ibid.
25. MacCaffrey, 'Paradise Lost' as 'Myth', p.129.
26. ibid., p.126.
27. Christopher Harvey, Schola Cordis or The Heart of it Selfe, gone away from God; brought back againe to him, and instructed by him in 47 Emblems (1647), Embleme 29, CORDIS IRRIGATIO 1.27, p.118, Epigr.29, p.117; Embleme 16, CORDIS EMOLLITIO 1.27, p.66.

28. Following J. M. Steadman, "Like Turbulencies": The Tempest as Adversity Symbol' in Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol (Chapel Hill, 1962) pp.90-101, Gayle E. Wilson has argued that Milton drew upon emblems "to add depth to his portrayal of characters and heighten his themes in Paradise Regained." See 'Emblems in Paradise Regained', MQ VI (1972) p.77. More recently, Shahla Anand has drawn attention to "The emblematic character of many verbal pictures in Paradise Lost." See "Of Costliest Emblem": 'Paradise Lost' and the Emblem Tradition, p.27.
29. Henry Vaughan, 'Regeneration' ll.6-8, from a collection of poems clearly influenced by the emblematic tradition, Silex Scintillans in The Works of Henry Vaughan, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford, 1957).
30. George Wither uses the argument that while "The Ground brings forth all needfull things;/ ... from the sunne this vertue springs" to illustrate the action of grace "from the Sunne of Righteousnesse" upon the soul. See A Collection of Emblemes Book II reprinted in English Emblem Books vol. XII, ed. John Hordan (Menston, 1968), p.104.
31. Sandys, p.253.
32. Perhaps the poetic use of the adjective caeruleus should be briefly noted in passing. Virgil in the Aeneid used it to suggest the pitch darkness of a storm cloud which eclipses daylight:
- olli caeruleus supra astitit imber'
noctem hiememque ferens et inhorruit unda tenebris
- (V. 10-11)
33. See Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.119.
34. "S. Chrys. sup. Matth.", Francis Quarles, The Third Book of Emblemes from The Complete Works, ed. A. B. Grosart (New York, 1967; reprint of 1880-81 edition), III, p.69.
35. De Doct. I.xii (Col.XV, p.204).
36. ibid., p.208.
37. ibid., p.204.

38. ibid., I. xxii, p.214.
39. Note to IX. 432-33; Fowler, p.463.
40. cf. Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.120.
41. See, for example, Carey's note to l.2.
42. Note too, the massed troops of fallen angels, "the flower of heaven" (I. 316) stand before Satan, "Their glory withered" (I.612) like "blasted" trees upon a heath. As MacCaffrey points out: "the combination of splendour and desolation ... like the fallen leaves, shows that withering and death are the inevitable results of evil" ('Paradise Lost' as Myth, p.127). Moreover, as Falconer observes in his Essay on Milton's Imitations of the Ancients:

the falling of a Shower of Leaves from the Tree, in a Storm of Wind, very well represents the Dejection of the Angels from their former Celestial Mansions; and their faded Splendour wan (IV. 810) is finely expressed by the paleness and witheredness of the Leaves.

(quoted by Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, p.124)

And cf. IX. 892-93.

43. Note to IX. 426-31; Fowler, p.463.
44. Parish, 'Milton and the Rape of Proserpina', p.334.
45. ibid., p.335.
46. The Winter's Tale IV. iv. 116-18, from The New Arden Edition of the Works of Shakespeare, ed. J. H. P. Pafford (1963).
47. Parish, 'Milton and the Rape of Proserpina', p.335.
48. ibid.
49. ibid., p.334.

50. ibid.
51. Note to IX. 901; Fowler, p.490.
52. Parish, 'Milton and the Rape of Proserpina', p.334.
53. ibid.
54. ibid.
55. As Kermode maintains: "the sense of loss is keener by far than the apprehension of things unseen, the remote promise of restoration" ('Adam Unparadised', p.121).
56. James Whaler, 'The Miltonic Simile', PMLA XLVI (1931), pp.1060-61.
57. K. M. Swaim, 'Flowers, Fruit and Seed', p.161.
58. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, pp.125-26. See too Rosemond Tuve, Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and their Posterity, (Princeton, 1966), p.228.
59. K. W. Gransden, 'Paradise Lost and the Aeneid', EC XVII (1967), p.282.
60. Consider recent studies of the typological patterning of Milton's last sonnet: J. C. Ulreich, 'Typological Symbolism in Milton's Sonnet XXIII', MQ VIII (1974), pp.7-10; Kurt Heinzelman, '"Cold Consolation": The Art of Milton's Last Sonnet', MS X (1977), pp.111-26; John Spencer Hill, '"Alcestis from the Grave": Image and Structure in Sonnet XXIII', MS X (1977), pp.127-40. J. C. Ulreich has pointed out that while "Milton does not make extensive use of conventional types ... the assumptions of typological theory can be used to illustrate Milton's symbolic practice" ('The Typological Structure of Milton's Imagery', MS V [1973], p.69).
61. For a discussion of Milton's poetic use of the theory of "typological evolution" see D. C. Allen, 'Milton and the Descent to Light', JEGP LX (1961), p.614.

62. ibid., p.618.
63. See J. W. Hales, 'Milton and Ovid', MP I (1903-4), pp.143-44.
64. Milton draws upon Ovid's account of the death of the poet (Met.XI. 1-19) in lines 58-63 of Lycidas.
65. J. C. Ulreich, 'Typological Symbolism in Milton's Sonnet XXIII', p.9.
66. L'Allegro, l.150.
67. Dr. Pearce was one of the first to recognise here "something of the same way of thinking that Milton uses in his Sonnet on his deceas'd wife." See also, Kurt Heinzelman, "'Cold Consolation': The Art of Milton's Last Sonnet", p.117 and Le Comte, Milton and Sex, pp.40-42.
68. So numbered in Carey's edition of Milton's Shorter Poems. For other possible echoes here see 'Appendix I, the Sun and the Moon.'
69. Hugh Candy, Some Newly Discovered Stanzas.
70. 117, 'A Snake killeth eurydice', 11.1-3 in Candy, Some Newly Discovered Stanzas, p.159.
71. See Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.80.
72. 118, 11.6-8 in Candy, Some Newly Discovered Stanzas, p.160.
73. ibid., l.4.
74. As D. C. Allen has pointed out: "The history of Orpheus as a pagan type of Christ can be traced for many centuries ... Christians hallowed Orpheus for his half-success as a saviour of men and for his frustrated attempt to lead a soul out of Hell's darkness." ('Milton and the Descent to Light', p.619).
75. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, pp.125.

76. Collett, p.93.
77. ibid.
78. Note to IX. 395, Fowler, p.461.
79. William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, p.185.
80. Koehler, 'Milton and the Art of Landscape,' p.15.
81. See Marcia Landy, 'Kinship and the Role of Women in Paradise Lost', p.12.
82. K. M. Swaim, 'Flowers, Fruit and Seed: A Reading of Paradise Lost', p.159.
- 82a. ibid., p.172; emphasis added.
83. Dr. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets I, p.185.
84. K. M. Swaim, 'Flowers, Fruit and Seed: A Reading of Paradise Lost', p.155.
85. ibid., p.161.
86. See Thomas H. Blackburn, 'Paradises Lost and Found: The Meaning and Function of the "Paradise within" in Paradise Lost', MS V (1973), pp.191-212. For a different view see Arthur O. Lovejoy, 'Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall', ELN IV (1937), p.163, where he concludes that "Adam's sin - and also, indeed, the sins of his posterity which it 'occasioned' - were the conditio sine qua non both of a greater manifestation of the glory of God and of immeasurably greater benefits for men than could conceivably have been otherwise obtained."
87. In fact, the only expression of the paradox is put into the mouth of Adam who confesses himself still "full of doubt" whether to "repent" or "rejoice" (XII. 473-76). See Kermode, 'Adam Unparadised', pp.102-3.
88. K. M. Swaim, 'Flowers, Fruit and Seed: A Reading of Paradise Lost', p.162.

89. ibid., p.162.
90. ibid.
91. ibid., p.159.
92. IV. 264; IV. 326-30.
93. Goodman, Fall of Man, p.114.
94. ibid.
95. Sylvester's Du Bartas II. i. 2. 460-67, p.111.
96. But cf. the monstrous account of the breaching of sin's womb at II. 778-85 and 796-800.
97. St. Ambrose, De Jacob 6. 21, as quoted by Arthur O. Lovejoy in 'Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall', p.172.
98. K. M. Swaim, 'Flowers, Fruit and Seed: A Reading of Paradise Lost', p.160.
99. De Doct. I.XIII (Col. XV, p.214).
100. It is thus true to say as Geoffrey Hartman has done that "the hand of Satan is ultimately indistinguishable from the will of God" ('Milton's Counterplot', ELH XXV [1958], p.7).

CHAPTER VII

"The Vine and Her Elm:"

Milton's Eve and the Transformation of an Ovidian Motif

Recent criticism has disposed of the old truism that Milton was a misogynistic poet with "something like a Turkish contempt of females as subordinate beings."¹ The importance Milton evidently attached to Eve's role in the Garden is now recognised. Like Adam, Eve is seen to be an image of God the "sovereign planter" (IV.691) who "shares and participates in the full range of human activities and achievements."²

Milton's treatment of Adam and Eve's relationship is complex however, and refuses to be neatly fixed and formulated. It is too subtle to admit only one line of interpretation. Indeed, we are not allowed to rest content with any one single formulation. While it is true that Milton often refers to the couple in terms that seem to indicate their absolute equality, sometimes stressing their separateness as distinct individuals, at other times suggesting that they are complementary halves of a single composite whole, this is clearly not the whole truth.³ He also places them in a hierarchical relationship of greater and lesser, superior and inferior.

There is no denying the force of the oft quoted line, "He for God only, she for God in him" (IV.299) or the statement that Adam and Eve were "Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed" (IV.296). Similarly, the references to Adam's "Absolute rule" (IV.301) and "superior love" (IV.499) obdurately remain, making their presence felt. Yet they hardly offset the effect of a number of "emotionally charged outbursts

on the part of the narrator" which cast doubt upon her relative inferiority and complicate our response to Eve from the outset. As Peter Lindenbaum so ably argues, "What is most remarkable about these outbursts, what in effect draws our attention to them so strongly, is that the narrator's voice in them is so different from his voice elsewhere in the poem."⁴

There seems no escaping the conclusion that we are confronted with two very different attitudes to Eve. The difficulty we may experience in reconciling the derisory remark that Adam fell, "fondly overcome with female charm" (IX.999), with the manifest delight in Eve's charms so strongly in evidence elsewhere in the poem, is obvious enough and need not detain us here. These direct effects are, however, useful indicators on the surface level of the narrative of an underlying tension which lies coiled at the heart of the epic and which is only resolved with the eating of the apple.

My particular purpose is to trace the way in which this ambivalence is reflected in Milton's handling of the vine motif. Milton's linkage of Eve with the vine has long been recognised, but this identification proves to be more complex and suggestive than is commonly noted. The vine is a composite image, an axis which holds together these two opposing aspects of Eve Janus-like. On the one hand, it becomes a symbol of Eve's active and independent power, a celebration of her beauty and fruitfulness, on the other, it proclaims her weakness, her dependence on Adam and vulnerability without his supporting presence.⁵ The reader's dilemma cannot be resolved by merely rejecting one set of implications in favour of the other; we

are neither invited nor permitted to choose between them until the morning of the Fall. We must simply accept that the two are placed in dramatic conflict, this very opposition playing its part in propelling the action to its crisis.

Significantly, the vine motif first appears with our introduction to the human pair, "The most famous, apparently the most unequivocal statement of the inequality of the sexes".^{5a} The passage evolves from visual description into an account of Eve's relationship to Adam,⁶ her "golden tresses"

... in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received.

(IV.305-09)

These lines are in keeping with definitions of the marital relationship evolved by other Reformers.^{6a} Daniel Rogers argued uncompromisingly that "The first Dutie of the Wife [is] Subjection"⁷ and William Whately similarly declared:

Whosoever therefore doth desire or purpose to bee
a good wife, or to live comfortably, let her set
downe this conclusion within her soule: Mine husband
is my superior, my better: he hath authoritie and
rule over me, nature hath given it him, having
framed our bodies to tendernesse, mens to more
hardness; God hath given it him, saying to our first
mother Evah; Thy desire shall be subject to thine
husband, and hee shall rule over thee.⁸

Others revealed in their writing the tension characteristic of the age in which male authority existed uneasily with "Collateral love, and dearest amity", for as Adam demanded, "Among unequals what society/Can sort"? (VIII.426, 383-84).

It is a difficulty admitted by William Gouge who conceded that he found only a "small inequality ... betwixt man and wife". And Gouge goes on to argue the interdependence of the sexes thus:

Though the man be as the head, yet is the woman as the hart, which is the most excellent part of the body next to the head, farre more excellent than any other member under the hart, and almost equall to the head in many respects, and as necessary as the head.⁹

So too Goodman had explained that it was for the sake of order that "between man and wife there must be a superior":

... though she be made of the ribs, and every way equall as touching her condition, but for her beauty and comelinesse far excelling man, yet in government she is inferior and subject to man.¹⁰

The married couple should be, he concluded, as "one soule and one mynde, as they were made one flesh."¹¹

Milton's position here seems nearest to William Perkins' description of "A couple" as

.. that whereby two persons standing in mutuall relationship to each other, are combined as it were in one. And of these two, the one is alwaies higher, and beareth rule, the other is lower and yeeldeth subjection.¹²

But as Sinfield has pointed out:

This sounds clear but it builds in conflict. The wife is to receive the respect due to an equal partner, but also to be subordinate. It was difficult in practice to decide where affectionate trust and shared responsibility should give way to male authority ... 13

It is a strain that Adam and Eve feel too, especially since woman's subjection to man is "a law only unequivocally established by the Lord after the Fall."¹⁴

Indeed, while in IV.306-9, "Each descriptive detail is," as D. P. Harding observes, "subordinate to one, large, informing idea - the dominant position of man in the relationship between Adam and Eve",¹⁵ we need not read very searchingly to become aware of certain unresolved tensions in the passage. Eve's 'submission', as L. W. Hyman has remarked, "does not remove the impulse towards independence; and we are reminded that the seeds of conflict are inherent in Paradise."¹⁶ Moreover, the hierarchical scheme apparently set forth so clearly and succinctly here, proves to be qualified as well as defined by the central image of their marriage, the wedding of the vine to her elm.

Let us look more closely at the scene which unfolds as Adam and Eve set about "their morning's rural work" in the Garden and are observed by God employed

... where any row
Of fruit-trees over-woody reached too far
Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check
Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine
To wed her elm; she spoused about him twines
Her marriageable arms, and with her brings
Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn
His barren leaves.

(V.212-19)

This passage illustrates Milton's ability to include a symbolic episode and hold it up as a mirror to reflect certain less obvious areas of meaning without causing the narrative to pause unduly. It is located shortly after Eve's account of her disquieting dream and Adam's comforting explanation of it to her. It is thus, most obviously, indicative of the newly restored peace and accord between the couple after the divisive experience of the previous night, expressed through the harmony of their actions. This interpretation seems confirmed by an analysis of the figurative level: the passage with its heavy insistence on 'wedded love', ("wed", "spoused", "marriageable", "dower"),¹⁷ ritually re-enacts their courtship and marriage with remarkable precision. As the focus shifts from the gardeners to the garden in line 215, the human couple are transformed emblematically into the vine and the elm they are themselves tending.

This metamorphosis is part of a set of complex variations upon key words and images with which Milton constructs arches that span large areas of the narrative, encouraging the reader to look for a significance beyond the immediate and draw together related passages into a pattern of converging significance. The ramifications of these lines are subtle, numerous and dense. Indeed, they clearly invite comparison with the description of Eve in Book IV which was couched in distinctly similar terms.

The emblematic image of the sturdy elm and the clinging vine¹⁸ thus underlines Milton's portrayal of the first marriage, and is apparently the means by which he would translate into graphic visual terms the abstract "Hierarchical conception"¹⁹ of a relationship in

which "Eve's [dependence] on Adam is central."²⁰ That it is employed primarily to symbolise a relationship of support and dependence would seem to be confirmed by the more explicit metaphor of the flower and her prop in Book IX (lines 432-33), and appears to gain further support from Milton's earlier use of the vine-elm figure in his pamphlet Of Reformation in England, where he argues for the self-sufficiency of the Church thus:

I am not of the opinion to thinke the Church a Vine in this respect, because, as they take it, she cannot subsist without clasping about the Elme of wordly strength, and felicity, as if the heavenly City could not support it selfe without the props and buttresses of secular Authoritie.²¹

In any case, we are sufficiently prepared for a more profound layer of suggestiveness and that "this trope relates Eve to Adam, as vine to elm," by traditional poetic usage.²² "The vine-prop elm"²³ remained one of the most famous pieces of horticultural lore preserved from Roman times, as Kester Svendsen reminds us.^{23a} Virgil, for example, in a few explanatory lines prefacing the Georgics, had proclaimed his intention to instruct the reader when to join the vine to the elm ("ulmis ... adiungere uitis" I.2).²⁴ More pertinently, "The idea that the elm is wedded to the vine it supports is," as Fowler observes, "very ancient: Horace Odes II.xv.4 [and Odes IV.v.29-30] already take its familiarity for granted."²⁵

However, it seems we are indebted to Catullus for reversing the conventional approach. As P. Demetz notes, "it was Catullus who first suggested the intimate union of marital elm and bridal vine as a poetic image of blissful marriage."²⁶ Perceiving its potentiality

for illustrating human relationships, Catullus uses the vine's evident dependence upon the elm as an exemplum to further the argument of the chorus of young men in his Epithalamium. The Iuvenes are anxious to impress upon the contending chorus of determined virgins the essential benefits of marriage for a woman:

ut vidua in nudo vitis quae nascitur arvo
 numquam se extollit, numquam mitem educat uvam
 sed tenerum prono deflectens pondere corpus
 iam iam contingit summum radice flagellum;
 hanc nulli agricolae, nulli coluere iuveni.
 at si forte eademst ulmo coniuncta marita,
 multi illam agricolae, multi coluere iuveni:
 sic virgo dum intacta manet, dum inculta senescit;
 cara viro magis et minus est invisā parenti.

(LXII, 48-57)²⁷

It is interesting to note in passing that in The Comedy of Errors, Shakespeare's only use of the vine-prop topos, the figure is employed to illustrate the vine's utter dependence upon the elm; significantly, no indication is given that the reverse might in some sense be true, or even that the vine herself may have valuable gifts to offer in exchange for such support. Adriana, mistaking Antipholus of Syracuse for his twin brother, her husband, addresses him as the stalwart tree to which she, the weak vine, must cling for support:

Come, I will fasten on this sleeve of thine;
 Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine,
 Whose weakness, married to thy stronger state,
 Makes me with thy strength to communicate.

(Act II.ii.173-76)²⁸

The vine-elm figure would seem, then, the natural emblem to crystallize the hierarchical relationship between the first man and woman, and thus Demetz concludes, the wedding of the vine to the elm is:

Instead of merely emphasizing the vine's dependence upon the elm, Ovid's usage seems designed to stress the reciprocal nature of the relationship. It is intimated that a man and woman should, like their fruitful counterparts in nature, use complementary gifts to mutual advantage. Ovid goes even further than this by suggesting implicitly the elm's incompleteness without the vine. By emphatically referring to the elm sine palmite as a truncus rather than an arbor, he is able to draw subtly on the connotations of the adjective which is used to describe something imperfect in itself, lacking in, or being deprived of, something essential. And it is interesting to note that Kester Svendsen finds, "The symbolic act" of wedding the vine to the elm "confirms Adam's incompleteness without Eve."³²

While Ovid does concede that without his female companion the elm's shady leaves would still be of intrinsic worth, Milton, as if deliberately answering him on this point, denies even this attribute to be of any value by disparagingly referring to the elm's leaves as 'barren', an epithet particularly damning in a world in which fruitfulness is the summum bonum. In God's commands to the couple "to till [the Garden] and keep it" (VIII.320), and to "Be fruitful [and] multiply" (VII.396), "Propagation is what is urged", following His own "prolific example."³³ Regarded in this way, the lines reflect rather badly upon Adam; the elm's height and strength are not even commended and, though formally a tree, he is rendered here, by implication, little more than a lifeless post.

This is not a tangential complexity. It may be timely to recall that Adam is first glimpsed by Eve "Under a platan" (IV.478).³⁴ Fowler claims that this is because "the plane was a symbol of Christ", and he continues, "This association seems more probable than those who made the platan tree a symbol of erotic love."³⁵ However, Milton is almost certainly mining another vein of association here: Horace contrasts the bachelor plane, "platanus caelebs" to the married elm (Odes II.xv.4-5); while Virgil, in the Georgics, more damagingly refers to the barren planes, "steriles platani" (II.70), and Quintilian, apparently echoing Horace and Virgil, similarly contrasts the "steril[is] platan[us]" with the elm that weds the vine, "marit[a] ulm[us]" in his Institutio Oratoria (VIII.iii.8).

Whether or not we should assign much importance to this detail, the picture of the vine's ripe fruitfulness certainly takes its place amongst a significant constellation of images substantially linking the feminine principle, and Eve in particular, to abundance, fruitfulness, vitality and life. We have already observed how references to the couple's expected fruitfulness tend to cluster around Eve rather to the exclusion of Adam, and that there are recurrent intimations of an underlying affinity between the abundance and fertility of Eden and Eve herself. Indeed, S. A. Demetrakopoulos has remarked how, "The feminine and exotic plant life bursting forth upon the Earth emphasizes the active fruitfulness of femininity."³⁶ Subsuming the roles of Flora, Ovid's Mater Florum, and Pomona, "the Goddess of Hortyards and their fruitful productions,"³⁷ Eve becomes the genius loci, maintaining its fertility and infusing vibrant life into the plants.³⁸

We have seen too how the passage in Book IV (lines 492-500), ostensibly demonstrating "How beauty is excelled by manly grace/And wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (IV.490-91) and thus how Adam is superior to Eve "in the prime end/Of nature" (VIII.540-41), evolves into something quite different.³⁹ The vine-elm figuration strikes the reader with like impact; there exists some degree of tension between the image and the narrative assertion it is supposed to complement. The hierarchical scheme set forth so clearly and precisely, gradually dissolves before our eyes, blurred by ambiguity. The vine easily eclipses the elm which appears curiously colourless in contrast. All the poetic energy in the description centres upon the vine; once led to her elm, she takes the initiative by actively insinuating the passive elm into her entwining arms and clasping him in a close, amorous embrace. The lines thus form, as L. Lerner remarks, "one of the most strikingly sexual passages in Paradise Lost."^{39a} Again, we cannot ascribe to the operation of mere chance the way in which those lines prompt recollection of the similar tableau in Book IV, where Eve is discovered "half embracing" Adam as she "leaned" upon him (IV.494).

Even so, here too, a subliminal counter-movement is initiated, subtly sounding a warning note: will Adam allow the gravitational pull exerted by Eve's powerful presence to reduce him to the state of an orbiting satellite, an attendant moon (VIII.149)? Other critics seem to feel that Milton is expressing more serious misgivings "at this mysterious female force ... which is both yielding and overpowering."⁴⁰ In a brief but stimulating discussion of the vine motif, Giamatti observes:

Here, as in the passage on Eve's hair in Book IV, the main point is the proper relation of male to female; for the "impli'd/Subjection" of woman to man (IV,308-309) is echoed by the way the vine is led to wed the elm. But again, as Milton implies something overtly, he covertly implies its opposite. The sensuality of that curling hair, the close embrace of those twining vines: is there something potentially dangerous imaged in the landscape, something within that woman ...[t]hose golden tresses, those tendrils, certainly imply subjection, but whose? Who will hold "gentle sway" (IV.308)?⁴¹

Similarly, D. P. Harding seems to consider this image double-edged, for he concludes, "the curled tendrils imply subjection it is true, but also the kind of encroachment which may ensnare and destroy as well,"⁴² an interpretation which does gain support from Le Comte's observation that Milton "insist[s] again and again" that "golden hair is a net."⁴³ Is there, then a more sinister connection between the luxuriance of Eve's hair and the "mantling vine" (IV.258-60)?⁴⁴ It seems at least worth remembering that the natural attributes of the 'vine-prop' elm, constancy, firmness and strength, were passed over in silence.⁴⁵ The prop itself yields to the pressure of the vine it was supposed to support, or, as S. A. Demetrakopoulos puts it, "The feminine forces of the garden finally overwhelm Adam: the frail and lonely embodiment of the masculine principle in Eden."⁴⁶

It would seem then, that at a subterranean level of the action, both incidents will have an important bearing upon the moment of crisis, and it is interesting to speculate upon the possible significance of the constant, even parallel progression of events constituting these two episodes. Indeed, the vine-elm sequence could be held to re-enact emblematically the action in the earlier passage. This had concluded with the vignette outlined above: as the scene Eve had conjured up of

her initial reluctance to be led to Adam fades, she discloses her dependence on, and adherence to him, and as a token of her submission, rests upon him in a half-embrace as "vitis requiescit in ulmo" (Met. XIV.665).

Eve has just finished recounting to Adam how she had been found lying beside a pool, vainly engaged in offering 'soft embraces' to her own insubstantial reflection. Her guide had then raised her from this recumbent pose and led her to where she could descry the 'fair and tall' figure of Adam who was, henceforth, to be her 'guide' and her 'best prop'. God's 're-dressing' of Eve to an upright stance seems of especial significance in a poem in which there is so much play upon the wider moral implications of physical posture.⁴⁷

In both the classical and Christian tradition, man's erect stature was held to be the differentiating, external attribute which not only set him apart from the animal kingdom he was to rule, but also linked him with his Creator, being in some way expressive of His "image, not imparted to the brute" (VIII.441).⁴⁸ It need hardly be added that Eve shares this image with Adam. Milton makes this point unequivocally when the Father shifts from the general singular to the plural form in His exhortation to the Son:

Let us make now man in our image, man
In our similitude, and let them rule
... and fill the earth.

(VII.519-31; emphasis added)

in accordance with the formula used in Genesis:

And God said, let us make man in our own image,
after our likeness: and let them have dominion
... over all the earth ...

So God created man in his own image, in the image
of God created he him; male and female created
he them.

(Gen. I.26-27)

Indeed, in our first introduction to Adam and Eve, they are distinguished from the other living creatures surrounding them with telling emphasis, as being: "Two of far nobler shape erect and tall, / Godlike erect," who "In naked majesty seemed lords of all" (IV.288-90).

Man's upright gait, therefore, elevates him above the other creatures of the earth, indicating his sovereignty over them. As Fowler observes:

The idea that man's upright posture distinguishes him from other animals, and indicates his special destiny was a commonplace of hexaemeral literature. It had the authority of various classical authors (Plato, Tim. 90A; Cicero, De nat. deor. ii.56; etc);⁴⁹ but Ovid's version (Met. i.76-86) is closest to M's.

For in Ovid's account, as Sandys observes, "man was [also] made with an erected looke to admire the glory of the Creator."⁵⁰ Ovid's rendering of the purpose of man's creation reads thus:

Sanctius his animal meritisque capaci^{50a} altae
deerat adhuc et quod dominari in cetera posset:
natus homo est, sive hunc divino semine fecit
ille opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo,
sive recens tellus seductaque nuper ab alto
aethere cognati retinebat semina caeli.
quam satus Iapeto, mixtam pluviab^{50a} undis,
finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum,
pronaque cum spectent animalia cetera terram,
os homini sublime dedit caelumque videre
iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.

(Met. I.76-86)

The parallels in thought and expression are exceptionally close; Milton stresses almost precisely the same points when Raphael observes how on the sixth day:

There wanted yet the master work, the end.
Of all yet done; a creature who not prone
And brute as other creatures but endued
With sanctity of reason, might erect
His stature, and upright with front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence
Magnanimous to correspond with heaven,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends, thither with heart and voice and eyes
Directed in devotion to adore
And worship God supreme, who made him chief
Of all his works.

(VII.505-16)

Since Sandys emphasizes "how man ... only of all that hath life erects his lookes into heaven,"⁵¹ it is interesting to ponder the significance of Milton's curiously ambiguous expression that man "might erect/His stature." Bentley's abrupt expostulation, "As if his Erection were superadded to his Form by his own Contrivance; not originally made so by his Creator,"⁵² draws attention to the possible ambiguity in these lines. Milton's choice of words here allows the reader to interpret man's erect stature as conditional upon his proper response to his creation, thus exemplifying the wider freedom of moral action ascribed to man by a God who expressly created him "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (III.99).

The significance of this line of interpretation becomes apparent if we recall that when describing her initial reaction to life and the world about her as she found herself "reposed/Under a shade of flowers" (IV.451-52), Eve outlines a setting which seems to

demand comparison with the corresponding section in Book VIII where Adam, in turn, gives an account of his first moments of consciousness:

... As new waked from soundest sleep
Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid.

(VIII.253-54)

The underlying artistic design seems evident: Milton compels us to compare and contrast their respective responses.⁵³ Adam's first impulse is to look up "Straight toward heaven," and then, "As thitherward endeavouring," "up [he] sprung," and "upright/Stood" like a fair, tall tree. Eve, like Adam, contemplates the sky, but the sky reflected down into a pool which she has lain beside to gaze into its waters. The effect of this line of suggestion must be to trouble the reader with, as yet, half-formed doubts about Eve's sufficiency to stand alone. This is supported by Janet Adelman's perceptive observation that, "The newly created Eve finds herself lying down and presumably must stand up to get to the pool, but Milton suppresses this movement: we see her lying down, then lying down again."⁵⁴ Elaine B. Safer maintains that we should have "no trouble applying" the masculine singular pronoun in "God's statement ... 'I made him just and right,/Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall' not only to Adam, but also to Eve (i.e., to our first parents)" but, as she herself goes on to argue, "echoes of hierarchical order seem to work against such a reading of Eve's sufficiency to stand."⁵⁵ While S. A. Demetrakopoulós' comment, "The naturally erect male posture is not so naturally [Eve's]"⁵⁶ plainly spells out the significance of the incident for us. Before being led to her 'elm', Eve is like the vine which, unless it is held erect, displays its natural propensity to

trail upon the ground, to "creep" or "crawl,"⁵⁷ "terrae acclinata iaceret" (Met. XIV.666).

Eve also resembles the untended vine in needing someone 'to check' her 'fruitless embraces'. As J. M. Evans perceptively observes, "Eve's untutored feelings, like the natural growth of the plants around her, do not grow in the right direction spontaneously."⁵⁸ It is interesting to note in connection with this, another line of suggestion contained within Adam and Eve's differing responses to life and creation. D. C. Allen has remarked that Eve's attraction to her own reflection may not only be designed to suggest the unhappy fate of Ovid's Narcissus, but also to insinuate into the reader's mind a comparison between Eve and those angels who "fell in love with themselves, and neglected God"⁵⁹ alluding to the Christian tradition that "when the angels were created they looked first at themselves, surprised at their own existence. Then some looked upward and found the source of creation in the word. Others fell in love with themselves and sank in their own darkness."⁶⁰

So too, it does not seem solely due to chance that the wedding of the vine to the elm follows Eve's dalliance with Satan, whom she allows, albeit only for the duration of the dream, to supplant the position Adam now holds as her "guide" (V.91) and to draw her away from his protection and support. The likely result of such a substitution is made sufficiently clear by the ensuing events of the dream itself. Having isolated Eve from Adam's supporting presence, Satan encourages the growth of discontent within her. "Taste this," he urges,

...and be henceforth among the gods
Thyself a goddess, not to earth confined.

(V.77-78)

She, aspiring upward, apparently overreaches herself and, when deprived of her 'guide', sinks down again to earth. As Eve herself, describing the experience, relates: "up to the clouds/With him I flew"

... wondering at my flight and change
To this high exaltation; suddenly
My guide was gone, and I, me thought, sunk down,
And fell ...

(V.86-87; 89-92)

Eve falls, but only into sleep; next time her separation from her true 'guide' and 'prop' will result in more complete ruin.

Both episodes exercise a proleptic function, anticipating and preparing for the coming tragedy.⁶¹ Of course, as is commonly noted, the demonically inspired dream enacts the circumstances of Eve's fall more nearly than the earlier incident of Narcissistic indulgence, for man was not to fall "Self-tempted, self-depraved," but "deceived" by Satan (III.130). Even so, Eve's account of her experience by the pool, with its intimation of her preference for the "Fairest resemblance of [their] maker fair" (IX.538), furnishes Satan with an invaluable insight into how best to frame his dream-temptation.

Eve, as yet sinless, wakes in fear and, recoiling from the 'offence' of her dream, instinctively clings to Adam. Her innocence is thus symbolically re-affirmed by this embrace and also by the fruitful and loving embrace that the vine bestows upon her elm, which implies, as Fowler puts it, that they "are reunited after the division

of Eve's dream."⁶² Despite these scenes of reconciliation on the literal and figurative level, and Adam's supposedly reassuring explanation of the dream's origin, the gathering cloud of uncertainty and foreboding enveloping Eve gradually loses its amorphousness and assumes a more distinct shape and character.

It seems of especial significance, therefore, that Adam and Eve are not only observed wedding the vine to her elm but are first discovered engaged in the other important task of the vine-dresser, pampinatio, the lopping or trimming of superfluous growth. James Brown has detected here "a series of muted ambiguities [which] precede the pun on 'embraces'". The effect of this, he argues

... is that "trees" or "boughes" acceptably possess the mobility, the motivation, the moral responsibility of sexually driven creatures; Adam and Eve are no longer merely garden keepers, but have become guardians of morality in a world ominously pre-figuring their own weaknesses.⁶⁴

Moreover, by describing the boughes or 'arms' of the fruit-trees as "pampered", Milton seems to introduce simultaneously two mutually supportive chains of connotation.

On the one hand, since 'pamper' was an accredited derivation from the Latin pampinus, a tendril or vine-shoot,⁶⁵ it would seem that Milton already has in mind the vine - which he mentions explicitly in the line that directly follows - as one of the fruit-trees in need of pruning.⁶⁶ On the other hand, the verb 'to pamper' signifies "to over-indulge (a person) in his tastes and likings generally" (OED). We have already observed how, in the first use of the vine figure in Book IV, Eve's hair is likened to tendrils which 'in wanton ringlets

wave' requiring 'subjection,' this very description thus becomes subtly enmeshed with Adam's creative role as gardener. For we have noted with S. A. Demetrakopoulos how, "Descriptions of the eagerly breeding garden correspond to descriptions of Eve," and, perhaps more significantly, how "Eve is more closely associated with the wanton fertility of the garden than is Adam."⁶⁷

The "wanton growth" of the plants "Tending to wild" (IX.211-12) requires, therefore, "constant creative ordering," without which, as B. K. Lewalski maintains, the Garden "will revert to wilderness."⁶⁸ John Evelyn's address to his reader in the introduction to the Kalendar seems of interest here. He maintains that:

As Paradise (though of God's own Planting) had not been Paradise longer than the Man was put into it, to Dress it and keep it; so, nor will our Garden (as near as we can contrive them to the resemblance of that blessed Abode) remain long in their perfection, unless they are also continually cultivated.

And he goes on to warn "how intolerable a confusion will succeed a small neglect"⁶⁹

Adam's task, then, demands vigilance and discipline,⁷⁰ and must include the pruning of any desire for distinction and pre-eminence on Eve's part and the redirection of her back to his side, should she attempt to reach beyond him. The application of this line of suggestion is only fully disclosed after the event when it becomes evident that Adam has proved remiss in his conduct towards Eve. In the gardening debate, Eve apparently tries to gauge her sphere of action and Adam allows her to overreach herself, fatally withdrawing herself from his support.⁷¹

As Evans puts it, "The vine is [here] trying to disengage herself from the elm,"⁷² while Marcia Landy explains, "the fact that she succumbs, as Adam implied she might, underscores her need for guidance and protection."⁷³

However, it has been persuasively argued, perhaps most forcibly by L. W. Hyman, that the tragic power of this crucial scene "lies in the fact that there is no right answer that Adam could have given."⁷⁴ "The need for obedience is as strong as the need for freedom ... both are deeply felt and irreconcilable."⁷⁵ Nevertheless, B. K. Lewalski has demonstrated that Adam would not necessarily have had to resort to his power of absolute command (IX.1156) to resolve the dispute. She enlarges upon the point thus:

We are given early on a model of how Adam's leadership should properly function so as to preserve and enhance Eve's freedom of choice, personal growth, and responsibility. This is at the scene of Eve's presentation to Adam when she turns from him back to the fairer image of herself in the water, and Adam proceeds to urge his claim firmly and rationally ... In terms of this model we can see what went wrong in the marital dispute. Adam not only ceased to press his own case forcefully and rationally⁷⁶... but at length he virtually sent^{per} away ... (IX.370-75)

If horticultural lore may be applied to human affairs, Virgil gives the best advice in that part in his farming manual devoted, significantly, to viniculture:

Ac dum prima nouis adolescit frondibus aetas,
 parcendum teneris, et dum se laetus ad auras
 palmes agit laxis per purum immissus habenis,
 ipsa acie nondum falcis temptanda, sed uncis
 carpendae manibus frondes interque legendae.
 inde ubi iam ualidis amplexae stirpibus ulmos
 exierint, tum stringe comas, tum bracchia tonde
 (ante reformidant ferrum), tum denique dura
 exerce imperia et ramos compesce fluentis.

(Georgics II.362-70)

The moral is plain: Adam can afford to be lenient towards the pliant, submissive Eve "that feared to have offended" (V.135), but when she displays increasing assertiveness in the gardening debate, he should check this unruly growth. It is interesting to note too in passing that the primary meaning of "coma" (Georgics II.368) is "the hair of the head, hair" and only by poetic transference does it come to mean "leaves" or "foliage"(l). This seems suggestive when we recall the implied connection between the luxuriance of Eve's hair and the 'mantling vine' and the significance this comes to assume during the course of the epic.

In addition, we may remember that when Eve takes her leave of Adam to garden alone, the passage follows the structural patterning of Ovid's portrait of Pomona to whom, moreover, she is explicitly likened: Eve,

... Delia's self
 In gait surpassed and goddess-like deport,
 Though not as she with bow and quiver armed,
 But with such gardening tools as art yet rude,
 Guiltless of fire had formed, or angels brought.
 To Pales, or Pomona thus adorned,
 Likeliest she seemed, Pomona when she fled
 Vertumnus, ...

(IX.388-95)

That Milton intends the reader to recall Ovid's account is confirmed by the distinctly audible echoes of this introductory sketch of Pomona in the Metamorphoses by which he proclaims his indebtedness:

rus amat et ramos felicia poma ferentes;
 nec iaculo gravis est, sed adunca dextera falce,
 qua modo luxuriam premit et spatiantia passim
 bracchia conpescit ...

(Met. XIV.627-30)

Milton's open allusion to this passage is not perhaps as important as the ironic effect of the camouflaged allusion his lines contain. For, by an inevitable extension of the comparison between Eve and Pomona, the reader recalls the significant detail that the gardening tool that Pomona arms herself with is the pruning-hook designed to check over-luxuriant growth. The vine-elm topos thus draws together related passages into a pattern of converging significance and sheds light on future developments.

Virgil's firm counsel would have been approved by the divine spokesman, Raphael. He urges Adam to

... weigh with her thy self;
 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.

(VIII.570-74)

Raphael argues: self-knowledge and a proper evaluation of self are essential for them both if they are to continue to act by their first lesson that 'beauty is excelled by manly grace/And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.' As we have seen, Adam finds it impossible to follow Raphael's deceptively easy formula for managing his relationship with Eve.

Until after the Fall, moreover, the awareness of mutual need is much more acutely experienced by Adam.⁷⁷ This is evident in the initial vignette of Eve as Narcissus, but as Rauber observes:

... nowhere more pathetically than in the discussion leading up to their parting. After confessing his total dependence upon Eve - "I from the influence of thy looks receive/Access in every vertue ..." - Adam breaks out despairingly, "Why shouldst thou not like sense within thee feel/When I am present ...?" (IX.309ff).⁷⁸

For Adam too lacks total sufficiency without Eve.⁷⁹ As the vine and elm together form a composite whole, so "the union of male and female ... approaches the sufficiency of God and repairs the 'unity defective' of man alone without woman."⁸⁰

But Adam, as critics are wont to inform us, is more than inclined to deify Eve, to attribute to her the godlike self-sufficiency that prior to her creation he had rightly reserved for their Maker alone, "so absolute"⁸¹ she seem[ed]/And in her self complete" (VIII.547-48). Her air of self-reliance, most strongly in evidence on both those occasions when she ventures to garden by herself, is founded upon an illusion, however, as the Narcissus episode intimates, and betrays a dangerous lack of self-knowledge on her part. Having been led by God to Adam, she judges him by the only standard she has yet formed, and finds him wanting. Her beauty thereafter tends to blind both Adam and Eve herself to a just appraisal of her own limitations and their mutual dependence.

This view is endorsed by the way in which, until the morning of the Fall, Adam and Eve form a descriptive, dramatic, figurative and even syntactic unity.⁸² Only three times are they observed apart, and two of these occurrences, as we have already seen, appear to presage the Fall directly. At the figurative level, at least, the outcome of her encounter with Satan is never in doubt. Once separated, they are both doomed.

"Who can deny," Stella Revard demands, "that when she departs from Adam on the fatal morning she seems particularly vulnerable to harm?"⁸³ The reader cannot help but recall the first time Eve departs to garden alone when she appears a majestic figure of truly 'goddess-like' stature, not less but more than equal, and wonder. Having proceeded thus far indirectly with hints and intimations of Eve's insufficiency, Milton now openly focuses our attention upon her inadequacy. Eve is discovered self-absorbed in her own world, oblivious of any threat or danger.⁸⁴

... oft stooping to support
 Each flower of slender stalk, whose head though gay ...
 Hung drooping unsustained, then she upstays
 Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while,
 Her self, though fairest unsupported flower,
 From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.

(IX.427-28; 430-33)

Raphael's uneasiness proves warranted. "That feeling of inner self-sufficiency which she never loses" proves to be, as Rauber observes, "one of her great mysteries and also her fatal weakness."⁸⁵ And we are encouraged to feel that properly pruned and supported the vine would have been able to weather the storm, "contemnere uentos" (Georgics II.360.)⁸⁶

This briefly but delicately executed sketch of Eve glimpsed as the 'fairest unsupported flower' amongst her flowers possesses, like the vine-elm figure it parallels so closely, other qualities beside the purely pictorial. The image gathers together the significance of what has preceded and prepares for what follows. Moreover, in contrast to the peaceful rural activities of Book V, which only incidentally gave

us a sense of unease, the image here is no longer primarily horticultural; it is explicitly linked with the imminent tragedy at every point. The drama, as critics have so often noted, is reflected in many mirrors. Again, unlike the earlier image, the metaphor of the flower without her prop suggests almost exclusively Eve's "frailty and infirmer sex" (X.956). In this way, these lines not only prepare for her collapse 'exposed' by Adam to the oncoming 'storm', but also look forward to the more passive and unassuming, but no less important, role Eve is to play when, "much-humbled" (X.181), she freely confesses her dependence on him in terms that are clearly significant for this study, acknowledging Adam to be her "only strength and stay" (IX.538; emphasis added).

As the emphasis now falls upon Eve's incompleteness without Adam, the image of the vine languishing without her "strength and stay" seems singularly appropriate. Moreover, only a minute adjustment of focus is necessary to render the scene strangely familiar. Summers has remarked how "Milton introduced Eve's speech with a description of how she,

... with Tears that ceas'd not flowing,
And tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
Fell humble, and embracing them, besought
His peace ...

(X.910-913)

That physical depiction," he observes, "with its specific recollection of the 'Tresses discompos'd' (V.10), the 'imbracing' (V.27), and the tears (V.129-135) ... had characterized Eve's earlier appearance when she repented merely her dream of sin."⁸⁷ Tillyard too has commented

upon the way in which this earlier scene seems to serve as "a foreshadowing of the human motions of sin, repentance, forgiveness in love and continued life which are played out between Adam and Eve on the heroic scale in Book X."⁸⁸

These observations form a valid and pertinent commentary upon one of the ways in which this central scene prompts recollections of other related incidents and draws them together into a larger pattern of significance. However, we are still making fewer demands upon the lines than they will serve, for the parallel between this scene and the one at the beginning of Book V is more extensive than either Summers' or Tillyard's readings would seem to suggest, for they stop short of the critical allusion to the image of the vine and her prop, and the weight of association this brings to bear on the present passage.

The wedding of the vine to her elm forms, as we have seen, a natural pendant to the scene which directly preceded it and which it parallels so closely, restating emblematically the reconciliation of Eve to Adam after the divisive experience of the dream temptation and fall. It is interesting to speculate whether the reappearance of the vine-elm motif betokens a similar significance here.

That Milton intends the reader to recall these complementary scenes seems confirmed by several interesting points of contact.⁸⁹ Eve's words at XI.176 are noteworthy not only for the volte face they contain, the reversal of her conviction in her own self-sufficiency, which led her away from Adam's protection and support in an active assertion of virginal independence, but also because it seems no fortuitous coincidence that here Eve submissively likens herself to a

plant in need of support and restraint.

Touched by her prostration before him, Adam "upraised her soon" (X.946). Adam's re-dressing⁹⁰ of Eve to an upright stance is an action that speaks louder and reverberates more powerfully than any prosaic statement of the proper relationship of support and dependence, authority and subjection that must now exist between them, could do. The dynamic tension that complicated our attitude to Eve's relationship to Adam, embodied not only in the narrative action but in the complex patterning of ideas, images, values and feelings, is now resolved.

This ultimate resolution paradoxically involves loss and gain. Stripped of her mythological pretensions and self-assurance, Eve's heroic stature as 'goddess humane' is exchanged for the humility and self-abnegation essential for Christian salvation. As Sharon C. Seelig has argued, here "Eve typifies the virtues necessary for any human's salvation: dependence, humility and penitence."⁹¹ Thus "Eve is not merely Milton's ideal of womanhood but the pattern for all mankind after the Fall."⁹²

Indeed, Mahood's general observation that "the relationship between man and woman was for Milton, as for the poets of many centuries, a symbol or shadow of that between God and the soul"⁹³ seems confirmed by the way in which the relationship of support and dependence between fallen man and woman is seen to reflect the proper relationship between fallen Man and God. Eve's "lowly plight/Immovable till peace obtained from fault/Acknowledged and deplored," clearly looks forward to fallen Mankind "in lowliest plight repentant" (X.937-39, XI.1; emphasis added).

Moreover, this parallelism in turn throws light on the apparent inconsistency between lines 1087 and 1099 in Book X and the first line of Book XI which has troubled editors. The traditional defence is put forward by commentators such as Pearce⁹⁴ and Greenwood⁹⁵ and repeated by Fowler that by saying Adam and Eve "in lowliest plight repentant stood" (XI.1; emphasis added), "[t]here is no literal contradiction of 'prostrate' at X.1099, since stood means 'remained'⁹⁶ as demonstrated by Milton's usage elsewhere. However, while this line of argument clears Milton of inconsistency, it lays him open to the more serious charge of insensitivity.

Their clearly physical prostration at X.1087 and 1099, emphasized later by their resemblance to Deucalion and Pyrrha,⁹⁷ exerts pressure on stood, encouraging us to take it literally. As Shumaker has suggested "Milton's sense of propriety may have been satisfied by prostration followed by manly erectness"⁹⁸, especially since this would continue the parallelism between the scene of Adam's forgiveness of Eve and God's forgiveness of mankind. As Adam raises Eve in token of his reconciliation to her, Milton here effects the quiet miracle of the regeneration of mankind after the Fall as man is held erect once more by God.

The emblematic image of the plant and its support thus becomes invested with theological significance as it merges with the traditional Christian emblem of God, the prop of the fallen, as the Father holds out the promise that mankind "yet once more ... shall stand" "Upheld by me":

By me upheld, that he may know how frail⁹⁹
 His fallen condition is, and to me owe
 All his deliverance, and to none but me.

(III.178-82)

The emphatic antimetabole underlines the strength of his support, man's dependence and the new conditions that obtain in the fallen world where man is not 'sufficient to stand' alone. In this way, the connotative value of the Ovidian image of the 'vine-prop elm' expands and deepens in association with, and is finally absorbed into, Christian truth. Indeed, mankind is instructed in the Schola Cordis:

Thou cans't not stand
 Without a prop to boulder, and to stay thee.
 To trust to thine owne strength would soon betray thee.¹⁰⁰

Thus Milton's use of the figure of the vine and the elm seems not only to anticipate the Fall but also the movement towards regeneration. Although the elm's 'barren leaves'¹⁰¹ may prefigure the "fruitless hours" (IX.1188), which Adam and Eve spend apart after the Fall, in leading the vine to wed her elm, Milton prepares for Adam and Eve's reconciliation and the continuation of the human race through their children,¹⁰² while the fruitful vine¹⁰³ looks forward to their redemption through the "seed of woman" (XII.379).¹⁰⁴

Notes

1. Dr. Johnson, Lives of the English Poets I, p.157, Even in an avowedly feminist study of the role of women in Paradise Lost, Marcia Landy has readily conceded that in his "treatment of male and female roles" Milton was "a representative seventeenth-century Protestant poet"; see 'Kinship and the Role of Women in Paradise Lost', p.5. However, the charge of misogyny has been revived recently in S. K. Gilbert's essay, 'Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers: Reflections on Milton's Bogey', pp.368-82. But see Joan Malory Webber's reply in 'The Politics of Poetry: Feminism and Paradise Lost', pp.3-24.
2. B. K. Lewalski, 'Milton on Women - Yet Once More', p.3. In this fine essay Lewalski takes issue with Landy's complaints about the limitations of the female role in Paradise Lost. See too 'The Hand of Eve: Ingredients of Virtue' in Diane K. McColley's recent work, Milton's Eve, pp.110-39.
3. Kathleen M. Swaim has remarked on the complexity of Milton's portrayal of Adam and Eve, "Throughout the poem Adam and Eve sometimes combine to provide one rung of the hierarchial ladder; at other times they are carefully distinguished" ("Hee for God only, Shee for God in Him: Structural Parallelism in Paradise Lost, p.124). See also the 'Politics of Poetry: Feminism and Paradise Lost, pp.13-15 and 'The Renaissance Idea of Androgyny', p.6, where M. R. Farrell makes a similar point.
4. Peter Lindenbaum, 'Lovemaking in Milton's Paradise', p.289. While exonerating Milton from the charge of misogyny, critics continue to follow Sir Walter Raleigh in stressing the profound ambivalence of Milton's attitude to women, a response compounded of fascination and fearfulness in which "the power of Beauty was a magnetism to be distrusted for its very strength"; see Milton (1900), pp.145-46.
5. I am extending a suggestive observation of Don Parry Norford's that "woman is at once greater and lesser, stronger and weaker, than man" ('The Separation of the World Parents in Paradise Lost', Milton Studies, XII [1978], p.3).
- 5a. D. Aers and B. Hodge, '"Rational Burning": Milton on Sex and Marriage', p.22.
- 6.. cf. Lieb, The Dialectics of Creation, pp.71-72.

- 6a. See William and Malleville Haller, 'The Puritan Art of Love' in Huntington Library Quarterly V (1941-42), pp.235-72; William Haller, 'Hail Wedded Love' reprinted in Milton: Modern Judgements, ed. Alan Rudrum (1969), pp.296-312 and 'Who Bids Abstain?', Sinfield, pp.49-70.
7. Daniel Rogers, Matrimoniall Honour (1642), p.253.
8. William Whatley, Bride Bush (1617), pp.189-90.
9. William Gouge, Of Domesticall Duties (1626), p.273.
10. Goodman, The Fall of Man, p.253.
11. ibid., p.438.
12. William Perkins, Christian Oeconomie (1609), p.10.
13. Sinfield, p.65.
14. William Perkins, Christian Oeconomie, p.130 and cf. Genesis III. 16 and S A 11.1053-60.
15. D. P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, p.69.
16. L. W. Hyman, The Quarrel Within: Art and Morality in Milton's Poetry (1972), p.44. cf. Webber's point that "Even Eve's words 'unargued I obey', by calling attention to the possibility of argument, both demonstrate and deny the strain "of their twoness , in 'The Politics of Poetry: Feminism and Paradise Lost', p.14.
17. L. D. Lerner, 'The Miltonic Simile', E C IV (1954), p.305.
18. In his interesting article, 'The Elm and the Vine: Notes Toward the History of a Marriage Topos', PMLA LXXIII (1958), p.526 , P. Demetz points out that, "Andrea Alciati Emblematum Quatuor (Augsburg, 1531) prints the elm-and-vine image under the title 'Amicitia etiam post mortem durans' (Steyner, A6)". Although Shalha Anand emphasizes "The emblematic character of many verbal pictures in Paradise Lost" (p.21), she fails to mention the vine-elm figure in her recent work, "Of Costliest Emblem: 'Paradise Lost' and the Emblem Tradition."

19. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', p.73.
20. Elaine B. Safer, "'Sufficient to Have Stood": Eve's Responsibility in Book IX', MQ VI (December 1982), p.100.
21. Of Reformation in England (Col. III. i ,pp.22-23).
22. A. B. Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic p.323. In his invaluable study of Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts: The Iconographic Tradition in the Epic Poems (Princeton, 1978), Roland Mushat Frye has pointed out that "rather general associations of the feminine vine with the masculine tree had been directly connected, in the visual arts, with the story of the first parents long before Milton wrote Paradise Lost" (p.247).
23. Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queen I. i. 8.
- 23a. Kester Svendsen, Milton and Science, p.133.
24. Quotations from the Latin text of Virgil are taken from the Opera, ed. R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1972).
25. Note to V. 215-19, Fowler, p.269; emphasis added.
26. Demetz, 'The Elm and the Vine: Notes Towards the History of a Marriage Topos', p.521.
27. This quotation from Catullus is taken from Catullus Tibullus and Pervigilium Veneris.
28. William Shakespeare, The Comedy of Errors, in the Arden Shakespeare, ed. H. Cunningham (1907), p.42.
29. Demetz, 'The Elm and the Vine: Notes Towards the History of a Marriage Topos', p.528.

30. So too J. Halkett emphasizes: "the association of the 'female' vine with dependence and submission on the one hand, and with frailty requiring gentleness and submission on the other; see Milton and the Idea of Matrimony, p.104.
31. Summers, The Muse's Method, p.84.
32. Svendsen, Milton and Science, pp.133-34.
33. Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.87.
34. For a different view see McColley, Milton's Eve, p.81.
35. Note to IV. 478, Fowler, p.223.
36. S. A. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.103.
37. Sandys, p.661.
38. cf. Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.114.
39. See pp.131-32.
- 39a. Lerner, 'The Miltonic Simile', p.305.
40. J. B. Broadbent, 'Paradise Lost': Introduction (Cambridge, 1972), p.97.
41. Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic, p.324. Compare the destructive embrace of Salamacis: "inpicat ut ... / ... solent hederæ longos intexere truncos" (Met. IV. 362-65).
42. Frye also notes a similarly disturbing ambivalence in treatments of the vine motif in the Medici tapestries and in the Creation of Eve by Andrea Pisano. In Pisano's relief: "The entwined vine may suggest the mercies of Christ (and it is Christ here who creates Eve). In a more sinister sense it foreshadows the familiar shape

of the serpent coiled about the Tree of Knowledge"; see Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts, pp.147-48. See also Rick's discussion of the significance of Eve's "wanton ringlets" and "the 'wantonness' of Eden" in his masterly study, Milton's Grand Style p.112. But see too Stanley Fish's view of the reader's interpretative dilemma here in Surprised by Sin, pp.92-105.

43. Le Comte, Milton and Sex, p.7.
44. The luxuriant growth of the vine is singled out for especial mention again at VII. 320.
45. cf. Martz' comments on IV. 11. Although he goes on to observe that "the prime impact here is not theological", Martz maintains that:

The voice of pity here seems to draw out all the implications of that word frail: not simply the basic meaning "liable to break or to be broken" ("free to fall"), but all the weight of all the other meanings of the word: "easily crushed or destroyed," "weak, subject to infirmities, wanting in power, easily overcome," or worse yet, "morally weak; unable to resist temptation; habitually falling into transgression". We may well ask: how can a man be made sufficient to have stood though frail?

(Poet of Exile, p.106)

46. S. A. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.100.
47. See N. J. Jones, '"Stand" and "Fall" as Images of Posture in Paradise Lost', MS VIII, pp.221-46 and cf. Ricks' interesting discussion of the significance of "redress" at IX. 219 (Milton's Grand Style, p.146).
48. Consider how Milton makes use of this distinction for his own ends (IX. 495-503).
49. Note to VII. 505-11, Fowler, p.387. Further discussion of this point can be found in Sister M. Corcoran, Milton's 'Paradise Lost' with Reference to the Hexaemeral Background (Washington D.C., 1945), p.44 ff. See too Arnold Williams (The Common Expositor, pp.202-3,

but for a more detailed consideration of the influence of the Ovidian passage on Christian thought see Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, p.25.

50. Sandys, p.58.
- 50a. Note Satan's parody (IX. 602-5).
51. Sandys, p.58.
52. Noted by Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral, p.178.
53. cf. Murray W. Bundy, 'Milton's Prelapsarian Adam', reprinted in Milton: Modern Judgements, ed. Alan Rudrum, p.159; and Don Parry Norford's, '"My Other Half": The Coincidence of Opposites in Paradise Lost', MLQ XXXVI (1975) pp.26-27.
54. Janet Adelman, 'Creation and the Place of the Poet in Paradise Lost' in The Author in His Work: Essays on a Problem in Creation, ed. Louis L. Martz and Aubrey Williams (New Haven, 1978), p.61.
55. E. Safer, '"Sufficient to have Stood": Eve's Responsibility in Book IX', p.12.
56. S. A. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.104.
57. P L IV.259; Comus l.294.
58. Evans, p.253.
59. John Donne, Sermons, ed. Simpson and Potter (Berkeley, 1957), III, 254, as quoted by D. C. Allen in 'Milton's Eve and the Evening Angels', MLN LXXV (1960), p.109.
60. ibid., p.108.
61. For a different reading of both episodes see Fish, Surprised by Sin, pp.217-25 and Diane K. McColley, 'Eve's Dream', MS XII (1978), pp.25-46.
62. Note to V. 215-19; Fowler, p.269.

64. J. Brown, 'Eight Types of Puns', PMLA LXXI (1956), pp.16-7. See too B. K. Lewalski's suggestive comments: "The poem's imagery identifies Adam and Eve not only as gardeners but also as part of the Garden ... Much of the work Adam and Eve perform in Eden is an image of the work they should accomplish in the paradise within" ('Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden', in New Essays on 'Paradise Lost', ed. Thomas Kranidas [Berkeley, 1977], p.93). Elsewhere she points out that "The Areopagitica had described primal man's nature in very similar terms - as comprised of passions and capacities for pleasure which are potentially dangerous but which are also the very materials for growth in virtue if properly 'tempered':

... wherefore did [God] creat passions within us,
pleasures round about us, but that these rightly
temper'd are the very ingredients of vertu?

('Innocence and Experience
in Milton's Eden', p.94)

As Halkett concludes, "Marriage reflects the sensuousness and order of the Garden itself ... it is a sign of the full humanity of man, of his reason, will, emotions and appetites operating in harmony" (Milton and the Idea of Matrimony, p.109). Though, as Stein remarks, "Milton does not accept a strict dualism, which would have Eve literally female passion ... and Adam masculine reason" ("Eve's reason undercuts a simple identification of woman with nature or emotion" as Farrell has observed [The Renaissance Idea of Androgyny', p.13]) "the potential conflict of passion and reason is part of Milton's scheme" (p.70). Broadbent has argued that "This is an anachronism like Milton's psychology, because neither the garden nor the microcosm or the macrocosm it represents should need pruning or weeding in innocence" (Some Graver Subject: An Essay on 'Paradise Lost', [1960], p.177). But as Giamatti maintains, "if the garden is to be a true reflection of the first couple, it must reflect all that is within them; it must also include that potentiality for change, change for better or change for the worse, which is part of their nature" (The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic, p.299).

More recent criticism has gone further still in drawing out the implications of the correspondence between the growth of the external garden and the paradise within of unfallen Adam and Eve to demonstrate that Milton did not conceive of prelapsarian life as an easy and effortless state of frozen perfection. For further discussion of the difficulty and complexity of 'unfallen experience' see: Evans, pp.242-71; B. K. Lewalski, 'Innocence and

- Experience in Milton's Eden,' pp.86-117, John S. Diekhoff 'Eve's Dream and the Paradox of Fallible Perfection', Milton Quarterly IV (1970), pp.5-7; Thomas H. Blackburn, '"Uncloister'd Virtue": Adam and Eve in Milton's Paradise', MS III (1971), pp.119-37; Martz, 'The Power of Choice' in Poet of Exile, pp.127-41; Lindenbaum, 'Lovemaking in Milton's Paradise', pp.298-99; Farrell, 'The Renaissance Idea of Androgyny', pp.12-14; McColley, Milton's Eve, p.119.
65. As Newton explains, "The propriety of this expression will best be seen by what Junius says of the etymology of the word pamper. The French word pampre, of the Latin pampinus, is a vine-branch full of leaves: and pamprer, he says, is a vineyard overgrown with superfluous leaves and fruitless branches." Fowler too comments on this secondary play first remarked by Newton (note to V. 214, p.269).
66. The luxuriant growth of the vine is twice singled out for mention as we have seen: IV. 258-60 and VII. 320.
67. S. A. Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', p.103.
68. B. K. Lewalski, 'Milton on Women - Yet Once More', p.7.
69. John Evelyn Sylva ... to which is annexed ... Kalendarium Hortense: Or, Gard'ners Almanac; Directing what he is to do monethly throughout the Year (Facsimile of 1664 ed.; Menston. 1972).
70. In Milton's eyes "discipline" had a vital role to play in maintaining "the state ... of the blessed in Paradise" and "the new Jerusalem", being "not only the removal of disorder, but if any visible shape can be given to divine things, the very visible shape and image of vertue." See The Reason of Church-Government, I. i. (Col. III. i., p.185).
71. Both fail here in their marital duties as conceived by Perkins. The first duty of a wife, he argued, was "to submit her selfe to her husband; and to acknowledge and reverence him as her head in all things" (p.130), while the husband was to show his love "in protecting her from danger" (p.124). "Hence it followeth", he concluded, "that the woman is not to take libertie of wandring, and straying abroad from her owne house, without the man's

knowledge and content" (Christian Oeconomie, pp.131-32). And cf. N. R. Jones' assessment of the situation: "Adam is at fault in subjecting himself to Eve, she is at fault if she does not subject herself to him", ("Stand" and "Fall" as Images of Posture in Paradise Lost', p.237). But the Son's demands at X. 145-56 cannot be answered unequivocally before the Fall.

72. Evans, p.274.
73. Landy, 'Kinship and the Role of Woman in Paradise Lost', p.11. In connection with this, it is interesting to observe how Adam, in his attempt to persuade Eve not to stray from his side (IX., 265-69), argues that his presence "shades and protects her" (emphasis added). Significantly, Milton now seems to be attributing a more positive function to the elm's "barren leaves". So too, remembering the earlier allusion to the platan (IV. 478), it is interesting to note Patrick Hume's remark that it was "so named from the breadth of its Leaves, Πλάτυς Gr. broad, a Tree useful for its extraordinary Shade: Jamque Ministrantem Plantanum potentibus umbram. Geor. 4". See also Harry Blamires' comments on IX. 434-35: "the word 'Covert' was used especially in law 'of a married woman: under the cover, authority, or protection of her husband' (O.E.D.)" in Milton's Creation, p.221
74. Hyman, The Quarrel Within, p.60
75. ibid., pp.57-58.
76. Lewalski, 'Milton on Women - Yet Once More', p.13. So too Rogers had given similar advice to the husband in difficulty "not to insult, threaten, and domineer over her as a Lord ... but by all loving waies tenderly to draw her, and convince her by the strength of reason" (Matrimoniall Honour, p.265).
77. As Stella P. Revard has pointed out, "the notion of the human being as incomplete is not first noted by Eve, but by Adam"; see 'Eve and the Doctrine of Responsibility in Paradise Lost', PMLA LXXXVIII (1973), p.74. And cf. Norford, 'The Separation of the World Parents in Paradise Lost', p.12.
78. Rauber, 'The Metamorphoses of Eve', pp.68-69 .

79. Critical contention has tended to centre upon the question of Eve's sufficiency or insufficiency without Adam, attributing more or less significance to their separation in Book IX. The controversy continues. Notable additions to the debate include: John C. Ulreich, '"Sufficient to Have Stood": Adam's responsibility in Book IX', MO V (1971), pp.38-42; E. B. Safer, '"Sufficient to Have Stood": Eve's Responsibility in Book IX', pp.10-14; Diane K. McColley, 'Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of Paradise Lost', SEL XII (1972), pp.103-20; K. M. Swaim, 'Hee for God Only, Shee for God in Him' :Structural Parallelism in Paradise Lost', pp.136-38; M. R. Farrell, 'The Renaissance Idea of Androgyny' pp.15-16 and D. K. McColley, '"Summon All": The Separation Colloquy' in Milton's Eve, pp.121-49. But as Webber has perceptively concluded, "The whole relationship between Adam and Eve, in fact, is affected by this stress between self-sufficiency and mutual need ... either position, overindulged, becomes destructive, and balance is hard to maintain" ('The Politics of Poetry: Feminism and Paradise Lost', p.12).
80. Purvis E. Boyette, 'Something More About Erotic Motive in Paradise Lost', Tulane Studies in English XV, 1967, p.29. On this point see also Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, p.62 and A. G. George, Milton and the Nature of Man: A Descriptive Study of 'Paradise Lost' in Terms of the concept of Man as the Image of God (1975), pp.65-74.
81. For the significance of Milton's use of "absolute" here see Aers and Hodge, '"Rational Burning": Milton on Sex and Marriage', p.25.
82. See J. B. Broadbent, Some Graver Subject, pp.188-90.
83. S. Revard, 'Eve and the Doctrine of Responsibility in Paradise Lost', p.74.
84. See B. K. Lewalski, 'Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden', p.94.
85. Rauber, 'The Metamorphoses of Eve', pp.64-65.
86. cf. Goodman's insistence on the husband's responsibilities to his wife: "hath God made her the weaker vessel? then she wants the protection of her husband; she the more impotent and weaker of counsell? then ought she to be instructed and taught by her husband" (The Fall of Man, p.257).

87. Summers, The Muse's Method, p.178.
88. ibid., p.74.
89. See Halkett, Milton and the Idea of Matrimony, p.133, where he also notes how X. 942, coming after X. 911, makes a "visual pun" on "the word 'distress' (X. 942)".
90. So too Empson argues that "Milton intends it to be clear that God would not regard her as repentant until Adam had redirected her impulses" (Milton's God, p.172).
91. Sharon C. Seelig, 'Our General Mother: The Pattern for Mankind', a paper given at the convention of the Northeast MLA, 8-10 April 1976, an abstract of which is published in MQ X [1976], p.27. It is a pattern recognised by Satan too, cf. IV. 79-81.
92. This is also the general thrust of Swaim's article, "Hee for/ God only, Shee for God in Him": Structural Parallelism in Paradise Lost', pp.121-50.
93. M. M. Mahood, 'Milton's Heroes' reprinted in Milton: Modern Judgements, ed. Alan Rudrum (1969), pp.263-64.
94. In his note to XI. i. Pearce observes:

Dr. Bentley thinks that the author intended it repentant kneeled, because it is said in ver. 150, and in X. 1099, that they kneeled and fell prostrate: but stood here has no other sense than that of were. So in ii. 55, stand in arms signifies are in arms. In the same sense stetit and εστῆ are often used by the Latins and Greeks.

95. Similarly, Greenwood argues:

Stood here, and in ver. 14., hath no relation to the posture, but to the act itself, and the continuance of it. Standing in arms is not only being armed or having armour on, but being in arms with a determined resolution not to lay them down without endeavouring to attain some end proposed. Thus stood praying means, not only that they prayed or were praying, but they persevered in their devotions ...

(quoted in Newton, 8th ed. 1778)

96. Note to XI. i., Fowler, p.563. As Fowler remarks here, it is interesting to note that "The apparent contradiction is treated as a deliberate paradox by John E. Parish in English Miscellany, ed. M. Praz, XV (Rome, 1964), 89-102. Adam and Eve are prostrate in sin, but raised by regeneration".
97. cf. Met.I.375-76.
98. Wayne Shumaker, Unpremeditated Verse: Feeling and Perception in 'Paradise Lost' (Princeton, New Jersey; 1967), p.198. We may note too that prostrate is generally used of something normally erect as "a tree" or "person" (OED), and cf. XI. 758-59 where Adam falls into despair "till gently reared/By the angel on [his] feet [he] stood'st at last".
99. cf. Patrick Hume's gloss on "How frail" (III. 180), which reads "how unable to support it self ... of fragilis, Lat. easily broken".
100. Christopher Harvey, Schola Cordis, Emblem 37, p.172.
101. Taken together with the allusion to the sterlis platanus, the elm's "barren leaves" may well suggest Christ's cursing of the barren fig tree in Matthew XXI. 19. I am indebted to Anthony Low for this suggestion.
102. Commenting on V. 215, Broadbent observes that by "leading 'the Vine to wed her Elm'" it is "as if [Adam and Eve were] rearing children and giving them in marriage" (Some Graver Subject, p.177).
103. Roland Frye observes that in one tradition of Judaic and primitive Christian art the vine was associated with the Tree of Life and "the vine and its grapes became symbolic of sacrifice and redemption through Christ", Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts, p.247
Parallels between the role and speech of Eve and the Son have been detected by Summers, The Muse's Method, pp.176-85 and Pecheux in 'The Second Adam and the Church in Paradise Lost' ELH XXXIV (1967), p.173.
104. cf. Kathleen M. Swaim, 'Flowers, Fruit and Seed: A Reading of Paradise Lost', pp.155-76, esp. p.159, where she notes "seed and anticipation of harvest dominates the final books."

The Metamorphosis of Ovid

After the Fall Milton's use of Ovidian imagery in his portrayal of Eve subtly changes. By likening Eve to Pyrrha Milton points to the change in Eve herself, her loss of active, independent power and her new found submissiveness and humility. As a natural corollary of Eve's more passive and unassuming role, Adam and Eve no longer feel what Professor Webber has called "the strain of their twoness",¹ and their resemblance to Deucalion and Pyrrha accentuates the closeness of their marital relationship "each being the other's only available companion, helper and comfort in the midst of complete desolation".² After the Fall then, Eve becomes fully defined by her relationship to Adam, and as an exemplary wife she is like Pyrrha, "Soft, modest, meek, demure".³

However, not only does Eve's meekness and patience become the pattern of Christian heroism⁴ fulfilled by Christ and his Virgin mother, Mary, but, through the mediation of Ovidian myth, her 'softness' assumes a transcendent value, ensuring her reconciliation to Adam, Man's reconciliation to God and regeneration to life. Milton's allusion to Ovid's myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha's regeneration of the human race appears in a theologically significant context, taking its place in the progressive definition of salvation found in the final books as we ascend 'by types and shadows' from the first judgment and regeneration of mankind to the Last Judgment and the final resurrection into eternal life.

Milton's use of Ovidian fable here is exceptionally rich and complex. It is not dismissed as pagan myth and therefore literally untrue (indeed, he grants Ovid's account some basis in historical fact), nor is it treated as a merely external and physical prefiguration of an inward spiritual reality. Milton's use of typological patterning allows

him to suggest, what he does not in fact say, that Deucalion and Pyrrha's revival of the human race through the miraculous softening of stones is a valid analogue of Christian regeneration.

With the Fall the ambivalence inherent in our perception of Eve and in her relationship to Adam dissolves and with it the strategic use of Ovidian imagery to create such richly ambivalent effects. Shorn of its mythological glory, the 'virgin majesty' of Eve rapidly evaporates and she is soon discovered with Adam as Columbus found "the American.../With feathered cincture, naked else and wild"(IX.1116-17) The most immediate effect of associating the newly fallen pair with near naked savages, first only by implication (IX.1100-11), but then by a more overt linkage (IX.1115-18)⁵, is to demote them from that 'pre-eminence' they have enjoyed above the rest of mankind. This unique position they have now "lost,brought down/To dwell on even ground...with [their] sons" (XI .347-8). "[T]his reduction in perspective from the splendid gods and goddesses to naked savages is", as Collett has remarked, "not unlike the diminution of the fallen Angels from Earth's Giant Sons to small Dwarfs" and, he shrewdly comments elsewhere, "There is no more dramatic way to portray the stark condition of deprivation they have come to".⁶ To these perceptive observations, I would just like to add that the lines reflect more harshly on Eve than Adam. Eve's fall from innocence "seems more complete and more shocking than Adam's, because", Knott suggests, "she has been so fully identified with the beauty of Paradise".⁷ Moreover, it was she who more nearly united the poles of a paradox as 'goddess humane'. 'Affecting godhead' she loses all pretensions to 'goddess-like deport' and even ordinary human dignity.

It is only through their association with the Ovidian figures, Deucalion and Pyrrha, that Adam and Eve regain a measure of their lost stature, albeit on a more modest human scale⁸

... yet their port
 Not of mean suitors, nor important less
 Seemed their petition, than when the ancient pair
 In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
 Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha to restore
 The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine
 Of Themis stood devout.

(XI.8-14)

Outwardly the simile works to restore their dignity, but inwardly and metaphorically it establishes their regeneration. It is with this deeper metaphorical meaning that we will be primarily concerned.

Since this is the first and only time after the Fall that Milton uses a mythological simile to describe Adam and Eve, the context insists that the comparison carries a great deal of imaginative weight. Yet the passage has been strangely neglected; at best, it has been customary to acknowledge the appropriateness of the parallel and pass on with little or no comment. The reactions of Newton and Pearce are typical in this respect. While Newton enthusiastically exclaims, "The Poet could not have thought of a more apt Similitude to illustrate his subject and plainly fetch'd it from Ovid's Met.I.318", Pearce attempts to answer Bentley's strictures on the "pat comparison of Deucalion and Pyrrha to our Adam and Eve" by arguing that:

The Case of Deucalion and Pyrrha (as represented by the Heathen Poets) was the only one that in any remarkable way resembled that of Adam and Eve and therefore the Poet could hardly fail to bring it in by way of Comparison.

More recently, Wayne Shumaker is, to my knowledge, the only critic who has made any attempt at a more detailed analysis, recording certain implicit but previously unexplored connections between the two scenes in Paradise Lost and the Metamorphoses.

Most obviously, as Shumaker argues:

the comparison is relevant ["as visual image"] because Deucalion and Pyrrha also are [like Adam and Eve] the sole human figures in the landscape, because each pair has prostrated itself, and because the attitude of each bespeaks entreaty.

A second and related "parallelism of situation" noted by Shumaker is that:

like the Biblical pair, Deucalion and Pyrrha were at the moment of praying the only two human beings on earth.

While a third point of contact:

Although thrust out of prominence ... has to do with similarity of result ... Adam and Eve [like Deucalion and Pyrrha] also pray in a ruined world, for Milton regards their sin as no less catastrophic than Deucalion's flood; and their prayer also effects a kind of restoration.

Such solid correspondences seem to provide substantial grounds for justifying an investigation into subtler effects, especially since, as Grose and other readers have noticed, the initial point of comparison "in the similes of Paradise Lost accounts for only part of their total effect, schematically tight though most of them are".¹⁰ For we have often had occasion to observe the 'subterranean virtue' of Milton's Ovidian allusions, that their deeper value resides in what is not expressly stated as a resemblance at all.

Although Summers has recognised the "reconciliation between man and woman" to be the necessary "prologue and type of the ensuing reconciliation between man and God",¹¹ the way in which the verbal and thematic correspondences between the two scenes are supported and enriched by Milton's highly original use of the Ovidian myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha has not been explored. While a satisfactory reading of the two scenes is clearly not dependent upon our recognition of the part Ovidian myth plays here,¹² our awareness of the way in

which the reverberations of certain key words draw attention to an underlying metaphorical complex, which in turn suggests an important poetic equation between the role of Eve and that of the Son, is considerably heightened by such an understanding. These are large claims but I hope a close reading of the respective scenes in the Metamorphoses and Paradise Lost will support this interpretation and help towards a more conscious appreciation of how simple words and images may take on the resonance and power we associate with metaphor and symbol.

In his sensitive account of Ovid's rendering of the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha in the Metamorphoses (Met. I. 313-415), Fränkel has alerted us to the presence of "echo-like recurrences" that "accentuate certain aspects of the fables which otherwise may be lost in the swift succession of details" and which may "point toward the deeper significance below the running sequence of events".¹³ The presence of such a pattern of significant repetitions in the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha is traced by Fränkel with such care that we can do no better than quote him directly:

... before Deucalion and Pyrrha by their devout touch cause the soil (terrena 408), and cold stone of Mother Earth to soften and bend, they kneel down on the soil, shyly kiss the cold stone of the temple steps (376), and pray that the wrath of the gods may soften and bend (378). The notions, and indeed the words, repeat themselves ["Remollescunt and flectitur from line 378 are taken up by molliri, mollita in line 402, and by flectitur which is projected back into 408 by virtue of the contrast to flecti nequit in 409"], and by this subtle device Ovid ties up the yielding mercy of the relenting (mitissima 380) gods with the yielding and relenting (mitiora natura 403) of the elements when the merciful miracle is performed and mankind revived from its merited destruction. Both stubborn anger and stubborn matter are conquered (victa 378) by the pious and loving couple.¹⁴

The literal and figurative meanings of the operative words in this metamorphosis: remollescere (L, "I Lit., to become soft again, grow soft, soften"; "II Fig. B. To be moved, influenced") and its related forms; flectere (L, "I Lit., to bend", "turn"; III Fig. B. Esp. of

opinion or will, to bend, prevail upon, soften, appease"); and mitis (L, " Lit., mild, mellow"; " II Fig., mild, soft, gentle, lenient") thus vibrate together. Turning to Paradise Lost we find that Milton contrives a comparable effect, using words with a similar unobtrusive energy that recall the Ovidian account by their very phrasing.

To pursue this point in more detail, let us turn to where Eve tries to approach Adam (X.865ff). "That he is still unregenerate is shown", as Marjorie Hope Nicholson maintains,¹⁵ "by the violence of his vocabulary" here. Eve's soft words (X.865) and her tears (X.910; 937) move Adam who has turned from her in anger (X.909) to relent (X.940). These "soft words" taken together with her "tears"¹⁶ gently insist that we become aware of, and respond to, the literal meaning of "relent", derived from the original Latin root, "to bend, become soft again, soften" ("F. re + RE- 7 + L. lentāre bend, med. L. soften"¹⁷).

Adam's bitter questioning of divine providence

... O why did God,
 Creator wise, that peopled highest heaven
 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 befallen

(X.888-95)

is now answered and what seemed to him inchoate in God's design is fully divulged. As Eve was formed pre-eminently for softness and Adam for contemplation, so too by a natural extension of terms in the equation by contraposition, he was formed for hardness, she for affection or feeling (IV.295-98). Indeed, when Eve first beholds Adam she is aware that he is "Less winning soft, less amiably mild" (IV.479) than herself.

While "We see frequent signs of Adam's or Eve's particular qualities turning up in the other: just as Adam acquires sweetness, Eve demonstrates the power of contemplation,"¹⁸ as we approach Eve's

fatal encounter with Satan we are made to feel that the male and female principles are fundamentally different and properly distinct, and that any blurring of the two will have fatal consequences. Adam's sudden yielding in the gardening debate is ironically counterpointed by the firm, measured movement of the narrator's comment, "So spake the patriarch of mankind" (IX.376), which apparently confirms Adam's rightful leadership, and by what immediately follows. The jagged rhythm created by the successive qualifications, "but Eve/Persisted, yet submiss, though last, replied" (IX.376-77) enacts mimetically the opposing elements ominously at work in Eve. "She is", as Ricks astutely observes, "stubborn but sweet ... obdurate but soft".¹⁹

By the same token, too much 'softness' in Adam is potentially dangerous since it may equally disturb the proper equilibrium in their relationship. "As always," Professor Webber reminds us, "Adam and Eve's vulnerabilities are opposite to one another."²⁰ Indeed, in his judgment of the fallen pair the Son openly blames Adam because "Thou didst resign thy manhood" (X.148), while Michael also attributes man's continuing fall to his "effeminate slackness" (XI.634),²¹ a revealing emphasis which seems to draw upon the negative connotations of mollescere^{21a} (L "II Fig.B To become effeminate, grow unmanly") and underlines the complementary basis of their relationship.

Such a differentiation of the sexes is, of course, a commonplace of sixteenth and seventeenth-century thought²² which has persisted to our own day. It is the unquestioned assumption behind York's denunciation of Queen Margaret, where his words express a horrified realization that while she is "seen to bear a woman's face" her actions deny her female sex:

Women are soft, milde, pitiful and flexible,
Thou sterne, indurate, flintie, rough, remorseless.²³

In Milton's scheme this distinction has a transcendent meaning.²⁴ Paradoxically, Eve's softness, the very quality that renders her the "weaker" (IX.383) of the two, more yielding and more easily influenced and swayed, and therefore more vulnerable to the temptations of Satan, makes her in turn more readily receptive to the mollifying effects of prevenient grace (XI.3-4) which works through Eve's 'tears' and 'soft words' to soften 'the stony'²⁵ in Adam's heart. Conversely, Adam, once fallen, is more susceptible to the hardening of the heart (III.200) or spiritual petrification that afflicts Satan. Indeed, we have already been prepared for the positive influence exerted by Eve's 'softness' by the episode which prefaces Satan's temptation of her: Eve's "heavenly form/Angelic, but more soft, and feminine" (IX.457-58, emphasis added)²⁶ at least temporarily "bereaved" even the obdurate Satan of "His fierceness" and "the fierce intent it brought" (IX.461-62), so we may well expect her softness to assuage Adam's "fierce passion" (X.865) completely.²⁷

In the world of metamorphoses there is little difference between mental and physical hardness;²⁸ Milton extends this analogy to make the spiritual condition of the fallen and the incipient effects of regeneration immediately apprehensible. That this is not merely a casual turn of expression on Milton's part, nor a single random similarity between the two texts, is reinforced by the way in which the pattern repeats itself. As in the Metamorphoses the earthly and heavenly planes of the action are drawn together in one cosmic movement.

Thus 'softened' Adam no longer despairs but trusts that God will likewise extend his forgiveness and "relent" and "turn/From his displeasure" (X.1093-94), when approached with prayers and tears. Moreover, as the vantage point now moves upward to the heavenly perspective we see "the stony" has been removed from their hearts (XI.3-4).

As God beholds them "softened and with tears" repenting their sin (XI.110-11), he relents in turn, and ensures that their sentence is not too "rigorously urged" (XI.109), appearing to their inward, spiritual vision "placable and mild/Bending his ear" (XI.151-52). However, this is a slight, but significant, oversimplification of the sequence of events that unfold in Heaven: before Man finds forgiveness, the Son must urge the Father to 'soften', "Now therefore bend thine ear/To supplication" (XI.30-31). It is interesting to speculate upon the significance of this suggestive extension of the hard-soft dichotomy to Heaven itself.

Indeed, many readers have readily agreed with Marjorie Hope Nicholson's conclusion that:

One aspect of Milton's Godhead is an Old Testament God of Justice, and sometimes of wrath; the other is a New Testament God of mercy and love.^{28a}

While recent criticism has endeavoured to prove that such a view, though tempting, is a distortion of the text which clearly describes both justice and mercy, wrath and love as aspects of the Father as of the Son,²⁹ nevertheless, in the actual dramatisation of the scenes in Heaven, the inflexible demands of justice are voiced almost exclusively by the Father, while the softer attributes of mildness and compassion are invariably reserved for the Son. In his speeches the Father's concern for the claims of retributive justice and harsh means to discipline mankind seem much more in evidence than his love and mercy, and the Son's successive pleas for leniency on Man's behalf "serve only", as Evans has pointed out, "to emphasize the Father's unyielding severity".³⁰ Even though the Father's speech (III.168-216) finally moves "beyond the exactions of law" to create "a world in which charity becomes an imaginative fact as well as a theological principle" as Rajan's fine analysis shows,³¹ yet the relentlessness of "He with his whole posterity must die" (III.209), "the clenched decisiveness" of "Die he or justice must" (III.210) and the "hammer-like movement" of "The rigid satisfaction,

death for death" (III.212) where, as Patrick Hume first observed in his note on the verse, "The word Rigid seems to imply a stiffness, an unrelenting satisfaction to be made to the Almighty Justice ... Rigidus Lat. hard, stiff", obdurately remain making their presence felt .

We may even begin to entertain the disconcerting suspicion that the Father bears some resemblance to Satan in his rigid fixity. Indeed, it is interesting to pause and reflect upon Sinfield's perceptive, if provocative, consideration of the deficiencies of Milton's God and the likeness he shares with Satan:

The reader who admires Milton's intellect and verbal gift will be on the lookout for hints of a softening of the implications of the tyrannical deity. The notion that Milton's sympathies are with Satan is no help, for Satan is entirely like God. They both conceive an implacable enmity towards those who infringe what they take to be their rights; they both make proud, rigorous, legalistic and equivocal speeches of self-justification. The difference is that God is right and Satan is wrong; or in Hobbesian terms, God is more powerful. Milton may empathize with Satan, but it does not help him to see beyond a punitive ethic.³²

If we cannot expect even such an original thinker as Milton to transcend his historical context entirely, we do not expect him to be a passive reflector of it either. I cannot help feeling that the Father is somehow silently reproached by the poet in the Son's generous, self-effacing love for Man, in the same way as Adam is put to shame by Eve's selfless "impulsive generosity in wishing to take all the punishment upon herself".³³

It has been said that in Milton's patriarchal universe woman is first found in Hell, then on Earth but never in Heaven.³⁴ Yet the soft of feminine qualities of the Son are placed in dramatic contrast to the hard or masculine attributes of the Father,³⁵ and the two aspects of the Godhead only attain their highest perfection together as a transcendent union of contraries. The Father completes himself in the Son as Adam is completed by Eve. The Father is colleague with the Son, justice with mercy, hard with soft, as Adam should remain colleague with Eve, intellect with emotion. As Don Parry Norford explains. "The chain of

being in Paradise Lost may be seen as a series of mirrors through which the Divine Image is reflected and diffused" and this chain "is supported by innumerable balances of contrary tensions".³⁶ The relationship of the sexes thus naturally reflects the primary relationship between the Father and the Son; as the Father is to the Son, so is Adam to Eve, and this correlation in turn prepares us for the bold poetic equation of Eve with the Son and, in more muted form, Adam with the Father, found at the close of Book X and beginning of Book XI. Indeed, there are few precedents for Eve's decisive role in the redemptive process envisaged here by Milton.³⁷

On the other hand, Satan whose "obdured breast" (II.568) is struck by the "mace petrific" and "Gorgonian rigor" of spiritual death, entirely lacks this countervailing softening influence. And so it is in Satan that the process of spiritual petrification is most fully realized. As Mary Y. Hoffman has observed:

As much as is Satan's mind "fixt" and unregenerate, just as much is his hell a hell of process, of endlessly recapitulating the fall and hardening one's heart against the possibilities of redemption.³⁸

Satan's hardening of his heart is enacted most clearly in the soliloquy which opens Book IV (ll.32-113) and forms the grounds for Marchant's rejection of Dr. Newton's attempt to emend line 39:

I cannot be of Dr Newton's opinion that repent here is a better word than relent. Satan is all along remarkable for his obdurate Hatred and unrelenting Malice to the Almighty ... for never since he rebell'd, did he once give Satan Liberty to reflect on the horrid Nature of his Offence; but now the glorious Objects that are in his View, which bring fresh into his memory the happy and exalted Station from which he fell; the Reflection on his own monstrous Ingratitude, which stings him to the Heart; and the sense of his present condition, which was unspeakably miserable, all together soften him into a wish that he had never offended in the manner he had done; that his Heart relents, which is the first step towards Repentance.

However, "when remorse led not to repentance but to hardened persistence"

earlier readers "would recognise", as Fowler explains, "that a new phase in damnation had been reached".³⁹ Satan hardens his resolve like the "obdurate king" (XII.205) who "Humbles his ... heart" only to be "as ice/More hardened after thaw" (XII.193-94).

Of course, the heart like "marble ice/Both cold and hard"⁴⁰ was a familiar motif that featured in the work of those emblemists concerned with translating the life of the spirit into physical terms. While this similarity has led Mary Hoffman to conclude that Milton's treatment of Satan's hard heartedness is "very suggestive of Henry Vaughan's emblem to Silex Scintillans (1650)",⁴¹ she sensibly cautions against the assumption of specific indebtedness on Milton's part, attributing the resemblance rather to a shared currency of ideas. Rosemary Freeman's argument in her fine study of English Emblem Books supports this view. She maintains that:

[Though] in the conventions on which they were based, they were obviously more suited for the expression of Catholic than of Protestant religious ideas ... The treatment of the themes, however they may be represented in the engravings, remains essentially Protestant.⁴²

Indeed, the image of the hardened heart derives ultimately from a text which was of crucial importance to Reformation theology.

The lines quoted above (XII.192-94) plainly allude to the sequence in Exodus (IX-XIV) where it is repeatedly stated that it was God who hardened Pharaoh's heart against the Israelites,⁴³ which St. Paul had interpreted to mean that God "has mercy upon whomever he wills, and he hardens the heart of whomever he wills" (Romans IX.18). Sinfield cites both these passages in connection with Protestant teachings on salvation and draws attention to the way "Luther stressed the [latter] text and Erasmus admitted that it seems to leave nothing to choice" (Luther and Erasmus, p.64), while "For Calvin it afforded key evidence that election and reprobation are sheerly God's decision (Institutes, III.xxii.11)".⁴⁴ In Paradise Lost, however, Milton emphasizes the inclusiveness of God's

offer to "soften stony hearts" (III.189),⁴⁵ excluding from mercy only those who "neglect and scorn" his "day of grace"; it is thus only those who are obdurately "hard" that will be "hardened ... more" (III.198-202). Milton thus draws upon these resonant scriptural echoes to provide a Biblical framework for his own symbolic structure.

Critics frequently voice doubts as to the wisdom of including the Father as a speaking character in the epic and, more frequently and, understandably perhaps, express disappointment at the bareness of style and sentiment attributed to him.⁴⁶ Through God the Father, as Irene Samuel explains:

... the omniscient voice of the omnipotent moral law speaks what is [and what will be, we might add] . Here is ... the nature of things expounding itself in order to present fact and principle unadorned.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, it is because the Father speaks with such unelaborated simplicity that we must understand his intention to soften or harden the stony hearts of the fallen as literally true, and the plain directness of his words (at III.185-202) thus prepare us for those subtle, deeper and less easily detachable images of fallen Man's spiritual experience that lie just beneath the narrative surface later in the poem, which we have been discussing here.

Since the "eye of God does not see things metaphorically but in their essential natures as Adam saw the natures of the animals when he named them",⁴⁸ his words do not merely liken "spiritual to corporeal forms" but reflect an immediate, intuitive apprehension of fallen Man's spiritual condition. Although its full import is scarcely realized at this point, when considered together with Milton's dramatization of the Fall and its aftermath, the Father's pronouncement proves to be an unexpectedly precise rendering of the experience and state of spiritual death on the one hand, and the mollifying, re-creative effects of grace on the other.

Even here where Milton relies most heavily upon scriptural material to substantiate "the theological principles from which the redemptive action of his poem proceeds", Martz has detected:

... echoes of the heavenly conference in the opening book of the Metamorphoses, as angry Zeus consults with all the gods about the destruction of the human race and its regeneration.⁴⁹

Turning back to the closing lines of Book X and the opening lines of Book XI with which we began this discussion, the first stage of the Father's promise to regenerate mankind is fulfilled in the inward change that takes place in Adam and Eve and which is symbolized, with characteristic subtlety and indirection on Milton's part, in the recreation of the human race by Deucalion and Pyrrha. Indeed, Ovid's fable had long been invested with such Christian significance and allegorised as a symbol of conversion, as Fowler points out, citing Sandys as his authority:

God is said in the Gospell to be able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham: the sence not unlike, though diviner: meaning the ingrafting of the Gentiles into his faith hardned in sinne through ignorance and custome. So the giving us hearts of flesh, instead of those of stone is meant by our conversion.⁵⁰

Moreover, the context in which Milton openly refers us to Ovid's myth points decisively towards such an interpretation. In the preceding lines, Milton makes explicit what is implicit here, preparing us for the transformation of a pagan image into the prefiguration of Christian truth. In his gloss on lines 3-5 Patrick Hume describes how prevenient grace "made a relenting Tenderness, like the Flesh of a newborn Babe grow in their Harts, in stead of their stubborn Hardness", and goes on to interpret this change specifically in terms of Christian regeneration:

The Conversion of a Sinner, is in Scripture-Phrase styled, Regeneration, a New-birth; Regeneratio, Lat. Our Saviour discoursed with Nicodemus, John 3.3. Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.⁵¹

With our thoughts thus directed to the inward change experienced by Adam and Eve as a type of Christian rebirth in which "HOMO INTERIOR VETERE ABOLITO ... VELUTI CREATURA NOVA ET DEO REGENERATUR"⁵², we cannot miss the

symbolic significance encountered here in the re-creation of mankind by Deucalion and Pyrrha. As the stones thrown by Deucalion and Pyrrha miraculously soften to become the new race of Men, Ovidian myth becomes a rich extended metaphor for the process of inward spiritual regeneration in fallen Man.⁵³

The central metaphorical tendency that characterises the last two books as a whole also supports the force of this reading as does the extension of the emblematic significance of the Garden as an image of Man's spiritual life in the passage that almost immediately follows.⁵⁴ This elaborate horticultural metaphor supplies a new but related set of associations which holds out the hope that, having lost the external paradise of Eden, Man may yet raise a 'paradise within' from the 'seed' of God's grace.

Like the rest of the imagery in the final books the significance of the 'seed'⁵⁵ is progressively defined 'from shadowy types to truth', moving inward from 'flesh to Spirit'. After their reconciliation Adam and Eve's rejection of "wilful barrenness" (X.1042) makes possible at least some form of continued existence for the race of Man; in their offspring or 'seed' the physical continuance of mankind is assured. With their reconciliation to God, Man's spiritual life is renewed, from these first "children of the promise"⁵⁶ will spring the line of the faithful remnant or 'seed' which will come to fruition in that "destined seed" (XII.233) whose death "Annuls ... the death [Man] shouldst have died/In sin for ever lost from life" (XII.428-29) and makes physical "death the gate of life" everlasting (XII.571). However, the emphasis at this point in the narrative is not so much upon regeneration as "a matter of vicarious atonement" but upon regeneration as "the advent of Christ in man, the growth of Christ in the individual soul".⁵⁷ Indeed, John Everard had put this rather more strongly when he described:

The Externall Jesus Christ [as] ... a shadow, a symbole, a figure of the Internal viz. of him that is to be born within us.⁵⁸

After the spiritual barrenness of the 'fruitless hours', hard, stony ground is exchanged for soil that is moist, friable and receptive. By "watering the ground" "with tears" (X.1101-2), fallen Man ensures that the "seed" (XI.26) of "implanted grace" (XI.23) "Sown with contrition in his heart" (XI.27) springs forth with "first fruits" (XI.22) as "rain produce[s]/Fruits in softened soil" (VIII.146-47). When considering the emblematic suggestiveness of this passage it is interesting to note in passing how Christopher Harvey, writing in the emblematic tradition which likened "THE HART consecrated to the loue of Iesus" to a "flourishing garden",⁵⁹ used emblems such as SEMINATIO IN COR and CORDIS IRRIGATIO⁶⁰ to draw out to full extent the correspondences between stages in the spiritual life of the Christian soul and the steps in the tendance of an earthly garden.⁶¹ And indeed, his description of how "showres of repentant teares must steep/The mould to make it soft" before the heart can be made "Fit for the seeding of [the] word" seems particularly suggestive here.⁶²

However, the watered ground also provides another point of contact with Ovid's account of the aftermath of the Deluge. Indeed, Shumaker has gone so far as to suggest that "The initial impetus to the comparison may ... have been a subcortical sensing" of the "tactual likeness"⁶³ of both scenes: "the dampness caused by Ovid's flood and the wetting of the ground by Adam's and Eve's tears".⁶⁴ Admittedly, such a poetic equation may at first seem hyperbolic and grotesque⁶⁵ as Shumaker himself concedes. Yet whether or not such an unconscious association first prompted the comparison, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the correspondence is not entirely fortuitous, that Milton was well aware of the connection, and even concerned to forge such a link in the mind of his reader.

The pressure of this association is at first carefully held in check; its full force is only released with the Deluge at the end of the book. It rises slowly up to our conscious minds as we watch Adam's descendants

lapse into sinfulness for which, Michael darkly hints, "The world ere long a world of tears must weep" (XI.627)⁶⁶, breaking the surface only with the Flood itself in the poet's address to Adam as he weeps at the apparent destruction of mankind:

How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
 The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
 Depopulation; thee another flood,
 Of tears and sorrow a flood thee also drowned,
 And sunk thee as thy sons.

(XI.754-58)

However, to appreciate fully the prefigurative value of Milton's allusion to Deucalion and Pyrrha at this point, we must reassess its implications in terms of the typological patterning of Books XI and XII. Michael's words at XII.230-35 and again at 300-6 give pointed expression to the way in which Milton drew upon the rhetorical possibilities of typological symbolism to organize his survey of human history and to propel his narrative forward through time and beyond to eternity. That Milton exploits the typological suggestiveness of Deucalion and Pyrrha as pagan types of Noah and his wife has long been recognized. Fowler briefly acknowledges that Deucalion is included as a "mythical analogue of Noah"⁶⁷, while J.H.Collett observes that "through the comparison Milton prefigures the story of Noah, 'a Reverend Sire', with which the book closes and ... the typological procedure that characterizes the last two books"⁶⁸ begins.

Sandys comments on the relationship of the pagan to the Biblical Flood thus:

The sinnes of men drew on (in which our Poet [Ovid] concurres with Moses) the generall Deluge, although he transferre it to Deucalions, wherein most of Greece was surrounded; which hapned seaven hundred and fourescore yeares after the other: yet in this he describeth the former, as appeares by many particulars: which may serve to reconcile his Chronology, for many of these following stories were before the daies of Deucalion.⁶⁹

The argument, if tortuous at times, provides a useful gloss on Milton's curious phrasing in lines 10-11 of Book XI, where he refers to Deucalion and Pyrrha as an "ancient pair" but "less ancient yet than" Adam and Eve. Fowler justly observes that "Bentley and Empson ... perversely take less ancient to imply that Genesis is an old fable too", but concludes that Milton is here intent upon exploding the Ovidian myth since, "In narratives professing to describe the origin of the present human race, juniority brings discredit".⁷⁰

However, we might just as easily argue that Milton's emphasis on the chronological precedence of the Biblical to the Ovidian pair underlines an insistence on the historical reality of both couples. This interpretation is strengthened if we accept Collett's theory that Milton makes a critical distinction between his use of 'feign'd' or fictitious myth, and 'fabl'd' truth, historical "accounts set down by the ancients".⁷¹ Moreover, Milton's concern to attribute some historical foundation to Deucalion's Flood would be in keeping with the "demythologizing"⁷² tendency of the last two books where, as Collett explains, "only those 'fabled' myths which are pagan accounts of actual historical events are appropriate".⁷³ So too, some claim for the historical basis of the myth would further justify Deucalion's inclusion as a pagan type of Christ⁷⁴ and thus be in accord with the stricter procedure of typological fulfilment to be found in the final portion of the poem.⁷⁵

Indeed, Ovid's myth is arguably the hinge upon which this typological structure turns. The inclusion of Deucalion and Pyrrha, "saved for their vertue ... while the vitious are swallowed by their owne impieties"⁷⁶, looks forward to the "general Deluge", in which "one whole world/Of wicked sons [is] destroyed" (XI.874-5) and its survivors, Noah and his family, for whom God "relents" (XI.891) to "raise another world" (XI.877). The story of Noah in turn looks directly toward the Last Judgement⁷⁷ in which fire will "purge all

things new" (XI.900) and "dissolve/Satan with his perverted world" before "New heavens, new earth, ages of endless date" are raised "From the conflagrant mass, purged and refined" (XII.546-49).⁷⁸

However, Milton extends the pivotal function of the myth still further; it leads backwards as well as forwards, gathering Adam and Eve into the same pattern of typological fulfilment, moving from death to new life, from destruction to recreation. This pattern in which the 'faithless herd' is set against the 'few faithful' appears in its most condensed form at this point in the narrative. Since Adam and Eve form the only extant examples of mankind they represent corrupt humanity in their Fall, and, as their offensiveness⁷⁹ to God is washed away in a flood of tears, the faithful in their regeneration. Indeed, the allusion to Deucalion and Pyrrha plays an important part in effecting this 'sweet transition' which accompanies their repentance. As Adam and Eve appear in the likeness of Deucalion and Pyrrha "with prostrated bodies and humble soules"⁸⁰ they become imbued as it were "By tincture or reflection"⁸¹ with the purity and faith that so strongly features in Ovid's portrayal of the couple.⁸² Ovid introduces us to them after their little boat has run aground on Parnassus. At this point their characterization rests solely on their strong reverence of the Gods; they are both described as "innocuos ... cultores numinis" (Met. I.327) and they are first seen in prayer:

Corycidas nymphas et numina mortis adorant
faticamque Themin, quæ tunc oracula tenebat;
non illo melior quisquam nec amantior æqui
vir fuit aut illa metuentior ulla deorum.

(Met. I.320-24)

It is with fine irony that Milton grants Adam and Eve their most innocent moment, from the standpoint of mythological analogy at least, after they have fallen. The appearance of Adam and Eve as Deucalion and Pyrrha establishes our conviction in the spiritual

potential of ordinary humanity. God works:

... by small
 Accomplishing great things, by things deemed weak
 Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
 By simply meek.

(XII.566-69)

Deucalion and Pyrrha mediate between the fallen Adam and Eve and their new roles as prototypes of Noah and his wife, drawing the two 'sources' of mankind into close thematic relationship. Once we acknowledge the possibility of such a relationship a number of subtle structural, conceptual and figurative links come into play.

That Milton intended the two re-creations to be considered together is suggested by the way in which one becomes the natural pendant to the other, forming an enclosing frame to the eleventh book. Between the final lines of Book X and the opening lines of Book XI the narrative stands poised between the destructive effects of the Fall and the restorative effects of regeneration till the allusion to Ovid's myth of Man's second creation tips the balance and confirms Adam and Eve's second chance of life. Turning to the close of Book XI and the beginning of Book XII the Archangel likewise pauses⁸³ "Betwixt the world destroyed and the world restored" (XII.3) and the same structural pattern is thus repeated. The narrator's comment though physically located in Book XII (1-5) stands as a self-contained paragraph, interposed between the two visions of destruction and re-creation, and forms one of the more important additions made to the original text when Milton recast the tenth and final book of the first edition into Books XI and XII of the second. Since one of the most obvious effects of this new arrangement was to thrust the story of Noah into greater prominence and thereby tighten the structural parallelism between the first and second judgement of mankind, it provides evidence of an unusual

kind of Milton's concern to deepen the correspondence between the two which cannot be lightly dismissed.

Again, the flood's purging of the world's corruption as a necessary preliminary to a new creation⁸⁴ casts a retrospective light on Adam and Eve's flood of tears. Adam and Eve, like Noah and his family, are "saved by water"⁸⁵. They are thus symbolically baptized⁸⁶ "with water unto repentance"⁸⁷ and their tears become a "sign/Of washing them from guilt of sin to life/Pure" (XII.442-44) and their regeneration.⁸⁸ Again, Michael's revelation: "Such grace shall one just man"⁸⁹ find in his sight/That [God] relents, not to blot out mankind" (XI.890-91) looks back, via Ovid's account in the Metamorphoses of how:

Iuppiter ut liquidis stagnare paludibus orbem
et superesse virum de tot modo milibus unum,
et superesse vidit de tot modo milibus unam,
innocuos ambo, cultores numinis ambo,
nubilia disiecit nimisque aquilone remotis
et caelo terras ostendit et aethera terris.

(Met. I.324-29)

to where the Father, accepting Adam and Eve's prayers, had similarly relented and turned from his displeasure.⁹⁰ So too, since the appearance of the rainbow betokens "peace from God, and Covenant new" (XI.867), the descent of God's messenger Michael in raiment "dipped"⁹¹ by "Iris"⁹² (XI.244) acquires special significance⁹³ in retrospect as a 'pacific sign' and token of God's "Covenant in the woman's seed renewed" (XI.116).

As a result of the attractive power of such associative links the forward movement of the narrative is countersprung by references backward to other new beginnings, milestones on the journey to Man's Resurrection and the final regeneration to "new life" (III. 294). While Adam and Eve's regeneration may only be "a miniature microcosmic anticipation of what the human race will experience

through the Son's future incarnation",⁹⁴ it becomes instrumental in furthering the spiritual redemption of mankind.⁹⁵

Although critics have recognized the typological function of the story of Noah, they have tended to underestimate the way in which Adam and Eve have become part of this ascending sequence, completed and fulfilled in Christ as Man's "second root" (III.288). Cherrell Guilfoyle, for example, observes that "in the opening lines of Book XII Michael", apparently echoing the earlier prediction by the Father to the Son that "in thee/As from a second root shall be restored/As many as are restored" (III.287-89), "tells Adam of the 'second stock' (7), 'This second sours of Man' (13) which will rise from the eight survivors in the ark, led and redeemed by Christ, the greater Noah"⁹⁶. Fowler too comments on the significance of "stock" in his note to line 7 of Book XII, regarding it as:

An ambiguity referring not only to the literal replacement of one source of the human line of descent (Adam) by another (Noah) but also to the grafting of mankind onto the stem of Christ according to the Pauline allegory of regeneration (Rom.xi)⁹⁷

However, it is important to remember that the regeneration of Adam and Eve had already been included in this "Gardening metaphor used by St.Paul often, Rom.II.v.17, 19, 23 etc."⁹⁸ of "incorporation in Christ as a grafting".⁹⁹ Consequently, both the renewed Covenant with Adam and Eve, and the Covenant with Noah, become types of the New Covenant and, as such, not only prefigure, but in some way further, Man's salvation. Herein, then, lies the value of the parallels we have been tracing between Adam and Noah. The skilful patterning of interrelated images and themes combine to suggest Adam's prefigurative significance. Adam, Noah, and Christ thus become key abutments¹⁰⁰ in the bridge spanning human history.

The effect is cumulative, progressing from type to truth in a powerful crescendo movement. As we move in ascending order from the Old Adam to the New, the fullest structural and poetic emphasis naturally comes to centre upon examples of the 'one just man' found 'so perfect and so just' for whose sake "man shall find grace" (III. 227). But, as we have intimated elsewhere,¹⁰¹ Eve too assumes an important typological role. In an interesting essay, Mother Mary Christopher Pecheux has carefully analyzed Eve's figurative role as a type of Mary "the woman through whom true life is to come"¹⁰². Just as "Adam was a special type of Christ in that his figurative relation to Christ was chiefly defined through contrasts rather than resemblances as is the usual emphasis",¹⁰³ patristic writers elaborated the ways in which "Mary second Eve" (X.183) "repaired what was lost by Eva".¹⁰⁴ However, it seems significant that whereas, although Milton allows Adam's typological role to expand and deepen through his association with Noah, it is transcended in its completion and fulfilment in Christ, Mother Pecheux finds that "even in the last books it is less perhaps that Eve is absorbed in Mary than that Mary is absorbed in Eve"¹⁰⁵.

After the reader has put the poem aside, the epic undergoes a retrospective rearrangement. As he becomes more fully aware of these recurring patterns of emphasis, the underlying design of the final books is seen to develop in a way which proves to be not only linear but also cyclical in arrangement. It is, of course, linear because from line to line, page to page and book to book, the narrative follows the course of human history to its final end in "this world's dissolution" (XII.459) and the raising of a "New heaven and earth" (III.335). But it is also cyclical because until this culminating act of re-creation human nature continually lapses and after each successive reversion to chaos or 'uncreation' the work of creation must be repeated and God's covenant with his faithful remnant renewed.

However, while on the one hand cyclical pattern and linear progress seem to combine fruitfully together in a spiral of progression, on the other hand these two readings of human history are perhaps ultimately irreconcilable, and the ambivalence of the poem's close may be in part due to this. The Reformers' emphasis upon St. Paul's application to Man's salvation of Isaiah's prophecy, "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea only a remnant shall be saved", inevitably led to a pessimistic view of human history. While Milton held that God's mercy is freely offered to all,¹⁰⁶ he also believed that only a small proportion would avail themselves of grace. Again and again the salvation of the faithful remnant is contrasted with the fate of the general mass of humanity. The pattern is clearly prefigured by Abdiel's stand against Satan and his train. The seraph is the only Angel "faithful found,/Among the faithless, faithful only he" (V.896-97). However, the theme of the faithful remnant, the minority remaining faithful to God out of a group, nation or race who have fallen away, recurs as a leitmotiv in the last two books with increasing structural and poetic emphasis. We find: Enoch, "The only righteous in a world perverse" (XI.701); Noah, "the only son of light/In a dark age" (XI.808-9), the "one just man" (XI.890) among "one whole world/Of wicked sons" (XI.874-75); and all those who follow Christ after his Resurrection and before the Second Coming are described as "the few/His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd" (XII.480-82). Indeed, with the failure of the Commonwealth and the Restoration of the Monarchy, the poet's own 'dark age' in which he can only hope to find a "fit audience... though few" (VII.31) is itself subtly drawn into this pattern.¹⁰⁷

Moreover, despite Marjorie Nicholson's protestations to the contrary, Milton's vision of human history shows many features in common with "the 'degenerative' theory, implied to some extent in the classical Four Ages and frequently read into Genesis, a pessimistic

theory often very acute among Reformation teachers"¹⁰⁸. We watch as the prelapsarian world of Man's innocence ends with the image of the divine "defaced" by sin. We see how "from that sin" Man derives "corruption to bring forth more violent deeds" (XI.427-28) till "all ... turn degenerate all depraved" (XI.306), while even after the Flood the "latter, as the former world/Still tend[s] from bad to worse" (XII.105-6). Only with the final End will the degenerative process of human history come to a halt.

The pessimistic strain in Ovid's account of the creation of Man readily accommodates itself to such a view. The emphasis on Man's original divine stock, "divino semine" (Met. I.78) and exalted position as "Sanctius ... animal" (Met. I.76) "Finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum" (Met.I.83) rapidly disappears with the Golden Age. In the locus classicus for the Ages of Man, Mankind steadily declines until the Age of Iron when "protinus inrupit venae peioris in aevum/ omne nefas" (Met.I.128-29) and the original stock is finally eradicated to be replaced by "subolem ... priori/dissimilem populo ... origine mira" (Met.I.251-52) as we have seen. Rather than emphasize fallen Man's spiritual potential, his kinship to God and his ability to refine himself "By faith and faithful works" (XI.64), Milton dwells on his weakness, his limitations, and his capacity for violence and evil, and his forgetfulness of his Maker. We more often see, if not "the image of God" then the image of Man - as Michael corrects us - once "so goodly and erect" (XI.509) "degraded" (XI.501), "debased" (XI.510) and "defaced" (IX.901) rather than raised "eminent/In wise deport" (XI.665-6).

Nor does Milton allow us to gain any consolation from the technological advances of civilisation that accompany the Fall¹⁰⁹. This is given added point if we bear in mind that the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha and the transformation of stones into the human

race had often been interpreted as an aetiological myth explaining the origin of civilisation and how "salvage men" were "made civil"¹¹⁰. Indeed, in the Georgics, Virgil had contrasted unfavourably the "soft primitivism" of the Golden Age with the developments of civilisation that attended the change from the ease and abundance of the first age to the hard lot of the race of Deucalion and Pyrrha¹¹¹.

According to the theodicy outlined in the first book of the Georgics, the change was an example of divine providence and not a punishment for Man's wickedness. By setting in train the cycle of the seasons, Jupiter bestirred mankind by compelling Man "to labor, to think, and to invent"¹¹².

However, as critics have recently come to recognize, the idea of "effortless innocence"¹¹³ is totally alien to Milton's paradise. Only the animals in Eden, "Rove idle unemployed" (IV.617); "Man hath his daily work of body or mind" (IV.618). There is thus nothing passive about Milton's concept of life before the Fall and in this, as Evans perceptively observes, he "revolutionized the traditional view of Eden and pre-lapsarian Man"¹¹⁴. Milton's commitment to his belief that Man's original condition was perfect and contained all things that were necessary for his dignity and happiness, led to the novel balance struck between Virgilian durus labor and Ovidian mollia otia. In paradise, Adam and Eve's "sweet gardening labour ... made ease/More easy" (IV.328-330). Once again unfallen Man's role as a gardener demonstrates that innocence is to be regarded as a state of equilibrium in which all the energies proper to human life have full expression and are held in balance.

The apparent advantages and benefits of civilisation exist, Milton repeatedly insists, only as measures to repair the damage caused by the Fall and would, in an unfallen world, be unnecessary and superfluous¹¹⁵. This view is expressed at various points in

the narrative but nowhere more strongly than in Raphael's visit to the nuptial bower. Adam and Eve greet and entertain their guest without any of the trappings of civilisation, and the simple but dignified perfection of their state of innocence is repeatedly contrasted with the superficial refinements of fallen cultures.

Moreover, in the hands of those forgetful of their Maker the "arts that polish life" (XI.610) are shown to be 'depraved from good'. Thus our response to the "technological and aesthetic innovations"¹¹⁶ of the sons of Lamech and descendants of Cain, Jubal, "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ" and Tubal-Cain, "the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron"¹¹⁷, "often interpreted as ... important steps in the history of civilisation"¹¹⁸, is immediately qualified by our recollection of a passage in Book I (ll.700-12) "where the arts of music and metal-working" had been "again associated"¹¹⁹, and where "Milton himself presses home the human relevance of what is happening ... in Hell"¹²⁰.

This implicit criticism is confirmed by the narrative sequel. "A bevy of fair women" singing "Soft amorous ditties" "to the harp" (XI.582-84) ensnare "that sober race of men" (XI.621), the descendants of Seth. These fair but corruptly sophisticated¹²¹ daughters of Eve have inherited only her softness and beauty. A comparison with Eve herself in all her rich complexity highlights the difference. In the state of innocence Eve is able to unite wifely virtues concerned with "household good", here described as "Woman's domestic honour and chief praise" (XI.617), with the graces of Venus, and to attend to her garden without seeming in any way rustica¹²².

Indeed, to some extent the qualities of 'hard' and 'soft' combine harmoniously in Eve herself as well as in her marriage to Adam, though, as we have seen, even the perfect equilibrium of innocence often trembles in the balance. However, in the fallen world no trace remains of the possibility that 'hard' and 'soft' may be complementary rather than opposing

forces. The feminine principle "becomes a powerful force which threatens to enervate and emasculate,"¹²³ while the masculine principle rapidly degenerates into a military ethic of "valour and heroic virtue" (XI.690).

And indeed, the rediscovery of metallurgy proves even more ominous. While Milton passes over in telling silence "what else" besides "tools" might "be wrought/Fusile or graven in metal"¹²⁴ (XI. 72-3), it brings us closer to the time when, prompted by Mammon, "Men also" will have:

Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures better hid.

(I.686-88)

These lines in turn lead us directly back to Ovid's account of Man's degeneration in the first book of the Metamorphoses and the tradition that the impious Iron Age began when Man first

... itum est in viscera terrae,
quasque reconsiderat Stygiisque admoberat umbris,
effodiuntur opes, inritamenta malorum.

(Met.I.138-40)¹²⁵

But they also remind us of how Satan "dugged up" the "entrails" of heaven for firearms (VI.516-17). Moreover, while "the brazen throat of war" (XI.713) seems reminiscent of Ovid's portrayal of the Golden Age as a time when "nondum ... aeris cormua flexi erat" (Met.I.97-98), it also appears to be an "image of seventeenth-century cannon"¹²⁶ and thus looks back to Satan's "hollow engines" (VI.484) and "their balls/Of missive ruin" (VI.518-19). In this way Milton subtly suggests that these "inventors rare" (XI.610) have taken the first step towards rediscovering¹²⁷ this pernicious "invention"¹²⁸ of the Fallen Angels. The Civil War had left its mark on Milton

and his epic.

Further support for this general line of interpretation is presented by the dark vision which immediately unfolds. The scene opens to reveal Man fully armed and already bent "on war and mutual slaughter" (VI.506). There are obvious similarities between the Giants of this violent age and "illa propago" of men which "contemptrix superum saevaeque avidissima caedio et violenta" thus testified to its origin from the blood of the Giants (Met.I.160-2). Once again Ovidian imagery strengthens the link between these "Destroyers ... of men" (XI.697) and the Fallen Angels¹²⁹; the emphatic references to the "Giants"¹³⁰ relate pointedly to the descriptions of the Fallen Angels in the first book of the poem where, as Collett points out, "all the mythological references, with the exception of Mulciber at the end, are to the Titans"¹³¹ and the "Earth-born" Giants that "warred on Jove" (I.198).¹³² Like his Augustan predecessors, Milton treats the revolts of the Titans and Giants as virtually synonymous, forming together an inclusive poetic symbol of evil, violence, destruction and disorder.¹³³ Again, while Ovid hails the Golden Age as a time of peace "sine militibus usu" in which "mollia securae peragebant otia gentes" (Met.I.99-100), in Milton's vision of a world thrown out of balance even "peace" now harbours its own evils and is as likely "to corrupt" as "war to waste" (XI.784).

Ovid's vision of human history is subtly ironic rather than darkly pessimistic. In his view the only enduring achievements are the products of the human mind. From the initial, grand conception of a divinely ordained cosmos, the universe of the Metamorphoses steadily declines into purposeless flux in an inexorable movement "ad ferrum ... ab aura" (Met.XV.260). In the final books this underlying theme forms a stridently ironic counterpoint to the narrative movement which ostensibly works towards the culmination of Jupiter's plans for mankind in the renewal of the Golden Age under Augustus. Ovid undoubtedly casts a sly glance at the Augustan myth in the final

lines of the poem. Augustus's reign, the very empire itself is, like all things in this world of metamorphoses,¹³⁴ doomed to pass.

In contrast, Milton's view is deeply ambivalent. His pessimism is, of course, offset by his confidence in the promised reward of the faithful and the transcendent meaning of human history, but it cannot be discounted and challenges any complacent oversimplification of his final position. The two conflicting strains remain unresolved. Marjorie Nicholson, noting Milton's expression of the paradox of the felix culpa, voiced in Adam's joyful outburst in Book Twelve (ll.469-78), confidently affirms that the final mood of the poem is triumph not despair.¹³⁵ Other readers have felt more uneasy about Milton's failure or deliberate refusal to reconcile the opposing elements of this paradox.¹³⁶ No single impression is allowed to prevail, as W.R. Johnson puts it, "the poem's joy does not triumph over its tragedy", indeed, the most that can be said is that in the final lines, "the joy and tragedy find a profound and dreadful equipoise, an equipoise that one feels to be insecure".¹³⁷

Milton's capacity to accommodate such powerfully ambivalent thoughts and feelings seems to be near the heart of his poetic greatness and is central to the continuing vitality of his work. Indeed, as we have seen in this study, dynamic tensions pervade Paradise Lost and are to be found in all the major poems. Critics have attempted to analyse and account for this in various ways. They remind us that Milton was both a theologian and a poet,¹³⁸ "a man of the Renaissance as well as a Puritan."¹³⁹ and the problematic position and divided

allegiance of the 'puritan humanist' has been fully explored.¹⁴⁰

Closely related to this dualistic perspective on Milton is the conflict many readers have sensed between the 'conscious' and 'unconscious meaning' of the poem.¹⁴¹ This critical controversy has tended to centre almost exclusively upon the question of Satan's status in the epic and Milton's treatment of classical myth, but more recently critics have begun to recognise that it has some bearing on Milton's complex characterisation of Eve and her relationship to Adam.

Waldock was among those who reacted most violently to what was felt to be the effects of Milton's failure to reconcile contradictory thoughts and feelings.¹⁴² He saw this in terms of a complete bifurcation, "a fundamental clash ... between what the poem asserts on the one hand, and what it compels us to feel on the other," which, in his eyes, marred the poem irremediably. "Paradise Lost does not profoundly satisfy us," he went on to argue, "because of the embedded ambiguity at the heart of it."¹⁴³

Other critics have developed Waldock's original position, extending it beyond the notion of a simple, radical dichotomy between the narrative idea and the affective dimension of the poem, and have concluded that perhaps Milton had deliberately failed to reconcile the opposing elements in his poem in a way that Waldock would feel to be satisfactory and satisfying. As Robert Adams explains:

The antimony on which Milton's work centers undergoes a full exploration, not a full resolution; we admire not the formal perfection with which a conclusion is worked out, but the truth and energy with which a conclusion is explored ...¹⁴⁴

Moreover, ambiguity "far from being a fault" is now more widely recognised as one of the most important and exciting aspects of Milton's complex vision in Paradise Lost and, indeed, as the very "source of the poem's power."¹⁴⁵

Similarly, the portrait of Milton and his tastes and interests that we glimpse in modern scholarship has softened considerably and developed in complexity. While it may well be felt that what we have gained "in breadth and subtlety" in our understanding of Milton, "we have lost in coherence," Adams is surely right in concluding that we are "the richer in being able to see light, artistry and humanity where the nineteenth century saw only gloom and moral earnestness tempered by organ music."¹⁴⁶

In connection with this, we may remember that although Thomas De Quincey once suggestively likened the lasting bond between Milton and Ovid to "the wedding of male and female counterparts", he attributed Ovid's hold upon Milton's imagination to an attraction of opposites rather than to any form of natural affinity between the two poets, Ovid's

... festal gaiety, and the brilliant velocity of his aurora borealis intellect forming a deep natural equipoise to the mighty gloom and solemn planetary movement in the mind of the other ...¹⁴⁷

Critics are now more inclined to see such a division, whether of complementary or sharply antithetical aspects, present within Milton's own mind. Adams observes that "the sort of tension on which his poetic style is built is one within the poet's temperament,"¹⁴⁸ while J. W. Saunders identifies this "temperamental contradiction" as "a natural

and exuberant sensuousness, a love of life in all its fertility" combined with "an ascetic philosophy, a passion for discipline in all its austerity."¹⁴⁹

In Paradise Lost Milton maintains the "balance or reconciliation
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of opposite and discordant qualities" that Coleridge found so essential to poetry. When writing his epic, Milton embraced both the Metamorphoses and the Bible, the imaginative truth of pagan symbolism and the literal truth of Genesis, sensuous beauty and Old Testament austerity. In this poem, where neither side is divorced from the other, the tension is productive, a source of combined strength rather than divisive weakness. Indeed, the marriage of Adam and Eve may be regarded as the fruit and symbol of the wedding of these two different aspects of Milton's poetic genius and the way in which they work together in the poem. Such an analogy lies beneath Christopher Ricks' conclusion that, "At its very best, Milton's style is remarkable for its simultaneous combination of what is energetically strong with what is winning soft and amiably mild."¹⁵¹ For at times it is almost as if these opposing principles had been distilled into two separate essences, projected and embodied in the human pair.

So too, the relationship of these opposing principles is as complex as the relationship of Adam and Eve before the Fall when the masculine and feminine principles, though held in equilibrium, are sometimes seen as complementary and at other times as contending forces, or, then again, as combining together in a pattern of higher and lower value. That one aspect could not be held subject to the other is one of the keys to the comprehensiveness of the world Milton

created in Paradise Lost, itself a transcendent union of contraries:

Discors; concordia fetibus apta est.

(Met. I. 433)

Notes.

1. Joan Malory Webber, 'The Politics of Poetry: Feminism and Paradise Lost', p.14.
2. Hermann Fränkel, Ovid, A Poet between Two Worlds (Berkeley, 1945), p.76.
3. S A ,l. 1036.
4. This point has also been made by Sharon C. Seelig in a paper delivered at the Annual Convention of the Northeast MLA at the University of Vermont, Burlington (8-10 April 1976). An abstract of this paper, 'Our General Mother: The Pattern for Mankind' is published in MQ X (1976) p.24.
5. Note too Adam's intention "to live savage" (IX. 1085, my emphasis).
6. Collett, p.94; p.88.
7. Knott, Milton's Pastoral Vision, p.124.
8. Incidentally, this interpretation answers Bentley's reproof, "Why yet? as if something had preceded, that was diminishing of them." (note to XI.8)
9. Wayne Shumaker, Unpremeditated Verse: Feeling and Perception in 'Paradise Lost' (Princeton, New Jersey; 1967), pp.198-200.
10. Christopher Grose, 'Milton on Ramist Similitude' published in Seventeenth-Century Imagery: Essays on Uses of Figures of Language from Donne to Farquhar, ed. Earl Miner (1971), p.115.
11. Summers, The Muse's Method, p.176. I intend my findings to complement Summers' interpretation of Eve's role here, expressed in 'The Voice of the Redeemer' (pp. 176-85). His careful comparison of the "sounds" of Eve's speech (X. 933-36) with the Son's "loving offer" to redeem Man (III. 236-41) leads him to conclude that Eve is seen here "mirror[ing] the redemptive actions of the Son" (p.178-79).

12. cf. Adam's comment that:

[Milton's] usual manner of adapting the phrases of others never involves the obscuring of his own lines; an echo from Virgil or Ovid is presented as lagniappe for the learned, but it does not substitute for sense in the English.

(p.156)

- 12a. 11. 377-80 are quoted by Shumaker, but only to draw attention to "the ambiguity of mersis" and "the suggestiveness, in this context, of daranum" (Unpremeditated Verse, p.200).
13. Fränkel, Ovid, A Poet between Two Worlds, p.77.
14. ibid., p.77; note 11 (quoted in square brackets) is printed on p.210.
15. Nicholson, p.304. She adds the qualification, "so far as [Eve] is concerned," but see the appendix, 'The Fruitless Hours' where I argue that Adam is completely unregenerate at this point.
16. The action of water upon stone yielded a sententia familiar both from the Bible (eg. Job XIV. 19) and the Classics (eg. Lucretius De Rerum Natura IV. 1286-87) and to be found in current proverbial expressions such as "Constant dropping will wear the stone" (M. P. Tilley, A Dictionary of Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries [1950] p.618). Moreover, its obvious figurative application was equally commonplace as Samuel Daniel's sonnet, Delia XI. 1-3 and 9-14 (1601) or Shakespeare's line, "Her tears will pierce into a marble heart," adequately testify. King Henry VI, Part III, III.i.38 from The New Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare, ed. Andrew S. Caincross (1964).
17. The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, ed. C. T. Onions, assisted by G. W. S. Friedrichsen and R. W. Burchfield (Repr. New York, 1974).
18. Webber, 'The Politics of Poetry: Feminism and Paradise Lost', p.13. From the moment of Eve's creation we observe how Adam's masculine characteristics are tempered by Eve's softening presence. Adam describes how Eve "infused sweetness into [his] heart/Unfelt before" (VIII. 474-75). cf. Lucretius De Rerum Natura V. 1011-14, where primitive man's original hardness has to be softened before human society can evolve.
19. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, pp.89-90.

20. Webber, 'The Politics of Poetry: Feminism and Paradise Lost', p.18.

21. Milton's Samson reaches a similar conclusion (SA ,11.406-10), and cf. 1.534 where he describes himself as "softened with pleasure and voluptuous life" (emphasis added).

21a. cf. the curse of Hermaphroditus:

"quisquis in hos fontes vir venerit, exeat inde
semivir et tactis subito mollescat in undis!"

(Met. IV. 385-86)

22. cf. Goodman's exhortations to the "Hard-hearted man", (The Fall of Man, p.256) and consider the revealing emphasis in the narrator's comment (XI. 494-98) as Adam confronts the many faces of death:

Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,
Though not of woman born; compassion quelled
His best of man, and gave him up to tears
A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess.

23. King Henry VI, Part III, I.iv.140-142.

24. Don Parry Norford also "wonders with Adam why God created the female ... instead of finding 'some other way to generate/Mankind'" (X. 894-95). Although created "essentially good" he maintains that she is "peculiarly liable to be 'depraved from good'", and that there is thus an "intimate affinity of evil with Eve", "My Other Half": The Coincidence of Opposites in Paradise Lost, p.33. Yet after the Fall Eve's "sweet attractive grace" (IV. 298) draws Adam to repentance and heightens her resemblance to the Son as an instrument of grace rather than looks back to an association with Sin who also displayed "attractive graces" (II. 762). cf. Dorothy Durke Miller, 'Eve', JEGP LXI (1962), p.544 and Saurat's comment, quoted with approval by Empson, that "Here Milton happily forgets his theories of the predominance of reason, and the influence of 'female charm' on Adam is this time his salvation", Milton's God (1961), p.167. For a very different interpretation of Eve's role here see Demetrakopoulos, 'Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman', note 12, p.107.

25. It seems interesting to recall in passing the power possessed by water in Comus. Some "Drops" from Sabrina's "fountain pure" (11.911-12) "thaw the numbing spell" (1.852) which keeps the Lady "In stony fetters fixed" (1.818).

26. Bentley objected to "soft" in this context "on the ground that if Eve's form were softer than angelic she would be altogether fluid and 'no fit Mate for her Husband'; Fowler effectively answers Bentley's complaint with a timely reminder that "soft" need not always and only mean "physically yielding and flexible", but may equally suggest "gentle; free from severity or rigour' (OED II 8)", pp.465-66.
27. But for a less positive view of this "power to soften and tame/ Severest temper" see PR II. 163-68.
28. See Met. X. 242, where the Propoetides are changed "in rigidum parvo silicem discrimine."
- 28a. Nicholson, p.236.
29. Consider Blamires, Milton's Creation, pp.71-73 and Fowler, note to III.144, p.151 and II. 405-6, p.166. See too Evans' persuasive theory that we see here vestiges of the long-standing tradition of a debate between the four daughters of God and that the speeches of Justice and Mercy have exercised a powerful, formative influence on this episode so that, "in spite of Milton's explicit statements to the contrary, the Father and Son do still preserve the characteristics of their allegorical predecessors", pp.231-36. However, such an interpretation necessarily involves some kind of unintentional failure by Milton in his handling of traditional materials. Such an assumption must not be made too readily bearing in mind the findings of Alan Sinfield's recent study in which he argues that:
- Protestants did not believe that the Old Testament God of wrath had been superseded; they relied equally upon all parts of the Bible for illustrations of God's ways with his people and did not play down the violent and punitive elements in the New Testament.
- (p.16)
- Accordingly, Milton's conception of the Father would seem to display "the protestant respect for a stern authoritarian deity" (p.16) and the "essential contradiction in Reformation theology - the freeing of the human mind from worldly authority and the suppression of it by a punitive deity." (p.149).
30. Evans, p.231.

31. For Rajan's close reading of this passage see his introduction to John Milton: 'Paradise Lost' Books I and II (1964), p.xxxvi.
32. Sinfield, p.148.
33. Helen Gardner, A Reading of 'Paradise Lost' (Oxford, 1965), pp.87-88.
34. See Marcia Landy 'Kinship and the Role of Women in Paradise Lost', p.10, where she claims, "Excluded from Heaven, woman is found on Earth and in Hell", and cf. Gilbert, 'Patriarchal Poetry and Women Readers', p.373.
35. Webber has commented on Christ's rejection of "all the so-called masculine values" ('The Politics of Poetry: Feminism and Paradise Lost', p.20).
36. "'My Other Half": The Coincidence of Opposites in Paradise Lost', p.29; p.23.
37. See Roland M. Frye, Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts (Princeton, 1978), p.294.
38. 'The Hard Hearted Hell of Self Delusion', MQ VII (1973), p.13.
39. Fowler's note to IV. 42-43, p.193.
40. Christopher Harvey, Schola Cordis or The Heart of it Selfe, gone away from God; brought back againe to him, and instructed by him in 47 Emblems (1647), Epigr.16.1-2, p.65.
41. 'The Hard Hearted Hell of Self Delusion', pp.13-14.
42. Rosemary Freeman, English Emblem Books (Repr. New York, 1978), p.139.
43. cf. what "wonders move the obdurate to repent?" (VI. 790), applied to the fallen Angels; this line distinctly recalls, as Fowler observes in his note to lines 789-91, how "Pharaoh's heart was hardened (Exod. xiv.4), in spite of the miraculous plagues" (p.349).
44. Sinfield, p.118.

45. On 'softness of heart' as a prerequisite for salvation see Calvin, Institutio Christianae Religionis (Lavsannae, 1576) II. v.5, pp.72-73, and cf. De Doct. I. viii (Col. XV, p.81).
46. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to 'Paradise Lost', pp.130-33; 'Milton's God', Nicholson, pp.223-25; Arnold Stein, Answerable Style, p.128 and others.
47. Irene Samuel, 'The Debate in Heaven; A Reconsideration of Paradise Lost, III, 1-417', PMLA LXXI (1957), pp.601-11.
48. Jackson Cope, The Metaphoric Structure of Paradise Lost, p.168.
49. Martz, Poet of Exile, p.97.
50. Fowler's note to XI. 10-14, p.564.
51. In the terms set forth by Milton in De Doct., Adam and Eve are thus released from the second degree of Death, MORS SPIRITUALIS, and may be said "regenerari, et renasci et denuo creari", I. xii (Col. XV, p.204).
52. De Doct. I. xviii (Col. XV, p.366). Milton's description of how regeneration leads to "RESIPIENTIA", "SALVIFICA FIDES" and "INSITIO IN CHRISTUM" in De Doct. I. xv-xxii provides an illuminating commentary on the effects of regeneration in Adam and Eve.
53. Indeed, it is not too fanciful to regard Adam and Eve as the first Christians, for by the end of the epic they are justified by their faith in Christ as their Saviour. See Blackburn's persuasive argument in 'Paradise Lost and Found: The Meaning and Function of the "Paradise Within" in Paradise Lost', MS V (1973), pp.201-3, and note Fowler's conclusion that "faith is the theme of Bk XI, as repentance was the theme of Bk X" (note to XI. 355, p.580). For the significance of the shift from vision to narrative and thus from physical sight to the inward eye of faith see B. K. Lewalski, "Structure and Symbol of Vision in Michael's Prophecy Paradise Lost, Books XI-XII", PQXLII(1963), pp.25-35 quoted with approval by Madsen in From Shadowy Types to Truth p.166. And cf. B. Rajan, 'Paradise Lost: the hill of history', in The Lofty Rhyme: A Study of Milton's Major Poetry (1970), pp.79-99.

54. XI. 22-30.
55. The reiterated use of 'seed' has not passed unnoticed; K. M. Swaim has commented on 'seed' as "the form vegetation imagery takes in the final portions of Paradise Lost, a term of potential for growth, especially in Christ", and she goes on to claim that "Of the thirty mentions of Seed in the poem, twenty-six occur in the final three books" ('Flower, Fruit and Seed', p.171).
56. Romans IX. 8: "the children of the promise are counted for the seed."
57. Cherrell Guilfoyle, "'If Shape It Might Be Call'd That Shape Had None": Aspects of Death in Milton', MS XIII (1979), p.45.
58. John Everard, The Gospel-Treasury Opened (1659), The First Part, p.55, quoted by W. G. Madsen From Shadowy Types to Truth, p.41.
59. The DEVOVT HART or Royal Throne of the Pacificall Solomon Composed by F. St. Luzvic S. J. Enlarged with Incentives by F. St. Binet of the same S. and now enriched with Hymnes by a new hand (Printed by John Coursturier, 1634). English translation by "H. A." attributed to Henry Hawkins. In a paper delivered at the 1976 MLA convention in New York, B. K. Lewalski pointed out that the "School of the Heart" tradition of emblem making was used by Protestants and Catholics alike. An abstract of this paper, 'Emblems and Religious Lyric, George Herbert and Protestant Emblematics' is published in MQ XI (1977), p.27.
60. SCHOLA CORDIS, "Embleme 28", p.112; "Embleme 29", p.116.
61. See L. Martz, The Paradise Within: Studies in Vaughan, Traherne and Milton (New Haven, Conn; 1964) in which he considers "the Garden of the Soul" to be "one of the great central symbols in the Christian literature of meditation and contemplation" (p.9).
62. Schola Cordis, Ode 27. 4. 2-3, p.110; Epigr. 27 . 3, p.109. But other suggestive emblems include: "Embleme 8", CORDIS DURITIES", p.32; and "Embleme 16", "CORDIS EMOLLITIO", p.64.
63. Shumaker, Unpremeditated Verse, p.200.

64. ibid., p.199.
65. ibid., p.199. But for a similar use of the tear drop as a microcosmic counterpart of the macrocosmic flood cf. John Donne's 'A valediction: Forbidding mourning' (l.6) and 'A valediction: of weeping' (ll. 17-18).
66. And cf. XI. 874-75 where Adam echoes Michael's word play at X. 627 in his reference to "one whole world/Of wicked sons destroyed" (emphasis added) in the Flood.
67. Fowler's note to XI. 10-14, p.564.
68. Collett, p.95.
69. Sandys, p.67. Note too Sir Walter Raleigh in his History of the World had accepted the historical authenticity of Deucalion's flood and had similarly concluded that this "flood was after Noah's flood ended 782. yeares" (p.102).
70. Fowler's note to XI. 10-14, p.564.
71. Collett, p.95.
72. See Fowler's note to XI. 621-22, p.595 and also Adams, p.125, where he maintains that "One of the main directions which the whole story takes is away from the fabulous and mythical into the prosaic and everyday."
73. Collett, p.94.
74. I am extending a suggestion made in passing by John Spencer Hill that "the Deucalion - Noah - Christ triad ... provides a graded symbolic frame for the historical vision recorded in Book XI and XII", 'Image and Structure in Sonnet XXIII', p.133. For the allegorical tradition in which Deucalion had been interpreted as "Christ saving the world from the flood-waters of sin and turning the stony-hearted", see Ann Moss, Ovid in Renaissance France, p.33.

75. It would also confer additional propriety on Milton's evident reliance upon Ovidian material to provide poetic detail for his own account of the 'general Deluge' (XI. 738-53). The extent of Milton's indebtedness to Ovid here has been thoroughly documented by D. P. Harding in Milton and the Renaissance Ovid, pp. 80-84.
76. Taken from Sandys' listing of the correspondences between Noah and Deucalion, pp.68-69.
77. The two judgements and accompanying cataclysms which would purge the world by flood and fire respectively were linked in Scripture cf. Luke XVII. 26-30. Milton himself expressly associates the two at XI. 892-901. And cf. Met. I. 253-58 where Ovid refers to a general conflagration that is to end the world.
78. Again, the pattern predates human history. More than one critic has remarked upon the "images of Revelation" and the "overtones of the Last Judgment" to be found in Milton's description of the war in Heaven (Guilfoyle, 'Aspects of Death in Milton', p.48). See also Madsen From Shadowy Types to Truth, pp.110-11, and the appendix, 'The Fruitless Hours' p.397, where I argue that the Son's approach effects a re-creation in which Heaven itself is purged and renewed.
79. cf. De Doct. I. xvii, "HOMINIS RENOVATIO EST QUA IS AB STATU MALEDICTIONIS ATQUE IRAE DIVINAE AD STATUM GRATIAE DEDUCITUR" (Col. XV, p.342).
80. Sandys, p.69.
81. VII.367 and cf. Ricks' suggestive comment that "just as the stars receive and transmit light by 'tincture and reflection', so too do Milton's words", Milton's Grand Style, p.88).
82. Knott briefly remarks that this comparison "minimizes the guilt of Adam and Eve" (Milton's Pastoral Vision, pp.124-25).
83. It is interesting to note that the Angel pauses once more "at the world's great period" (XII. 467).
84. Fowler finds in XI. 852-54 echoes of VII. 285 ff. describing "the receding waters at the Creation", the connection implying that "'one whole world' (1.874) has been destroyed, and that God is creating afresh a New Creation based on the covenant" (p.606).

85. Peter I. iii. 20: "in the days of Noah ... few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."
86. cf. Deucalion and Pyrrha's ritual purification of themselves with the flood-waters of Cephisus's stream (Met. I. 369-72), and Comus 11.910-11, where, as Northrop Frye has observed, "The analogy between Sabrina's sprinkling of the Lady and the rite of baptism ... is clear enough." See 'The Revelation to Eve' in 'Paradise Lost': A Tercentenary Tribute, ed. B. Rajan, p.40.
87. Matthew III. ii, where John's baptism "with water unto repentance" is a sign of Christ's baptism "with the Holy Ghost and with Fire" and the Last Judgment and the final purgation by fire.
88. cf. De Doct. I. viii (Col. XV, pp. 366-68).
89. cf. Met I. 323-4 where Ovid says of Deucalion, "nec amantior aequi/vir fuit" and Sandys, p.68 where "Both Noah and Deucalion are celebrated for their justice and Religion."
90. For a more detailed discussion of the significance of 'relent' in this context see p.332 of this chapter.
91. cf. V. 283 where we are simply told that Raphael appears in "colours" that were "dipped in heaven".
92. It is interesting to contrast Ovid's account in the Metamorphoses (I. 270-71) where it is the appearance of Iris, messenger of Juno and goddess of the rainbow, that heralds the imminent deluge.
93. This answers Bush's charge that "the reference attracts attention to itself as a small but superfluous patch" (Pagan Mythology in the Renaissance, p.285).
94. Blamires, Milton's Creation, p.271 and cf. Hume's note to XI. 65.

95. cf. Lynn Veach Sadler's perceptive comments on "the dynamic Miltonic view of history in which each dispensation progressively unfolds God's Providence and the way by which each man may be regenerate in his own day " ('Regeneration and Typology: Samson Agonistes and its Relation to De Doctrina Christiana, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, 'SEL XII [1972], p.144).
96. Guilfoyle, 'Aspects of Death in Milton', p.48.
97. Fowler, p.610.
98. Hume, note to XI. 35.
99. Fowler, note to XI. 35; p.565.
100. Other important figurae from the Old Testament, Abraham, Moses, Joshua and David exemplify other aspects of the Messiah's role.
101. See p.247.
102. Mother Mary Christopher Pecheux, 'The Concept of the Second Eve in Paradise Lost', p.176
103. B. K. Lewalski, Milton's Brief Epic (Providence, 1966), p.176.
104. Andrew Willet, Hexapla in Genesin (1605), p.54. But it is important to note that the Reformer is dismissing the idea as "but a fond conceit" and certainly by the mid-seventeenth century it would normally be associated with Catholic meditations. cf. H. A., (attributed to Henry Hawkins) Parthenia Sacra (Aldington, Kent 1950; first published 1633), p.112. So it is especially curious that while "In his pamphlet Of Prelaticall Episcopacy, Col. Ed. III, 94, Milton scolds Irenaeus for making the special relationship between Eve and Mary a basis for Papistical idolatory. In Paradise Lost he himself adopts the idea." (James Holly Hanford, A Milton Handbook [New York, 1946; 4th ed.], p.246.)

105. Pecheux, 'The Concept of the Second Eve', p.366. See also 'Adam Unparadised', p.120 where Kermode remarks upon "the centrality of the paradox of Eve as destroyer and giver of life" and Seaman's comments on Eve's "double image" as "temptress" and redemptrix" in The Moral Paradox of 'Paradise Lost', pp.113-14.
106. For Milton's 'Arminian' modifications of the rigorous Calvinist position on Predestination see De Doct. I. iv.
107. So too Milton had wryly remarked upon the existence of a "Paradise of Fools to few unknown/Long after" (III. 496-97, emphasis added).
108. Nicholson, p.311.
109. Contrast the enthusiastic reception given to 'The Handy Crafts' in Sylvester's Du Bartas II.i.4 and Fowler's note to XI. 556-77, p.592-93.
110. Sandys, p.70.
111. cf. Georgics I. 60-63; I. 121-46.
112. Anthony Low, 'Milton, Paradise Regained, and Georgic', PMLA XLVIII (1983), p.153.
113. A. J. A. Waldock, 'Paradise Lost and Its Critics' p.22, and contrast the views of more recent critics such as B. K. Lewalski, 'Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden', pp.86-117 and Thomas H. Blackburn, ' "Uncloister'd Virtue": Adam and Eve in Milton's Paradise', pp.119-37.
114. Evans, p.249.
115. cf. X. 1076-81.
116. Summers, The Muse's Method, p.202.
117. Genesis, IV. 21-22.

129. For "the allegorical tradition which identified the Gigantomachia with the Revolt of the Angels" see Harding pp. 57-60 and Milton and the Renaissance Ovid pp.85-87.
130. "Giants of mighty bone" (XI. 642), "gigantic deeds" (XI. 659), "prodigious births" (XI. 687), "giants" (XI. 688).
131. Collett, p.89. cf. I. 197-200 and 230-37 with Met. V. 346-48. Note too Milton's reference to the "giant angels" (VII. 605).
132. In a recent article, 'The Titans and the Giants: Paradise Lost and the Tradition of the Renaissance Ovid', MO XII (1978), pp. 9-16, Albert C. Labriola has attempted to distinguish between the two rebellions since his argument, that "the relationship between the fallen angels and fallen men" is "an adaption of the relationship between the Titans and the Giants" (p.15), rests upon such a distinction. However, his theory is based upon a misreading of Ovid and Milton in turn. Neither in Book I, nor Book V, does Ovid mention the Titans let alone describe the Giants as their "descendants and offspring" as Labriola maintains (p.11). Moreover, Labriola makes much of the parallelism between "the Titans' revolt under the leadership of Typhon" and the rebellion of the fallen Angels under Satan. However, while the parallel between Typhon, or Typhoeus as he was also known, and Satan is indeed of interest, it is important to note that Typhon was a Giant and not a Titan (as Labriola mistakenly supposes, pp.11-12) and was clearly so regarded by Ovid (Met. V. 346-48).
133. cf. Horace, Odes III. iv. 41-80, and Fowler's note to I. 197-200, p.55.
134. Except, of course, the Metamorphoses itself. See Met. XV. 871-89.
135. Nicholson, p.319.
136. See Giamatti, The Earthly Paradise, pp.349-50; Kermode, 'Adam Unparadised' p.121; Adams, pp.125-26; Rajan, 'Paradise Lost' and the Seventeenth Century Reader (1947), pp.78-92; Martz, The Paradise Within, pp.141-63; Tillyard, Milton, p.287. While Bentley's proposed emendation of the final couplet is justly notorious, it is interesting to note that even Addison would have preferred to have seen it omitted altogether. See Joseph Addison, Criticisms on Milton (essays originally published in the Spectator) reprinted with an introduction by Henry Morley (1905), p.188.

137. W. R. Johnson, 'The Problem of the Counter-classical Sensibility and Its Critics' California Studies in Classical Antiquity, III (1970), p.134.
138. D. P. Harding, The Club of Hercules, pp.68-69; see also Bush, Pagan Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition, p.273. See too The Literary Temper of the English Puritans, Louisiana State University Studies in Humanities Series IX (1961), introduced by L. A. Sasek, p.13.
139. Tillyard, Milton, p.143
140. See 'Puritan Humanists: Sidney, Spencer, Milton', Sinfield pp.20-33.
141. See Tillyard, 'Paradise Lost: The Conscious Meaning' pp.257-75 and 'Paradise Lost: The Unconscious Meaning' (Milton, pp.276-88).
142. A. J. A. Waldock, 'Paradise Lost and Its Critics' (Cambridge, 1947), p.145. But see also Stein, Answerable Style, p. 62, where he warns us against "referring all complexities in the poem to the psyche of the writer".
143. Waldock, 'Paradise Lost and Its Critics', p.145.
144. Adams, p.207.
145. L. W. Hyman, 'The Ambiguity of Paradise Lost', MQ XIII (1979), p.1.
146. Adams, p.201.
147. Thomas De Quincey, 'Milton Versus Southey and Landor' from The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey: New and Enlarged Edition in 14 Volumes by David Masson (Edinburgh, 1890), XI, p.449.
148. Adams, p.204.
149. J. W. Saunders, 'Milton, Diomedes and Amaryllis', ELN XXII (1955), p.254. cf. Sir Rostrevor Hamilton, Hero or Fool (Folcroft, Pa.; 1969), pp.37-38.
150. Cited by Saunders, 'Milton, Diomedes and Amaryllis', p.254.
151. Ricks, Milton's Grand Style, p.148.

APPENDIX I

The Sun and the Moon

Illuminating light is shed upon Adam's mythological role as Phoebus Apollo,¹ his initial response to Eve and the nature of their subsequent relationship from a surprising source, one of Milton's youthful essays in the Ovidian manner, Elegia Septima. The seventh elegy is presented as the poet's own recollection of a fleeting, springtime encounter with a beautiful but elusive young lady, engineered by Cupid to avenge the belittling of his divinity. As even this brief outline suggests, Milton's elegy is primarily fashioned upon the model of Phoebus' unrequited love for Daphne - also the direct result of the machinations of the angry God of love - as related by Ovid in the first book of the Metamorphoses (ll.452-64).² When regarded in the light of the original story in Ovid, Milton's elegy displays a striking number of significant parallels with Adam's description of how he fell in love with Eve, related to Raphael in Book VIII of Paradise Lost.³ Milton's account of Adam's, and his own personal experience of the onset of love thus seem to share the same imaginative springboard.

By suggesting this linkage, I do not, of course, mean to imply that Adam's love for Eve is to be considered as in any way a punishment, certainly not for hybris. Eve is created, according to Milton, at the direct request of Adam, who openly confesses his need for love and companionship to his maker. Although the demands of decorum preclude the direct intervention of Cupid in the affair, his active agency has

in fact been strongly insinuated in Book IV (ll.763-65).

Ovid's account of Phoebus' love for Daphne gains additional prominence in his narrative not only by being the story of Phoebus' first amatory experience but also by being the first love story in the epic. Ovid introduces the tale thus:

Primus amor Phoebi Daphne Peneia, quem non
fors ignara dedit, sed saeva Cupidinis ira...

(Met. I.452-53)

A similar emphasis is accorded to the experience of first love in both the Miltonic accounts, though certain differences of approach are immediately discernible. In each case, Milton shifts the oblique, third person narration to the vivid and direct expression of first person narrative so that the story is told entirely from the male lovers' perspective as they themselves relate their first experience of love. Adam's account exhibits the same intensity of response and sense of excitement barely suppressed that animate the lines of the youthful poet. Editors and commentators differ in their judgement of whether the incident recounted by the young Milton was real or imaginary, but they are unanimously agreed over the most important issue, the accent of sincerity and exhilaration overlaying his use of Ovidian material, leaving no doubt about the keen hold the subject had taken upon his emotions and intellect. And he has succeeded in transmitting the residue of this intense and excited response to vivify his embodiment of Adam's experience:

Milton's youthful encounter is checked well short of the climax we would have expected from his Roman predecessor. As E. K. Rand notes, "Ovid is often tantalizing, but never to this extent."⁵ Milton proves unable to make even a declaration to the mysterious lady. With instinctive artistic sense, the young poet refrains from imagining her pierced with Love's leaden arrow. To his chagrin, she simply fails to notice him as she passes by, leaving him to lament forever his lost opportunity.

Milton does not end on this conventional note, however; he leaves the way open for a new development of thought. Although his despair seems only to be deepened by his musing that she might have proved sympathetic had he had the chance to proffer his suit, yet this reflection at once prepares for the anticipatory note on which the poem ends. In a prayer to the god of love, he looks forward to the successful consummation of his desires when next he strikes:

Tu modo da facilis, posthaec mea siqua futura est,
Cuspis amatuos figat ut una duos.

(Elegia VII. 101-2)

We may trace this basic pattern to its final evolution in Paradise Lost, when Milton fashions Adam's reaction to the creation of Eve and her sudden disappearance. In Genesis we are merely told:

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam,
and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed
up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the
Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and
brought her unto the man.

(Gen. II. 21-22)

Milton adds soft and subtle shading to give depth and emotional colour to the bare outline of Genesis. He achieves this by drawing out the implications and possibilities for development actually inherent in the passage, seizing upon the suggestion of a period of separation implicit in the final line from Genesis quoted above.

His prime innovation is to have Adam, "Though sleeping" (VIII.463), entirely conscious of what is happening.⁶ Adam himself explains how, although his eyes were closed, "the cell/Of fancy [his] internal sight" was left open "by which":

Abstract as in a trance methought I saw,
 Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape
 Still glorious before whom awake I stood,
 Who stooping opened my left side, and took
 From thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
 And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,
 But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed:
 The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;
 Under his forming hands a creature grew,
 Manlike, but different sex, so lovely fair,
 That what seemed fair in all the world, seemed now
 Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained
 And in her looks, which from that time infused
 Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before.

(VIII.460-75)

The passage is now the conductor of a more powerful emotional charge since Adam is made acutely aware of Eve's sudden removal. Like the young poet, Adam suffers from the frustration of all his hopes:

She disappeared, and left me dark, I waked
 To find her, or for ever to deplore
 Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure.

(VIII.478-80)

The keen sense of bitter disappointment is conveyed by the imagery of darkness and light; the sun's "fair light" (VIII. 273) is eclipsed with the bright evanescent vision of Eve. This carries considerable ironic force when we recall that Adam has been tacitly linked with the sun god himself. Moreover, it establishes an interesting connection with the patterning of darkness and light⁷ in Elegia Septima:

Talis et abreptum solem respexit, ad Orcum
Vectus ab attonitis Amphiaraus equis.

(11.83-84)

Beautiful women are said to emit a radiance comparable with the sun's own brilliance: "Auctaque luce dies gemino fulgore coruscat" (1.55).⁸ In this line Milton gallantly asserts that the fair troop act as a second source of light, intensifying the brightness of the sun. In the next line he goes further: "Fallor? an et radios hinc quoque Phoebus habet" (1.56) and wittily compounds the conceit, as with Ovidian ingenuity, he confesses himself in doubt as to whether the sun is actually the primary source of light or whether he merely reflects their radiance as the moon derives its light from the sun. The masculine function of the sun as the source of light is thus inverted to become a passive reflector.

When the girl passes from view, then, it is as if the sun had set forever on the young poet's world, plunging him into the darkness of despair. He can compare his situation with propriety to that of Amphiaraus, doomed to leave the sunlit world and remain for all time in the dark depths of hell. Adam is 'left dark' too after the 'excessive brightness' of the radiant vision of Eve's beauty and suffers a similar desolation.

It is notable that when Milton first catches sight of the outstanding beauty, there follows a clearly audible echo of Ovid's description of Diana among her nymphs, her chastity besmirched by Actaeon's profaning glance. Milton's line reads: "Unam forte aliis supereminuisse notabam" (l.61), while in Ovid we find: "tamen altior illis/ipsa dea est colloque tenus supereminent omnis" (Met. III. 181-82).⁹ The possibility of an Ovidian connection here seems in part confirmed by the pentameter of the couplet: "Principium nostri lux erat illa mali" (l.62). In this line the young lady is referred to as 'illa lux': the moon? But if so, the moon is threatening to usurp the primacy of the sun. This seems particularly significant when we consider that Eve too will be implicitly and explicitly likened to the fair virginal moon goddess, Diana, and the calculated ambiguity of this linkage.

For this bears an interesting connection with Milton's conceit, quoted earlier, in which the sun is relegated to the subsidiary role of reflecting light. This should not, I feel, be simply dismissed as an example of youthful enthusiasm or even wry humour. From the first Latin elegy to Paradise Regained, Milton discloses in his work an intense but ambivalent response to women; his lifelong appreciation of the power of feminine beauty was qualified by concomitant feelings of vulnerability when exposed to 'beauty's powerful glance.'

This in turn throws light upon the relationship of male and female in Paradise Lost. Initially, Raphael confirms that the moon is dependent on the sun as the source of her light:

First in his east the glorious lamp was seen,
 Regent of day, ... / ... less bright the moon,
 But opposite in levelled west was set
 His mirror, with full face borrowing her light
 From him.

(VII.370-71;375-78)

As Watkins points out, the idea "that the female moon's paler light is mere reflection of the sun's fits neatly Milton's belief in the subordination of woman to man - 'He for God only, she for God in him.'"¹⁰ As the attendant moon (VIII.149) is a reflection and satellite of the sun, so Eve is the image and dependent of Adam.

However, Raphael later casts this hierarchy into doubt when he describes how the sun and moon communicate "male and female light,/ Which two great sexes animate the world" (VIII.150-51). These lines, as Don Parry Norford maintains, "do seem to suggest that female light, as one of the two great sexes is self-luminous, which apparently contradicts the idea of the moon as simply a mirror."¹¹ The relationship between male and female has now become one of mutual dependency, with "communicating" (VIII.150) suggesting the fruitful intercourse of equally active partners. In the earthly sphere a more precarious equilibrium is preserved between male and female forces. Eve's radiant beauty tends to throw into confusion the primary hierarchy and casts doubt upon the respective positions of Adam and Eve in the chain of being.

It is interesting to speculate whether Milton consciously associates Adam's situation with his own experience as described in a poem written in the days of his poetic apprenticeship to Ovid, or whether it emerges from a deeper connecting shaft of memory. Whichever

is nearer the truth, outcrops of Ovidian material are to be found embedded in Milton's verse throughout his poetic career.

Notes

1. See Fowler's note to IV.303, p.213, and Bush's note to IV.481-82.
2. It is also, of course, the first love story, "Primus amor", (Met.I.452) of the epic.
3. For the other possible Ovidian influences on this episode, see pp.252-53.
4. cf. Bush, The Greek and Latin Poems, p.130.
5. E. K. Rand, 'Milton in Rustication', p.112.
6. But see Evans, pp.261-64.
7. It is first introduced in ll.15-16, picked up again in ll.55-56 and further developed in lines 58 and 62.
8. cf. D. Aers and B. Hodge, '"Rational Burning": Milton on Sex and Marriage', where they argue that at VIII. 46-47, Eve "functions partly as a goddess, but also unmistakably as sun, active principle of growth and hence a male force" (p.20).
9. But see also Virgil, Aeneid I. 498-502 and Homer, Odyssey VI. 102-10.
10. Watkins, An Anatomy of Milton's Verse, note 9, p.60.
11. Don Parry Norford '"My Other Half": The Coincidence of Opposites in Paradise Lost', p.25.

APPENDIX II

Botticelli, Milton and Ovid and Three Scenes of Eternal Spring

The lateral scene of the Primavera, flanking the central figure of Venus on her left, forms an interesting iconographic gloss upon the trompe l'oeil effect whereby Eve seems to appear first as Daphne and then in the guise of Flora. It seems more than likely that Botticelli, too, may have discerned that the two elements of pursuit and metamorphosis could be felicitously combined to form two consecutive phases of a composite whole. For in this detail from the painting we are confronted with the same two episodes restated in the medium of visual representation. In each case we may confidently trace the thread back to Ovid and those passages in the Metamorphoses and Fasti where he treats of Daphne and Flora respectively.

Ovid's mastery of vivid word painting is rightly celebrated. While the pictorial quality of his verse lent his work to memorable visual translation, in the Primavera, Botticelli exhibits his acknowledged genius for translating literary texts into exact but expressive visual equivalents. I now propose to make a more detailed study of this particular grouping of figures, which may be identified, looking from right to left, as Zephyr, Chloris and Flora.

Let us first remind ourselves of the salient details of the story as related by Flora herself in the *Fasti*. She explains, "Chloris eram, nympe campi felicis":

quae fuerit mihi forma, grave est ^{narrare} modestae;
 sed generum matri repperit illa deum.
 ver erat, errabam: Zephyrus conspexit, abibam.
 insequitur, fugio: fortior ille fuit.

(*Fasti* V 197; 199-202)

On the far right of this detail from the *Primavera*, we can easily recognise the amorous Zephyr as he enters the picture, a veritable gale of passion. He swoops to the earth to gather the reluctant young virgin nymph whose charms, scarcely concealed beneath the swirling, diaphonous material, are clearly pronounced as nubile.

The unloosened tresses of Chloris' hair stream out as she runs, her arms outstretched before her in flight. She turns her head, eyes wide open in terror, to regard her pursuer as she feels his breath, and his hands about to seize her. Chloris stumbles awkwardly forward, her strength evidently exhausted. She parts her lips to scream, perhaps, but only flowers issue forth with her breath. This latter detail securely links her with Flora, whom we may recollect: "dum loquitur, vernas efflat ab ore rosas" (*Fasti* V. 194).

Moreover, there exists an enigmatic spatial relationship between Chloris and the figure to her right, who is placed in such close proximity as to be contiguous, and yet both seem utterly oblivious of the imminent collision. It seems likely that this curious overlapping of images is, as Wind maintains, "a calculated effect"¹ designed to establish the temporal precedence of one moment over the

other,² as the sophisticated camera techniques of stroboscopic photography enable us to analyse the intervening movements in a single completed action. The interaction between Zephyr and Chloris is thus the direct antecedent of the adjacent image.

We are certainly justified in identifying this figure as Flora; her attire, richly decorated with colourful floral motifs and her distinctive gesture - she is invariably represented as strewing flowers - help confirm this impression.³ Furthermore, we may just distinguish that certain of the flowers that form the pattern of Flora's dress seem to emanate from Chloris' finger-tips.⁴ This detail, combined together with the stream of flowers that issues from her lips, gives a strong impression of incipient metamorphosis.

Such a scene of flight, pursuit and imminent rape, though not at all enlarged upon or unfolded in any detail, is implicit in the passage from the Fasti initially quoted, and is made more explicit by Flora's allusion:

et dederat fratri Boreas ius omne rapinae
ausus Erechthea praemia ferre domo.

(Fasti V. 203-4)

It is not surprising that, as Edgar Wind remarks, "the scene has reminded more than one observer of the pursuit and transformation of Daphne."⁵

Indeed, this passage from the Metamorphoses (I. 490-544) would seem to form the most helpful commentary on the action in Botticelli's picture. Ovid's vivid description seems to conform in almost every visual detail with Botticelli's depiction of the pursuit of the fleeing nymph by Zephyr. Even as she fled:

tum quoque visa decens ; nudabant corpora venti,
 obviaque adversas vibrabant flamina vestes,
 et levis impulsos retro dabat aura capillos,
 auctaque forma fuga est ...
 ... deus et virgo ... hic spe celebr, illa timore.
 qui tamen insequitur pennis adiutus Amoris,
 ocior est requiemque negat tergoque fugacis
 imminet et crinem spasum cervicibus adflat.
 viribus absumptis expalluit illa citaeque
 victa labore fugae ...

(Met. I. 527-30, 539-44)

However, Ronald Lightbown has peremptorily dismissed even the possibility of such a connection:

This group of three figures has been strangely misinterpreted as representing a metamorphosis. The great German scholar, Warburg, saw long ago that its literary source is a passage in Ovid's Fasti.⁶

But, as I have previously intimated, since the story of Flora as recounted by Ovid is inherently one of metamorphosis ("Chloris eram, quae Flora vocor", Fasti V. 195), the two perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Botticelli's painting is thus an exact, pictorial representation of the process which begins with the fructifying breath of Zephyr and culminates in the radiant figure, raised to the rank of goddess, and endowed with the realm of flowers as her bridal gift, who steps forth

with the ease of manner, dignity and grace that we should expect of Ovid's mater florum. A certain rhythmic continuity subsists between the two figures of Chloris and Flora, conforming to the general pressure of movement which gradually draws the attention of the observer from the wings to the centre and the unpretentious figure of Venus, and out again. Chloris falls forward to recover her balance as she merges into the perfectly poised figure of Flora, and, by juxtaposing them, thus Botticelli seems also to be pointing the distinction between primitive and refined beauty.

In Paradise Lost and the Primavera, we may find expressed a parallel process, a progression in which amor, embodied in the ardent lovers, Adam and Zephyr, and the examples of castitas, Eve and Chloris, culminate in the refined beauty, pulchritudo of Eve and Flora as brides. Edgar Wind explains:

In the guise of an Ovidian fable, the progression Zephyr-Chloris-Flora spells out the familiar (Neo-platonic) dialectic of love: Pulchritudo arises from a discordia concors between Castitas and Amor; the fleeing nymph and the amorous Zephyr unite in the beauty of Flora.⁷

Incidentally, this triad corresponds to a contemporary application of the image of the three Graces in the Florentine Neoplatonic circle. The design on the medal of Giovanna degli Albizzi depicted the dance of the Graces and was cast from the same mould as Pico della Mirandola's, but the inscription had been altered significantly. The Platonic definition of love suited to a man, Love is Desire aroused by Beauty, "PULCHRITUDO-AMOR-VOLUPTAS," is replaced by a Platonic definition of Beauty; Love and Chastity meet in Beauty: CASTITAS-PULCHRITUDO-AMOR,

more appropriate for a woman. As Wind helpfully explains:

... the Grace in the centre unites the opposites: for in Pulchritudo, the contraries of Castitas and Amor coincide. But ... Pulchritudo ... also achieves a conversion ... Beauty now turns from Chastity toward Love.⁸

The initiation of chaste beauty into love may be regarded as the dominant thematic motif of the Primavera, which is in many ways, like this section of Milton's epic, a celebration of married love. It forms, moreover, the theme of the principal action in the painting which takes place between Venus and Cupid and the Grace they intend to pierce with a flame-tipped arrow. Cupid aims with absolute precision at the central dancer among the Graces.

As Lightbown argues: "If then in the Primavera one of the Graces is to be pierced by the arrow of love, the implication can only be that she is to quit her virgin state for marriage."⁹ The scene is thus a restatement of the theme on the right, the lawful fruition of love in marriage. The Graces have been identified by their symbolic accoutrements as, from left to right, Voluptas, the female counterpart of Amor, Castitas and Pulchritudo, and Wind has described and interpreted the scene with admirable lucidity:

In so far as dialectic can be danced, it has been accomplished in this group. 'Opposition', 'concord' and 'concord in opposition', all three are expressed in the postures and steps and in the articulate style of joining the hands. Placed palm against palm to suggest an encounter, but quietly interlocked in the absence of conflict, they rise up high to form a significant knot when they illustrate the Beauty of Passion.

That this gesture is made to hover like a crown above the head of Castitas, defines the theme of the dance as her initiation. Castitas is the neophyte, initiated into Love by the ministrations of Voluptas and Pulchritudo.¹⁰

At this point, it seems timely to mention Lightbown's perceptive observation that "The kindling of love in a pure and beautiful virgin grace is an obvious compliment to a bride",¹¹ and his theory that the Primavera was commissioned to celebrate the marriage of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de Medici to Semiramide d'Appiano, an initiation of chaste beauty into love.

The stereotype of the iconoclastic Puritan dies hard in the popular imagination and persists, together with a strong notion of Milton's weak eyes, later blindness and over-compensatory auditory imagination,¹² conspiring to distract attention from any interest Milton may have shown in the visual arts. However, the case for their relevance to a considered reading of Milton's poetry has been persuasively argued by Roland Mushat Frye, and his comments on the importance of Milton's exposure to the great Italian works of painting and sculpture for his poetic development are particularly instructive.¹³ He concludes:

When Milton's earliest biographer says that in Italy he saw "the rarities of the place" and when his nephew, John Phillips writes that "he met with many charming objects," I think the evidence permits us to assume with some confidence that among those "rarities" and "charming objects" he included the masterpieces of art with which the cultivated Englishman was expected to be familiar.¹⁴

Since Milton spent well over a quarter of his sixteen months abroad in Florence, where his friendship with Piero Frescobaldi- whose "close personal family ties with the reigning Medici grand dukes"¹⁵

Florence ¹⁶ - it seems likely that Milton would have availed himself of 392
the ample opportunities to view their extensive and renowned collections.

The striking resemblance which critics have noted¹⁷ between Milton's visualisation of the Ovidian topos, Ver erat aeternum and Botticelli's Primavera, "one of the most famous of quattrocento paintings"¹⁸ may not seem so coincidental when we reflect that "the lately published inventories of Lorenzo and Giovanni show that [the Primavera] was painted" not, as was generally assumed, to decorate Castello, but "for their town house in Florence," "a house adjoining, [and] in fact originally part of the Palazzo Medici in the Via Larga."¹⁹ It is interesting to speculate, then, whether the Primavera was not one of the great 'rarities' Milton encountered on his Italian journey.²⁰

Notes

1. Wind, p.102.
2. So too, as Ronald Lightbown has argued: "Botticelli was careful to indicate that this background scene takes place at a different moment by making the dress and drapery of Chloris blow in the opposite direction to the drapery of the Graces and of Flora" (Sandro Botticelli: Life and Work Vol. I [1978], p.80).
3. See, for example, Fasti V. 221; 337-38.
4. See Wind, p.104.
5. ibid.
6. R. Lightbown, Sandro Botticelli, p.79.
7. Wind, p.103.
8. Wind, pp.72-73.
9. R. Lightbown, Sandro Botticelli, p.77.
10. Wind, p.104. However, Lightbown maintains that "Cupid ... shoots a flaming-headed arrow at the first Grace on the left" (p.75); that this is clearly not the case can be easily demonstrated by tracing a line from the arrow head to its target.
11. R. Lightbown, Sandro Botticelli, p.81.
12. cf. T. S. Eliot's provocative remarks: "Milton may be said never to have seen anything" and his claim that the poet suffered from "hypertrophy of the auditory imagination at the expense of the visual and tactile" (On Poetry and Poets [New York, 1957] p.162 and 'A Note on the Verse of John Milton', E & S XXI [1936]; pp. 32-40).
13. Roland Mushat Frye, Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts, pp.23-31

14. ibid., pp.30-31.

15. ibid., p.25.

16. ibid., pp.28-29. See too, The Early Lives of Milton, p.57 for an account by Edward Phillips of the cordial relations Milton enjoyed with "the most Learned and ingenious of the Nobles, and the Grand Wits of Florence, who caress'd him with all the Honours and Civilities imaginable."

17. See Mushat Frye, Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts where he records that "In his edition of Paradise Lost, Hughes noted of these lines (IV.264-68) that 'comparison with Botticelli's Spring is inevitable,' while Jeffrey Spencer carries the suggestion somewhat further: 'One is struck by the resemblance between the lines above and Botticelli's Primavera, which represents a similar tableau of frozen movement in a timeless spring landscape" (p.230). See too Martz, Poet of Exile, p.226.

18. Mushat Frye, Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts, p.230.

19. R. Lightbown, Sandro Botticelli, p.73; p.71.

20. Note too Charles G. Osgood, The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems, commented on the striking resemblance of "the flowery-kirtled Naiades" of Comus (l.254) to "the figure of Primavera in Botticelli's Spring. Her robe, loose and flowing, is richly embroidered all over with a pattern consisting of little bunches of flowers" (p.lxvi).

A P P E N D I X

III

The Fruitless Hours

The following discussion is intended to complement the arguments put forward in the last two chapters by examining the effects of the Fall upon Adam while he remains estranged from Eve. Since it does not directly concern either Eve or Ovid it has not been incorporated in the main body of the text but appears here as an appendix. However, unless we give sufficient weight to Adam's apparent helplessness at this point, his inability to resist alone the downward pull of death and despair, we cannot fully appreciate the structural and thematic emphasis accorded to the scene of his reconciliation to Eve, nor understand why this forms an essential prelude to Man's regeneration, and reconciliation to God.

So let us turn to where Adam and Eve:

... in mutual accusation spent
 The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,
 And of their vain contest appeared no end.

(IX. 1187-89)

These lines which close Book IX are simple, and yet charged with meaning. Against the fruitful wedding of the vine to her elm, a picture of marital, physical, mental and spiritual harmony, the hours now wasted by Adam and Eve are seen to be 'fruitless' in the profoundest sense. The utter reversal of all the layers of meaning embedded in Milton's use of the vine-elm topos thus serves to invest the 'fruitless hours' with such poignancy and expressive power. With the reciprocal relationship of love which nurtured and maintained the inward paradise suspended, 'Chaos is come again'.

The storm has thus become internalized forming the very

structure of the self now hopelessly divided:

They sat them down to weep, nor only tears
 Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
 Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
 Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shock sore
 Their inward state of mind, calm region once
 And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent:
 For understanding ruled not, and the will
 Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
 To sensual appetite, who from beneath
 Usurping over sovereign reason claimed
 Superior sway.

(IX. 1121-31)

This description, as Fowler has observed, at once "universalizes the change in human nature" and explicitly establishes the analogy between the "meteorological disturbances",¹ grimly catalogued in the next book, and the greater malady, the tempest in the mind to which man is now subject. Moreover, it seems significant too that "The conflict of all winds", as Fowler later reminds us, "was a reversion to chaos that had often been used as a symbol of the chaotic state of human passion".² Indeed, the winds' impetuous blasts and man's stormy passions are seen to be genuinely analogous to the condition of matter in chaos.

The disorder in the psyche where passion has risen from her "element below" in an attempt to wrest control from "sovereign reason" recalls the "eternal anarchy" (II. 896) and "misrule" (VII. 271) that characterizes the state of "uncreated" matter in chaos. This general resemblance is further supported by the more specific reference to Man's "inward state" "calm region once / And full of peace" as now "tossed and turbulent", a physical condition closely similar to that of the warring elements in chaos that appeared:

Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
 Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
 And surging waves, as mountains to assault
 Heaven's highth.

(VII. 212-15)

It is a storm that can only be calmed by the divine imperative of creation issued by the Son: "Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep, peace, / ... your discord end" (VII. 216-17). This in turn momentarily transports us back to the "tumults vain" (V. 737) and "horrid confusion" (VI. 668) of the war in heaven, where the opposing forces would have been locked in "Perpetual fight ... Endless / With no solution ... found", had not the Son intervened. Moreover, his mission here too is, at least in part, one of creation or rather recreation as lines 780-84 make clear.

The futility of this epic battle is often remarked and criticized but if we accept Stein's supposition that "the material action of the war does not exist for its literal meaning and independent meaning, but is instead part of a complex metaphor",³ it can be found to shadow forth not only the endless struggle of the forces of good and evil in human history before the final intervention of the Son at the Last Judgement, but also the 'vain contest' which takes place between Adam and Eve.

Bouchard has indicated the importance of this structural correspondence as a feature of the epic's symmetrical patterning, maintaining that it is the resolution of the discord by the intervention of the Son which is the significant parallel in each case:

Like the "War in Heaven", the discord of Adam and Eve will be resolved by the Son in a merciful judgement.⁴

So too Grossman draws attention to the "state of paralyzed fantasy-making" which "is the situation after Adam's fall and prior to the intercession of the Son", and goes on to argue:

The book ends with Adam and Eve trapped in an agon which cannot be resolved ... Adam and Eve will need divine help, prevenient grace (XI, 3), to emerge from their wretched state.⁵

These observations are undoubtedly true. This said, they do not

seem to be quite the whole truth: abstracted plot and concrete dramatization may not necessarily evolve with the same emphasis. Though indeed Milton assigns chronological priority to the Son's initiative in accordance with the "doctrine of divine Prevenience",⁶ it is not upon the heavenly level of the action that the fullest structural and poetic emphasis falls.⁷ Our attention is focussed upon Eve, the human agent of salvation,⁸ and her love for Adam which reverses the degeneration into chaos and releases Adam from the endless downward spiral of despair and damnation. Only with their reconciliation can the counteractive, restorative movement of regeneration begin. Eve may fall first but Adam falls further.

This is amply demonstrated by a careful consideration of what takes place after the Son's pronouncement and before Eve approaches Adam: in the intervening period the narrative gaze is turned upon Adam exclusively and we are made to feel the immanence of chaos as both an inward and outward reality. From being a state of stormy turbulence, chaos hardens into a negation of the conditions essential for life.

Like Hamlet, Adam's desire to escape an intolerable situation that "seemed remediless" naturally develops into a yearning to disappear and not to be, to throw off the burden of life and consciousness for the insensibility and total oblivion of death or 'uncreation'. Adam gives most poignant expression to his longing either to revert to the state of non-being from which God had promoted him or to embrace insentience in the long, dreamless sleep of death:

... How gladly would I meet
Mortality my sentence, and be earth
Insensible, how glad would lay me down
As in my mother's lap? There I should rest
And sleep secure

(X. 775-79)

The final line is especially revealing. Of course, his power to give relief from Man's "anxious cares", and his close relationship to death, are aspects of Sleep most frequently mentioned in poetic invocations of the God. Ovid addresses Sleep as, "Somne, quies rerum, placidissime, Somne, deorum". (Met. XI. 623), and in a similar vein, Samuel Daniel conjures the presence of "Care-charmer Sleep, sonne of the sable night,/ Brother to death, in silent darkness borne".⁹ However, the salient details of the Statian account of the Grove of Sleep prove particularly suggestive here. Foremost among Sleep's attendants are to be found "opaca Quies et pigra Oblivio"; his realm is characterized by darkness and arrest, and his enervating influence extends over the very plants and flowers:

... et nova marcent
gramina, terrarumque inclinat spiritus herbas.¹⁰

Moreover, as Fowler points out, the woods, "impenetrable/To star or sunlight" (IX. 1086-87) to which Adam retreats, as well as suggesting Spenser's "labyrinthine wood of Error", "distinctly recall Statius' dark grove of Sleep, nulli penetrabilis astro,/lucus iners (Theb. X 85f)".¹¹

As Adam is once again discovered "hid in gloomiest shade" (X. 716), his physical attitude more fully reflects his mental prostration and regressive death-wish:

... on the ground
Outstretched he lay, on the cold ground, and oft
Cursed his creation, death as oft accused
Of tardy execution.

(X. 850-53)

Indeed, the present passage seems to have been written in studied contrast to that earlier scene in which Adam records his first moments of consciousness. There, Adam outlined a setting and state of mind which is at each point contrasted with his present fallen condition. In both passages the concrete setting seems to form more than a convenient back-drop - it profoundly complements and even figures forth Adam's mental and spiritual

state.

Adam quickens to life and consciousness on a soft flowery bank as "new waked", refreshed "from soundest sleep" (VIII. 253). His first experience of being is the warming caress of the sun and, as though invigorated by its energizing influence, he springs upright. This instinctive action, itself an expression of "lively vigour" (VIII. 269, emphasis added) is also seen to be a positive affirmation of life on Adam's part. In marked contrast to this scene of radiant light, where the general mood is of serene optimism, the second is dark, terrifying and daemonic, set in the very depth of the blackest night. Adam's dark night of the soul is passed in a state of restless, tortured apprehension in which everything around him takes on a threatening nightmarish character. The "black air" and "dreadful gloom":

... to his evil conscience represented
All things with double terror.

(X. 847-850)

In addition to the obvious contrast between the bright sunlight of the first passage and the "black air" of the second, at least three other antitheses are used to articulate the two emblematic scenes: vital warmth is contrasted with deathly cold; a soft bank with hard ground; and of course, while in the first sketch the horizontal sweep of the pencil is effectively offset by an emphatic vertical line as Adam stands upright, in the second no such counter-movement occurs. Thus the sluggish resistance to life and activity, which follows hard upon Adam's fall and aberration from God, is most accurately represented in his continuing physical prostration, and the scene as a whole serves to ally him ever more closely with Satan and Death and by a natural association of ideas with "The black tartareous cold infernal dregs/Adverse to life" (VII. 238-39).¹²

It rapidly becomes apparent that spiritual death, like creation, is a continuous process. As Tillyard has pointed out, "The process of

falling continues [after man's initial offense] ... Indeed it could be maintained that the Fall is not accomplished, does not in deepest verity take place, till Adam's despairing speech late in Book Ten (line 720)".¹³ Doubtless, "As we read this speech we are meant to recall Satan's great speech on Mount Niphales at the beginning of Book Four. Both speakers are tortured, both admit God's justice", but here, Tillyard insists, the similarities end. Satan concludes with a "resolve to do evil, Adam in self-accusation".¹⁴

However, it seems more likely that Milton's concern is rather to suggest that Adam is poised on the brink of despair, a hairsbreadth away from the Satanic logic of "All hope excluded thus ... all good to me is lost;/Evil be thou my good" (IV. 105; 109-110). Indeed, Adam has begun to re-enact this drama of despair and damnation. Believing himself "miserable/Beyond all past example and future,/To Satan only like both crime and doom" (X. 839-41), Adam shares Satan's conviction of the absolute finality of his loss. Satan's dilemma, "Me miserable! Which way shall I fly/Infinite wrath, and infinite despair" (IV. 73-74), is Adam's also. His horrified realization that "in the lowest deep a lower deep/Still threatening to devour me opens wide" (IV. 76-77) is matched by Adam's consciousness of an "abyss of fears/And horrors" "out of which" he can "find no way, from deep to deeper plunged" (X. 842-44).¹⁵

Fallen Adam's partial perspective which excludes from his vision one half of the divine nature seeing only the God of justice and wrath is reflected in a shift in the emblematic suggestiveness of light and the sun in particular. While the sun's rays primarily symbolized for the emblemists God's benevolence: "His forgiveness, [and] His life-infusing essence", at times, as Shahla Anand goes on to explain, "Heavenly rays could be malevolent, showing God's wrath and His destructive power"¹⁶ roused against the impenitent. We have commented previously on the consistency with which Milton uses the sun's light and warmth to suggest the creative and fostering power of God's grace and presence and it is both a measure and evidence of Adam's fallen condition and "horrenda

expectatio iudicii"¹⁷ that divine light now seems blindingly strong and fierce, "insufferably bright".¹⁸ Moreover, Adam's agonized plea:

... cover me ye pines,
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me,

(IX. 1088-90)

seems strongly reminiscent of Faustus' desperate cry:

Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall¹⁹ on me
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God.

which in turn echoes the urgent demand of those who have incurred the divine displeasure in the apocalyptic vision of St. John:

And [they] said to the mountains and rocks, Fall
on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth
on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

(Revelation VI. 16)²⁰

Adam attempts to insulate himself against the anticipated blaze of God's wrath by retreating "Into the thickest wood" to where the fig tree creates a "pillared shade" (IX. 1100, 1106). As Wentersdorf has remarked, Milton seems at pains here to explain that "the fig in question is not the common fruit-bearing tree, but the Malabar or Indian fig",²¹ and this emphasis seems significant in this context when we recall that it is the fig's usefulness as a protection against the sun's fierce heat that features in contemporary accounts. Gerard, for example, observes how:

... the Indians do use [it] for couerture against the
extreme heate of the sunne, wherewith they are
greeveously vexed.²²

and Milton too draws attention to the way in which the fig tree will be prized by "the Indian herdsman shunning heat" who will shelter in its "thickest shade" (IX. 1108; 1110). The likelihood that Milton intends more than to anticipate the harsh change in climatic conditions in the fallen world where the sun will "affect the earth with ... heat/Scarce

tolerable" (X. 653-54) is considerably strengthened when we reflect that it is "Under the influence of the full blazing sun" (IV. 29), as Dennis Danielson has stressed, that Satan, haunted by his remembrance of goodness, "perceives the truth about himself, but refuses to give glory to heaven's matchless king" (IV. 41).²³ It may also be instructive to consider here St. John's account of the operation of the fourth vial "of the wrath of God" which acts upon the sun. The vial is poured upon the sun

... and power was given unto him to scorch men with Fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

(Revelation XVI. 8-9)

Paradoxically, the blinding light and fierce heat of the sun is salutary. While it is a manifestation of God's wrath, it is yet also an instrument of his mercy, since it should move sinners to repent. However, the light that should illumine serves only to blind the darkened minds of the unregenerate.²⁴

The initial effect of this line of interpretation, then, is to accentuate Adam's resemblance to Satan and ally him more closely with those who will "stumble on, and deeper fall" (III. 201). That Adam is indeed mistaken in believing himself to be "to Satan only like both [in crime and doom" (X. 841), and that "man ... shall find grace, / The other none" (III. 131-32) is set forth in terms that seem to confirm the existence of the image pattern we have been tracing here.²⁵ Consider the passage in which Milton describes the descent of the Son to "sentence man":

Now was the sun in western cadence low
From noon, and gentle airs due at their hour
 To fan the earth now waked, and usher in
 The evening cool when he from wrath more cool
 Came the mild judge and intercessor both ...

(X. 92-96, emphasis added)

By extending the significance of the scriptural detail in Genesis III. 8:

"they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day", Milton makes clearly explicit the symbolic meaning he attaches to the time of the Son's first judgment of mankind.

However, while Adam falsely assumes a simple equivalence between his fate and that of Satan, his exclusive concern with the exactions of divine justice and his preoccupation with God's role as punisher of his offence,²⁶ blind him to the possibility of divine grace and pardon, rendering him incapable of recognising such tokens of divine mercy and thus of repentance.²⁷

In his attempts to understand the workings of divine justice, ratiocination can offer no guidance but leads him in wearisome circles back to his conviction of his own culpability and the justice of God's claims upon him and so tends to preclude any awareness that his sin may be forgiven:²⁸

... Him after all disputes
 Forced I absolve: all my evasions vain,
 And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still
 But to my own conviction: first and last
 On me, me only, as the source and spring
 Of all corruption, all the blame lights due.

(X. 828-33)

The involutions of self-criticism which redoubles upon itself but finally leads nowhere are traced with fine precision by Milton here.²⁹ Moreover, these lines give access to a number of interconnecting shafts lying just beneath the narrative surface.

As is commonly observed, the lines quoted above contain distinctly audible echoes of lines 559-61 of Book II, and once again seem to point to Adam's resemblance to the fallen angels, those who "reasoned high":

Of providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,
 Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
 And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.

However, it has not been noted how these lines at the same time ironically recall how Adam, guided by Raphael, had already been released from a labyrinth of "idle speculation":

And freed from intricacies, taught to live,
 The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts
 To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
 God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
 And not molest us, unless we our selves
 Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain.
 But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
 Unchecked, and of her roving is no end.

(VIII. 182-89)

Reason as well as Passion has its own dangerous propensities.³⁰ For Satan the inward experience of "mazy error" finds its physical counterpart in his journey through chaos, "wandering" in a "darksome desert" (II. 973) "without [a] guide" (II. 975). While the long established image of both error and chaos as a dark, labyrinthine wood seems to cast retrospective light upon Adam's retreat into "the thickest wood" which can thus be found to complement and figure forth his mental confusion. "A SHADIE Wood .../ With uncouth pathes, and hidden waies unknowne/ ... Not peirceable, to power of any starre" is said by Peacham to resemble chaos,³¹ while Spenser's famous wood of Error is similarly a "shadie grove" where Una and the Red Cross Knight "wander too and fro in wayes unknowne".³² More pertinently, perhaps, we may recall that in Comus: "Chaos ... reigns ... In double night of darkness, and of shades" (ll. 333-34) in the unnatural darkness of the "blind mazes" (l. 180) of a "leafy labyrinth". In Paradise Lost the dense wood stems from only one tree: the "Malabar or Decan" fig "spreads her arms/Branching so broad and long, that in the ground/The bended twigs take root"³³ (IX. 1103-5) and in this way, as Gerard explains, "Of one tree is made a great wood, or desart of trees", creating a deceptively enticing "pillared shade/High overarched, and echoing walks between" (IX. 1106-7).³⁴

To find the way out of this tortuous, twisting maze lies beyond the reach of reason alone. The mind can go no further forward and is doomed to circle endlessly round. The underlying thematic design seems unmistakable: Adam's helplessness here confirms his incompleteness without Eve; and, if we may press to an explicit formulation the implicit schematic structure which seems to be emerging, "Reason" suffers in

isolation from "Feeling" or "Emotion" "in unities defective". Not until Adam is reconciled to Eve, Reason to Emotion, will the loss of integrity suffered on their separation be repaired.³⁵

Something of the significance of this underlying pattern has long been acknowledged. Indeed, Marjorie Hope Nicholson has contrasted the way in which Adam spends the time before their reconciliation in "intellectualising the ways of God to men", "Eve in feeling more and more poignantly her sin".³⁶ Again, L.W.Hyman has remarked that Adam is rescued from an apparent impasse, "not by logic but by an appeal to his emotion",³⁷ and he observes too how this forms a profoundly significant part of the meaning of Milton's complex design since, "the emotional attachment to Eve which brought about his falling away from God, is now the direct cause of Adam's return".³⁸

It is only when Adam's acknowledgment of divine justice with his mind is joined by a sense of divine mercy in his heart,³⁹ that his narrow vision has expanded, precipitating a rich, intuitive awareness of the twofold, Janus-like aspects of the divine nature; the face of justice and wrath finds its obverse and complement in mercy and love. Accordingly, Adam remembers

... with what mild
And gracious temper he both heard and judged
Without wrath or reviling;

(X. 1046-48)

It is an awareness that leads directly to repentance and the "first fruits on earth" "sprung from" the seed of "implanted grace" (XI. 22-23), and so puts to an end the barrenness of the 'fruitless hours'.

Notes

1. Note to IX. 1112; Fowler, p.503.
2. Note to X.695-706; Fowler, p.544 and cf. IX.715-18.
3. Stein, Answerable Style, p.132.
4. D. Bouchard, Milton: A Structural Reading, p.132.
5. Marshall Grossman, 'Dramatic Structure and Emotive Pattern in the Fall: Paradise Lost IX', MSXIII (1979), p.213;p.216.
6. Note to III.231; Fowler, p.156.
7. William Empson too has drawn attention to the "total absence of heavenly aid at this point," Milton's God, p.173.
8. For a detailed analysis of Eve's redemptive role see Summers' excellent chapter, 'The Voice of the Redeemer' in The Muse's Method, pp.176-85.
9. Samuel Daniel, Delia (1601) LI, 11.1-2, p.26.
10. Statius, Thebaidos X.89, 98-99. From Thebais et Achilleis P. Papini Stati edited H. W. Garrod (Oxford, 1965). Reprinted from corrected sheets of the first edition of 1906.
11. Note to IX.1085-90; Fowler, p.501.
12. In De Doct. I. xii-xiii (Col.XV, pp.202-50), Milton distinguishes between 'Quatuor ... mortis gradus': 'MALA OMNIA QUAE AD MORTEM VERGUNT ... primum est Reatus'; 'MORS SPIRITUALIS'; 'MORS CORPORALIS' and 'MORS AETERNA DAMNATORUM POENA'. We see the effects of the first two degrees of death on Adam here.
13. Tillyard, Studies in Milton, p.13.

14. ibid., note to p.37.
15. Though Tillyard maintains that because both Adam and Samson "have searched their hearts to the bottom and really know themselves and admit every scruple of guilt they are even now saved men" (Studies in Milton, p.37), Adam at least, as Summers has noted, "recognises and accepts his guilt only in soliloquy" (The Muse's Method, p.182) and in fact retracts his confession of guilt on Eve's approach. Just as Satan, immediately after accepting his own responsibility for his fall from grace, seeks to place the responsibility for his defection upon God, so even now Adam is quick to exonerate himself from blame and displace the burden of guilt for his lapse upon Eve, just as when called to account for his disobedience before the Son he had held her to blame.
16. Anand, "Of Costliest Emblem": 'Paradise Lost' and the Emblem Tradition, p.61.
17. Hebrews X.27; quoted by Milton in De Doct. I.xii (Col. XV, p.204).
18. In this moving soliloquy (IX.1080-90), Adam shrinks from all forms of light, both celestial and natural.
19. Christopher Marlowe, The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus, ed. Frederick S. Boas (1932), V.ii.156-57 .
20. Clearly echoed in VI.841-43, as Fowler points out (p.352), where the "thrones and mighty seraphim prostrate,/... wished" that:
- ... the mountains now might be again
Thrown on them as a shelter from his ire.
21. Karl P. Wintersdorf, 'Paradise Lost: The Garden and the Flowered Couch', MQ XIII (1979), p.139.
22. John Gerard, The Herball, or Generall Historie of Plantes (1597), pp.1330-31.
23. Dennis Danielson, 'On Toads and the Justice of God', MQ XIII (1979), p.12.

24. See III.200 and Patrick Hume's note on this verse: "Let their Eyes be darkened that they see not, Psal.69.v.23 as they well deserve, who shut their Eyes against the glorious light of the Gospel"; and cf. VI.775-76 and 789-92. See also John XII.40 (Matthew XIII.15; Acts XXVIII.27); Isaiah LIX.10, and indeed, Comus ll.381-85.
25. And see Fowler's comments on the "Sol iustitiae metaphor", note to IV.30 (p.192).
26. Consider for example X.794-98.
27. Since Man is only able to repent 'SEQUE EX SENSU DIVINAE MISERICORDIAE AD DEUM HUMILLIME CONVERTIT', De Doct. I.xix (Col. XV, p.378).
28. Compare the seemingly irrefutable logic of Lucifer's argument to Faustus:

Christ cannot save thy soul, for he is just.

Christopher Marlowe, The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus II.ii.87.

29. This is surely the point of X.810ff. Where, as Harry Blamires has pointed out, "once more an argument already closed is being re-opened, after the fashion of satanic obsessional repetitiveness ... cf.XI.99-178" (Milton's Creation, p.262).
30. However, Summers has helpfully commented upon Milton's implicit criticism of Adam's "abstract intellectuality" as he enters upon "studious thoughts abstruse" (VIII.40). The emphasis upon 'abstruse' here is revealing since, as Summers explains:

The English word derived ultimately from abs and trudere, and the Latin root verb had the primary meaning of 'push forth', 'put forth', 'send forth'. In the second Georgic ... Virgil used trudere on three occasions (II.31, 74, 335) to describe the vital process by which plants 'push forth' buds or fruit. That Milton had that usage in mind, that 'abstrudere' represents a reversal of the normal fruitful order of nature, is indicated by what happens in Eve's garden ... Eve and the fruits and flowers, 'Her Nursery', 'go forth', 'spring' outwards, and grow 'gladlier'.

(The Muse's Method pp.156-57)

31. Henry Peacham, "Nulli penetrabilis" ll.1-2, 7. From the second part of Minerva Britanna or A Garden of Heroical Devises: Furnished, and adorned with Emblemes and Impresa's of sundry natures. Newly devised, moralized, and published (1612), p.182.
32. Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene I.vii.3; x.5.
33. While acknowledging the difficulty of assigning these lines to a single source, Fowler maintains that "Gerard's description (Herball (1597) 133Of.) is probably as close as any to the present passage" (p.502). This is supported by Harry Blamire's argument that Milton repeats here an "error made in Gerard's Herball. It is the Banana tree, not the Banyan Indian fig tree, that has the large leaves. The Banyan leaves are small" (Milton's Creation, p.238).
34. It seems worth noting in passing that in the Trinity MS of Comus (l.180), instead of "blind mazes of this tangled wood," we find "blind alleys of this arched wood" (emphasis added).
35. Though used to support her argument that "unfallen Eve corresponds allegorically to what Dante calls the vegetable soul, as unfallen Adam does to the animal soul, and that, when fallen, the first couple corresponds to un'alma sola (Dante, Purgatorio XXV)," Kathleen Swaim's conclusion seems relevant here. She maintains that, "Such a composite relationship explains the mathematics of calling Eve's fall plus Adam's fall the (or a single) fall" ('Flowers, Fruit and Seed: A Reading of Paradise Lost', note 7, p.175. Moreover, Fowler in his note on IX.370-75 suggests that "more emphasis should be laid on symbolic meanings of the separation" and he goes on to discuss the emblematic significance of Adam and Eve's "clasped hands" seen here unlinked for the first time (pp.458-59).
36. Nicholson, p.304.
37. L. W. Hyman, The Quarrel Within, p.72.
38. ibid., p.71.
39. cf. John XII.40 (Matthew XIII.15; Acts XXVIII.27).

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