

**The Narrative Distribution
of the Creation in
Paradise Lost**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

University of Manitoba

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

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THE NARRATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CREATION IN
Paradise Lost

BY

THERESA KIT-YEE CHAN

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of
MASTER OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT

“The Narrative Distribution of the Creation in Paradise Lost” aims at examining how recent attempts at a structuralist narratology by which to read the poem fail to see Eve’s real status in creation and gender relations because of limitations in a method which flattens both time and change out of an epic poem about the history of progressive change and development in human life. Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogical method, Wolfgang Iser’s reception theory, and Hélène Cixous’s feminist methodology all offer alternative readings which shed a completely different light on Eve’s relationships with Milton, Milton’s God, and Adam.

Bakhtin’s sociolinguistic model enables us to see dialogical complexities in language which cannot be divorced from the social and dramatic context. Iser’s dialectical approach to reading emphasizes the process of “illusion-building” and “illusion-breaking” which serves as a perfect model in reading a poem famous for its contradictions and intricacies. Cixous’s feminist approach likewise offers an answer to the question why so many critics have mistaken Milton as a masculinist or even a misogynous poet. For her model helps to show how Milton sets up patriarchal clichés in his poem only to offer a subtext which deconstructs these orthodox values.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Illusion-building and Illusion-breaking: “Double-Voiced Discourse” in Our First Approach to Paradise.....	10
Chapter Two: Seeing Through the Mask: The Task of Adam and the Reader in the Creation of Eve.....	43
Chapter Three: Deconstructing Hierarchies: The Final Lesson for Adam and Eve, and the Reader.....	71
Bibliography.....	103

Introduction

Does Paradise Lost justify God's ways to woman? The apparent secondariness and subordination of Eve in the poem have been an unresolved problem in criticism through the centuries. Recent feminist critics like Sandra K. Gilbert have insisted most virulently that what Milton tells is a story that degrades woman: Paradise Lost is "a story of woman's secondness, her otherness, and how the otherness leads inexorably to her demonic anger, sin, her fall, and her exclusion from that garden of the gods which is also for her the garden of poetry" (370). More traditional humanists like Diane K. McColley have tried to refute this argument by suggesting that Eve's subordination does not signify her "weakness or wickedness," or her inferiority, especially in moral and spiritual terms (35). Nonetheless, a new feminist line of argument, based on structuralist narratology, purports to show that Milton's treatment of Eve is highly patriarchal, especially in the narrative distribution of the creation story. Analysing the three different creation accounts narrated by Eve, Raphael, and Adam, Mary Nyquist argues that the narrative distribution is "ideologically motivated, and that the import of this motivation can best be grasped by an analysis aware of the historically specific features of Milton's exegetical practice in the divorce tracts" (Nyquist 115). In other words, Nyquist assumes that Milton's poetic ideology is basically the same as the social ideology of his divorce tracts published two decades earlier.

It is noteworthy that Nyquist's structuralist narratology claims to be scientific and objective, for her study which makes use of Gérard Genette's theories of narrative distribution tries to prove that there is a logical grammar, or inherent structure in that particular distribution, which helps to uncover a deeper signifying system in the poem. As Jonathan Culler suggests, the structuralist study of literature aims at "investigat[ing] its structures and devices" and "attempt[s] to make explicit the system of figures and conventions that enables works to have the forms and meanings they do" (Introduction to Narrative Discourse 8). In fact, this structuralist method of searching for a system and literary structures in a work is "an aspiration to make literary criticism a scientific and objective discipline" (Ravindran 7).

Firstly, Nyquist makes use of Genette's method of the study of the relations between "the temporal order of succession of the events in the story and the pseudo-temporal order of their arrangement in the narrative" (Genette 35). She addresses the question why Eve, who is created later than Adam, narrates her creation account first in Book Four of Paradise Lost. Nyquist argues that Milton's act of placing Eve's narrative first is, firstly, to subvert the logic of supplement which would render Eve as the fulfillment of creation. Secondly, it helps to emphasize that Eve is created with a private sense of self which is complementary to Adam's desire for an other self, thus reinforcing the masculinist assumption that Adam's needs are the underlying impetus of Eve's creation. It further reinforces Eve's "secondary status

as a gift from one patriarch to another as she is made both for and from Adam” (Nyquist 106).

More broadly, Nyquist’s structuralist study of the relationship between Raphael’s and Adam’s narratives reveals that Milton’s exegetical practice in the divorce tracts, which takes Genesis 1:27 as an abstract of the individual creations of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:7 and 2:18-23, is still at work in Paradise Lost, thus emphasizing that Adam is superior because he is the man directly made in the divine image, while Eve is inferior because she is made in Adam’s image (Nyquist 116-17). Furthermore, Nyquist suggests that the contrivance of having Adam tell of Eve’s creation stresses Adam’s patriarchal role in the creation of the object which satisfies his desires (118).

However, Nyquist’s structuralist reading of gender relations in Paradise Lost is partial because of the shortcomings of her methodology. Firstly, the method of structuralist narratology is synchronic, ignoring “history” in both the poem and the life of the poet. To take the latter history first--the history of the poet in the twenty-four-year interval between the first divorce tracts and Paradise Lost--the poet clearly changed his mind about a number of things. Milton’s basic decision to abandon his original plan to write the story of King Arthur, “a story that features one-man rule, an aristocratic society, and stereotyped sex roles” (Webber 5-6), and to write Paradise Lost instead, is already a forceful indication that Milton has undergone

changes of attitude and outlook between the 1640s and 1660s. But Nyquist's method also ignores more important changes in the social history of Heaven in the interval between the first rebellion in the poem and later counsels in Heaven and on earth. A structuralist account of the narrative distribution of events in the poem thus needs to be balanced by a rhetorical analysis of dramatic distribution: who knows what at which times, and what is the source of each speaker's belief?

Another basic assumption underlying any structuralist analysis is of one unitary voice or language, one fixed meaning running through the poem. God, Raphael, Adam, and Eve all speak the same language because it is the language of the poet's own value system; all the voices merge into the unitary language of the social class to which the author belongs. Mikhail Bakhtin, however, insists that "there is no unitary language or style in the novel"; "the author cannot be found at any one of the novel's language levels: he is to be found at the center of organization where all levels intersect" (48-49). As Crosman observes, "Milton's narrative art is polyphonic, with a constant interplay of 'voices' variously reinforcing and contradicting each other" (8).

Assuming Paradise Lost can serve as a prototype of the polyglot novel, my aim is to use Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogical method to reread each of the three creation accounts in Paradise Lost. Bakhtin's sociological poetics will show how each character's language which reveals his individual belief system is distinct from

that of another character, thus undermining the structuralist assumption of a single “grammar” for any narrative. But because this is also a study of the reading act, and not just of language, I will use Wolfgang Iser’s dialectical approach to reading to show how reading creates anticipations and builds up illusions at different moments, and how these illusions work together, or against each other, and how they are inevitably broken, thus reminding us how first impressions in reading are unreliable; we must wait and see how the plot develops. Finally, a feminist methodology which Hélène Cixous employs in The Laugh of the Medusa offers a way of exploring how Milton’s language in the creation accounts also works to deconstruct the hierarchical binary oppositions of gender, either constructed by Milton himself, or by other characters.

My first chapter shows how Nyquist’s structuralist narratology inevitably assimilates Eve’s creation account to the two male narratives due to her assumptions about the exegetical practices of Milton and the whole Reformed tradition. Thus, Eve’s autobiography which is initially an emblem of her growth and development, and even of her superiority in willing to learn and grow, loses its individual meaning and becomes subordinated to the two other accounts, as much as Eve becomes Adam’s subordinate in Nyquist’s interpretation.

Nevertheless, Bakhtin’s sociological poetics serves to give the first warning that we must not assume the apparently masculinist statements such as “Hee for God

only, she for God in him” to be authorial declarations of Eve’s secondariness and inferiority. For Bakhtin’s method reveals that the narrator’s first description of Adam and Eve is a “hybrid construction” which contains two conflicting languages and points of view: one belongs to Satan, the true misogynist, while the other belongs to the narrator-poet, who presents a more humanist and egalitarian relationship between Adam and Eve. Iser’s dialectical method of reading shows that Eve’s gesture of self-subordination in Book Four is likewise an illusion which is broken by her subsequent astronomical question to Adam, as well as by her act of restraining Adam’s excesses in Book Five which signifies her status as Adam’s equal helpmeet instead of as his subordinate. The analysis of the dramatic forces behind these illusions of Eve’s subjection further reveals her growth and development. Hélène Cixous’s feminist notions of masculine and feminine economies even render Eve superior for she is willing to give unselfishly, in comparison with Adam’s tendency to withhold himself in the courting scene beside the pool of Narcissus.

My second chapter shows how Nyquist employs Genette’s method of examining the relations between narratives and those between narrative and narrating to link Raphael’s and Adam’s narratives together so as to “create” Milton’s ideology. Again, Nyquist’s structuralist approach betrays her underlying assumption that Raphael and Adam are speaking the same language--the patriarchal language of

Milton in the midst of an emerging bourgeois economy.

Bakhtin's concept of "social heteroglossia" helps us to see that Raphael, the unfallen angel, cannot be Milton's mouthpiece on gender relations any more than Satan because Raphael only speaks for himself; his language reflects his particular system of belief which is determined by his angelic background and limitations. The angel's words are not to be taken simply because they are of higher authority, as Christian orthodoxy has assumed, since Iser's dialectical approach to reading shows that even the Father assumes ironic postures only to be unmasked by his careful auditors. Therefore, Raphael's authority and his masculinist pronouncement on Eve's inferiority are revealed to be illusions of Christian orthodoxy, which are broken by the dialectic of debate and the force of events. Nyquist's assumption that Eve is created simply to satisfy Adam's needs cannot sustain itself because of God's act of breaking this illusion in the scene where he requires Adam to debate with him. Adam's confession to Raphael at the end of Book Eight that Eve is inferior, both in mind and faculties, is another illusion which is broken by a careful analysis of the dramatic context of that particular scene. Cixous's method of deconstruction further shows how Milton's language in the creation accounts works to destabilize the hierarchical binary oppositions set up by Raphael: male/female, strong/weak, superior/inferior, and mind/body.

My third chapter then examines the separation scene, the falling scene, the

judgment scene, the reconciliation scene, and the concluding education scene, which fall outside the artificial limits of creation accounts, but offer conclusive commentary on them. It becomes clear that not only does Nyquist's structuralist method ignore history, it also ignores one half of the story of the first man and woman: their Fall and their subsequent relations with the divinity which affect the destiny of all humanity.

Examining the separation scene and the cause of Eve's fall with the help of Bakhtin enables us to see Eve in a more compassionate light than orthodoxy has ever allowed. For Eve is shown to eat the fruit not because of her innate weakness, but because of her injured feelings brought about by Raphael's and then Adam's patriarchal assumptions of her inferiority. The comparison of gendered economies in the Fall and judgment also deconstructs the hierarchical oppositions of superior/inferior, God/nature, and spirit/body. Eve's voluntary sacrifice for Adam which resembles the Son's act of dying for mankind also denotes that she is closer, even after her fall, to God than Adam now is, thus reversing entirely the old binary oppositions. Finally, the dialectical method of reading shows that the Son's judgment which ordains Eve's subordination is an illusion which is inevitably broken by the Son's subsequent act of humility and service to the fallen couple. Patriarchal hierarchies are further rendered to be illusions which are broken by the equal participation of Adam and Eve in education. Adam and Eve leaving the

Garden "hand in hand" is a forceful emblem signifying Milton's final blow to hierarchies of gender which have victimized men and women through the centuries.

Chapter I

Illusion-Building and Illusion-Breaking:

"Double-Voiced Discourse" in Our First Approach to Paradise

In answering the question why Milton places Eve's creation narrative first although she is formed later than Adam, a structuralist narratology may actually assimilate her autobiography to the two other creation accounts narrated by Raphael and Adam. Mary Nyquist, for example, assumes that Eve's creation narrative is complementary to the two other accounts in expounding Milton's social ideology in the divorce tracts.

Thus, Nyquist argues that Eve's narrative is placed first in order to foreground Eve's private sense of self so that "it can ground, as it were, the lonely Adam's articulated desire for another self" (119). In other words, she believes Eve's autobiography is employed by Milton to emphasize that she is created for Adam to satisfy his psychological needs--his yearning for an "other self" (8.451)--a point reinforced in the divorce tracts, and which will be strongly emphasized by Adam himself in his narrative. Hence, Eve's "secondary status as a gift from one patriarch to another" seems authorized by the structure of the poem itself (Nyquist 106). While Nyquist suggests that Eve's narrative reveals a narcissistic desire in both herself and Adam, the couple receive completely different treatments from God, which signifies the "hierarchically ordered nature of their differences," inasmuch as

Eve is really made in the image of Adam, instead of the immediate divine image (120). This thesis of secondary status is summed up in the narrator's notoriously masculinist statement, "Hee for God only, shee for God in him" (4.299). Because of Eve's secondary status in creation and her inferiority to Adam, she is bound to submit voluntarily to the "paternal law" (Nyquist 123). As other feminists have argued, Eve thus becomes "the image of the idealized and objectified woman whose belief in her role underwrites patriarchal power" (Froula 329).

In fact, Nyquist's structuralist method of assimilating Eve's autobiography to the male narratives is predicated on hermeneutic assumptions about how the first creation account in Genesis (1.27) is also assimilated to the second creation account (2.7, 18-25) in Milton's "explaining of Genesis 1 by Genesis 2" in the divorce tracts (104). For Milton, like Calvin and Pareus, seems to believe that the two seemingly contradictory accounts do not refer to two different stories or stages in creation, but are two different ways of telling one story (Nyquist 102). "Simplifying matters considerably, and using terms introduced into the analysis of narrative by Gérard Genette, one could say that in the view articulated, especially cogently by Calvin and then elaborated, aggressively, by Milton, the story consists of the creation in the image of God of a single being supposed to be representative of humankind, Adam, and then the creation of Eve; the narrative discourse distributes this story by presenting it first in a kind of abstract and then in a more detailed or amplified

narrative fashion” (Nyquist 102).

In a sense, Nyquist takes Reformed traditions of biblical exegesis to be practical anticipations of Genette’s distinction between story as “content” (the actual events which take place) and story as discourse or “narrative statement” which “undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events” in its own specific manner (Genette 27, 25). The Reformed tradition thus resolves to show how the first part of Genesis 1.27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him,” is an abstract of Adam’s creation from dust in 2.7, while “male and female created he them,” is an abstract of the more elaborated discourse of Eve’s creation for Adam in Genesis 2.18-25 (Nyquist 102). Consequently, the distribution of this narrative discourse suppresses the gaps and ambiguities in Genesis 1.27 which might suggest a more egalitarian relationship between the two sexes, as conveyed by the potential interpretation of the “man” as an original androgynous being who is split into man and woman in Genesis 2. Therefore, the story told in Genesis 1 is reshaped as a patriarchal account of Adam formed as the primary image of God, representative of all mankind, while Milton’s Reformed exegesis of privileging Genesis 2 simultaneously stresses Eve’s secondary status.

Since the synchronic method of structuralism takes for granted that Milton’s exegetical practice in the divorce tracts is still at work in Paradise Lost, Nyquist likewise focuses on the distinction in Paradise Lost between story and discourse, and

argues that in the poem, although the creation story is told in three different discourses, it is indeed one story bearing one message: the secondary, derivative status of Eve. Therefore, for Nyquist, Eve's "first word" is an abstract of the "last word" of the male narrators, and Eve's autobiography, which potentially signifies her own growth and development, is inevitably framed by the two other discourses, thus completely reshaping and changing the meaning of Eve's story for Nyquist.

And yet a structuralist method overlooks many important aspects of Paradise Lost which can shed a different light on gender relationships in the poem. Bakhtin's sociological poetics, Iser's reception theory, and Cixous's feminist methodology, all enable an alternative reading, suggesting that Eve, far from being inferior and subordinate to Adam, is actually an equal partner in the Edenic marriage. She has equal status in creation and is no less than Adam intellectually and spiritually.

First of all, a Bakhtinian analysis of the narrator's first description of Adam and Eve (4.288-308) would suggest that it is far too early and too simplistic to conclude that "Hee for God only, shee for God in him" (4.299) is an authoritative statement about gender relations in the poem. Many critics, but most notably Barbara Lewalski, have noticed that this first Edenic description is framed by Satan's perspective, as suggested by the previous lines and by the use of the punctuation mark, the colon:

...where the Fiend

Saw undelighted all delight, a kind

Of living creatures new to sight and strange: (4.285-7)

Another reader can suggest, with equal validity, that "Hee for God only" is merely the masculine viewpoint of a fallen angel who "obsessively weighs and measures all creation," and imposes a hierarchy between Adam and Eve (Peczenik 32). Indeed, Satan is a lover of hierarchy. His fear that the Son's exaltation will threaten his status in Heaven is his reason for rebelling against God. Although he always talks about equality in the demonic council, he actually "prefers hierarchy in hell to unity in heaven" (Webber 16). He wants to preserve all the values of monarchy, rank, and status. Therefore, other feminists can suggest that Satan, instead of Milton, is the true misogynist who proclaims "Hee for God only, shee for God in him."

Such a conclusion depends upon making Satan's perspective the only perspective offered in our first approach to the Garden in Book Four. However, the literary language used by the narrator is far more complex, and indeed richer, when we read it in light of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of a "hybrid construction," which is a "double-voiced discourse," one utterance which "serves two speakers at the same time" (Bakhtin 324). In these hybrid constructions, "two voices, two meanings, and two expressions" can be heard, but these "two voices are dialogically interrelated,"

reflecting the conflict of two world views (Bakhtin 324).

Some of Milton's liberal defenders have recognized that the first Edenic description (4.288-311) is not solely made up of the language of Satan's fallen consciousness. As Louis L. Martz observes, it is the dual perspective of Satan and the narrator-poet who, though fallen, "still love[s] God's goodness to mankind" (Martz 108). Satan's hierarchical language and his misogynistic viewpoint dialogically clash with the more egalitarian language and the humanist world view of the poet within a single description:

Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
 God-like erect, with native honor clad
 In naked majesty seemed lords of all,
 And worthy seemed, for in thir looks divine
 The Image of thir glorious Maker shone,
 Truth, wisdom, sanctitude, severe and pure,
 Severe but in true filial freedom plac'd;
 Whence true authority in men... (4.288-311)

Our difficulty lies in determining who says what in this double-voiced discourse.

Such diction as "far nobler," "majesty," "lords of all," "worthy," and "true authority"

could be read as hierarchical language colored by Satan's class and hierarchical consciousness. As Bakhtin remarks, "language is not an abstract system of normative forms but rather a concrete heteroglot conception of the world" which reflects one's consciousness (293). But how can we tell where Satan's consciousness leaves off and the narrator's begins?

What Bakhtin calls "the compositional forms for appropriating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel" (301) mark the boundary between a character's language and that of the narrator or author within a hybrid construction, thus enabling us to distinguish between Satan's and the narrator-poet's voice. The first form of incorporating two voices in a hybrid construction is "pseudo-objective motivation," marked by subordinate conjunctions and link words, which signifies another's language and belief system, although it appears to be objective authorial language (305). A second form is "fictive solidarity" of syntax, where the subordinate clause is in direct authorial language while the main clause is in another's language (306). A third form is the use of a "posited author" who tells his story in his own voice and point of view which are distanced from the "real" author (312). A fourth, most obvious, form is the language used by characters, who speak in their own ways which are independent of the authorial language and perspective (315). Finally, a fifth form of hybrid construction occurs in "incorporated genres," which likewise introduce another's language to "refract, to one degree or another,

authorial intentions" (320).

One can already detect an analogous pseudo-objective motivation in the first four lines of the first Edenic description, marked by the two "seem'd"s in "Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,/Godlike erect, with native Honor clad/In naked Majesty, seem'd Lords of all/And worthy seem'd..." (4.288-91, my emphasis). These lines which denote that men are the goodly rulers of the earth appear to be an objective authorial judgment. For the noble and God-like appearances of Adam and Eve do remind us of the indisputable fact that God has created Adam and Eve in his divine image, and "let them rule/Over the Fish and Fowl of Sea and Air,/Beast of the Field, and over all the Earth,/And every creeping thing that creeps the ground," as Raphael will remind us in his creation account (7.520-23). Adam himself is also well aware of their human roles as rulers (4.429-32). However, the usages of the two "seem'd"s suggest that it is in fact Satan, the fallen hierarch, instead of the narrator, who makes these provisional judgments in "seem'd Lords of all" and "worthy seem'd." It cannot be the narrator who knows so little about his characters, but has to be Satan who is trying to interpret appearances, and makes subjective judgments, first about political authority ("seem'd Lords"), and then about moral authority ("worthy seem'd"). Thus, the hybrid construction masks Satan's point of view as the source of these judgments, and makes them seem objective, as if coming from the narrator himself.

Likewise, the judgment on the seeming inequality of the two sexes in “both/Not Equal, as thir sex not equal seem’d” (4.296, my emphasis) sounds like an objective authorial judgment because, according to the epic standards and the patriarchal tradition in which the poem is produced, Adam, being stronger, braver, and more contemplative, should be generically superior to Eve, who is weaker and softer in appearance. Nevertheless, the third “seem’d” masks a fictive solidarity between character and narrator, suggesting that the judgment in fact belongs to Satan who automatically imposes a hierarchy between Adam and Eve because he has no experience of gender outside his encounters with Sin. Thus, Satan leaps from “not equal seem’d” to a general conclusion: “Hee for God only, shee for God in him,” indicating his patriarchal assumption that only Adam is directly made in the divine image, which quickly becomes his declarative judgment: “[Adam’s] fair large Front and Eye sublime declar’d/Absolute rule” (299-301, my emphasis). However, as Aers and Hodge suggest, “declar’d” implies that “these signs may only ‘declare’ absolute rule to the fallen angel” (22). Indeed, “declar’d” sheds light on Satan’s absolutist habits of mind which tend inevitably towards “Absolute rule.”

Similarly, the very general and masculinist statement, “Hee for God only,” should be cast into doubt. Following Satan’s absolute judgment on Adam’s superiority and his discrimination against Eve, he logically sees the amorous depiction of the couple as an emblem of “manipulative male love” and “woman’s

subordination" (Aers & Hodge 27), and seizes upon Eve's "ringlets" as being "wanton" (306). In fact, such a negative reading of Eve from Satan's perspective coincides with some patriarchal interpretations of Genesis that Eve is associated with "flesh, passions, nature and sexuality seducing man as soul, reason, spiritual virtue and contemplation from its proper relation to God" (McColley 11). Some critics even conclude from this description that Eve has shown signs of fallenness before the Fall.¹

However, the narrator begins to unmask these thoughts as Satan's by gradually separating himself from this syntactically "fictive solidarity," marked by the subordinate clause "which impli'd/Subjection, but requir'd..." (307-8) until "Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed" (4.312). The syntactical break of "which impli'd" moves the narrator away from Satan's "absolute" declarations, and significantly undercuts these "objective" judgments in the main clause, exposing them as Satan's absolutist thinking. The narrator further disassociates himself in an attack on "mere shows," (316) raising questions about "mere shows" of sexual inequality; and in the verb phrase "so pass'd" (319), he clearly moves on with Adam and Eve and leaves Satan behind on his "high Tree," thus completely separating the

¹ A.J.A. Waldock argues that if Adam and Eve are absolutely perfect at the beginning, they must be already fallen before the Fall, otherwise, it is hard to perceive how they can proceed from "sinlessness to sin." On the other hand, Millicent Bell suggests that unless Adam and Eve are not absolutely perfect, one cannot accept how perfection can be corruptible. Whereas Tillyard argues that Milton, in order to make the Fall possible, has "attributed to Eve and Adam feelings which though nominally felt in the state of innocence are actually not compatible with it" (quoted in Danielson 195).

narrator's point of view from Satan's in this hybrid construction, and moving to a second, purely authorial description of Adam and Eve (4.319-24).

The second description of our first parents (4.319-24), unlike our first view of Eden (4.285-311), is uncomplicated by "double-voiced discourse," as it simply says that God and Angel "thought no ill" of the naked couple, and that they are "the loveliest pair," with Adam the "goodliest" and Eve the "fairest." Indeed, this second description of Adam and Eve would be redundant, unless it were a new description from the narrator alone, who corrects the earlier "hybrid" view of the first description which was framed by Satan's consciousness. Hence, Satan is clearly revealed to be the "posited author" in our first view of Adam and Eve. The second, otherwise redundant, description of the couple marks the boundary between the "posited author" and the "real" author.

Furthermore, as Bakhtin suggests, the language used by characters is also a form of hybrid construction highlighting a "double-voiced discourse." In fact, even a character may speak different languages at different moments due to changes in his belief system, or in the dramatic context. For instance, Adam addresses Eve in courteous terms which tend to emphasize her equality with him and his deep respect for her: "Sole partner and sole part of all these joys" (4.410); "Best Image of myself and dearer half" (5.95). But on the first appearance of an angelic visitor to their domestic bower, he forgets both himself and her in addressing her as a servant:

“Haste hither Eve” (5.308). Likewise, Eve, in her autobiography and her own speeches, moves from an initial impulse to narcissism beside the lake, to her corrected view of self under God’s instruction, to her first view of Adam whom she thinks is less attractive than the image in the lake, to her corrected view of him, to her first view of her “submissive” happiness when she proclaims “to know no more/Is woman’s happiest knowledge and her praise” (4.638-39), to her corrected view of her need for knowledge when she asks, “O wherefore all night long shine these, for whom/This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?” (4.657-58). Her stunning reversal of her submissive claim “to know no more” at the beginning of her speech, so quickly contradicted by her impulse to know more at the end of the speech, suggests that her announced sacrificium intellectus is only the language of a woman deeply in love who is unable for any length of time to sustain the compliment of such voluntary subordination to her lover.

Likewise, Eve’s autobiography and love lyric (4.639-56) are “incorporated genres” which suggest her proximity to the language of the narrator who also incorporates his autobiography into his epic and prays for knowledge, “that I may see and tell/Of things invisible to mortal sight” (3.54-55). Like the narrator who lovingly details the sights of “flocks, or herds, or human face divine” from which he is now “cut off” (3.44,47) by blindness, Eve details the “charm of earliest Birds” and “herb, fruit, flow’r,/Glist’ring with dew” (4.651-53), none of which, she says to

Adam, "without thee is sweet" (4.656). As Lewalski comments, "nothing in Milton's epic is more artful, melodious, and graceful than the love lyric [Eve] addresses to Adam" ("Milton" 8). Eve, as the inventor of her creation narrative and the first love song in Paradise, is thus identified with the poet and with Milton. As Loewenstein points out, Eve's poetic genius even undermines the "Pauline model of masculine authority" (91). Her song is further evidence that Satan's point of view, which is hierarchical, must be distinct from the narrator's, as illustrated in the hybrid description, for the poet is more aligned to Eve as shown here. Satan, we can conclude, is the true "inventor of misogyny" (Peczenik 33) which is alien to the poet's world view.

Now, it should be clear that the masculinist connotation of "Hee for God only, shee for God in him" is largely derived from Satan's fallen perspective. But Nyquist, because she identifies Satan's point of view with the narrator's, insists that it is also Milton's personal conviction that woman is inferior because she is less the divine image. For Nyquist, such a statement has the objective authority of Milton's own prose writings in the 1640s; particularly his divorce tracts such as Tetrachordon which suggest that Milton did once advocate the inferiority of woman to man. For in his exposition of Genesis 1.27, "in the image of God created he him," Milton states that "the woman is not primarily and immediately the image of God, but in reference to the man," on the grounds that though the "Image of God" is common to them

both, "had the image of God been equally common to them both, it had no doubt bin said, In the Image of God created he them" (Sirluck 589, my emphasis). Nevertheless, Tetrachordon was published in 1645, while Paradise Lost was published twenty-two years later. According to Mulder, "the matching of parts--mixing poetry and prose, early works and late--slight differences in Milton's age and circumstances and in the genres he uses... it assumes that Milton's career declares a consistency of outlook and feeling that rarely, if ever, is found in any other writer" (146).

A re-reading of Satan's perspective on gender in Book Four might allow us to discern a more liberal and humanist view of the narrator-poet which inevitably clashes with Satan's: although it is true that Eve is the image of Adam, and is the image of God through him, it does not signify that she is Adam's subordinate. First, it is noteworthy that "the conclusion Renaissance ears are likely to have expected is not 'shee for God in him' but 'she in him'" (McColley 42). Second, being made in the image of Adam does not imply that Eve bears less resemblance to God. Since, if Adam is really made in the full image of God, he must be a copy of God, then Eve, being made in Adam's image, must also be a copy of the divine image. Assuming that the divine image diminishes through the creation of copies is to cast doubt on the formative power of the Almighty Being. Thus, Bakhtin's sociological poetics shows that even such a statement, which is taken by almost all critics to be

masculinist, is an utterance that expresses two conflicting languages and world views, thus warning the reader not to jump to conclusions by equating Satan's voice with that of the narrator-poet.

A second reading of the first description of Adam and Eve as a double-voiced discourse enables us to note further egalitarian sentiments inhabiting the same discourse where Satan's hierarchical visions are produced. For instance, Eve does share the "looks" of the divine image and equally participates in the divine qualities with Adam: "Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure" (4.293). According to McColley, "in the context of the literary and iconographic tradition [which supports woman's inferiority], it is unusual for Milton to include Eve in all the qualities enumerated in the first eight lines of the description" (41).

In addition, the two parallel lines, "For contemplation hee and valor form'd,/For softness she and sweet attractive grace" (4.297-98), convey a more equal gender relationship between Adam and Eve, as opposed to Satan's hierarchical views. Adam and Eve are created to possess different characteristics and strengths so that they are interdependent. As Shullenberger remarks, "Adam's contemplation and valor bereft of Eve's humanizing sensitivity to the sweetness of Eden would be arid and empty; Eve's softness and sweetness in the absence of Adam's spiritual vigor could become, like Eden left uncultivated, a wilderness choking on its own waste fertility" ("Wrestling" 76). Thus, this pair of parallel lines is used by the

narrator-poet to symbolize that Adam and Eve are two parts which make up one soul and one body. Neither can exist without the other. The balanced structure of these corresponding lines further reinforces the idea that Adam and Eve are equal partners in their marital relationship, and they share equal status in the creation.

In addition, it is important to note that "grace" is particularly assigned to Eve (4.298). Eve's grace actually "opens into another order of language altogether" (Shullenberger, "Wrestling" 76). As McColley observes, "even the choice of 'grace' rather than a more strictly physical kind of beauty suggests divine favor" (41). Indeed, Eve's "grace" here recalls the Son's great love and compassion in being willing to die for the sins of humankind in the Heavenly Council in Book Three. Therefore, Milton is "not marking Eve with a gender-based weakness," but with divine goodness (Shullenberger, "Wrestling" 76). Hence, Milton's choice of diction emphasizes Eve's equal participation in the divine image, despite Satan's hierarchical visions which coexist in the hybrid construction.

Furthermore, contrary to Satan's vision of Eve's inferiority to Adam, the narrator-poet presents a lively amorous portrait in which Adam and Eve mutually enjoy each other (4.307-11). Instead of reading Eve as a "wanton," malicious woman who seduces Adam, the prelapsarian perspective of the poet enables us to perceive Eve as a young, innocent, and carefree woman who enjoys her divinely ordained lover. She is simply playful, as "wanton" can have better connotations than

“immodesty”. God and the angels must think “no ill” of Eve and their amorous foreplay, just as they “thought no ill” of their nakedness (4.320). Under such a dramatic context, the words “subjection,” “yield’d,” and “submission” lose their chauvinistic connotations, and merely stress Eve’s willingness to yield shyly to the mutual love she shares with Adam, instead of to his rule and domination. Therefore, Bakhtin’s concept of a double-voiced discourse helps us to understand that if we omit the boundary between Satan’s viewpoint and the narrator’s, we would overlook the beautiful, romantic, and sentimental elements portrayed in the Edenic love picture, by simply reading it as an emblem of male domination and female subordination in terms of Satan’s hierarchical language.

Still, many critics, like Froula and Heller, earnestly argue that Milton and Paradise Lost are the products of a patriarchal tradition. Thus, in spite of his “extremely innovative” views on marriage, he was, “nevertheless, influenced by his ideological context and the prevalent belief in woman’s subordination to man, created below in the hierarchy of nature” (Heller 190). These critics suggest that Eve’s own remarks and personal attitude in Book Four indicate her voluntary and delightful self-subordination, due to her perfect understanding that she is made for and from Adam, thus confirming Milton’s devotion to the patriarchal belief in woman’s natural subjection. However, Wolfgang Iser’s dialectical method of reading can also help to show how Eve’s self-subordination and submissiveness are

merely an illusion that will not last long, because it will be contradicted by her subsequent behaviour in Books Four and Five.

Iser's dialectical approach to reading in "The Phenomenology of Reading" opens up in most great books a process of "illusion-building" and "illusion-breaking" (288). In reading a literary text, the reader finds expectations which are aroused, along with his need to impose a consistent pattern in the text. In this way, he is building up illusions so as to sustain his consistent reading. However, due to a text's "polysemantic possibilities," these illusions are bound to be broken by other impulses which are incongruent to the illusions built (Iser 285). Thus, this process of "illusion-building" and "illusion-breaking" replicates the gathering of experience in life, in which what happens is usually completely different from what we have expected, because of our limited understanding at a given moment (Iser 281).

Furthermore, in reading a literary text, a reader comes to think someone's else ideas, which may belong to the author, the narrator, or the characters. As Georges Poulet suggests, the reader "becomes the subject that does the thinking" (quoted in Iser 292). Since these thoughts are "alien" to the reader himself, he needs to assume an "alien" self to be the subject who thinks these alien thoughts (Iser 292). Thus, in the reading process, the reader is taken over by this "alien 'me'" (Iser 293). Although the "subject-object division" is temporarily removed in the experience of reading, the reader cannot "identify" completely with the thoughts of this "other

self," because his real self is still present. Thus, another division takes place within the reader himself--a division of the personality between the "alien 'me'" and the "real 'me'" (Iser 293). Such a division is indeed parallel to the division in the "hybrid narration" mentioned above, where the narrator separates himself from the point of view of Satan. Therefore, with Iser's dialectical method of reading, we discover from "illusions" that are built and then broken, or expectations which are aroused and then frustrated, that we must not "identify" with a character's views at any one moment, not, at least, until we can see how these views are corrected, just as we cannot "identify" completely with the alien thoughts of the "alien 'me'" until we see how the "real 'me'" adjusts and adapts to the "alien 'me'".

In Book Four of Paradise Lost, Eve indeed "builds" the illusion of total feminine subordination. As many critics comment, if Eve really occupies an equal status in creation and in the marital relationship, she is behaving and talking far more humbly than she needs to, as she acknowledges her husband as her "Guide/And Head" at the beginning of her autobiography, and as her "Author and Disposer" later (4.442-43, 635). It seems that, from the moment of her surrender to Adam, her obedience is absolute. Froula also points out that Eve's first utterance in the poem: "O thou for whom/And from whom I was form'd flesh of thy flesh": is an echo of "Adam's naming of her from Genesis 2.23," which indicates that "she has already absorbed the wisdom of her teachers [God and Adam], and she repeats this gesture

of self-subordination at the end of her own reminiscences" (326-27). Therefore, Froula, like Nyquist, suggests that Eve is an epitome of a submissive woman who surrenders herself to patriarchal authority, as she "becomes a part not only of Adam but of the cultural economy" (329).

Eve's exclamation that "what [Adam] hast said is just and right" (4.443) and her contentment to "know no more" form the climax of her self-subordination:

My Author and Disposer, what thou bidd'st
 Unargu'd I obey; so God ordains,
 God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
 Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise. (4.635-38)

However, this "illusion" of Eve's contentment to "know no more" cannot even survive this same speech, because immediately after Eve has spoken her eighteen-line love lyric to Adam, she abruptly asks him the question, "wherefore all night long shine these, for whom/This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?" (4.657-58). Interestingly enough, this astronomical question breaks the illusion that Eve herself has just built, and refutes the critical assumption that "silence and absence is the norm" for Milton's Eve (Wittreich 102). Obviously, Eve is contradicting herself, while Milton is breaking the norm--the "clichés of culture"

(Wittreich 102). Eve is not willing to keep silent when she finds it necessary to speak and ask. She is eager to learn and to know more. Her initial submissiveness is thus an illusion which is quickly broken by her refusal to surrender her inquiring mind.

Many critics nonetheless suggest that Eve is portrayed to be inferior to Adam intellectually, on the ground that she withdraws from the conversation between Adam and Raphael when it turns to a solemn and serious topic like astronomy. Yet, Eve's "first foray into the realm of astronomical speculation" inevitably reveals that such an observation fails to sustain (Lewalski, Paradise 189). Indeed, one should bear in mind that Eve's astronomical question even precedes the male conversation in Book Eight, in which Adam asks a similar question of why the sun shines for the earth which is much less noble (8.32-38). Thus, Eve is actually a young and active woman, full of curiosity and enthusiasm for knowledge. She has the same kind of intellectual yearning as Adam. She is not the body ordained to be ruled by the mind of her husband. Furthermore, she is not what Marcia Landy calls her, a submissive woman who is chiefly allocated to domestic tasks, and to fulfill her familial roles as wife and mother (18).

On the other hand, Eve also builds the illusion that she is really subjected, unconditionally and unquestionably, to Adam's rule and command, for, as she exclaims, "what [Adam] bidd'st/Unargu'd [she] obey[s]" (4.635-36). Shullenberger

concludes that Eve acknowledges her own position and her “responsibility to superior beings through respect and obedience” (“Wrestling” 74). Heller also comments that “together [Adam and Eve] fulfill what Milton terms the ‘golden dependence of headship and subjection’” (190, Sirluck 591). Lewalski also agrees that Eve fully understands, and is delighted about “her hierarchical position of subordination to Adam,” although Lewalski still looks for signs of an equal partnership and mutual dependence of Adam and Eve (Paradise 185).

The erotic scene (4.492-504) that takes place after Eve tells her story of awakening by the pool is again an illusion of Eve’s subjection, for it “appears to be a perfect attitude of male dominance and female subjection,” as denoted by the diction “meek surrender,” “submissive Charms,” and “superior Love” of Adam (Peczenik 43). Thus, even McColley, a humanist feminist who gracefully tries to redeem Eve by emphasizing her goodness, creativity, and regenerative power, admits that Eve is Adam’s subordinate to a certain extent. Although McColley, by demonstrating the Son’s example of being exalted because of his self-subordination and humility, insists that Eve’s subordination does not imply her inferiority, especially on the spiritual level, it is a pity that she fails to see Eve’s real status as Adam’s equal.

What many critics, like McColley, overlook is opened up in Iser’s dialectical approach, for once again, Eve soon breaks the illusion of subjection which she has built herself. If Adam catches a note of enthusiasm in Eve’s question about the stars

(4.674-78), and helps to restrain such “excess” in her thinking, she does much the same thing for him the next day. For she restrains Adam’s excess, instead of obeying him “unargu’d,” (4.636) when Raphael, “the Divine Historian,” is sent by God to instruct them, and to warn them against their enemy. In fact, Adam does not expect the visitation of the angelic guest; he is so overwhelmed upon Raphael’s arrival that he exclaims:

Haste hither Eve...But go with speed,
 And what thy stores contain, bring forth and pour
 Abundance, fit to honor and receive
 Our heavenly stranger; well we may afford
 Our givers thir own gifts; and large bestow
 From large bestowed, where nature multiplies
 Her fertile growth, and by disburd’ning grows
 More fruitful, which instructs us not to spare. (5.308-20)

Conspicuously, Adam is so excited that he is reasoning in a faulty way.

Firstly, he forgets in his haste to address Eve in a courteous way, the first time he does not use dignified forms to address her, such as “Sole partner” (4.411) or “Best Image of myself” (5.95). Secondly, he has confused Raphael’s role with

God's role, as he mistakes Raphael as the all-giver. Thirdly, he asks Eve to bring everything they have in store, which is, again, not an appropriate action, because restraint is important to a garden growing to excess, as Adam himself declares (4.623-33). Eve, by comparison to Adam, remains calm and thoughtful. She implicitly and skillfully corrects Adam, first by renewing the courteous form of address, and then by reminding him that God, instead of the angel, is the all-giver of their gifts: "Adam, earth's hallowed mold, of God inspired" (5.321-22, my emphasis). Then, she gently restrains his excess by explaining to him that "small store will serve, where store,/All seasons.../Save what by frugal storing firmness gains/To nourish" (5.322-25).

Obviously, we cannot completely identify with the thoughts of the "alien 'me'" until we see how the "real 'me'" makes adjustments and changes; so, too, we cannot identify with Eve's views that "what [Adam] bidd'st/Unargu'd [she] obey[s]" (4.636), until we see how she corrects herself. In this situation, she is correcting and advising Adam, instead of obeying and following his instructions blindly and unquestioningly. Thus, contrary to what Eve herself claims, she is a quick and intelligent woman who dares to speak up, and to express her opinions skillfully and wisely when it is necessary. Silence is not her rule; neither is Adam her absolute law. She is an independent person with independent thinking, instead of being another's subordinate. Eve is also revealed to be superior in this instance as she

behaves calmly, while Adam is reacting too impulsively. Even a critic who believes in the hierarchical difference of Adam and Eve can see at this point that Eve is superior to Adam in the “management and disposition of household goods” (Halkett 110).

In addition, Eve’s restraint of Adam’s excess echoes the whole theme of self-restraint in Book Four. Indeed, the Garden of Eden itself is an emblem of self-restraint. As Adam has declared to her:

...our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
 That mock our scant manuring, and require
 More hands than Ours to lop thir wanton growth:
 Those blossoms.../Ask riddance. (4.627-32)

As Lewalski points out, “the constant though pleasant georgic labor required to order, prune, and restrain the growth of the Garden is an emblem of the labor required to order the self-pruning unwarranted impulses and ordering the burgeoning growth of human responsibility” (Paradise 187).

At the end of Book Four, even the archangel, Gabriel, in his confrontation with Satan, is hindered by the sign of Heaven, and has to learn to restrain his power, and let Satan flee. Thus, the whole of Book Four of Paradise Lost is framed by this

theme of self-restraint. The Garden has to be restrained; Gabriel has to be restrained; Adam's excess also needs to be restrained. Eve's act of restraining Adam is evidently full of divine wisdom, and must be pleasing to Milton and Milton's God. Hence, she is not the household maid, the inferior wife, against whom Milton discriminates.

It is noteworthy that a dialectical structure of reading always requires the reader to "formulate [his] own deciphering capacity," which was unformulated before, in order to perceive and absorb the alien thoughts of the author (Iser 294). In terms of our experience of encountering an alien world of innocence in Book Four, we have to give up our first impressions and inherited assumptions and develop a deciphering capacity which allows us to formulate a more sophisticated understanding of gender relations, and changing attitudes in the Garden of Eden. Why, the reader needs to ask, does Eve insist so completely on her own subordination in her early life? The answer may be found in something as ordinary as the dramatic context.

As Bakhtin and Volosinov suggest, in life, "verbal discourse is clearly not self-sufficient. It arises out of an extraverbal pragmatic situation and maintains the closest connection with that situation" (395). Likewise, discourse in Paradise Lost needs to be understood in terms of its dramatic context, which sheds light on the motivations and implications of an utterance, as well as the psychological condition

and source of belief of the speaker. As mentioned, Eve humbly acknowledges Adam as her "Guide/And Head," her "Author and Disposer." Her language seems to indicate her willingness to obey Adam unconditionally, because she believes his judgment is always right. However, we must remember that, before Eve starts her speech, Adam also addresses her in a highly respectful manner, calling her "Sole partner and sole part," and "Daughter of God and man" (4.411, 660). Therefore, it is very natural for Eve, a newly-wedded woman, to repay her husband's love and respect by honoring him with the title of "Guide/And Head." In fact, it is a perfect example of mutual love and respect. Besides, Eve, having just realized the danger of narcissism in her first experiences, is more ready to acknowledge Adam as the help she needs.

Obviously enough, Eve is still undergoing changes, both in her spiritual and intellectual growth. This explains why she contradicts herself. It appears that she behaves very inconsistently. But it is because she is still learning, as she was when she woke up at the pool and had to learn to reject appearances (4.440-91). She is struggling to develop herself, and to realize her role and identity. Therefore, Eve shows signs of submissiveness at a moment when she has not fully understood herself and her situation, and when she has overestimated Adam, thinking he is perfect. Once she is able to discern that Adam may make wrong judgments, she is ready to challenge his "authority," to advise him, and to express her opinion. In this

way, she has truly fulfilled her role as the divinely ordained helpmeet of Adam, supplementing his imperfections as the instrument of his growth.

Adam, of course, has already been instructed in Eve's own intellectual and moral growth. Eve tells in a famous passage of autobiography, generally known as the self-mirroring scene, or narcissistic scene, how she awoke from her creation and lay down "with inexperience'd thought" beside a "Smooth lake" (4.457). Because of Milton's allusion to the tale of Narcissus, many critics read this narrative as "a corroboration of the shallowness of a woman enamored with her own outside" (McColgan 29), or as the first declaration of her vanity or potential for sin--"a native vanity that issues in the Fall" (McColley 74). Cheung, by contrasting Eve's nativity to Adam's, even suggests that Eve's gesture of narcissism resembles Satan's self-love, as "Eve awakens in the shade--where snakes slumber" (20). Even Richard Corum, reading from a feminist perspective, argues that Eve's first narrative reveals that the subordination of woman to man's domination is a cultural practice similar to "imperialism" or "civilization" (125). Janet Halley even suggests that the heterosexual relationship in Eve's autobiography "echoes the relations of male and female subjectivity in the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, incorporating the female voice and female will only by subsuming them in male intention" (246). Obviously, Halley affirms Nyquist's assumptions about Eve's creation account.

Other critics seize upon Eve's bildungsroman as evidence of her assimilation

to patriarchy. As mentioned, Christine Froula comments that Eve's first utterance, "O thou for whom/And from whom I was form'd flesh of thy flesh," and the rest of her narrative are signs of her subjection to patriarchy, as her words "consign her [own] authority to Adam, and through him to Milton's God, and thence to Milton's poem, and through the poem to the ancient patriarchal" (326). For Nyquist and Froula, these speeches represent Eve's perfect understanding of her role: created both for and from Adam to be his subordinate. Furthermore, Froula draws our attention to the structure of the voice's explanation to Eve: "What there thou seest...is thyself" (328). Froula argues that the divine voice suggests Eve is equivalent to the reflection or shadow in the water. It has reduced Eve, an individual being, to a "substanceless image, a mere 'shadow' without object until the voice unites her to Adam.--'hee/Whose image thou art'" (Froula 328). Thus, Froula's analysis emphasizes that Milton's and the voice's treatment of Eve is extremely patriarchal.

However, in response to Froula's conclusion that "the mirror scene educates Eve to accept her subordinate position as object," Ilona Bell tries to establish a more egalitarian relationship between the couple. She indicates that Adam is also regarded as an object designed for Eve's interest, as the divine voice "transform[s] Adam from the subject of the discourse to the object of Eve's desire: 'hee/Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy/ Inseparably thine'" (99). Hence, Bell's

syntactic analysis refutes Nyquist's argument that Eve is secondary and inferior as an object created for Adam. She further insists that Adam is also presented as "a divinely bestowed gift" to Eve, as the Father introduces the man to the daughter (103). Thus, a relationship of reciprocity is depicted. Although as Adam emphasizes in his narrative, and as Eve herself believes, she is created for Adam, Bell's analysis shows that Adam is also designed to be Eve's other half, so that she can enjoy him "Inseparably thine" (99).

Nyquist nonetheless stresses that Eve's autobiography hides a chauvinistic male language indicating that Adam's attributes, "grace" and "wisdom," are superior to Eve's "beauty," as Eve is indeed Adam's image (4.490-91). However, McColgan upholds an entirely different point of view by interpreting the word "manly" as "human," thus signifying that what Eve proclaims to be superior is human grace and wisdom in realizing the need of the other sex (34). Indeed, grace and wisdom characterize both Adam and Eve in the first authorial description of the couple. Moreover, as mentioned, "grace" is a quality particularly assigned to Eve by Milton. In fact, Eve's "grace" recalls the Son's divine sacrificial love, and foreshadows her graceful gesture of volunteering to bear all the punishment for Adam after the Fall. Clearly enough, grace is not a masculine quality restricted to Adam, thus supporting McColgan's views which reject a masculinist reading of the line. Therefore, contrary to what Nyquist believes, there are several different grounds from which to

view Milton's Eve as Adam's equal, who freely chooses heterosexual love instead of self-love under God's guidance.

Perhaps the best theoretical explanation for Eve's behaviour in the "mirror scene," however, is to be found in Hélène Cixous's idea of differing economies of behaviour in man and woman. Here, what Cixous calls a "feminine economy" renders Eve the superior being in the scene, thus entirely reversing Nyquist's observation that Eve is Adam's subordinate who submits herself to his rule. Even Adam's act of claiming Eve back to his side, as incorporated in Eve's narrative, fits well into Cixous's idea of a masculine economy of giving and withholding:

...Whom thou fly'st, of him thou art,
 His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
 Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart
 Substantial life, to have thee by my side
 Henceforth an individual solace dear. (4.482-86)

According to Cixous, the masculine economy is a system of circularity in which a man gives only to get back and to withhold again (484). A man's giving is merely a gesture so that "everything must return to the masculine." "If a man spends and is spent, it's on condition that his power returns" (Cixous 486). In Adam's case, he

expresses his desire to have Eve back because he has given his rib to create Eve. As Froula suggests, Adam's story "informs Eve of an ontological debt she has unwittingly incurred" to him (328).

Conspicuously, Adam is demonstrating a masculine economy which gives but will be "swiftly taking back the investments...so that nothing ever gets given, everything gets taken back" (Cixous 484). Undeniably, Adam is selfish at this particular moment, as he assumes he has the legitimate right to have Eve by his side. Fortunately, Eve's gesture of hesitation helps him to realize that he has to respect the choice and freedom of Eve, who is an independent entity. As McColley comments, Eve's bildungsroman stresses the "opportunities for them both, for Adam to recognize that though he has given her substantial life she has also substantial life of her own, free and responsive to 'pleaded reason'; for Eve, to respond freely; for both in understanding of personhood and love" (88).

Opposite to Adam's masculine economy of withholding, Eve demonstrates a feminine economy of "giving that doesn't take away," "of unceasing giving" (Cixous 487, 479), "of enjoying possibility, of risking investments, a kind of openness" (Cornell 39). Eve, after realizing that the beautiful image she loves is indeed herself, is more willing to open her ears to listen to Adam's pleading and speech of courtship. Eve, instead of being self-centered and withholding, perceives her "connectedness to all being, and of [an identity] not as separate," but as

relational to each other (Shullenberger, "Wrestling" 80). Consequently, she freely chooses not to cling to herself, but yields herself, not to Adam's control, but to a mutual and reciprocal love relationship, both for her own, and for Adam's sake. Hence, Cixous's feminist paradigm allows the reader to perceive Milton's treatment of Eve in a very different way: Milton, far from rendering Eve secondary and inferior in creation and in the marital relationship, highlights her full humanity in being willing to open herself to new possibilities, and to give up her narrow sense of self for a heterosexual relationship which is divinely ordained.

The various methods of Bakhtin, Iser, and Cixous all help us to realize the importance of making distinctions from confusions, separating out illusions in reading Paradise Lost. Bakhtin's method enables us to distinguish between differing voices and world views in the hybrid constructions, thus warning us not to take Satan's hierarchical visions as authorial declarations of Eve's inferiority. Iser's method allows the reader, like Eve, to separate her from illusions of dependence, thus cultivating a more mature understanding of gender relations, other than the conventional perception of Adam and Eve which constitutes the patriarchal clichés. Finally, Cixous's method allows the reader, like Eve, to separate herself from illusions of a "normative" system of masculine values, thus constructing a more positive, or even superior picture of Eve, who gives without selfish motivations.

Chapter II

Seeing through the Mask: The Task of Adam

and the Reader in the Creation of Eve

If Satan, the fallen angel, is not the mouthpiece of the poet in registering first impressions of Paradise in the poem, can we safely take the word of Raphael, the divine historian sent by the Father to advise Adam, as an infallible guide to the relations between the sexes in the poem?

F. Peczenik seems to think that Raphael is a heaven-sent marriage counsellor who gives Adam, at the end of Book Eight, a lesson on marital relationship and angelic love, advising him to "love his mate and enjoy his earthly Paradise" (35-36).

But David Aers and Bob Hodge counter that "at the center of the kind of love recommended by Raphael is a simple egoism," and the angelic authority is inevitably undercut by the preceding debate between Adam and God which sanctions a reciprocal and mutual relationship (23-24). And Martin Kuester says flatly that "Raphael does not realize that he serves as a messenger speaking God's ironic language when he is suggesting a split between human and divine language, and he does not seem to know that the split between signified and signifier that he has instituted might be another, harder test of Adam's capacity to disambiguate ironic divine language" (272-73).

Bakhtin's sociological poetics helps even more to show why we must not

assume the language of any character, or even that of the narrator at any given moment, to be the poet's own language. Indeed, as Bakhtin suggests, "each character's speech possesses its own belief system," which is distinct from the poet's own world view, "since each is the speech of another in another's language" (315). Thus, "the author cannot be found at any one of the language levels" (48). Bakhtin's concept of "social heteroglossia" (316) enables us to see Raphael as an individual "ideologue" whose language is "a particular way of viewing the world," because he comes from a particular social background (316, 325). Indeed, Raphael's first discourse in Paradise, which is on "degree" or hierarchy (5.469-505), demonstrates his limited understanding of the changing politics of Heaven due to his angelic background, thus suggesting that his perspective may be as faulty as that of Satan.

Raphael's famous first speech on hierarchy or the scale of being as illustrated by a tree image is a "ladderlike" picture which reveals that his structure of mind is as hierarchical as the fallen angel's (Fuller 149). Nevertheless, this observation should not surprise us because he is an angel coming from a heaven which is "of Hierarchies, of Orders, and Degrees" (5.591). Firstly, Raphael tries to prove the superiority of spirit to body, in spite of "one first matter all," offering a prospect of progressive refinement of human matter-- "Till body up to spirit work" (5.478)--that will ultimately transform men into angels. He also uses the tree metaphor to suggest that nature is "a dynamic hierarchy, from lowest or simplest or least good to the

highest, the perfect, or best" (Elledge 465). Thus, the "root/out of [which] Springs lighter the green stalk" is the lowest element in Raphael's metaphor of the hierarchy of nature (5.479). However, his own metaphor works against him, since the Father himself has already identified the Son as "a second root" from which "shall be restor'd,/As many as are restor'd" (3.288).

Raphael, in fact, seems not to have understood a larger paradigm shift in the politics of Heaven which has occurred in the Heavenly Council in Book Three when the Father proclaims of the Son, "Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt/With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne" (3.313-14). For the Son, who has given up his hierarchical position, is unexpectedly "Anointed universal King; all power/I give thee, reign for ever" (3.317-18), the Father declares, seemingly in renunciation of his own authority and monarchy of Heaven. That this is not simply the politics of dynastic succession seems evident from the Father's preview of the end of history: "Then thou thy regal Sceptre shalt lay by,/For regal Sceptre then no more shall need,/God shall be All in All" (3.339-41). As Christopher Hill remarks, "Here perhaps we have a solution to the paradox that Milton the great republican appeared to favour monarchy in heaven. The ultimate state is no longer monarchical, because the concepts of power and obedience have no meaning when we are all gods" (Hill 304). In fact, the Father asks the archangels to surrender voluntarily their place in the hierarchy, and to vacate their thrones in imitation both of the Son and of himself:

“But all ye Gods,/Adore him, who to compass all this dies,/Adore the Son, and honor him as mee” (3.341-43). The introduction of mortality into the Godhead, it turns out, is the introduction of a levelling principle in Heaven by which all are reduced only to be raised up into the Godhead.

Raphael, the loyal archangel, has even been one of those who has already submitted to the process of exaltation by humiliation: for “lowly reverent/Towards either Throne they bow, and to the ground/With solemn adoration down they cast/Thir Crowns inwove with Adamant and Gold” (3.349-52). But his later discourse to Adam and Eve on the tree of being tends to emphasize the ascent of “body up to spirit” rather than the descent of “spirit” to “body,” since “the winged Hierarch” (5.468) is evidently unable to rethink the old metaphysics of high/low, spirit/body, reason/sense, and so remains incapable of transforming his own ethical sacrifice into a truly democratic politics. Failing to see that the old categories are already destabilized and relativized, he proposes that a “time may come when men/With Angels may participate” (5.493-94), or that “Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,/Improv’d by tract of time” (5.497-98), rather than seeing how that time of equality is now, or how he might himself descend without condescension.

The infamous confusions of spirit and matter in Raphael’s account of the War in Heaven further underscore how we must not take any angel’s viewpoint as the poet’s point of view, since the archangel’s social background contributes necessarily

to the limitations of his understanding. Arnold Stein, in his answer to Dr. Johnson's famous criticism that Milton confused matter with spirit, lays this confusion on Satan, suggesting that Satan desires to ascend in the hierarchy of spirit by means of matter, "external" and "physical" power, accepting only the "materialistic concept of might" ("Milton's" 271-273). However, Raphael is in fact equally confused as he continues to celebrate physical strength and power in the War in Heaven: "such highth/Of Godlike Power: for likest Gods they seem'd" (6.300-01), he boasts of his kind, later proclaiming: "Behold the excellence, the power/Which God hath in his mighty Angels plac'd" (6.637-38). While Raphael learns the ethical lesson of "stand only and behold" Messiah's moral might, he still takes pride in his own power relative to men and even to other angels, not failing to name himself among the heroes of Heaven who resist the onslaught of the hellish foe: "On each wing/Uriel and Raphael his vaunting Foe,/Though huge, and in a Rock of Diamond Arm'd,/Vanquish'd Adramelech, and Asmadai/Two potent Thrones" (6.362-66).

But the Son has already made it clear that strength is not the measure of excellence, as he criticizes Satan's materialistic conception of might when the Son asks the warring loyalists to "stand only and behold/God's indignation on these Godless pour'd/By mee" (6.810-12), because "by strength/They measure all, of other excellence/Not emulous" (6.820-22). Yet ironically, Raphael himself "by strength...measure[s] all" in his celebration of the War and the loyalist side. He

proves even to be ethnocentric in his representation to humankind, since his obsession with angelic power blinds him to the Son's own humble weakness, and, specifically, to the moral test of the Son who is told by the Father, "Go then thou Mightiest" (6.709), but will later be asked to give up any pretense to might in dying for the sake of mankind. Raphael then fails to see that the Son is already resigning that power in the very moment it is given: "Sceptre and Power, thy giving, I assume,/And gladlier shall resign, when in the end/Thou shalt be All in All, and I in thee/For ever" (6.730-33). Therefore, Raphael's ethnocentrism sheds light upon his limitations as a teacher of the human couple who come from a completely different social background.

Similar to the human couple, the angels have to experience gradual understanding of their own bodily and spiritual limitations through the War in Heaven, as well as a better understanding of the changing social history of Heaven in the interval between the first rebellion in the poem and later counsels in Heaven. Hence, an angel may not necessarily be a reliable source of information at any given time. Indeed, through the angels' experience in the War in Heaven, they realize for the first time that they can feel physical pain although they will not die. They are also "stumbl'd" and are unable to "walk upright" when they encounter the sudden attack of Satan's devilish engines (6.624-27). Furthermore, the angels make false assumptions about their freedom of spirit, which is why they need to be confined and

crushed, it seems, in metal suits of armour: "down they fell/By thousands, Angel on Arch-Angel roll'd;/The sooner for thir Arms: unarm'd they might/Have easily as Spirits evaded swift/By quick contraction or remove" (6.593-97). The point could not be made more explicitly that their spiritual freedom has material limits. The War in Heaven, it seems, is the introduction of a levelling principle into the hierarchies of Heaven whereby "Angel on Arch-Angel" is literally "roll'd."

The loyal angels have finally to learn that their own "heroic" rage levels the whole landscape of heaven; they uproot mountains in order to seek revenge on the Satanic forces who ridicule them. As Fuller suggests, they "do not act like heroes as they become involved in materialism and fragmentation and eventually participate in the literary dismantling of heaven" (139). Rather, they are having to be humbled in recognizing that "their own strength is insufficient to extirpate that evil. For a decisive victory, [they] must depend upon the divine power manifested in the Son" (Lewalski, Paradise 149). Conspicuously, then, even the voice of an unfallen angel, such as that of Raphael, cannot be taken as the poet's voice because of his social limitations and false assumptions.

For all these reasons, it is hard to credit Mary Nyquist's reading of the sexual politics of the poem, since she believes Milton's exegetical practice in the divorce tracts of 1643-44 is still at work in Raphael's creation account in Book Seven of Paradise Lost:

Let us make now Man in our image, Man

In our similitude, and let them rule...

This said, he form'd thee, Adam, thee O Man

Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breath'd

The breath of Life, in his own Image hee

Created thee, in the Image of God

Express, and thou becam'st a living Soul.

Male he created thee, but thy consort

Female for Race. (7.519-530, my emphasis)

Clearly, Raphael's narrative does combine Genesis 1.27 and 2.7, as Nyquist asserts, and unambiguously identifies the "Man" created in God's image in 1.27 as Adam, the man created from dust in 2.7. According to Nyquist, Milton, by having Raphael identify Adam as the representative man in 1.27, actually echoes his own exegetical practice in the divorce tracts, suppressing the potentially generic meaning of "Man," and thus repressing the more humanist interpretation of Genesis 1 which conveys a more egalitarian relationship between the two sexes.

Moreover, Nyquist notes that Raphael only refers to Eve's creation in one statement, which is primarily addressed to his male audience, "Male he created thee, but thy consort/Female for Race" (7.530), and Raphael does not even mention Eve's

creation story at all (Nyquist 117). But of course, Eve's creation story is not excluded from Paradise Lost, since the literary adaptation of her nativity is narrated by Adam in detailed manner in Book Eight of the poem. Again, Nyquist believes that Milton's narrative distribution of Adam's and Eve's creation accounts in this way is ideologically motivated. For her, Raphael's short remark about Eve's creation becomes an abstract of the detailed story of her creation from Adam's rib. As Nyquist argues, "one of the effects of this narrative distribution is that in Milton's epic Adam's story comes to have exactly the same relation to Raphael's as in the divorce tracts and in Protestant commentaries the second chapter of Genesis has to the first; it is an exposition or commentary upon it, revealing its true import" (117).

Ultimately, Nyquist draws upon Gérard Genette's technique of narrative analysis of examining the relation between "narrative" and "narrating" (Genette 27), since one effect of allowing Adam to narrate his personal experience of his own creation and Eve's nativity is that Adam can come to express the role he plays in the creation of his helpmeet, and to emphasize that Eve is created both from and for him, to satisfy his psychological needs. For Nyquist suggests that, according to Adam's narrative, it is Adam himself who first realizes his need of an equal partner, and who courageously asks for it, before God decides to create Eve to quench his desire (114). Thus, Eve's secondary status as a gift granted by God to fulfill Adam's needs is stressed, with the result that the institution of marriage is basically "contractual"

(114). As a result, "Paradise Lost makes sure that the doctrine of marriage is both produced and understood by the person for whom it is ordained, just as in the divorce tracts it is the privileged male voice, Milton's, which expounds the true doctrine of divorce" (Nyquist 117).

Obviously, this type of structuralist narratology can assume that Adam, as much as Raphael, is Milton's direct mouthpiece, echoing the divorce tracts which "foreground an Adam whose innocent or legitimate desires preexist the creation of the object that will satisfy them" (114). In other words, Nyquist's conclusion is that Raphael, Adam, and Eve all speak the same language in their individual creation narratives: Adam is the man directly made in the divine image, and thus, he is superior to Eve who is created primarily for Adam's sake.

If we grant Nyquist's assumption that Raphael and Adam speak with the poet's voice, then we should conclude that Paradise Lost is really a patriarchal poem which declares the inferior status of woman. For Raphael only addresses Eve in one sentence when he first arrives in Paradise, "Hail Mother of Mankind," (5.388) looking at her simply in terms of her reproductive power. Later, having celebrated the manly power of angels in the War in Heaven, he admonishes Adam to "warn/Thy weaker" (6.908-09), speaking of Eve as if she were not even there. He further dismisses her as merely a body by naming her as "thy consort/Female for Race" (7.529), having already spoken of her as if she were Adam's inferior. Not

surprisingly, then, Adam does describe Eve at the end of Book Eight in terms he has learned from his new mentor, calling her his “inferior, in the mind/And inward Faculties” (8.541-42). Nevertheless, Bakhtin’s sociological poetics have already shown that in a literary work, none of the characters can be regarded as speaking purely the poet’s language. Each speaks for himself, for each comes from a specific social background, and is located in a specific dramatic context. Axiomatically, there is then no unitary language in a literary work.

Iser’s dialectical approach to reading helps even more to undercut such a flat pronouncement of Eve’s inferiority. For a dialectical method exposes Raphael as a masculinist whose pronouncements on gender reproduce familiar illusions of Christian orthodoxy, which will nonetheless be broken by the dialectic of debate and by the force of events. God’s apparent decision to create Eve only after Adam expresses his desire, together with Adam’s confession to Raphael, are other illusions that will be dispelled in a closer look at the dramatic context of those particular scenes.

As mentioned, Raphael’s perspective can be faulty; nonetheless, as Aers and Hodge remark, “neo-Christian critics are so awed by authority that they assume the archangel must be right, or more right than Adam” (23). Indeed, Paradise Lost “builds” the illusion that Raphael’s authority is absolute at the beginning of Book Five, first by God’s commission, and then by Adam’s deep respect for him. First of

all, it is indisputable that Raphael is directly sent by God to advise and warn Adam and Eve against their enemy, Satan (5.229-245). Therefore, some readers might think that if Raphael is directly sent by the Father to carry out such an important mission concerning the fate and history of the whole human race, Raphael must be a very reliable angel, carefully selected by the Father for his deep trust in him.

The illusion of Raphael's absolute authority is also built up by Adam's initial submissiveness to him, as "Nearer [Raphael's] presence Adam though not aw'd,/Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,/As to a superior Nature, bowing low" (6.358-360). Moreover, when Raphael is willing to take the human fruits which Adam offers to him, Adam is genuinely excited and he remains in a humble manner, expressing his gratitude and great pleasure:

Inhabitant with God, now know I well
 Thy favor, in this honor done to Man,
 Under whose lowly roof thou hast voutsaf't
 To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
 Food not of Angels, yet accepted so. (5.461-467)

Therefore, it seems that readers should also have deep respect for what Raphael speaks and advises.

Yet why should we believe that Raphael's comment on Eve, "Female for Race" (7.530), is Milton's own view of the role of a woman and wife? First of all, it is clear that even in the divorce tracts, Milton himself observes that the idea "that woman was created solely or primarily for the purposes of procreation is the low-minded or 'crabbed' [Milton's adjective] opinion the Protestant doctrine of marriage sees itself called to overturn" (Nyquist 103). The dialectical model of reading further makes it clear that Raphael's masculinist declaration is only an illusion which is bound to be broken, firstly, by his own confession that he was absent on the day of the creation of mankind, for he was sent by the Father to the Gates of Hell "to see that none thence issu'd forth a spy/Or enemy, while God was in his work" (8.231-234). Thus, Raphael does not even witness man's and woman's creation. His observation of "thy consort/Female For Race" is actually his hasty assumption about the female sex, due to his angelic identity and his lack of experience of a new gender.

Secondly, in Book Eight, when Adam narrates Eve's creation story, he hints first of all at some doubt in his own mind as to the real value of the masculine creation as defined by Raphael. Noting that the Sun is hierarchically superior to the lowly Earth, Adam nonetheless sees how the earth is "Serv'd by more noble than herself" and "attains/Her end without least motion" (8.34-35). Then, in full view of Raphael's ambiguous and evasive answer about whether "Great/Or Bright infers not

excellence" (8.90-91) in astronomical spheres, Adam offers a mild, if tacit, rebuke to the angel's habit of judging with insufficient knowledge: "now hear mee relate/My story, which perhaps thou hast not heard" (8.204-05). Adam, in short, tells Raphael a story of Eve's creation which differs radically from all the angel's hierarchical assumptions about the feminine sex.

What Adam's story reveals is his desire for an equal partner, for "Among unequals what society/Can sort, what harmony or true delight?/Which must be mutual, in proportion due/Giv'n and receiv'd" (8.383-86). He emphasizes that what he yearns for is a companion who can offer him solace, who can "participate all rational delight," "conversation," and "fellowship" with him (8.389-391). The Father, in response to Adam's requests which are sound and reasonable, "expressing well the spirit within [him] free," (8.440) promises that he is going to grant him a partner who meets his deepest needs:

What next I bring shall please thee, be assu'rd,

Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,

Thy wish, exactly to thy heart's desire. (8.449-51).

Hence, procreation is never introduced as the primary role in Eve's creation. According to Lewalski, "nor is she so perceived by Adam, who in his long argument

with God urges to demonstrate most forcefully his need for a mate--not for progeny but for companion" ("Milton" 9).

Evidently, Raphael's comment on Eve as a creature for procreation is an illusion introduced by a masculine angel and long maintained by a patriarchal tradition of viewing women. Yet, Adam's very question about hierarchy in the solar sphere is the beginning of a process of breaking such old illusions. In response to Adam's question, Raphael is willing to give a thorough explanation on the relationship between the Sun and the Earth: "consider first, that Great/Or Bright infers not Excellence" (8.90-91). At the end of his stumbling, self-contradictory monologue, however, Raphael is forced to conclude that there is no answer to this challenge to male hierarchy, and he essentially closes further discussion of the matter by resorting to the patristic tradition of sacrificium intellectus, renouncing any possible understanding of the topics he has laboured at discursively now for three full books of the epic:

Heav'n is for thee too high

To know what passes there; be lowly wise:

Think only what concerns thee and thy being;

Dream not of other Worlds, what creatures there

Live, in what state, condition or degree,

Contented that thus far hath been reveal'd

Not of earth only but of highest Heav'n. (8.172-78)

Indeed, Raphael has responded to Adam in similar ways several times throughout their conversation. As Lewalski suggests, he “warns [Adam] against probing into God’s secrets, reaffirms that the knowledge he seeks should be appropriate to human capacity and human needs, and proclaims that temperance should control the appetite for knowledge as for food” (Paradise 154). It seems that Raphael’s comment to Adam is well justified in this light. However, the dialectical approach to reading shows that Raphael’s “be lowly wise” is an instance of an old illusion of Christian orthodoxy which will soon be broken by Adam’s report of his debate with God, in which God stimulates him to ask more questions, and to engage in further dialectics with him.

The debate between God and Adam in Book Eight is really about Adam’s need of an equal partner. After Adam wakes up from his creation, the Father enjoins him to “Bird and Beast behold/Approaching two and two,” and asks him to name them (8.349-50). After surveying the creatures, Adam feels that he has not encountered anything that can be his companion. Instead of keeping silent, Adam is courageous and skillful enough to ask his Creator, “In solitude/What happiness, who can enjoy alone,/Or all enjoying, what contentment find” (8.364-66)? God then

deliberately tries to provoke Adam by replying that he can play with the beasts, and “bear rule” over them (8.375). According to Fuller, in responding in this way, God actually “sets up a hierarchical structure” (155). In spite of the Father who “seem’d/Ordering,” Adam obviously challenges this hierarchical structure by expressing his ideal of an equal partner. God continues to induce Adam to debate with him, by deliberately putting on a mask of one who does not find Adam’s need to be valid, by telling Adam that he himself is happy, although he must converse with creatures inferior to him through all eternity. In response to this stimulation, Adam challenges his Creator by explaining that, unlike God, he is imperfect in nature; thus, he will feel lonely without an equal partner. In the end, God shows great appreciation for Adam “expressing well the spirit within [him] free,” and grants him what he himself has intended all along (8.444-48).

It becomes clear that, contrary to Raphael’s teaching which advises Adam to “be lowly wise” and to be content with the things he already has, Adam’s story sheds light upon a God who induces man to see through illusions, to penetrate the mask of a seemingly remote God who fails to understand human needs and human predicament, and to discover a God who encourages man to realize his own needs, and to use his reason to debate with him, or even to challenge him, instead of obeying him blindly. Undoubtedly, God, rather than Raphael, is the ultimate source of truth in Heaven. Consequently, the archangel’s orthodox advice is exposed as

another illusion of a hierarchical social order which has to be broken down.

Iser's dialectical method of reading thus serves to remind us of the flatness of a structuralist method like Nyquist's which reduces every voice and every language in narrative to the ideology of a given era. Assuming, in other words, that Milton speaks for the emerging economic order of the bourgeoisie, Nyquist also assumes her conclusion that Adam, like his author, is "preternaturally awake to the implications of entering into relations with others," even before God proclaims his decision to make Eve (Nyquist 115). Thus, she believes that Milton's Adam has played a role almost as equally important as God's in Eve's creation, by forcing God to create a partner for him, thus justifying the chauvinistic and patriarchal outlook of the poem.

Nevertheless, this assumption is first shattered by the fact that, as mentioned, it is God who takes the initiative in stimulating in Adam the desire for a companion. As Gallagher remarks, God "intends to apprise Adam of his anomalous solitude" (Milton 36). Therefore, Adam's "preternatural" awareness is already an illusion. Secondly, after Adam valiantly debates with God over his need of an equal partner, God eventually admits that he is testing Adam's reasoning power, and that he "had all along intended to provide Adam with a companion," even before Adam realizes and expresses his desire (Hamilton 51):

Thus far to try thee, Adam...
..., I ere thou spak'st,
Knew it not good for Man to be alone,
And no such company as then thou saw'st
Intended thee, for trial only brought. (8.437,444-47)

Ilona Bell also agrees that "Adam was in fact wrong to think that Eve is the result of his desires" (111). In fact, the beasts and birds that are mated in pairs have already implied that in God's original design of creation, there are two opposite sexes which are equally important. Conspicuously, as Webber suggests, "contrary to Gilbert's idea that Eve is a divine afterthought, she is from the beginning an essential part of the whole design of growth and change achieved through opposition" (34).

Although Eve is intended by God to be Adam's partner, she obviously was "always part of God's design" (Gallagher, "Milton's Bogey" 320). God does not create her at the same time with Adam only because he is to challenge Adam himself to realize his own need of a partner. Therefore, Eve is not inferior and secondary in creation. She is something much more than a gift in God's plan. Hence, Iser's dialectical approach reminds us not to take what happens at one moment to be truth, until we see how God unmask himself, breaking the illusion and revising the meaning of Eve's creation for us.

Nonetheless, Adam himself can help to “build” the illusion of Eve’s inferiority at the end of Book Eight. Even though he has vigorously defended his ideal of an equal partner, he seems to be unfaithful to his own vision of a companion whom God has declared to be “exactly to [his] heart’s desire” (8.451). Why, then, has Adam suddenly become patriarchal, or why should he contradict himself, in telling Raphael:

Of Nature her th’ inferior, in the mind
 And inward Faculties, which most excel,
 In outward also her resembling less
 His image who made both (8.541-44)?

Adam’s belated reduction of his ideal partner is taken by Nyquist and by others as evidence of Milton’s personal discrimination against woman, since Milton had once stated in his Tetrachordon that Eve resembles less the divine image. But if Adam’s comments on Eve are right, then God must have deceived Adam. Yet who is more reliable, God or Adam?

Here again, the dialectical method offers a solution to Adam’s self-contradiction. For it helps us to see that his initial deprecating remarks about Eve are merely illusions served up to the prejudice of the masculinist archangel who has

warned Adam over and over of Eve's weakness and of her inferiority. Yet Adam himself cannot rest in such illusions, rehearsing his mentor's prejudice only to dispute and, finally, to dispel it:

...yet when I approach

Her loveliness, so well to know

Her own, that what she wills to do or say,

Seems wisest, virtouousest, discreetest, best...

Greatness of mind and nobleness thir seat

Build in her loveliest, and create an awe

About her, as a guard Angelic plac't. (8.546-59)

The illusion of Eve's inferiority comes about, according to one critic, because Adam "fears that he may not have the power to withstand Eve's awesome beauty and seeks to allay his fears by establishing a hierarchy of male and female attributes" (Peczenik 41). Indeed, one cannot deny that Adam, having talked to Raphael for such a long time, must have been influenced by his "hierarchical terminology and thought-patterns" to a certain extent (Fuller 159). Therefore, "in his innocence and deference to Raphael he gives more sanction to the angel's words than to the memory of his own experience" (Fuller 155). Yet, after releasing his anxiety, Adam

is able honestly to express his feelings again. And so he corrects his earlier views of Eve's inferiority, and admits that she is excellent, "As one intended first, not after made/Occasionally," (8.555-6) thus rendering his former degradation of Eve an illusion.

In response to Adam's praise of Eve, Raphael reveals the rigid character of his hierarchical thinking, urging that Adam has honoured Eve too much "by attributing overmuch to things/Less excellent" (8.565-66), and warning him not to "[sink] in carnal pleasure" (8.593). Raphael then concludes his speech by advising Adam to have more "self-esteem," and to exert headship over Eve (8.570-74). Indeed, Raphael is imposing the same sort of hierarchy on the marriage of Adam and Eve as Satan has done implicitly, though not yet publicly to the husband and wife. In spite of God's assurance in the Heavenly Council that hierarchy is an outmoded form of political organization in Heaven, and in spite of God's demonstration in the colloquy with Adam that equality is desirable between man and God as much as it is between man and woman, the "winged Hierarch" falls back on an outmoded metaphysics at precisely the point where he thinks he has found a weakness which will lead to the fall of mankind.

Most obviously, from a feminist point of view, Raphael's patriarchal thinking helps to construct in the poem a set of hierarchical binary oppositions of gender: male/female, mind/body, strong/weak, and superior/inferior, which always subjugate

the female as the weaker, negative term. Both Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida argue that these binary oppositions are deeply embedded in the patriarchal culture which always privilege the male (Jones 81). However, Cixous, in her essay, The Laugh of the Medusa, successfully “undoes” these hierarchical oppositions between men and women, by “undermining such oppositions, and dismantling the system that sanctions them” in her use of Derrida’s method of deconstruction (Greene and Kahn 26). Surprisingly to some feminists, perhaps, Milton’s language in the creation accounts also works to deconstruct the binary oppositions set up by Raphael, and much in the same manner as Cixous.

Firstly, as mentioned, Raphael has debased Eve merely as a “body” for procreation. From a radical feminist viewpoint, “to bear young is to be not spiritual, but animal, a thing of flesh, an incomprehensible and uncomprehending body” (Gilbert 372). Froula likewise argues that the comparison of the nativity scenes of Adam and Eve also sets up the couple as spirit/body. Eve, Froula maintains, is attracted by her own bodily appearance at the lake of Narcissus, while Adam “does not identify with earthly bodies--not even his own,” but “subordinat[ing] body and earth,” immediately directs his mind to the seeking of a Creator (330). And yet, as shown, Adam’s debate with God over a suitable companion never mentions procreation as a primary purpose of Eve’s creation, although it is the necessary outcome of marriage. On the contrary, the dialectic emphasizes that Eve is created

to be a partner who can “participate all rational delight” (8.390-91, my emphasis). Thus, Eve, as much as Adam, offers a mind which can reason. In addition, the binary opposition of body/mind has long been undermined by Eve’s own irrepressible enthusiasm for knowledge as revealed in Book Four and Five. Interestingly enough, we should note that Adam’s astronomical question to Raphael (8.32-38) actually expands on Eve’s earlier question to him (4.657-8), thus reversing our notions of intellectual primacy and destabilizing our assumptions about rational authority.

Secondly, Adam and Eve are constructed to be superior/inferior and strong/weak by Raphael, who is hierarchical in his mindset, and does not understand gender relations because he is caught in a changing universe which has now got a feminine principle which he has not seen in Heaven before. But curiously enough, he unwittingly undercuts the primacy he gives to man by his own illustration of the relationship between the Sun and the Earth (8.90-97). In response to Adam’s question about hierarchies in Heaven, why “the sedentary Earth,/That better might with far less compass move,/Serv’d by more noble than herself?” (8.32-34), he says:

...consider first, that Great

Or Bright infers not Excellence: the Earth

Though, in comparison of Heav’n so small,

Nor glistening, may of solid good contain
 More plenty than the Sun that barren shines,
 Whose virtue on itself works no effect,
 But in the fruitful Earth; there first receiv'd
 His beams, unactive else, thir vigor find. (8.90-97)

In this lesson, the Sun is taken to be male while the Earth is female. As Aers and Hodge comment, "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" (19-20). Clearly enough, then, "goodness" is not to be confused with "strength and size" (Peczenik 31). Similarly, although Adam appears to be stronger in Raphael's and Satan's perspective, he is not more excellent than Eve. Raphael's metaphor further undermines the hierarchical oppositions of superior/inferior and strong/weak, by advocating a relationship which is reciprocal and mutual, for the Sun and the Earth are revealed to be equally in need of each other. As McColley suggests, "for Milton, the whole cosmos is expressed in full reciprocity as an interanimation of the sexes corresponding to the microcosm of human marriage" (46).

Likewise, mutuality and equality are the main themes in Adam's debate with God over his ideal companion. It is strongly emphasized that marriage is a mutual relationship "in proportion due/Giv'n and receiv'd" (8.385-6). The idea that Eve is

Adam's "other self" recurs throughout the poem. Not only does God call her Adam's "other self" (8.450), but Adam himself also addresses Eve as "part of [his] soul" and "[his] other half" (4.437, 488). The terms "other half" and "other self," as Coleridge comments, mean "a completion of one in the other" (quoted in Peczenik 30). In other words, neither Adam nor Eve can complete themselves without the other. Therefore, reciprocity and mutuality are again reinforced. Eve is to help Adam and to be his companion in life; likewise, Adam is to help Eve and to cure her loneliness. Simultaneously, Adam stresses that his partner must be able to "well converse" with him (8.396). It is worthy to note that conversation is a dialogical activity in which both partners participate. Therefore, this primary element in the divinely ordained marriage further emphasizes that Adam and Eve are equal and mutual partners, thus deconstructing the patriarchal assumptions of male/female as superior/inferior.

Active/passive is another binary opposition constructed in the angelic visitation, for Eve seems to be playing the passive role of a listener during the earlier part of the exclusively male-talk of Adam and Raphael. Raphael even seems to be ignoring Eve altogether, by advising Adam to "warn/[his] weaker" right in her presence (6.908-9). Before Raphael expounds on the Sun-Earth relationship, Eve even withdraws from their conversation, and "[goes] forth among her Fruits and Flow'rs,/To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom,/Her Nursery" (8.44-6). Her

decision to withdraw at this moment is often seized upon by critics as evidence of her lack of interest in serious and solemn matters like astronomy. However, the first chapter has already proved the invalidity of this assumption. But is it still evidence of her passivity? Her decision to leave, instead of being a sign of her passivity, may be an "independent choice," leaving "the two boys to their abstract thinking" (Farwell 14). Or it may be a sign of her exquisite tact in leaving Adam free to discuss his doubts about gender and hierarchy at this first sign that his question about astronomy is also a question about marriage. Either way, Eve is "not a passive creature who leaves or moves only when bidden, for as Milton makes clear, she leaves 'as not with such discourse/Delighted, or not capable her ear/Of what was high: such pleasure she reserv'd,/Adam relating, she sole Auditress'" (Farwell 14). Hence, the hierarchical opposition of active/passive is deconstructed by Milton's own language in defending Eve.

Finally, Bakhtin's dialogical method reaffirms how each character speaks his individual language, which is subjected to the influence of his specific social background and experience. Iser's model, together with Cixous's feminist methodology, further show how first impressions, either in life, or in reading, should not be taken as final impressions. Wisdom and patience are required in the reader of Paradise Lost to distinguish reality from illusive impressions. As shown by the dialectical experience of reading, God is an illusion-builder and illusion-breaker, as

much as is the author of the poem. The task God assigns to Adam is to see through his seeming lack of understanding of human needs, and to unmask his hierarchical appearances. Milton's epic bard likewise assigns the modern reader the task to see through his mask of masculinist and patriarchal clichés which would further the inequality of the two sexes.

Chapter III

Deconstructing Hierarchies: The Final Lesson for Adam and Eve, and the Reader

A purely structuralist study of the narrative distribution of creation in Paradise Lost would exclude the last four books of the poem because they fall outside the artificial limits of creation accounts. However, these four books contain very crucial scenes: the separation scene, the falling scene, the judgment scene, the reconciliation scene, and the concluding education scene, all of which point to the human experience of living in time, rather than a mechanistic arrangement of space, as the true subtext of the creation narratives. In fact, it is the shortcoming of structuralism that it “attempt[s] to discover the whole in the part, that is, [it] take[s] the structure of a part, abstractly divorced from the whole, and claim[s] it as the structure of the whole” (Bakhtin & Volosinov 394). On the other hand, reading these last four books with the help of Mikhail Bakhtin’s sociological poetics, Wolfgang Iser’s reception theory, and Hélène Cixous’s feminist methodology further reveals how a structuralist reading of Eve’s creation is partial and biased, since Eve finally appears as an instrument of growth and regeneration in God’s creation, participating in the history of the reconciliation between God and men.

The patristic tradition descending from the Pauline epistles renders Eve inferior because in Genesis 3, she is obviously the one who sins first and who tempts

Adam to fall with her. Milton, of course, has to respect these biblical facts in his literary adaptation of the story of the Fall. But in rewriting Genesis 3, Milton tries to explain why Eve is alone when Satan tempts her in the form of a serpent, by developing a detailed separation scene in which Eve proposes to Adam the division of labour (9.205-25). A dialogical approach to the separation scene helps us to discern the real motivations behind Eve's proposal, as well as the reasons for her fall, thus rendering Eve less the gullible and malicious woman of the traditional icons than as a tragic protagonist whose fall deserves our sympathy.

In fact, very few critics notice her exact motives in Eve's proposal of dividing their labour at the very first moment she mentions it to Adam (9.205-55). For instance, both Louis L. Martz and Diane McColley take Eve's explanation that she wants to tend the Garden in a more efficient way as her real reason for separating from Adam (Martz 55). As McColley insists, "Milton's Eve is distinguished from all other Eves by the fact that she takes her work seriously" (McColley 110). On the other hand, Arnold Stein and Joseph Summers suggest that Eve is motivated by "her willful assertion of independence" (Stein 94), or by "a desire to prove her intellectual equality to her husband" (Summers 171). Meanwhile, Don Parry Norford states more flatly that "latent feelings of inferiority, injured pride, and resentment" underlie her behaviour (10). Clearly, Adam's responses to Eve's proposal do injure Eve's pride and hasten her decision to go out alone. Yet Adam's responses are only one

half of the story, omitting any reason why Eve should suggest their division of labour at the very moment after Raphael's visit. As Elizabeth Ely Fuller remarks, Eve's proposal is "a reaction to Adam's and Raphael's misevaluation of her in Book Eight" (171). Fuller alone has caught the implication of Eve's use of the word "redress," indicating Eve's intention to remedy her wounded feelings (171). There is more, however, in Eve's language than the single word "redress" to help us and Adam alike in understanding Eve's sudden request.

Bakhtin's dialogical method approach opens up a hidden dimension to the separation scene which is overlooked by most critics. What is central to Bakhtin's sociolinguistics is that one's language reflects one's consciousness and value system, both of which are determined by one's social background (Bakhtin 293, 315). In other words, we can identify a character's background, or the social class he comes from, by analysing his particular system of language. Indeed, "all words have a 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group" (Bakhtin 293). Once we realize that Eve's language in her first proposal to separate (9.205-12) actually echoes Adam's earlier language of tending the Garden (4.625-33), Bakhtin's concept sheds light upon Eve's need to satisfy herself that she and Adam still speak the same language, still cherish the same values, in spite of Raphael's warning about the dangers of uxoriousness.

A closer comparison of Eve's proposal with Adam's earlier speech on tending the Garden suggests that Eve is in fact testing Adam to see if her husband has changed his mind about their customary relationship:

Adam, well may we labour still to dress
 This Garden, still to tend Plant, Herb and Flow'r,
Our pleasant task enjoin'd, but till more hands
 Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
 Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
 One night or two with wanton growth derides
 Tending to wild. (9.205-12, my emphasis)

In the space of seven and a half lines, Eve repeats or echoes several key phrases from Adam's speech to her ("Tomorrow ere fresh Morning streak the East") in Book Four. It was Adam who had called their work "our pleasant labor" (4.625), which Eve now recalls as "Our pleasant task"; Adam's admission that the Garden "require[s]/More hands than ours" (4.628-29) is likewise assumed in her phrase "till more Hands/Aid us." Where Adam proposed "to lop" the blossoms' "wanton growth" (4.629), Eve describes, in a continuing present, "what we by day/Lop

overgrown," though this "wanton growth derides" their efforts, much as Adam had also conceded in his phrase, "mock our scant manuring" (4.628). Eve's language, in other words, recalls her former solidarity with Adam, and expresses her hope of continuity, more than it expresses any departure from past practice. She reminds Adam of what they have done and who they have been to each other in their daily tasks before she very pointedly seeks his advice, or else seeks his reaction to her "first," but not her final, thoughts on the matter: "Thou therefore now advise/Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present,/Let us divide our labors" (9.212-14). The proposal to divide their labour is more like Eve's trial balloon than it is an act of novelty or willfulness or latent inferiority.

But what has prompted this need of a trial balloon? Eve soon tells Adam quite directly that she has overheard Raphael's masculinist advice to Adam to exert headship over her (8.574), as she admits that "from the parting Angel over-heard/As in a shady nook [she] stood behind" (9.276-77). Therefore, Eve's deliberate echo of Adam's language can only be a test of whether Adam has been affected by Raphael's angelic language and value system, and if he still identifies himself as belonging to the same speech and social group as her. As Fuller suggests, Eve has "sensed that she and Adam have been divided by Raphael" (172). Hence, her language in the proposal to separate is an appeal to her husband to speak the same language, and come close again.

In response to Eve's proposal, Adam at first resumes their intimate marital language by addressing her in the dignified titles he has been using all along: "Sole Eve, Associate sole, to me beyond/Compare above all living Creatures dear" (9.227-28). However, his courteous tone quickly turns patronizing as he heeds Raphael's advice to "weigh with her thyself;/Then value; Oft-times nothing profits more/Than self-esteem" (8.570-72). That Eve now weighs less in Adam's scale of values, or that he esteems himself more, seems clear from the way he makes himself the standard of reference: "for nothing lovelier can be found/In Woman, than to study household good,/And good works in her Husband to promote" (9.233-34).

At the end of his first speech in this scene, Adam tries to persuade Eve not to go by emphasizing her secondary status, both in terms of her creation and of her potential power:

leave not the faithful side

That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.

The Wife, where danger or dishonor lurks,

Safest and seemliest by Her Husband stays,

Who guards her, or with her the worst endures. (9.265-69)

According to Diane Benet, "rather than united strength, Adam now emphasizes his

individual and greater power to guard Eve,” and it is evident that Eve is “demoted from helpmeet to passive object of the protection of her mate” (131-32). Fuller also remarks that Adam is “right to ‘doubt’ the wisdom of their being separated, but as he expresses this doubt he stresses her weakness without him, not the particular strength of her nature which, when joined to his, is the strength that can withstand Satan” (173). Although Adam has courageously defended Eve against Raphael at the end of Book Eight, his first answer to Eve reveals that he has unconsciously, if defensively, adopted Raphael’s hierarchical and patriarchal perspective.

“As one who loves, and some unkindness meets” (9.271), the narrator says in case we have missed it, Eve now responds much more openly to her fears that “winged Hierarchs” can do real damage to egalitarian marriages: she lets Adam know she has overheard their conversation (9.274-78), perhaps from the beginning, since Raphael had not mentioned “That such an Enemy we have” any later than 8.233, some 400 lines before the end of his dialogue with Adam. She further expresses directly her disappointment at Adam’s change by asserting that he is doubting her “firmness” (9.279) and her loyalty to him: “Thoughts, which how found they harbor in thy breast,/Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?” (9.287-89).

Adam, having realized that Eve is hurt by his reply, tries to comfort her by “healing words,” by calling her “Daughter of God and Man, immortal Eve” (9.290-

91). But his attempt to excuse his actions only makes matter worse:

Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
 Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
 Th' attempt itself, intended by our Foe.
 For hee who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
 The tempted with dishonor foul. (9.293-97)

Critics have always been forced to explain how the author of Areopagitica who scorned “a fugitive and cloistered virtue” (Hughes 728) could side with a protagonist who wanted only “to avoid/Th' attempt itself,” as if he thought his own virtue would survive, “unexercised and unbreathed” (Hughes 728). It is worth noting that in contrast, when Eve wakes up from the tempting dream in Book Five, Adam reassures her that she is innocent, and that the dream can “leave/No spot or blame behind” (5.118-19). Conspicuously, then, Adam has changed his own mind since he spoke with Raphael, and denies the principle that “Evil into the mind of God or Man/May come and go, so unapprov'd” (5.117-18). He likewise fails to heed the lesson of Abdiel's story that evil, so long as it is disapproved, will bring nothing but honour to the loyal spirit whose only “care” was “To stand approv'd in sight of God, though Worlds/Judg'd thee perverse” (6.35-37).

The very model of Abdiel's story of singleminded loyalty seems to one critic the decisive example to Eve, rather than the negative influence of the visiting storyteller. Diane Benet argues that Eve models her arguments on Abdiel, but that Adam models his views on the example of the Son in the War in Heaven (132-34). In Benet's reading of the separation scene, Eve insists that she is sufficient to stand against Satan's temptation even without Adam's protection because the example of Abdiel "proves that unquestioning obedience to one's superior in the hierarchy is not necessarily best, and that a lower place in the scheme does not mean certain moral failure" (Benet 132-33). On the other hand, Adam wants to resemble the heroic gesture of the Son. Yet, Benet ignores how Adam fails to see that the Son refuses to glorify himself in accepting his role from the Father, and so appoints himself to be Eve's saviour, as well as her judge: "thy trial choose/With me, best witness of thy Virtue tri'd" (9.316-17). Thus, not only has he made himself Eve's Head, but now he has made himself her God.

Very properly, Eve recognizes that God, not Adam, is the one true witness of her trial: "Favor from Heav'n, our witness from th' event" (9.334). So, too, Eve reaffirms Milton's lifelong ethic of testing, expressed most vividly in Areopagitica: "that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary" (Hughes 728). As she puts it quite as memorably, "And what is Faith, Love, Virtue unassay'd/Alone, without exterior help sustain'd?" (9.335-36). Adam is thus forced, by the logic of

hierarchy, to abandon argument and to assert his headship over Eve: "Trial will come unsought,/Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve/First thy obedience" (9.366-68). But it is clear henceforth that her obedience must be to him; this is especially clear in his shift from the subjunctive, in referring to himself, to the imperative in referring to her: "tender love enjoins,/That I should mind thee oft, and mind thou mee" (9.357-58).

The extent of Adam's defection to Raphael's point of view is finally summed up in his parting words to Eve which recapitulate the angel's advice to him: "God towards thee hath done his part, do thine" (9.375), he admonishes her. "Accuse not Nature," Raphael had said to him, "she hath done her part;/Do thou but thine" (8.561-62). Eve could not have expected worse from her mate than this playback of a conversation where Adam has changed sides. What began as "first thoughts" in a test of Adam's loyalty must now give Eve second thoughts, "prompting her to stand on her own dignity and assert her sense of independence--her ability to remain firm on her own in the face of temptation from their adversary" (Loewenstein 111).

Adam still might have persuaded Eve to stay, had he been willing to put aside his self-esteem and his chauvinistic assumptions, and to express his need of Eve, just as he had done in his request for an equal partner. As Claudia M. Champagne suggests, the fact that Adam has pompously "assumed the male stance as the protector of his 'weaker' (6.909) that Raphael told him is his duty," has driven Eve

to "her imminent fall" (56). Eve is hardly a vain woman, then, who deliberately leaves her husband to wander around for the sake of "pleasure-seeking" (McColley 149). Instead, she is forced to go, wounded as she is by her beloved's reduction of both her faith and firmness. In other words, Raphael's outmoded notions of hierarchy and absolute male authority, which have swayed Adam, have sent Eve into the mouth of the devouring serpent.

An analysis of Eve's reasons for eating the fruit further reveals how patriarchal language has made Eve vulnerable to Satan's temptation, thus rendering her a tragic heroine more than a sinful woman. While the Genesis tradition presents an Eve who is gullible, and who deliberately defies God simply out of her vanity to be like God, Milton's Eve is different. Firstly, as Lewalski insists, Eve falls not because she is insufficient in her intellectual power, for, although she enjoys the serpent's praise because it feeds her wounded pride (9.532-48), she still demonstrates her logical resistance to such flattery: "Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt/The virtue of that Fruit, in thee first prov'd" ("Milton" 14). Furthermore, when she finds out that the miraculous fruit mentioned by the serpent is the fruit of the forbidden tree, she immediately protests: "But of this Tree we may not taste nor touch;/God so commanded, and left that Command/Sole Daughter of his voice" (9.651-53). In fact, she "understands clearly the basic principle to withstand Satan's sequent argument" (Lewalski, "Milton" 14-15). Thus, Milton has portrayed an Eve

who is not intellectually inferior to Adam, as some feminists believe.

If intellectual deficiency is not the cause of Eve's fall, what is the primary force behind her disobedience of God's command? Satan, seeing that Eve still has not lost her reason, has to lure Eve by preying on her fear of inequality. The serpent also stresses that eating the fruit will not make one die as he himself has experienced. It is at this point that Eve's reason becomes clouded, not by her sudden ambition to become God, but by her belief that the fruit must be "the Cure of all" (9.776), which can heal her emotional injury brought about by the sudden loss of the equal relationship between Adam and herself. Therefore, she feels that eating the fruit will give her the power to restore what is lost. As Blessington comments, "Eve feels the tree may release her from her position of being subservient to Adam, and even elevate her to the divine status alluded to by Satan" (73).

Eve's subsequent struggle over whether she should ask Adam to partake of the fruit further suggests that the primary force prompting her to sin is her desire to gain equality after Raphael and Adam both name her as the weaker:

But to Adam in what sort

Shall I appear?...so to add what wants

In Female Sex, the more to draw his Love,

And render me more equal, and perhaps,

A thing not desirable, sometime

Superior: for inferior who is free? (9.816-25, my emphasis)

Finally, Eve resolves to persuade Adam to eat the fruit because of her underlying fear that she may die and Adam will find another Eve (9.826-30). However, she conceals her real motive and protests to Adam, in a fallen parody of his reasoning with God for a mate, that she wants him to taste the fruit merely for their mutual good:

Thou therefore also taste, that equal Lot

May join us, equal Joy, as equal Love;

Less thou not tasting, different degree

Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce

Deity for thee, when Fate will not permit. (9.881-85, my emphasis)

But it is noteworthy that Eve's repeated use of the word "equal" reveals what is deeply embedded in her consciousness--her yearning for equality; for the loss of equality with Adam is really a severe blow to her. Thus, reading the separation scene and the reasons for Eve's fall in terms of Bakhtin's dialogical method helps us to see Eve in a more compassionate light than orthodoxy has ever allowed. By

inventing the separation scene, Milton has already provided a measure of redemption for Eve, giving us a protagonist who deserves our sympathy and understanding, instead of our blame.

Nonetheless, the scene in which Eve and Adam fall seems to construct another hierarchical binary opposition of superior/inferior, since Adam appears to fall for a reason that indicates his superiority as a romantic lover; for he “resolves through vehemence of love to perish with [Eve]” (Argument to Book Nine). Eve herself also feels that Adam is literally “falling for her sake,” as she gladly exclaims: “o glorious trial of exceeding Love” (9.961), “much won that he his Love/Had so ennobl’d, as of choice to incur/Divine displeasure for her sake” (9.991-93). Yet, this binary opposition of superior/inferior can also be deconstructed by an in-depth analysis of the causes of Adam’s fall.

Many critics are still persuaded that Adam falls through his love for Eve, because when Eve gives him the fruit of the forbidden tree, he is “not deceiv’d,/But fondly overcome with Female charm” (9.998-99). The traditional view is held most uncompromisingly by C.S. Lewis: “Adam fell by uxoriousness” (Lewis 122). Meanwhile, Paul Turner argues that Adam commits “idolatry” because he believes that Eve is perfect and loves her more than God (8). Only A.J.A. Waldock asserts that “Adam falls through love--not through sensuality, not through uxoriousness...but through love” (51-52).

Still, if we go through Adam's speech more carefully, another picture emerges: Adam falls not through his true devotion to Eve, but through narcissistic self-love:

So forcible within my heart I feel

My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;

Our state cannot be sever'd, we are one,

One Flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself. (9.955-59, my emphasis)

As Arnold Stein admits, Adam's self-love is "the preference of the image he has begotten to the image in which he is begotten" (Answerable 109). Indeed, he no longer sees Eve as an independent entity, but merely as the reflection of himself. Crosman also notices the "egocentrism of the speech: a preoccupation with how Eve's disobedience will affect Adam and a commensurate silence on how to help Eve" (177-78).

Eve is not only mistaken, but finally and fully narcissistic, then, in judging the superiority of fallen Adam's love. If he truly loves Eve at this moment, he might even volunteer to bear the punishment for her, just as the Son has volunteered to die for the sins of mankind in the Heavenly Council in Book Three. In other words, Adam proves to be as selfish and ignoble as Eve at the instant of his fall, for he is

“concerned only with his loss, his desolation if he must live alone” (Champagne 56).

Thus, the binary opposition, superior/inferior, is destabilized by the equal fallenness of Adam and Eve.

A comparison of Adam and Eve in the judgment scene further deconstructs the binary opposition of superior/ inferior, or even reverses it entirely. In response to the Son’s question: “hast thou eaten of the Tree/Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?” (9.122-23): not only does Adam evade his own responsibility in the fall by blaming Eve and even God for giving him Eve, he actually lies to the Son:

This Woman whom thou mad’st to be my help,

And gav’st me as thy perfect gift, so good,

So fit, so acceptable, so Divine,

That from her hand I could suspect no ill,...

She gave me of the Tree, and I did eat. (9.137-143)

As Anderson suggests, the biblical Adam’s act of blaming Eve and God is “a sign of his wickedness and lack of true repentance” (138). Milton’s Adam seems to be even more devious for he emphasizes that he “suspect[s] no ill.” Thus, he is lying intentionally, since he fully recognizes that the fruit is forbidden, and that his fall is a deliberate choice.

In contrast to Adam's lengthy speech, Eve's reply is simple and straightforward: "The Serpent me beguil'd and I did eat" (9.162). As many critics have noted, her confession sounds more humble and noble. According to Anderson, the biblical Eve's reply denotes her intention to "seek excuse" by blaming the serpent (138). Yet, Milton's Eve is different, as "her poetic inversion of the Genesis wording-- 'the Serpent me beguil'd'--groups herself more closely with the beguiling agent and assumes, ever so subtly, a greater degree of responsibility for her own failure" (Anderson 139). Hence, Eve's apparent honesty and remorse, by comparison to Adam's refusal to admit his fault, implies that she is morally superior to Adam at this moment, thus beginning the reversal of the binary opposition of superior/ inferior.

A comparison of Adam's and Eve's reactions towards the Fall and the judgment further undercuts the binary oppositions of male/female, superior/inferior, God/nature, and spirit/body, for Eve is eventually proven to possess more divine qualities than Adam in the reconciliation scene. Adam is initially identified with God and spirit because the moment he wakes up from his creation, he has the intrinsic urge to come into contact with the Creator. As Webber suggests, "Adam's association is with sky, which is supposed to make him more aware of God," while "Eve's cosmic association is with physical nature, which legitimately concerns the couple in their immediate day-to-day obligations" (16). Initially, Eve is likewise

identified with nature and body because of her acute awareness of her beautiful earthly body in the self-mirroring scene. Secondly, Eve, as a female, is endowed with the power of procreation and fertility, thus reinforcing her closeness with nature, the mother earth (Landy 7). Indeed, she is called by the narrator "the fairest of her Daughters" (4.324).

Nevertheless, Adam appears to be completely godless in his behaviour after the Fall. In fact, his long soliloquy (10.720-862) resembles Satan's first soliloquy (4.32-113), "by being an internal debate between two inner 'voices,' one accusing God and the other defending" (Crosman 197). Thus, Adam's identity with Satan underscores his unbridgeable distance from God. Adam begins his soliloquy with the painful awareness of the contrast between his former happiness and his present woe. He is haunted by the consequences of his fall: all his progeny will be cursed because of his sin. It seems that he is now concerned with his suffering children. But, in fact, he is still preoccupied with himself: "Who of all Ages to succeed, but feeling/The evil on him brought by me, will curse/My Head" (10.733-35). The striking repetitions of "me" and "mee" in his speech further denote his self-centredness and self-love, which are the very reasons for his fall.

The moment Adam blames God for making him, it is clear that he is still unable to take responsibility for his fallen existence:

... O fleeting joys
 Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!
 Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay
 To mould me Man? (10.741-44)

Unlike Eve, he still has not grown towards a mature admission of his own fault. Although Adam later realizes that he has accused God unjustly, since his life is God's gracious gift to him (10.759-70), his former identification with God and his apparent superiority are inevitably deconstructed.

Later on, Adam returns to the problem of his cursed progeny. Again, he shows his concern for his innocent offspring in expressing his wish to bear all the punishment himself: "Fair Patrimony/That I must leave ye, Sons; O were I able/To waste it all myself, and leave ye none" (10.818-20). Indeed, Adam's speech is moving and sounds noble. It also appears that he has finally assumed responsibility: "first and last/On mee, mee only, as the source and spring/Of all corruption, all the blame lights due;/So might his wrath" (10.831-33). However, his willing conviction for his own crime is a mere gesture, for he quickly displaces all the blame onto Eve: "That burden heavier than the Earth to bear,/Than all the World much heavier, though divided/With that bad Woman?" (10.835-37, my emphasis).

Eve, having overheard Adam's lamentation and fiery accusation of her, is still

compelled to approach him, trying to comfort him with "Soft words" (10.865). Thus, Eve's compassion contrasts greatly with Adam's unmanly act. In fact, Eve demonstrates what Hélène Cixous calls a "feminine economy" which renders her superior to Adam. For although she also feels "Desolate" (10.864), she does not just stay there lamenting, as Adam does, but tries to help him and to mend their broken relationship in spite of his hatred towards her. She fits into Cixous's idea of a feminine economy which "does not hold onto loss," but "basically takes up the challenge of loss in order to go on living: she lives it, gives it life, is capable of unsparing loss" (Cixous 490).

The force of Adam's misogynous reply has served too often in the critical literature to make Milton himself look like a misogynist:

Out of my sight, thou Serpent, that name best
 Befits thee with him leagu'd, thyself as false
 And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy shape,
 Like his, and color Serpentine may show
 Thy inward fraud. (10.871-67)

But of course, Bakhtin's sociological poetics has already demonstrated very clearly that a character does not necessarily speak for the author. In fact, Adam has adopted

the perspective of a social class quite different from his own:

O why did God,
 Creator wise, that peopl'd highest Heav'n
 With Spirits Masculine, create at last
 This novelty on Earth, this fair defect
 Of Nature, and not fill the World at once
 With Men as Angels without Feminine? (10.888-93)

Forgetting or denying that Eve is created to his exact desire, Adam ironically identifies himself with the angels, though he goes beyond Raphael's masculinism to Satan's downright misogyny. By making himself superior, Adam recapitulates the Satanic plot, and is himself reduced to inferiority in the face of one whose "Humiliation shall exalt" (3.313).

In the face of Adam's anger, Eve "at his feet/Fell humble, and imbracing them, besought/His peace" (10.911-13). Eve is undoubtedly submissive, but her voluntary submission is not a sign of her inferiority. Paradoxically, it highlights her moral superiority to Adam for she is willing to admit her fault, to forsake her pride, and to seek reconciliation. According to Schoenfeldt, "sorrowful submission becomes an occasion for exaltation" (85).

Eve's gesture of volunteering to sacrifice herself to bear all the guilt for Adam further reverses the binary oppositions of superior/inferior, God/nature, and spirit/body, because she unconsciously resembles the Son's sacrificial love in dying for the sin of humankind:

There with my cries importune Heaven, that all

The sentence from thy head remov'd may light

On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,

Mee mee only just object of his ire. (10.933-36, my emphasis)

As Summers remarks, the predominant repetitions of the long 'e' sound in "me" and "thee" in Eve's speech recall the "moment when the Son, the true Redeemer, initiated the action of which Eve's is only the imperfect, if unconscious, imitation: the loving offer that all the sentence justly due to man should light 'on me'" (178-79). Indeed, Eve's offer to die for Adam reflects her "overwhelming capacity to love selflessly" (Swan 64). Her amazing ability to love and to give unselfishly again fits into Cixous's idea of a feminine economy "predicated on fullness and unceasing giving" (Cixous 479). It becomes evident that Eve is superior to Adam, and is more identified with the Son, "the 'female' side of God" (Hamilton 61), at this climax of the reconciliation scene, for she is "the embodiment of humility and of uncalculating

love, that she is the matter both of the highest perfection of human love and, justly, of the Divine Redeemer--whereby all men are blessed" (Summers 183).

Adam's response to Eve's selfless offer suggests a lingering self-esteem, a need to preserve his own superiority by dismissing her ability to bear his displeasure, much less all the divine punishment (10.947-52). Adam still refuses to believe Eve can do something that he cannot do. Nevertheless, Eve's selfless love and humble submissiveness move Adam to forgive her, thus saving him from solipsism and Satanic despair, as much as the Son who saves men from despair and the bondage of Satan and sin. Eve's example further shows Adam that they may find a way out by seeking God's pardon. As Schoenfeldt comments, "extrapolating from the power that Eve's submission has exercised over him, Adam suggests that he and Eve initiate their reconciliation with God by returning to the place 'where he judg'd [them]'" (84). Therefore, not only is Eve the mover of the reconciliation between the human couple, she is also the redemptive agent who brings about the reconciliation between God and men. Milton, by granting her the power of redemptive love, renders her a true hero of the epic poem.

Eve further tries to alleviate Adam's grief over their cursed descendants by suggesting two solutions: either they are to abstain from sex, so that they will not bring "Into this cursed World a woeful Race" (10.984), or they can commit suicide to end their suffering. Landy seizes upon Eve's faulty reasoning here to suggest that

Milton emphasizes Eve's intellectual inferiority to Adam, for she wishes to forsake their duty to multiply the earth (16). On the other hand, Adam demonstrates his reasoning power in refuting Eve's violent suggestions, and he even remembers the Son's prophecy that "[Eve's] seed shall bruise/The Serpent's head" (10.31-32), catching a first glimpse of its real implications. Thus, it seems that the poem has returned to the old binary oppositions of male/female, and superior/ inferior. More likely, however, Eve offers such suggestions simply out of her love and sympathy for her husband who is haunted by the question of cursed progeny. Consequently, her reasoning power is distorted by Adam's overwhelming pain. Thus, Eve appears to be selfless and superior in love even in the mistakes she makes.

In spite of the equality between Adam and Eve in the prelapsarian state and the deconstruction of hierarchical binary oppositions in their fallen state, the Son's judgment of Adam and Eve clearly ordains a hierarchy between the couple in their postlapsarian life, for the Son declares the subordination of Eve to Adam's authority: "to thy Husband's will/Thine shall submit, hee over thee shall rule" (10.195-96). Even F. Peczenik, a critic who strongly insists on reciprocity and mutual equality of the Edenic marriage before the Fall, believes that "God's judgment reinterprets the status of Eve and institutes the domestic hierarchy which condemns Adam to live without the equality he sought in his mate" (45). Yet, Iser's dialectical method of reading requires us to see that even the Son's declaration is an illusion which will

soon be broken by his subsequent act of service and humility to Adam and Eve.

In fact, even before the Son pronounces the judgment on Eve, he seems to affirm the inferiority and subordination of Eve in response to Adam's deceitful confession. Surprisingly enough, the Son who has resigned authority and power in the Heavenly Council has now become patriarchal, and his speech indeed resembles Raphael's advice to Adam at the end of Book Eight: "Adorn'd/She was indeed, and lovely to attract/Thy love, not thy Subjection" (10.151-53). He even seems to echo Milton's divorce tracts which stress the secondary status of Eve as she is made both for and from Adam: "the Place/Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,/And for thee" (10.148-50). Is the Son now speaking the single, ideological language that Nyquist assumes Raphael, Adam, and Eve to have spoken in their individual creation accounts?

The Son's speech, one has to say first, is logically tricky. It is even contradictory, since he first states that Eve is made to be Adam's equal: "Was shee thy God, that her thou didst obey/Before his voice, or was shee made thy guide,/Superior, or but equal" (10.145-47, my emphasis). But later, he asserts that Eve is Adam's inferior as Adam's "perfection far excell'd/Hers in all dignity" (10.150-51). The Son's intentional use of "well seem'd" (10.154) and "Unseemingly" (10.155) further highlights the possibility that he has taken up the Father's practice of presenting appearances, of creating the illusion of female

subjection and inferiority. Indeed, immediately after the Son proclaims a stern punishment in Eve's subordination, he assumes out of pity the role of the humble servant in clothing the naked couple, who are obviously his inferiors, with beast skins. This gesture of humility and service stresses that the whole economy of Heaven is not to rule, or to exercise authority, but to serve with love. Therefore, the whole system of patriarchal authority and hierarchy between man and woman is rendered an illusion, which is inevitably broken by the Son's model of rejecting hierarchy.

The illusion of the existence of a gender hierarchy between Adam and Eve is also broken by the last two books of Paradise Lost which present Adam and Eve once more as equal and mutual partners who support each other in their postlapsarian life. First of all, after Adam and Eve pray to God for forgiveness, the Father sends Michael to instruct them, so as to prepare them for their future life, before "send[ing] them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace" (11.117). Indeed, both Adam and Eve receive education in this concluding scene, though in different forms, and both experience spiritual growth and gradual understanding of the divine providence, thus shedding light upon the fact that both man and woman are important in God's creation and human history.

On the one hand, Adam is instructed by the visions of future history revealed by Michael. When Michael reveals how men from "tents of wickedness" (11.607-

08) engage in marriage with "A bevy of fair Women, richly gay/In Gems and wanton dress" (11.581-82), Adam blames the women for causing the fall of these men: "But still I see the tenor of Man's woe/Holds on the same, from Woman to begin" (632-33). Clearly, Adam is still evading his own responsibility in blaming the female sex. But he is immediately corrected by the angel: "From Man's effeminate slackness it begins" (11.634). Later on, when Adam sees the terrible vision of the Flood (11.749-62), he begins to understand the pain of foreknowledge as experienced by the Father and the Son, and he also begins to assume his responsibility for causing these evils: "O Visions ill foreseen! better had I/Liv'd ignorant of future, so had borne/My part of evil only" (11.763-65, my emphasis). According to Shullenberger, "although this is close as Adam comes to despair, it is not the self-involved, self-pitying despair which motivated him immediately after the Fall, but an expression of mourning, of his paternal responsibility and concern" ("Sorting" 174). Later on, he also admits his fault: "Favor unmerited by me, who sought/Forbidden knowledge by forbidd'n means" (12.278-79). Hence, Adam eventually breaks through his solipsistic obsession with himself and becomes an outward-looking human being. He also starts to have more insight into the cause of evil in human history, for he now sees that "Peace to corrupt no less than War to waste" (11.784).

Furthermore, we see how Adam gradually realizes that there should be

equality among all human beings. For, seeing the sight of the human effort to build
 “A City and Tow’r, whose top may reach to Heav’n” (11.44), he exclaims:

O execrable Son so to aspire
 Above his Brethren, to himself assuming
 Authority usurpt, from God not giv’n:
 ...but Man over men
 He made not Lord; such title to himself
 Reserving, human left from human free. (12.64-71)

Adam’s insight helps to emphasize that the hierarchy between Adam and Eve ordained by the Son is all an illusion, which is bound to be broken, for hierarchy is to be rejected absolutely. Finally, when Michael comes to the story of the birth of the Messiah, he portrays to Adam a king who is not a king: “the true/Anointed King Messiah might be born/Barr’d of his right” (12.559-60). Such a paradox denotes forcefully that hierarchy is to be abolished, for even the Messiah himself is shown to be relinquishing his authority. Thus, it becomes evident that it is impossible for the Son himself to impose a hierarchy on the human couple; it is a mere illusion ordained to be broken.

Therefore, the education that Adam gains from the prophetic visions is really

his "bildungsroman" (Shullenberger, "Sorting" 175). He can eventually understand the implication of the Son's prophecy of the Promised Seed and "to preserve hope through learning to read providential signs typologically across the screen of history; thus to interiorize the process of regeneration, to cultivate the paradise within" (Shullenberger, "Sorting" 175).

Likewise, Eve gains equal education and spiritual growth, although not through participation in the history lesson, but through prophetic dream. However, feminists still assume that Milton is stressing Eve's secondary status for she "has bowed out of Raphael's astronomy lesson," and "she is now excused for a postlapsarian nap while the gentlemen take up the tragic curriculum of history. History is man's business; to woman is reserved the bourgeois drawing room of private sensibility and the dream world of novelistic fiction" (Shullenberger, "Sorting" 168-70). Indeed, Michael's speech of telling Adam to take up his "patriarchal task" (Shullenberger, "Sorting" 170), to "Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard,/Chiefly what may concern her Faith to know," seems to make Eve subordinate. But a dialectical approach to reading shows once again how this is an illusion, for Eve's subsequent declarations about her prophetic dream suggest that what is revealed to her is not less than what is revealed to Adam: "Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I know" (12.610). Indeed, she has experienced a very personal and intimate relationship with God, as "God is also in sleep, and Dreams

advise,/Which he hath sent propitious, some great good/Presaging” (12.611-13), thus “suspend[ing] or subvert[ing] the hierarchical mediation structure by which Adam is for God only” (Shullenberger, “Sorting” 171).

The illusion of the subordination of Eve to Adam is further broken by Eve’s last words in the poem, which are also the last dramatic words in Paradise Lost: “though all by mee is lost,/Such favor I unworthy am voutsaf’t,/By mee the Promis’d Seed shall all restore” (621-23). Eve’s declaration reveals that she now understands the Son’s prophecy as much as Adam. It also denotes her very important status in God’s plan of redemption, for God gives her the honour to be the root of the Messiah. According to Lewalski, “Eve rises above lyric and moves beyond her role as protagonist in the tragedy of the Fall, to embrace her divinely appointed, central role in the epic Redemption” (Paradise 277). Thus, the whole tradition of patriarchal authority and female subordination is ultimately deconstructed.

To some critics, although Paradise Lost was written in a patriarchal tradition, Milton, by giving Eve the last words of the poem, has given her a very important and heroic role which is indeed unprecedented. As Wittreich asserts, it is “an extraordinary moment in the history of epic poetry, where the last speech is almost assigned to one of the gods or to the hero or a stand-in for him, who has privilege of place” (107). Yet, Iser’s dialectical method helps us to realize well before the end the significance of Eve’s dream, which highlights her very important status in God’s

creation and redemption, as well as in Milton's revolutionary poem which rejects all hierarchies.

Finally, Milton's portrayal of Adam and Eve leaving the Garden "hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow" (12.648) is a profound repudiation in his conclusion of the inequality of the sexes. According to Wendy Furman, the image of Adam and Eve "hand in hand" is "Milton's redemptive and reconciling vision" of "a restored harmony born of mutual responsibility and love" (128). In fact, in spite of the hardship in postlapsarian life, Adam and Eve, with "Providence [as] thir guide" (12.647), are to help and to support each other, even to complete one another. "Hand in hand" thus becomes Milton's forceful emblem of breaking all the illusions of patriarchal hierarchies and female subordination which have victimized men and women through the centuries.

Each of the methodologies of Bakhtin, Iser, and Cixous exposes the limitations of a narratology which empties time from an epic of change. Bakhtin's dialogical method allows us to see Eve not as the evil woman who falls because of her intrinsic vanity, but as the victim of patriarchal assumptions. Cixous's method of deconstruction reveals that not only is Milton's treatment of Eve sympathetic, but that the humanist poet has given her a superior role that is unprecedented: the instrument of human redemption and regeneration--the true hero of the epic. Finally, Iser's dialectical method of reading emphasizes that the reader has to reject the

illusion and appearance of a gender hierarchy, so as to arrive at the poet's conclusion that both man and woman are created to be equal partners to help each other to grow, to love, and to be more like God--which is the ultimate plan of the Creator for every one of us.

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