

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

"BENEVOLENT AND FACILE":

RAPHAEL'S EDUCATION OF ADAM IN PARADISE LOST

by

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## ABSTRACT

"'Benevolent and Facile': Raphael's Education of Adam in Paradise Lost" questions the reliability of Raphael's understanding of God's ways in Milton's epic, and explores the effect of the angel's education on the stability of Adam and Eve's relationship in Eden. It enquires, furthermore, into God's reasons for sending an unreliable messenger in the first place.

A major problem in Paradise Lost centres on the fact that Raphael's instructions to mankind in Book V do not accurately reflect what God reveals about Himself and His universe in the dialogue in Book III, and that, at a critical stage in their understanding of the ways of the Father, the angel brings Adam and Eve an outmoded system of hierarchy. Chapter One compares the teaching techniques and the tenets of the Father and Raphael. The Father appears in the guise of an eiron who speaks less than He knows in order to draw the truth from His creatures. Though He appears to teach by authority about the future of man and about justice and mercy, it becomes obvious that His method is really dialectical and that He requires a form of creative remonstrance from His students. God at first appears as the wrathful God whom Satan expects, but by dialectically provoking the Son He changes this picture of Himself. As the Son humbly argues for God's mercy, God changes His role even more by abdication. Through dramatic irony God establishes the model for all subsequent action. Whereas the Father reveals that humility and service typify His ways, Raphael teaches a reverence for

the old systems of hierarchy with which he has been familiar in Heaven.

Chapter Two records Raphael's faithful account of the provocation of Satan. In the first chronological event of Paradise Lost, the Father changes the political picture in Heaven by crowning the Son king of the angels. This demotion from godhead to kingship tests Satan's own willingness to adjust obediently to the Father's changing ways. Raphael continues, furthermore, to describe Satan's rebellion, the war in Heaven so humiliating to the loyal angels, and the Son's great single-handed defeat of the enemy. Raphael's story humbly acknowledges the new Heavenly order brought into being by the war, an order which requires the absolute obedience and humility of all creatures to the Father's commands. But Raphael is a better narrator than a philosopher, and he falsely perceives God to be in the process of consolidating His kingship in order to secure His control over the enemy. The oracular commands of the Father to the Son, also retold by the angel, tell an entirely different story. The Father's concern with His security (omnipotence) is really an ironic self-mockery which recognizes both His fundamental kinship with the enemy and the limitation free will places on His omnipotence. Though he does not understand this himself, Raphael's story reveals that the Father suffers from a latent evil which exists coextensively with freedom and that He requires the help of His creatures to purify Heaven.

Chapter Three outlines Adam's own changing perception of the ways of the Father, a perception which initially sees God as "absolute," unchanging, and beyond the need to propagate, and which finally begins to recognize the humility of the Creator Himself. God begins the NeoPlatonic division of body and spirit--He divides Himself and surrenders the material part of His being up to free will. This act of humility

is a key step in the process by which God intends to be refined. Ironically, Raphael is concerned at Adam's own apparent excessive humility before Eve (whom Adam has helped to create) and he instructs him to assert his authority over his wife. But the story of Adam's creation and Eve's creation from Adam's side indicates that the human couple are created equal and that mutuality rather than authority must regulate their relationship. Raphael's advice provokes and tests Adam much as the Son's exaltation has provoked and tested Satan in Book VI. Raphael's authoritarianism tests first Adam's and then Eve's understanding of the way in which humility and authority must be combined.

Since Adam fails to understand this test of his humility, he must face a similar test again. Chapter Four shows the Son's oracular reiteration of Raphael's old terms of self-esteem and authority. Adam and Eve come to understand this oracle only when they combine their separate gifts. Eve's surrender teaches Adam how to exercise a new authority based on humility--their reunion reunifies the division in God Himself.

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Dedicated to my wife, Martha, and our children, Jessica,  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	i
CHAPTER ONE	
"Thy Humiliation Shall Exalt": The Subversion of Degree in the Dialogues in Heaven and Eden. . . . .	1
CHAPTER TWO	
"None But Thou Can End It": The Politics of Humiliation in the War in Heaven. . . . .	38
CHAPTER THREE	
"I Am Who Fill Infinitude": The Changing Terms of God's Creation . . . . .	70
CHAPTER FOUR	
"The Cure of All": Sympathy as the Sum of All God's Ways. . . . .	100

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis addresses the problem of finding a language for evaluating the reliability of Raphael's perception of God's ways in Paradise Lost. The poem's dramatic structure itself intimates that Book III is the natural place to look for a solution. Here, in His dialogue with the Son, God establishes the critical method by which we must read the events of the poem and by which we must judge the perceptions of its characters.

This critical method, it becomes clear, is the interplay of the opposites of irony. God speaks in oracles, and He expects His creatures to see through the apparent doubleness of His thoughts. The Father's authoritative decrees in this dialogue act as a trial to test the willingness of the Son and the angels to confront that authority and to suggest new and creative interpretations of the Father's words in order to draw out truths hidden behind the ironic mask. Successful remonstrance is rewarded by further divine revelations about the future of the universe and the nature of creature and Creator. This Book establishes, then, that the method which must be employed is the method of irony uncovered. God's ironic method seemingly expects the observor to read Him dogmatically but actually encourages an imaginative struggle to see beneath the divisive surface to the real unity and truth in the Father's ways.

What is established, then, early on in Paradise Lost is the paradigm of identity between the Divine and the created. So it is

dramatically ironic that, when Adam and Eve pray for reassurance of the continuation of just such a direct relationship between themselves and God, He answers, oddly, by sending Raphael, whose own theological model reveals that he is uncertain about the correlation between Heavenly and earthly realities. The ironic doubleness of thought that we associate with the Father is also evident in Raphael's similar method. In Book V, for instance, when the angel first gropes for a method by which to entertain the nature of God, he proposes, in deference to human limitations, to "unfold the secrets" (V,573) of Heaven metaphorically, "By lik'ning spiritual to corporeal forms, / As may express them best" (V,573-74). Yet he allows in theory the possibility of a literal relationship between Heaven and earth and between God and man: "though what if Earth / Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein / Each to other like more than on Earth is thought" (V,574-76).

Raphael's semiotic theory is almost in step with God's ways but the angel fails to see through his own ironies. Whereas the Son brilliantly sees through the Father's ironic doubleness, Raphael's perception fails him at a critical moment when Adam and Eve most need to be reassured of their identity with God. Raphael is valiantly concerned to bring Adam and Eve a meaningful language to deal with their doubts but he is torn between terms of similitude and terms of identity in defining their status. In his uncertainty, he finally falls back on signs as the proper language for reading God's ways.

Raphael's semiotic theory is an accommodationist theory which sees language as insufficient to define essential reality--by the angel's standards, God accommodates man by giving him only signs of the truth. But the sign is always inadequate to express the reality of the signifier and therefore any use of signs by the Creator indicates an

act of condescension and expresses a disbelief in the creature's ability to perceive. Raphael's own philosophy that man must be "lowly wise" and that God is ineffable is a "NeoPlatonic" dualism which contrasts sharply with God's method of achieving union with men and angels. Raphael's failure to see how his accommodation theory differs from the ironic vision of the Father must have perturbing consequences in Eden. What will Adam feel now about his relationship to his Creator and how will Adam and Eve's perceptions of each other and of paradisaical nature be affected by such ambiguity?

The angel's uncertainty about similitude or identity does raise new doubts in Adam concerning the relationship between higher and lower beings. Till now Adam's experience has taught him that an identity exists between God and man, for Adam has understood the essence of the animals almost as well as God Himself--"[I] understood / Thir Nature, with such knowledge God endu'd / My sudden apprehension" (VIII, 353-54)-- and he has argued almost as an equal with the Creator, who in turn has been delighted with Adam's ability to reason. Adam's naturally exalted perception is challenged by Raphael's theology of similitude and his strident insistence on lowly wisdom.

As Book III reveals to the privileged reader, Adam need not accept Raphael's theories simply out of respect for authority, and though he is not privy to the dialogue in Heaven, Adam has enough evidence of his own to teach him this truth. The angel's earlier uncertainty, the ambiguities and ironies within the angel's stories, and especially Adam's friendly relations with God, should inform Adam of the inadequacy of Raphael's semiotic theory and should make him sufficient to challenge the angel's authority.

Raphael's mistakes about divine ways do, however, serve a purpose, for by them he unwittingly promotes God's ironic method in Eden. The angel's ironic doubleness of thought is a test of Adam's perception in a similar way that the Father's ironic inscrutability tests the sufficiency of the Son's education. In dramatic terms, Raphael's fear of having raised doubts about higher and lower beings (and thus of being an accomplice to the Fall) prompts him to assert an outmoded language of authority and to recommend that Adam rule over Eve. Adam is as concerned to obey the Father's will as the angel is and so, in spite of doubts about the angel's reliability, Adam accepts Raphael's "NeoPlatonic" dualism and sells short his own understanding of God's ways. Thus Adam, too, fails the test of perception.

William Empson has recognized that Adam and Eve fall because of Raphael's divisive influence. Some others too have felt vaguely uneasy about the chauvinistic advice which the angel gives to Adam and about an authority-centred education with ontological premises based on hierarchy. Empson recognizes God's ironic doubleness, and, unable to see His inherent unity accuses Him of determinism by showing that Raphael is a poor choice if God intends to prevent the Fall. Such mistaken determinism is echoed, though in positive terms, by the popular critical view that Milton's God is absolute and primarily concerned with omnipotence. Both perceptions argue that the distance between the Creator and His creatures is immense.

Milton's God is not deterministic. Perception is central to His purposes. Despite apparent indifference in the Divine, the creature must see through the ironic mask of God and recognize His goodness and greatness and His unity with creation. Milton's God, in stark contrast to a deterministic God, depends on His free-willed creatures to fulfill

the great social and political changes He sees for the future. The events after the Fall dramatically illustrate this doctrinal point. Eve's surrender in the face of Adam's hatred opens the way for his own sympathetic response to God whom Adam, at Raphael's prompting, had hitherto thought authoritative and remote. Adam learns further that the Son has not come to Eden simply to judge fallen man but to illustrate by example God's intention that men and angels themselves must come to recognize His great love for His creation. The judgments which Adam originally mistakes for punishments are really oracular prophecies of man's participation with God in the future defeat of evil on earth. Adam's "unless be meant" (X,1032) is the transition between his failed and his fulfilled perception and this change is itself a step toward change in the Father Himself.

The reader, too, is taught to see through the ironic doubleness of the poem, and so its aesthetic principles are based on the critical method of the God it describes. The very act of seeing through the ironic duality of the God of Paradise Lost is itself the means by which the Father becomes better known. The reader thus continues the tradition which the Son, Raphael, and Adam have begun--the poem involves the modern reader in the ancient dialectic begun by God Himself.

The creative perception of the creature thus allows him finally to recognize that the ironic doubleness of God is only doubleness as long as it is seen as such. Through perception of unity by men and angels, God is unified, and the distance between signifier and signified is eliminated. This process of closing the ironic gap points not to Milton's deterministic, ineffable, dualistic God but to his doctrine of linguistic monism--the word becomes flesh in Paradise Lost for the

power of creative perception and expression literally unites God and his agents. But the cycle is only half completed in this work.

Paradise Regained, which is outside the scope of this thesis, eventually fulfills the second half of the process when, through the educated perception of the Son, the flesh finally becomes word. Raphael's divisive language acts as an obstacle to this union, though his unwitting ironies act as a test of Adam and Eve and as a dialectic which enables Adam eventually to perceive the true power of the word and its divinity.

## CHAPTER ONE

### "Thy Humiliation Shall Exalt":

#### The Subversion of Degree in the Dialogues in Heaven and Eden

A problem of deep significance in Milton's Paradise Lost is the role Raphael plays in teaching Adam and Eve about God's ways. How unimpeachable is Raphael's understanding of the Father and how accurately do his tenets represent the design of God's will and His design for creation? In the past, critics tended to assume that the worldviews of God and Raphael must be indistinguishable and, even recently, doubt of the angel's reliability has only been hinted at. Good reason exists, however, to explore the problem of Raphael's (and God's) dramatic role in Paradise Lost and whether Raphael's judgments are in fact "above suspicion."<sup>1</sup>

Raphael's visit to Eden is the reply to Adam and Eve's passionate prayer that the Father "be bounteous still / To give us only good" (V, 205-06). This sudden need to remind the Father to continue His beneficence is brought about by the unexpected and formidable appearance in Eden of evil manifested in Eve's Satan-inspired dream. Heaven's "Parent of good" (V, 153), pitying His suffering children, calls on Raphael, "the sociable angel" (V, 221), to carry out a remedial course of action. First He outlines the problem:

Raphael, said hee, thou hear'st what stir on Earth  
 Satan from Hell scap't through the darksome Gulf  
 Hath rais'd in Paradise, and how disturb'd  
 This night the human pair, how he designs  
 In them at once to ruin all mankind. (V, 224-28)<sup>2</sup>

Then the Father instructs Raphael what to advise Adam that he might understand his danger:

tell him withal  
 His danger, and from whom, what enemy  
 Late fall'n himself from Heaven, is plotting now  
 The fall of others from like state of bliss;  
 By violence, no, for that shall be withstood,  
 But by deceit and lies; this let him know,  
 Lest wilfully transgressing he pretend  
 Surprisal, unadmonisht, unforewarn'd. (V, 238-45)

The Father's explanation of the purpose of the visit raises one immediate problem, given the human couple's prayer to "give us only good." For the angels have already heard the Father in dialogue with the Son say that "Man will heark'n to his glozing lies" (III, 93). The Father's hypothetical "lest" cannot then refer to the possibility of man's wilful transgression, but only to the chance that he will blame God for his insufficient warning. How, then, is God's stated intention to leave man no excuse really a just answer to the couple's prayer to "be bounteous still" and not an unjust projection upon man of God's need to excuse Himself?

One solution is to ignore the problem altogether, as does Anthony Low by claiming that the Father's command is simple and direct and that the angel, understanding perfectly what is expected of him, sets out with ample information to help man make a wise intellectual choice.<sup>3</sup> F. Peczenik has recently amplified this argument for informed choice by making Raphael's purpose already corrective, that is to say truly preventive, since it appears to her that Adam and Eve are tempted thus

early to pervert the nature of their relationship. Peczenik suggests that, at its best, their relationship before the Fall is governed by friendly reciprocity and that no domestic hierarchy exists in Eden until after the Fall. Then the couple's perceptions are limited, as a punishment by the Father, to a demonic disposition to categorize things in terms of their relative worth. Before they eat the fruit, however, Satanic tendencies already prompt them to assume the superiority of the masculine. Peczenik cites for support Adam's fear that his reason is powerless before Eve's beauty (VIII, 530 ff) and Eve's judgment, sympathetic to Adam's, that her God-made abilities are inferior to his. Raphael's sincere duty, moreover, is to correct the human couple's misapprehensions about hierarchy and thus to help stabilize their marriage: "Like an avid matchmaker [God] is there to sound out what Adam wants in a wife and, having created Eve, helps him convince her that he is what she wants. God leaves nothing to chance. His emissary Raphael delivers a short discourse on human and angelic love which is meant as a form of marriage counselling."<sup>4</sup>

Peczenik's argument is nonetheless beset by the difficulty, all too painful for the "egalitarian" view of Edenic marriage, that Raphael ends by "correcting" Adam for overvaluing Eve, urging instead the "skill" of "self-esteem":

of that skill the more thou know'st,  
The more she will acknowledge thee her Head,  
And to realities yield all her shows. (VIII, 573-75)

The dramatic facts bespeak a similar conclusion: Adam's urging of his headship leads at once to his separation from Eve. The preventive work of the "marriage counsellor" would seem, in any other jurisdiction,

to be open to a lawsuit.

Raphael's message is, if anything, more insistent on degree by the time he leaves Eden than when he arrived. His initial gracious humility allows that, though man now inhabits a middle ground between the elements and the divine,<sup>5</sup> "time may come when men / With Angels may participate" (V, 493-94) and "ascend to God" (V, 512) if they remain obedient. Despite Peczenik's attempt to explain away Raphael's early degree-centred system by suggesting that, because Adam "makes false deductions from that hierarchy" Raphael "offers another and richer order of creation,"<sup>6</sup> it seems plain that the final shift in the message of obedience to Eve as subject, "acknowledg[ing] thee her Head," is evidence instead for the imposition of hierarchy. A question then arises, what did God intend by sending this particular consellor?

Philip J. Gallagher is more fully aware than is Peczenik of the problem of explaining God's purpose in terms of His foreknowledge. Though Gallagher assumes at first the obvious proposition that the angel's method could, if obeyed, prevent the Fall, his recourse to the subjunctive is its own admission that the Father's foreknowledge precludes the purpose of preventing original sin. The possibility that God's purpose could be self-justification is astutely avoided by Gallagher in making Raphael into an "embodiment of prevenient grace sent by the deity to initiate the regeneration of fallen man before he has fallen."<sup>7</sup> Implicitly, the argument depends on God speaking ironically, saying less than He knows so as not to compromise the freedom of His messenger or the creature who will indeed need that grace. The "ironic" interpretation only raises further problems by remaining implicit; it ignores the crucial irony that Raphael, speaking for such hidden "grace," should relate the story of an absurd war in Heaven brought on by a sarcastic and provoking Omniscience who scorns an enemy not yet even fallen. In short, Raphael's under-

standing of God is coloured more by his respect for an arbitrary omnipotence than his zeal to protect God's goodness and mercy, in short His apparent grace.

If God is "bounteous still" to Adam and Eve in leaving them no excuse, His bounty must yet be reconciled to His apparent self-concern, for He early anticipates His offer of grace with "whose fault? / Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of mee / All he could have" (III, 96-98). Yet this colloquy is evidently ironic since it challenges the Son to see through the Father's "orthodox" Calvinist mask and to understand His ultimate purpose in creation. The Father reveals, by dramatic and ironic means, that He intends to change the established order in Heaven and that the old, accustomed order of hierarchy is already outmoded. The Son sees through the Father's ironic mask, but the question remains whether Raphael later understands anything of what the Son has learned in open dialogue of the Father's unexpected ways.

The picture of the Father which Book III presents seems at first glance to accord well with Raphael's hierarchical perspective in Book V. It appears to give a somewhat harsh portrait of the Father, more faithful to the fatalistic assertion of "eternal providence" than to a justification of God's ways and a more optimistic view of a kind and loving Father. The Father in colloquy with the Son in Heaven appears to be angry ("incens'd deity," III, 187), and even arrogant, and chiefly concerned with man's disobedience to divine laws, and the punishment which must follow. Man is an "ingrate" (III, 97) who has shunned God's gifts (III, 97-98) and who "Disloyal breaks his fealty" (III, 204). The Father appears to excuse Himself, saying that "foreknowledge had no influence on their fault" (III, 118), and because of these sins "Against the high Supremacy of Heav'n" (III, 205), man must die--"Die hee or Justice must" (III, 210).

This picture of a punitive God--which has been more or less received in Milton criticism--does not accord well, however, with the view we have of Him in the closing lines of the dialogue in Heaven, where His "attitude" seems to have undergone a complete change. He informs the Son that "dear / To me are all my works, nor Man the least / Though last created" (III, 276-78). There is an apparent discrepancy between the tone and message of the first passage and the second. The Father's love for mankind has replaced His "desire" for justice. This discrepancy is magnified by the content of the praise which the Father bestows upon the Son for his offer to die for man:

Nor shalt thou by descending to assume  
 Man's Nature, lessen or degrade thine own.  
 Because thou hast, though thron'd in highest bliss  
 Equal to God, and equally enjoying  
 God-like fruition, quitted all to save  
 A world from utter loss, and hast been found  
 By Merit more than Birthright Son of God,  
 Found worthiest to be so by being Good,  
 Far more than Great or High; because in thee  
 Love hath abounded more than Glory abounds,  
 Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt  
 With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne. (III, 303-14)

Two decades of Milton criticism have managed to dispel William Empson's claim that God is a "tyrant" who has created a barely tolerable Heaven for the angels, and that His relationship to creation "seems to be wickeder than any recorded society."<sup>8</sup> But for the most part, critics have ignored the dramatic discrepancies in the dialogue of the Father and the Son, reasserting the Father's authority even while admitting certain disagreeable qualities in His argument. J. B. Broadbent finds Milton's God too much of a seventeenth-century Ramist in His logic.<sup>9</sup> Empson dislikes Him for creating for His own sadistic glory,<sup>10</sup> and even a traditionalist like Stanley Fish admits that all readers feel a

"reluctant hostility" toward the deity for telling us what we don't want to hear.<sup>11</sup> J. M. Evans has lent his voice to those who find Milton's God disagreeable. For him Milton's presentation of human love is superb by way of contrast: "Milton's handling of the corresponding theme of 'Heavenly Love' is generally regarded as less successful, and the debate between the Father and the Son in Book III, in which the divine benevolence is most thoroughly explored, is perhaps the weakest part of the poem."<sup>12</sup>

These views ignore evidence, first offered by Irene Samuel, that the dialogue has been misread "as a mere presentation of doctrinal assertions conveniently divided between the Father and the Son. . . For may not the trouble be that we have incautiously misconstrued as dogma what Milton intended as drama?"<sup>13</sup> Samuel reads the scene as a dramatic test of the Son, intended to confirm by example the free will of "every being in the universe. . . established in Paradise Lost"<sup>14</sup> and to further the process of "the Son's growth to what the Father Himself calls virtual equality."<sup>15</sup> The dramatic model for resolving apparent discrepancies in the scene has the obvious difficulty, of course, of making the Son a creature without some share in the Father's omniscience, and of making Milton, in consequence, an Arian.<sup>16</sup> Samuel's argument is further limited, however, by her exclusive concern with the Son's dramatic responses;<sup>17</sup> she does not draw sufficient conclusions about what the Son sees newly revealed in the Father.

Admittedly, the Father's attitude in the colloquy seems harsh and legalistic, and this impression receives dramatic intensification from the Son's contrasting passionate faith in the Father's goodness.<sup>18</sup> Such statements, in God's opening discourse, as "what pleasure I from

such obedience paid" (III, 107), "they themselves decreed their own revolt, not I; if I foreknew, / Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault" (III, 117-18), and "I formed them free and free they must remain" (III, 125), sound at first as if God is entirely self-concerned. The repetition of "I," the abundance of imperatives, the "undignified" concern with proving personal innocence, are all factors which suggest litigation, not investigation, and so do not elicit the fallen readers' sympathy. Man, the Father says, has not been predestined to fall, and so the blame is his own. Because man will be disobedient to the Creator, man will have to pay the penalty.

One of the more surprising features of the Father's method of argument, however, is the abrupt non sequitur with which He closes each speech. Just at the point where future man already stands convicted ("and free they must remain / Till they enthrall themselves"--III, 124-25), the Father declares that, though Satan and his "sort" (III, 129) will be dealt with harshly according to the laws of justice, man will experience "Mercy and Justice both" (III, 132). This is an apparent break with the rigorous logic of the previous lines, though the apparent illogic is really the result of the Father's ambiguous shifts in subject from Satan (who "shall pervert"--III, 92) to man (who "will heark'n"--III, 93) to Spirits ("both them who stand and them who fail'd"--III, 101). Because the Father uses the past tense until III, 122, where He seems to be saying that the "spirits" are "author's to themselves in all / Both what they judge and what they choose," "them" becomes ambiguous, referring forward as well to "Till they enthrall themselves" (III, 125). So it must include man as yet unfallen ('until') as well as "Spirits." The Father would seem still to be speaking of the fallen angels when He says,

"Authors to themselves, in all" (III, 122), but His immediate use of the future tense ("Till they enthrall themselves") suddenly involves man in the indictment of the angels. The Father's non sequitur, then, is really only the clarification of an ambiguity: "Man therefore shall find grace / The other none" (III, 131-32).

Dramatically, however, the conclusion has not been foregone, as the Son's reply illustrates. He gives the tactful suggestion, in the subjunctive mood, that since the Father ended his speech with the possibility of extending grace to man, "Man should find grace" (III, 145). The Son follows this immediately with the indicative:

For which Heav'n and Earth shall high extol  
Thy praises, With th' innumerable sound  
Of Hymns and sacred Songs wherewith thy Throne  
Encompass'd shall resound thee ever blest. (III, 146-49)

There can be no danger in stating the fact that the Father will be praised, but the Son is anxious not to presume how the Father Himself will act. The Son thus returns to the subjunctive--"Should Man finally be lost, should Man / Thy creature late so lov'd, Thy youngest Son / Fall circumvented thus by fraud" (III, 150-52)--humbly inviting the Father to consider with him the resultant probability that evil would triumph over His creation. The imperative--"that be from thee far, / That far be from thee, Father, . . .who judgest all things right" (III, 153-55)--is not presumptuous either since it simply states that because God cannot err in His judgements, He would not permit evil to triumph over His goodness, not even when His creatures of their own free will have compromised their portion of it.

The subjunctive mood of his early statements indicates the Son's humility and sincerity, and these traits shine through the more daring and provocative questions he now poses. He asks if the Father intends

to allow the "Adversary" to "frustrate" His purpose and "to Hell / Draw after him the whole Race of mankind" (III, 160-61), or even if He intends to "Abolish thy Creation, and unmake, / For him, what for thy Glory thou hast made" (III, 163-64). In the answer he gives to his own question, the Son exposes the illogic of mere justice: "So should thy goodness and thy greatness both / Be question'd and blasphem'd without defense" (III, 165-66). The Son ends his argument as he started it, in the subjunctive mood, indicating again that he holds the Father's decisions in high esteem.

Instead of being chastized for his confrontation of "authority," the Son now receives an outpouring of praise in language quite foreign to the Father's initial mood:

O Son, in whom my Soul has chief delight,  
 Son of my bosom, Son who art alone  
 My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,  
 All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all  
 As my Eternal purpose hath decreed. (III, 168-72)

In the light of the Father's evident pleasure with His respondent, it is difficult to maintain either an impersonal picture of a disinterested Ramist theologian simply "exposing and communicating Truth"<sup>18</sup> or an angry cartoon of an authoritative and wrathful God.<sup>19</sup> The very outburst of divine joy must greatly complicate any picture of Milton's God. The discrepancy, in other words, between an angry and a joyous God is real.

The Father is apparently not willing, however, to forgo his judicial mask without some further trial. What emerges from the dialectical pattern is the drama of the Son's own trial: a test of his reading of God's ways. Dennis Danielson, a recent critic who seems

unaware of Samuel's pioneering work, also finds Book III to be a test of the Son. He bases his case on a more general proposition, drawn from Areopagitica, that "freedom without genuine trial or exercise would allow for the development of no more than a 'blank virtue.'"<sup>21</sup> Freedom is the most important prerequisite of true goodness and reason and, as Milton's God Himself says, any goodness by necessity in His creatures would not be goodness at all (III, 98-113). Under the heading "Theodical paradigm: Father and Son," in a longer discussion of the Arminian Free Will Defense, Danielson argues that God's theodical "self-defense" cannot be wholly judged by III, 98-128, but that this passage is only the beginning of an ongoing defense which occupies all of Paradise Lost. He argues also that Milton's theodical and literary technique is to present the dramatic character and the reader both with only a part of the truth, so that the rest has to be discovered: "the issue of divine justice is treated in a dramatic way. . .the Free Will Defense [of God's speech] is but an early stage in a kind of theodical dialectic."<sup>21</sup>

In dialectical fashion, the Father then agrees with the Son that "man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will" (III, 173), though He returns with increasing severity to the indictment against those who "neglect and scorn" (III, 199) "my day of Grace" (III, 198). He now accuses man of "break[ing] fealty" (III, 204), and of committing "sins against the high Supremacy of Heav'n" (III, 205), sins whose enormity would shake the very foundation of divinity (III, 206) without some other recourse:

and so losing all  
To expiate his Treason hath naught left,  
But to destruction sacred and devote,  
He with his whole posterity must die,  
Die hee or Justice must. (III, 206-10)

The coldness of the logic would be antithetical to the Father's previous expression of joy were it not for the non sequitur of His last 6½ lines-- "unless for him / Some other able, and as willing, pay" (III, 210-11) must come as a complete surprise after the vigorous assertion throughout the speech of God's singularly active role. The Father says, "I have chosen. . .I will clear. . .I will place" and He says it so forcefully and so often that He leaves room for no other actor but Himself; then, as it were, he adds, "Do I have a volunteer?"

That we are meant to be surprised is signalled in the amazed silence of "the Heav'nly Choir" (III, 216). If the Father has removed the mask of the disinterested Judge, no one in Heaven can have expected such a claim upon his personal interest. Even the Son's silence is more than a matter of courtesy; it suggests that he is really not privy to his Father's intentions.

He can act freely because, and only because, he relies on a promise his Father has made him on another occasion: "Thou has giv'n me to possess / Life in myself forever" (III, 243-44). The promise, as we learn from Raphael's story of the earlier war in Heaven, is only implicit: "Under his great Vice-gerent reign abide / United as one individual Soul / For ever happy" (V, 609-11). But even the Son is not certain at this point about the Father's intentions. Though he expresses his faith that "Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave / His prey" (III, 247-48), and goes on to prophesy his ministry and much of the course of cosmic history, he does not foresee the end of the divine plan in quite the terms that are announced by the Father. Samuel is the first to notice that where the Son had asked to be accounted man, the Father adds that "Thir Nature" will be joined to his; where the Son

offered to put off "this glory next to thee" (III, 239), the Father asserts that his nature will not be so degraded, but will rather "exalt / With thee thy Manhood also to this throne." And where the Son hopes to return to heaven, "Father to see thy face" (III, 262), the Father proclaims instead, "Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shall Reign / Both God and Man" (III, 315-16).<sup>22</sup>

This expression of the doctrine of incarnation is not only fatal in the longer term to NeoPlatonic doctrines of hierarchy; it announces the advent of universal democracy. Perhaps Empson's troubling conclusion should not be evaded any longer: "I had long felt that this is much the best moment of God in the poem, orally as well as poetically. . . It comes there because he is envisaging his abdication, and the democratic appeal of the prophecy of God is what makes the whole picture of him just tolerable."<sup>23</sup> Empson's condescension notwithstanding, the Father's ways evidently require self-sacrifice, not just of the Son, or even of the angels who now "bow, and to the ground / With solemn adoration down they cast / Thir Crowns" (III, 350-52), but of the Father himself.

The problem of reading God's ways is thus a problem of dialectic for the reader as much as for the Redeemer and the assembled hosts of Heaven. The Father appears in the guise of a Socratic peiron who speaks less than He knows in order to lead His respondents toward a truth He hopes will be elicited all along, but which He refuses to necessitate.<sup>24</sup> His acclaim for the Son's "descent" not only confirms the faith of the remonstrant, but redefines the meaning of sonship: "[Thou] hast been found / By Merit more than Birthright Son of God" (III, 309). The way is thus opened to the "Son both of God and Man" (III, 316) to be "Anointed universal King," although "Thou the regal Sceptre shalt lay by, / For

regal Sceptre then no more shall need, / God shall be All in All" (III, 339-41). This continued paradigm of abdication speaks not only of a process of divine becoming but of a paradoxical means of becoming "All in All"--"Thy Humiliation shall exalt / With thee thy Manhood also to this throne" (III, 313-14). Exaltation of "thy Manhood" is thus predicated upon the humiliation of man and God alike and calls into question the nature of degree in the old Heavenly order.

The dramatic incident which marks the chronological beginning of the poem has traditionally been understood as an exaltation in the true etymological sense of the word, perhaps because Satan reads it so. The abrupt pronouncement of the Father does seem unambiguous:

This day I have begot whom I declare  
 My only Son, and on this holy Hill  
 Him have anointed, whom ye now behold  
 At my right hand; Your Head I him appoint  
 And by my Self have sworn to him shall bow  
 All knees in Heav'n, and shall confess him Lord.  
 (V, 603-08)

Satan, unlike the Son, is not moved to remonstrance but to rebellion, galled by the idea that the Son has "us eclipsed under the name / of King anointed" (V, 776-77). Satan's rebellion contrasts with the Son's humility and thus points to similarities, rather than differences, in the test itself. Abdiel, the "one faithful servant" among Satan's angels, understands at least that the test is one of humility, although his rebuke to Satan raises new questions about the meaning of the first "exaltation":

But to grant it thee unjust,  
 That equal over equals Monarch Reign;  
 Thyself though great and glorious dost thou count,  
 Or all Angelic Nature join'd in one,  
 Equal to him begotten Son, by whom

As by his Word the mighty Father made  
 All things, ev'n thee, and all the Spirits of Heav'n  
 By him created in thir bright degrees,  
 Crown'd them with Glory, and to thir Glory nam'd  
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,  
 Essential Powers, now by his Reign obscur'd,  
 But more illustrious made, since he the Head  
 One of our number thus reduc't becomes,  
 His Laws our Laws, all honor to him done  
 Returns our own. (V, 831-45)

Albert C. Labriola has recently taken exception to the views of Saurat, Kelley, and Hunter about the character of this exaltation. The earlier critics agree that the Son keeps his godhead even though he takes on angelic form, but Labriola discovers in the Apocrypha a new paradigm for Milton's dramatic perception of the relationship "between the events of eternity and time. This connection [between the events of eternity and time] is more fully affirmed by the recognition that the Son 'really' becomes an angel in Book V, for the two begettings--the first is in eternity, the second in time--show the continuing humiliation of the deity, first as an angel, then as man."<sup>25</sup> The Son, according to Labriola, is demoted here on his first step down toward incarnate man. Danielson, drawing on Alistair Fowler's note in his edition of the poem, makes the same point independent of Labriola: "Abdiel appears to regard the Messiah's kingship over the angels as a kind of incarnation."<sup>26</sup> Just as the Son's incarnation exalts man, so too his kingship "illustrates" the angels.

If some form of "reduction" were in fact in progress, it might be possible because social equality has really never existed among the angels, not if their titles count for anything, titles for which, as Abdiel says, the angels are indebted to the Son. Only Satan takes hierarchy as being in the nature of things, although he uses it paradoxically to appeal to the angels' sense of God's injustice:

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,  
 If these magnific Titles yet remain  
 Not merely titular, since by Degree  
 Another now hath to himself ingross't  
 All power, and us eclipt under the name  
 Of King anointed, for whom all this haste  
 Of midnight march. (V, 771-78)

As the fiend admits, his fear is more the upsetting of the status quo, which is in truth his real fear of equality, justified by the sophism, "If not equal all, yet free / Equally free (V, 791-92). After all, Satan is prince of the North (V, 689). Since the angels are accustomed to segregation of power, that is, to hierarchy and degree, a fear exists among some that the "begetting" of the Son will make the old authority obsolete in Heaven.

Raphael, in his account of Satan's rebellion, celebrates the new authority though he is hard put to understand a Heaven which is not modelled on hierarchical principles. In particular, as we shall see, his heavenly sociology is ill-equipped to explain just what the Father means by "humiliation," except to state the obvious about obedience. The Father's words to the Son in Book III establish what must still be the paradox of exaltation through humiliation. Though the Father does not at this point explain how "God shall be All in All" (III, 341), Raphael is at least aware that the "magnific Titles" (V, 772), which Satan so much desires to protect, stand in the way of ascent to God.

The reader is aware, however, that the Father's dialogue with the Son in Book III is conducted without any form of hierarchical pageantry, in open sight of the remaining angels, whereas Satan's pomp and circumstance in Pandemonium marks a desperate repetition of that first day of the Son's "begetting" when "th'Empyrean Host / Of Angels by Imperial summons [were] call'd. . . Under thir Hierarchs in orders

bright" (V, 583-87). God's meritocracy is evidently based upon the surrender of former titles and honours in exchange for new honours which yet seem equivocal. Nothing of this, of course, is yet apparent in those scenes in Heaven which are dramatically, if not narratively, antecedent to the dialogue of the Father with the Son.

Book III, as Labriola has noticed in a different context,<sup>27</sup> then establishes the paradigm of descent for both the Son and the angels, although each is responsible for his own understanding of God's ways. Humiliation and service are dear to the Father and are an essential part of the process of descent. By offering to die and to be humiliated, the Son adheres to the traditional NeoPlatonic notion of how the "One" is fulfilled, in the sense that the low fulfills the high, the inferior the superior.<sup>28</sup> But ironically in Milton, the pyramid of authority is inverted to make "gods" the servants of man. Most notable and most revolutionary about Milton's portrayal here is the fact that the Father is not exempt from the humiliation He hopes His creatures will choose.<sup>29</sup> He initiates a reduction of authority in Heaven by His own descent from the throne.

The rest of Heaven will be expected to follow His example. That "all knees to thee shall bow" (III, 321) does not indicate a new autocracy but a new order in which the power groups of Heaven will be expected to bow down to what is meek, to make "humility" their god. The Father thus forecasts a new, universal respect for humility.

In the leveling process which this scene defines and declares holy, one discovers a final dispensing with authority in the universe, since the creature is to be joined with the "All." The reader is thus privileged to learn from Book III that the Father as eiron has much

more affection for His creatures than at first seems apparent: "well thou knows't how dear / To me are all my works, Nor Man the least / Though last created" (III, 276-78).<sup>30</sup> Knowing the special place mankind holds in the Father's mind, and having been informed this early by the poet of His expectations for His creatures, one has the necessary information with which to look more closely at both the NeoPlatonic philosophy of Raphael and the dramatic role he plays in Eden.

Raphael's education of Adam is an obvious analogue of the Father's education of the Son. Of course, one searches for correspondences between the two. The angel's handling of his very important duty is of prime interest to anyone who recognizes the delicacy of the Father's own teaching method (and task) of drawing out from the Son the recognition that the Father loves His creatures greatly, that "Justice" is not the only operative term in the divine worldview, and that humility is most highly prized by the Father. One expects solutions from the Heavenly messenger premised on those very qualities which characterize God's ways.

And Raphael does speak at once to Adam and Eve with a beautiful humility which can both hail Eve as the mother of mankind and hold out the promise of equality of man with angels. But the angel's famous speech on degree, which illustrates this promise, has as its central trope, a root-and-stalk metaphor whose direction is entirely upward.<sup>31</sup> The only concession to God's "downward" view comes in the orthodox confession of the "one Almighty. . .from whom / All things proceed, and up to him return" (V, 469-70). The choice of the word "Almighty" is itself revealing of the set of Raphael's mind, even after the Father's discreet announcement of His abdication, though it is properly the language of one who has long been accustomed to the notion of scale and

degree. The operative term in the metaphor, however, is "aspire"-- specifically, "Till body up to spirit work" (V, 478).

This discourse has been cited as "Milton's most beautiful and crucial ontological passage" in which he "very deliberately has Raphael put the essence of his thought into the image of the tree which represents the scale of being in the universe as a whole as well as man's body and mind as a replica or microcosm of nature."<sup>32</sup> But the problem with Raphael's "Elizabethan" picture of the "return" of the creature to God is that it ill accords with the paradigm of descent and return in the Father's own "exaltation" speech.

True to Plotinus' notion that all that has being originates in God, Raphael says:

O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom  
All things proceed, and up to him return,  
If not deprav'd from good, created all  
Such to perfection, one first matter all,  
Indu'd with various forms, various degrees  
Of substance, and in things that live, of life,  
But more refin'd, more spiritous, and pure,  
As nearer to him plac't or nearer tending  
Each in thir several active Spheres assign'd,  
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds  
Proportion'd to each kind. (V, 469-79)<sup>33</sup>

Raphael adopts the Plotinian theory of emanation<sup>34</sup> to suggest that matter is inferior to spirit, that man, who is "in part Spiritual" (V, 405-06) is less "refin'd" than the angels, though made of the same material and differing only in "degree" of purity.<sup>35</sup> Those forms which reside closer to God, he clearly says, are more pure. Though man lacks angelic purity, he need not fear, for the universe and man's nature is such that he can "aspire" toward a more spiritual, namely an angelic, state;<sup>36</sup>

So from the root  
 Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves  
 More aery, last the bright consummate flow'r  
 Spirits odorous breathe; flow'rs and thir fruit  
 Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd  
 To vital spirits aspire, to animal,  
 To intellectual. . . (V, 479-85)

This "root and stalk" metaphor describes in nature what is urgent and even instinctive in man since Adam already demonstrates such an impulse in the curiosity he shows to find out more about Heaven. The final state of such a process is politely defined:

Wonder not then, what God for you saw good  
 If I refuse not, but convert, as you,  
 To proper substance; time may come when men  
 With Angels may participate, and find  
 No inconvenient Diet, nor too light Fare. (V, 491-95)

Though he is hesitant to promise Heavenly residence for mankind, Raphael predicts that man "may" eventually be honoured by a change of venue and, consequently, by a change of menu too. By eating, Raphael honours man's material nature, though the hint of "lighter fare" in Heaven reminds us that, for the Neoplatonist, the grosser earth is to be overcome.

The end result of human aspiration should be the eventual rejection of the heavier, corporeal world:

And from these corporeal nutriments perhaps  
 Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,  
 Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend  
 Ethereal, as wee, or may at choice  
 Here or in Heav'nly paradises dwell. (V, 496-500)

Inherent in the hierarchy of being as Raphael defines it, then, is a spontaneous and "natural" judgment which speaks automatically in favour of the high and against the low, for spirituality and against materiality. Eden is good to a degree, but Heaven is better because physically more

free, more "ethereal." The potential for ascent is held out to Adam and Eve like a tasty morsel, though without the malice of that other angel in Eve's dream who promises ascent without the faithful exercise of obedience, the theme of all of Raphael's instruction. If the tautomeric possibilities hinted at by the angel--"or may at choice / Here or in Heav'nly paradises dwell" (499-500)--seem rather empty, given that they will be spirits, "etherealized" by then, Raphael nonetheless offers a bromide for the tempter's doubt that God intends to keep men low ("Forbidd'n here, it seems, as only fit / For God,"-- V, 69-70).

Raphael's NeoPlatonism<sup>37</sup> is as orthodox, in short, as Milton's theology is heterodox. Though less pure than the angels, man is more pure than the elements, plants, and animals. He is the owner of a soul which longs to become reunited with the world of pure Intelligence.<sup>33</sup> So that Adam and Eve's soul's may be finally reunited with God, Raphael feels it his duty to enlarge on the importance of obedience:

Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,  
 Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend  
 Ethereal, as wee, or may at choice  
 Here or in Heav'nly Paradises dwell;  
 If ye be found obedient, and retain  
 Unalterably firm his love entire  
 Whose progeny you are. Meanwhile enjoy  
 Your fill what happiness this happy state  
 Can comprehend, incapable of more. (V, 497-505)

More than a warning, Raphael's comments establish for man the fact that earth as he knows it is a "happy place," if unfortunately fettered by its corporeality.<sup>39</sup> Adam's "obedience" consists of remaining content for now with his lot on earth. This, implies Raphael, is God's single law (493).<sup>40</sup>

NeoPlatonic ontology, with its basic, if often implicit, tenet of the chain of being<sup>41</sup> is evidently central to Raphael's pedagogy.<sup>42</sup> Much of its significance consists of its conception of a universal order which is delicately balanced. For that reason, it is all the more surprising that Adam, having received the stories of the war in Heaven, of the creation, and man's special role in the universe, should finally express "doubt" (VIII, 13) about the specific nature of the hierarchy which Raphael has both defined in his 'root and stalk' metaphor and implied in the relation of events in Heaven. The late response of the angel, which cautions Adam against aspiring to understand "matters hid," reveals the paradox inherent in Raphael's position from the outset. For on the one hand, man's obedience is disciplined by fastening his attention on earthly matters; yet on the other hand, he is asked to believe that earthly things are less worthy and pure, that he should indeed aspire toward a more refined state. Adam is thus required both to aspire to understand the Heavens and to show obedience to God by remaining "lowly wise: Think only what concerns thee and thy being" (VIII, 173-74).

This paradox becomes all the more perplexing when one remembers that God challenges the Son to a new understanding of His ways. It would also seem to contradict directly God's challenge to Adam (as yet unknown to Raphael) to ask for a mate. Though there is a visible disparity between God's ways and Raphael's interpretation of them, one must not be quick to judge the "celestial Hierarch." His intentions are good. God's intentions in sending him may be what is questionable, though the dialectical model of Book III should remind us that God is not merely concerned to "let him know, / Lest wilfully transgressing he pretend / surprisal, unadmonish'd, unforewarn'd" (V, 243-45), but rather to imply

the "democratic" character of His goodness to a free-willed creature. Because Adam and Eve experience a sense of privation of God's goodness in the aftermath of the Satan-inspired dream,<sup>43</sup> they pray diligently and openly for God's beneficence--"Hail universal Lord, be bounteous still / To give us only good" (V, 205-06). The Father hears their prayers, pities them, and sends Raphael to "befriend" them. The angel's instructions are to "converse" with Adam and to advise him of his "happy state" ("Happiness in his power left free to will"), and of the existence of an "enemy" inside Eden who wishes to "deceive" him (V, 224-56). Raphael comes, therefore, to serve man as comforter and friend. By descending for the purpose of serving, the angel obediently imitates God's ways; and, by telling the stories of proceedings in Heaven before and during creation, he fulfills the Father's command as best he knows how.

As storyteller and moralist, Raphael's business is pedagogy, and he teaches with hierarchical authority and wisdom. His authoritativeness derives not only from the mastery of the history of Heaven and the apparent ways of God,<sup>44</sup> but from his very appearance when he first arrives in Eden, "a Seraph wing'd" (V, 277), to whom Adam makes courteous obeisances "as to a superior Nature" (V, 360):

Nearer his presence Adam though not aw'd,  
 Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,  
 As to a superior Nature, bowing low,  
 Thus said. Native of Heav'n for other place  
 None can than Heav'n such glorious shape contain.  
 Since by descending from the Thrones above,  
 Those happy places thou hast deigned a while  
 To want, and honor these. (V, 358-65)

Coming as he does in authority from Heaven as the "wing'd Hierarch" (369),<sup>45</sup> one is not surprised that his message deals with the question of authority,<sup>46</sup> that is, with the nature of Heaven's hierarchy, and with the means by

which rational creatures may eventually earn the right to become angels.

Milton's description of Raphael on his approach to Eden clarifies for the reader the unwitting role to be played by the "wing'd Hierarch." He is compared to the "phoenix" (271), Ovid's fabled bird which auto-genetically rises from its own ashes. In this case, the male progeny of a father whose ashes it respectfully carries to "the Sun's bright Temple" (V, 273) is its own sacrifice to the whole process of male-succession. The hint in Book III of the Father's "abdication" is thus confirmed just at the point when Raphael comes to iterate the old notions of hierarchy. Book XV of the Metamorphoses offers the best analogue, though with a difference. Whereas Ovid's first fourteen books have described the power of the gods over mortals and the often indiscriminate violence which attends authority, the last book begins to perceive the significance of love as "ordering" power. The fact is that Ovid is aware of the weakness inherent in the male-succession model, for here at the very end of his Metamorphoses, he responds to Pythagoras' revolutionary social commentary with an equally unorthodox concession that, though Augustus is a greater hero than his father, Julius, the father is stellularized and his deeds praised instead of sabotaged by the son.

That God, as well as the narrator, is thinking in terms of "Phoenix" metaphors is suggested at the conclusion of the heavenly dialogue by God's own prophecy of "New Heav'n and Earth" sprung from the ashes of the old (III, 330-38). The "ashes" of the old system of authority will give birth to "Joy and Love. . .and fair Truth." What, by contrast, Ovid perceives to be the violent process of history with its revolutionary succession of father by son, has already been declared invalid first by the Son's refusal to usurp the Father's power in his

surrender of self, and then by the Father's promise that a new democratic order shall exist in Heaven.<sup>47</sup>

There is more than an apparent contradiction, however, between Raphael's understanding and the Father's demonstration of the way of exaltation in the poem. The narrator signals a dramatic irony at the angel's very approach:

while now the mounted Sun  
Shot down direct his fervid Rays, to warm  
Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs. (V, 300-02)

Raphael is not "the mounted Sun," assuredly, but his coming provokes new excess in Nature, "Wild above Rule or Art" (297), and the cautionary tone of "more warmth than Adam needs" raises more questions than it answers.

What Adam surely needs is a more certain understanding of that evil which Eve has experienced in her dream. Now "sudden mind" (452) arises in Adam to inquire if this angel can clear up the difficulty.<sup>48</sup> The difficulty stems from the advice Satan has given to Eve. He encourages her to taste the fruit of precisely that tree which God has expressly forbidden them to try; to taste it is to become a god, a state which she deserves by "merit," Satan says:

Taste this, and be henceforth among the Gods  
Thyself a Goddess, not to Earth confin'd,  
But sometimes in the Air, as wee, sometimes  
Ascend to Heav'n, by merit thine, and see  
What life the Gods live there, and such live thou.  
(V, 77-81)

Since Eve is "created pure" (V, 96), and since man has had no reason till now to expect the existence of a will contrary to that of God, Adam is perplexed, though he relates the dream casually to the operation

of some "evil" force. Still he is uncertain whether his explanation is correct: "The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep / Affects me equally; nor can I like / This uncouth dream, of evil sprung I fear" (V, 96-98).<sup>49</sup> Adam is forced to make a decision about "uncouthness" based on insufficient or limited knowledge--that is why he suddenly asks the Heavenly visitor to shed some light on the problem. Adam does not inquire directly, but "warily,"<sup>50</sup> of "earthly fruits" and "food. . .of Angels" (464-65), a safe topic, but also significantly and precisely the subject of Eve's dream and the symbol of their dilemma.

Adam, of course, wants confirmation that his intuition about the falsehood of the "guide's" (V, 91) reasoning and explanations is correct. Raphael's answer is somewhat startling:

Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,  
 Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend  
 Ethereal as wee. . .  
 If ye be found obedient. (V, 497-501)

Though Raphael's description of the means of rising is opposed to Satan's account, he nonetheless shares in Satan's hierarchical sense of the superior freedom of spirit. Each of the angelic speakers places special value on freedom from confinement to earth, on a spiritual option to ascend to Heaven or remain on earth, and on the wonderful "ethereality" of the gods. These opinions, taken together, reveal a special reverence for the angelic, godly, spiritual state. But for the difference, then, between "obedience" and "merit," Satan and Raphael are ironically similar in their ultimate separation of body and spirit.

Such similarities increase the reader's temptation to question God's choice in sending Raphael to Eden.<sup>51</sup> But the narrator himself anticipates such questions by another controlling, dramatic irony.

From that point when God summons Raphael, until the moment Raphael leaves on his mission, the reader's perspective is Heavenly and largely abstract, but when the flight begins, the perspective shifts to earth and becomes pictorial.<sup>52</sup> The angel's "gorgeous wings" (250), the Heavenly choir "on each hand parting" (252) to give him passage, the gate of Heaven turning on "golden Hinges" (256), and Eden's hills "with Cedars crown'd" (260) lend concreteness to the scene. On the one hand, an extended simile reminds us of our own limitations as viewers:

As when by night the Glass  
Of Galileo, less assur'd, observes  
Imagin'd lands and Regions in the Moon:  
Or Pilot from amidst the Cyclades  
Delos or Samos first appearing kens  
A cloudy spot. (V, 261-66)

On the other hand, the shift in perspective from the Heavenly scene to an earthly point of view suggests that the earth-bound viewer, about to have his "glass" turned Heavenward by the visiting angel, will be left "less assur'd" by his optical aid.

The narrator's lengthy description of his martial ornament (V, 277-85), together with a Homeric simile likening him to "Maia's Son" (V, 285), tell us most of what we then need to know about the kind of excess Raphael brings to the garden.<sup>53</sup> Where Hermes, "Maia's Son," is notorious for bringing Pandora as a gift from Zeus to Epimetheus to punish man for his trickery, Raphael brings a vision of authority and hierarchy which is male-oriented. The feminine garden, at his appearance, "wanton'd as in her prime" (V, 295), suggesting the effect of his excessive masculinity in a garden where the gardeners have maintained a delicate balance until now (IV, 624-32). "Wanton growth" may indeed be "wild above Rule or Art," but the usual rule in Eden is to prune all

such excess.

Pruning is one of the few persistent metaphors for the process by which God works in Paradise Lost. Adam and Eve are busy pruning at the very moment when Raphael is sent to instruct them:

On to thir morning's rural work they haste  
 Among sweet dewes and flow'rs; where any row  
 Of Fruit-trees overwoody reach'd too far  
 Thir pamper'd boughs, and needed hands to check  
 Fruitless imbraces: or they led the Vine  
 To wed her Elm: she spous'd about him twines  
 Her marriageable arms, and with her brings  
 Her dow'r th' adopted Clusters, to adorn  
 His barren leaves. (V, 211-19)

It is this tremendous fertility in the garden which threatens to undo the work already done, and Adam informs Eve that the abundance of blossoms and branches "Ask riddance if we mean to tread with ease" (IV, 632).

Just as Adam and Eve are duty-bound to restrain the tendency toward wildness in nature, so they maintain a similar "delicate balance" by proper "government" and restraint of each other. Barbara Lewalski draws a parallel between their restraint of nature and restraint of each other: "The poem's garden imagery identifies Adam and Eve not only as gardeners but also as part of the garden: they too are 'planted' by God, expected to grow and perfect themselves through cultivation and to bear appropriate fruits. . . [They are] gardeners also of their own paradise within."<sup>54</sup> This lifestyle of mutuality of restraint is not only something which God has willed upon man but which Adam himself has requested and God graciously granted (VIII, 423-26).

Adam and Eve both learn restraint gradually, beginning with their first moments together when Eve, seeing Adam for the first time, finds him "Less winning soft, less amiably mild, / Than the smooth wat'ry

image" (IV, 479-80) of herself she has seen before. Eve has been admiring herself, with an innocent but nevertheless "over-grown" narcissism:

A shape within the wat'ry gleam appear'd  
 Bending to look on me, I started back,  
 It started back, but pleas'd I soon return'd  
 Pleas'd it return'd as soon with answering looks  
 Of sympathy and love. (IV, 461-65)

Adam is aware that they belong together, having heard God call her "thy fit help, thy other self" (VIII, 450), and with sound reasoning he successfully calls her to himself: "Return fair Eve, / Whom fli'st thou? whom thou fli'st, of him thou art" (IV, 481-82). In another instance, Eve asks Adam to explain "wherefore all night long shine these, for whom / This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?" (IV, 657-58). Adam corrects Eve's anthropocentrism by pointing out the other purposes of starlight, to keep darkness from "regaining her old possession" and to provide light ("soft fires,") for "all things" (IV, 667).

The "pruning" model in Book IV is most closely related to the model of self-sacrifice in Book III. So Eve's "yielding" is not without its own kind of strength--as is subtly hinted at by "impli'd subjection" (IV, 307-08)--and its indispensable worth. Eve's yielding reflects that submissive aspect of the Son; and the Son's "yielding," of course, will be crucial to man's salvation. Like Adam, the Son also reasons logically with the Father and obtains a promise of mercy. So Adam and Eve together reflect the two sides of the Son in Book III. It is only when each begins to feel sufficient without the other, when Adam and Eve both give in to such self-sufficiency, as we shall see in a later chapter, that the balance in Eden shifts. As Danielson notes about the need for

"mutual minding," "Eve's argument treats man's sufficiency as if it ought to be 'Single' (IX, 325, 339), individual, and innate (IX, 336); and this leads her to exclude from consideration, and so to neglect, some of the very means integral to human sufficiency as God ordained."<sup>55</sup>

The masculine-feminine tension which arises in Book V is still limited to nature. That it should occur, metaphorically, by virtue of Raphael's coming is prophetic of later and greater tensions when Adam will confess something of his sex life to Raphael and Eve will choose to assert her independence just when her danger is greatest. That the Father should allow his messenger the freedom to intervene as he will in the wake of her dream and of the dawning of human sorrow and uncertainty is the larger question, a problem quite as daunting as the one the Son faces in trying to read God's ways in the dialogue in Heaven. But that the Son himself does not have privileged knowledge is the surest indication that he can be tested; that Raphael should have limited knowledge is equally critical to the test of man's free will. Milton raises serious questions about God's ways by undercutting Raphael's "NeoPlatonism," but he does so because his God demands questions. The Father's inclusion of His creatures in communal discovery, and His demonstration that "Merit" in His universe means voluntary divestment of power and birthright through descent, form a new paradigm for Edenic man who can no longer be served by the commonplaces of the old heavenly NeoPlatonism.

Through no fault of his own except, perhaps, inattention, Raphael has come as teacher to Adam and Eve, not in the guise of an eiron who expects his pupils to discover the truth he knows is best for them, but with a message which ironically seems to lead his listeners away from the

truth which the Son has already discovered, that descent and service epitomize God's ways. It is only when Raphael moves from philosophy to narrative that his explicit faith in service and his implicit acceptance of humiliation in the war in Heaven can illustrate something of his sense of the changing order of God's ways.

Notes to Chapter One

The Subversion of Degree

<sup>1</sup> John E. Knott, Jr., "The Visit of Raphael: Paradise Lost, Book V," Modern Philology, 61(1963-64), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> John Milton: Paradise Lost, in Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merrit Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957), p. 260. All references to Milton's poetry and prose are to Hughes's text, except where indicated.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Low, "Milton's God: Authority in Paradise Lost," Milton Studies, 4(1972), p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> F. Peczenik, "Fit Help: The Egalitarian Marriage in Paradise Lost," Mosaic, XVII(Winter 1984), p. 35.

<sup>5</sup> In An Essay on Man (II, 1-10), Alexander Pope outlines the old Elizabethan commonplace about man's awkward "middle state" between the divine and the sensible.

<sup>6</sup> Peczenik, p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> Philip J. Gallagher, "The Role of Raphael in Samson Agonistes," Milton Studies, 18(1983), p. 256.

<sup>8</sup> See William Empson, Milton's God (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), p. 161.

<sup>9</sup> J. B. Broadbent, Some Graver Subject: An Essay on 'Paradise Lost' (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960), pp. 150-51.

<sup>10</sup> Empson, p. 155.

<sup>11</sup> See Stanley Eugene Fish, Surprised by Sin: The Reader in 'Paradise Lost' (London: MacMillan, 1967), p. 81.

<sup>12</sup> J. M. Evans, 'Paradise Lost' and the Genesis Tradition (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Irene Samuel, "The Dialogue in Heaven: A Reconsideration of Paradise Lost, III, 1-417, PMLA, 72(1957), p. 601.

<sup>14</sup> Samuel, p. 611.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel, p. 609.

<sup>16</sup> Bright Essence: Studies in Milton's Theology, Hunter, Patrides, Adamson, ed. J. H. Adamson (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1971), reprints a series of articles which debate both the ancient question of the Son's divine status and Milton's relationship to Arius's heretical view that the Son was the first of created beings and thus not the Father's equal.

<sup>17</sup> See Samuel, p. 602. "More important, he uses [God's toneless voice] to afford the Son opportunity for his impassioned reply."

<sup>18</sup> Fish, p. 76.

<sup>19</sup> Empson's whole attitude toward God is premised on this insincerity and shallowness.

<sup>20</sup> Dennis Danielson, Milton's Good God: A Study of Literary Theodicy (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), p. 103.

<sup>21</sup> Danielson, p. 108.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel says that, even though "the Son cannot know any more than others at the council that the task named does not mean annihilation" (p. 607), he trusts in the Father's good intentions and the Father responds with a "detailed affirmation" of all the Son's hopeful expectations (p. 608).

<sup>23</sup> Empson, p. 137.

<sup>24</sup> Northrop Frye, in Anatomy of Criticism (1957; rpt. New York: Athenean, 1969), identifies an eiron type not much noticed in comedy: "This is a character, generally an older man, who begins the action of the play by withdrawing from it, and ends the play by returning. He is often a father with the motive of seeing what his son will do" (p. 174). Milton's God is the archetype of this type in the sense that "the action of the play" is all of creation.

<sup>25</sup> Albert C. Labriola, "'Thy Humiliation Shall Exalt': The Christology of Paradise Lost," Milton Studies, 15(1981), p. 33.

26 Danielson, p. 222.

27 Labriola states that "Christ is to be exalted for two reasons: his divinity and his willingness to be humiliated by assuming a lesser nature. The former refers to his birthright, the latter to his merits" (p. 33).

28 Emile Brehier, The Philosophy of Plotinus, trans. Joseph Thomas (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958). Brehier states that in Plotinus' system the low serve the great, that "Intelligence derives everything it has from the object of its contemplation" (p. 51).

29 See Dennis Danielson, "Milton's Arminianism and Paradise Lost," Milton Studies, 12(1978), 44-73. Danielson differentiates between Calvinism and Milton's Arminian notions of freedom. My own suggestion, borrowed from Empson, that Milton's God is abdicating the throne offers further disparity between Calvinist divine absolutism and Milton's worldview.

30 The essentially deist position taken by such critics as John Peter, M. P. P. Morand and W. Empson is strongly refuted by God's own admission here that His works are dear to Him. This can only be denied if it is assumed that God lies in the poem.

31 E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (London: Chatto and Windus, rpt. 1952), p. 30, calls Raphael's degree speech "Milton's forthright exposition of the chain of being, and C. S. Lewis, in A Preface to 'Paradise Lost' (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956), p. 78, declares that "the Hierarchical idea [is the] indwelling life of the whole work."

32 Hughes, pp. 192-93.

33 For two diverse accounts of this history see Charles Elsee, Neoplatonism in Relation to Christianity (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1908), and Ernst Cassirer, The Platonic Renaissance in England (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1953). The Introduction to Robert Ellrodt's Neoplatonism in the Poetry of Spenser (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1960), gives a valuable, if brief, summary of the transmission of Neoplatonism to the Renaissance of England.

34 A radical dualism, the chain of hypostasis, the yearning of the soul to return to the realm of pure Intelligence and the supra-reality of the spiritual, Heavenly world, are all characteristic of Plotinian ontology, which in turn is largely founded on Plato's separatist philosophy. These ideas, transmitted by Augustine and the later Florentine school, deeply influenced English literature and theology.

35 See Walter Clyde Curry, Milton's Ontology, Cosmogony, and Physics (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1957), p. 166, for his opinion of the origin of Milton's "hylomorphic" scale of Nature which supposes the substantiality of even the spirit world.

36 Jackson Cope, The Metaphoric Structure of 'Paradise Lost' (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1962), claims that Raphael's descent, in fact, inspires Adam with an incipient desire for ascent. The angel is "a gentle instructor whose descent has been made only to herald a greater ascent, when men's bodies ' . . . may at last turn all to spirit'" (p. 116).

37 See Samuel, Plato and Milton, pp. 34-43, for instance. See also William G. Madsen, From Shadowy Types to Truth: Studies in Milton's Symbolism (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968), Chapter 4, passim.

38 C. A. Patrides, in Milton and the Christian Tradition (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 63, describes how the popular renaissance thinker, Comenius, divided the scale between earth and Heaven into ascending levels.

39 Brehier, p. 1. Plotinus believed that divinity stops outside the realm of matter, that matter is "ugliness." One is also reminded of the less cynical attitude toward corporeality in the Plato of the Republic, as compared to the Timaeus.

40 See Hughes, p. 911. Milton emphasizes the few "sole decrees" of God in the Christian Doctrine--one must wonder where the notion of a plentitude of divine laws and regulations comes from.

41 See Curry, p. 182, for a comment on the syncretistic identity of the chain of being.

42 Patrides, Milton and the Christian Tradition, records just how commonplace this scala naturae really was by describing the Renaissance's reverence for the "mythical" Hermes Trismegistus and his idea of a straight line extending from the bottom to the top of the natural world (p. 61).

43 Much effort has been expended discussing Eve's dream and debating her relative innocence. George Williamson, "The Education of Adam," in Modern Philology, 61(1963-64), p. 98, finds that her dream "has revealed her vanity," and that her pride makes her vulnerable to Satan's temptation. T. H. Blackburn in "Uncloistered Virtue," Milton Studies, 13(1971), maintains that both Adam and Eve "live a full experience of good" (p. 123), but that, though they know conceptually of evil, no evil actually exists in them till they fall. This problem of evil in man is, of course, directly related to the classic Parmenidian question about the many proceeding from the 'One' and, thus, necessarily, that of theodicy itself.

<sup>44</sup> cf. Murray W. Bundy, "Milton's view of Education in Paradise Lost," The Journal of English and Germanic Studies, 21(1922), p. 130.

<sup>45</sup> See Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture, p. 30.

<sup>46</sup> This idea gets its own authority from Raphael's very appearance and presence which suggest greatness. Greatness and highness do exist in Heaven since, in contradistinction to these properties, God has commended the Son for his goodness. The qualities which strike Adam about Raphael's appearance, then, are not considered especially "good" by God. Furthermore, it is illuminating that goodness, first manifested in Milton's eternity by the Son's self-sacrifice, is related to his becoming man and man is thus crucial in Paradise Lost both to theodicy and to the evolution of goodness.

<sup>47</sup> For a rather different view of Milton's treatment of succession and theogony, see Philip J. Gallagher, "Paradise Lost and the Greek Theogony," English Literary Renaissance, 9(Winter 1979), 121-48.

<sup>48</sup> See Dennis H. Burden, The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of 'Paradise Lost' (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967), p. 123. Burden views the dream as a "providential warning," a sign of the evil "potential" in man.

<sup>49</sup> See Diane McColley, "Eve's Dream," Milton Studies, XII(1978), 25-45. "Since, by God's permissive will, an evil spirit is lurking in the garden, Adam and Eve must learn to resist evil, not to ignore it. . .The dream Satan imposes on Eve is an important step in their education" (p. 37). I agree that this is a critical moment in the "instruction" of the human couple, but, as Michael Lieb shows in The Dialectics of Creation (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts, 1970), Satan has no power in Eden until Eve's fall, and, I contend, until Raphael's education; in that sense I agree with Empson.

<sup>50</sup> I believe that "wary" does not just connote humility and a desire not to presume, but is a kind of posturing, an extreme caution intended as a defense against evil, a caution which is first evident when Adam greets Raphael. Though "not Aw'd" (V, 358) is a comment on Adam's truest feeling, "yet with submiss approach" (359) more fully characterizes the stance he takes.

<sup>51</sup> See T. H. Blackburn, "Uncloistered Virtue," Blackburn counters the notion that Eve falls from a state of absolute innocence to one of corruption by suggesting that both humans have a potential for sin, a "full complement of human appetites" (p. 130), and as such the fall is an "actualization" of "potentialities." This begs the question, why did Eve fall? The evidence points to Raphael's peculiar education of Adam and Eve as the primary impediment to a continued state of peace in Eden.

52 Milton might also be dramatizing the juxtaposed perspectives of creation found in Chapters 1 and 2 of the Genesis account which J. M. Evans, 'Paradise Lost' and the Genesis Tradition, (p. 11), memorably describes: "Where J, as we shall see, is vivid and pictorial, P is precise, repetitive, and largely abstract, and its austere description of the creation seems prosaic beside J's striking anthropomorphisms. This stylistic contrast reflects in turn the divergent standpoints from which the two narratives are written; in P we seem to be looking down from some remote position in space, witnessing the creation from the creator's point of view, whereas in J we are firmly rooted to the earth, observing the beginning of things from the creaturely level."

53 J. P. Rosenblatt, "Celestial Entertainment," The Harvard Theological Review, 62(1969), p. 426, finds in Raphael's flight an indication of his "singleness of purpose." His purposefulness does not bode well for Eden, I maintain.

54 Barbara Kieffer Lewalski, "Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden," in New Essays on Paradise Lost, ed. Thomas Kranidas (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), p. 93.

55 Danielson, p. 145.

## CHAPTER TWO

### "None But Thou Can End It":

#### The Politics of Humiliation in the War in Heaven

Raphael is the Father's chosen messenger and he has been told to "advise" Adam of his "happy state," to "warn" him of the "danger" of the "enemy / Late fall'n himself from Heav'n" (V, 239-40), and to inform him that a created potential to be deceived makes the enemy's success conceivable. But the Father's advice is reasonably general and the details are left to the angel to fill in. The combination of this free reign to interpret and a certain sociability (V, 221) which characterizes Raphael suggests that the message which filters down to the human couple via Raphael must inevitably differ somewhat from a message which the Father Himself would deliver.

Besides the "insignificant" inaccuracies which plague oral communications, even those of angels, there are other questions that need to be raised concerning Raphael's reliability as narrator. What, on the one hand, does he expect in Book VI from the Father's order that the loyal angels go to war--that is, what does he think of their chances for success and what does he perceive to be the Father's purpose for warring with Satan? On the other hand, where is Raphael during the course of the war in Heaven and how much of what the Father says to the Son has the angel overheard? Does he overhear what the Father says in "jest" to the Son (V, 718) and does he overhear the Father's pronouncement that "none

but thou / Can end it" (VI, 702-03)? In short, how much does Raphael really know about God's ways? The possibility exists that he is interpreting events of which he has doubtful knowledge.

The Father's command to the loyal angels in Book VI, like his command to Raphael in Book V, is ambiguous: in a curious way God is oracular,<sup>1</sup> and what He says requires interpretation. His ironic method is established for the reader at least, from the chronological beginning of Paradise Lost, where He is seen, at V, 600, in the act of "provoking" Satan to rebellion. One hundred-odd lines later the reader meets Him again, this time ironically expressing to the Son His "fears" about the threat presented by the "sons of Morn" (V, 716) who are "banded to oppose his high Decree" (V, 716-717):

And smiling to his only Son thus said.  
 Son, thou in whom my glory I behold  
 In full resplendence, Heir of all my might,  
 Nearly it now concerns us to be sure  
 Of our Omnipotence, and with what Arms  
 We mean to hold what anciently we claim  
 Of Deity or Empire, such a foe  
 Is rising, who intends to erect his Throne  
 Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North;  
 Not so content, hath in his thought to try  
 In battle, what our Power is, or our right.  
 Let us advise, and to this hazard draw  
 With speed what force is left, and all employ  
 In our defense, lest unawares we lose  
 This our high place, our Sanctuary, our Hill. (V, 718-32)

The Father gives the appearance of being concerned for the safety of His throne and worried about His "Omnipotence," even though Raphael has already described His omniscience:

Meanwhile th' Eternal eye, whose sight discerns  
 Abstrusest thoughts, from forth His holy Mount  
 And from within the golden Lamps that burn  
 Nightly before him saw without thir light  
 Rebellion rising. (V, 711-715)

The possible sarcasm of the Father's speech to the Son must give us pause, in light of His secure omniscience; suffice to say for now that any facts about losing "what anciently we claim / Of Deity or Empire" (V, 723-4) and the urgent need for advisement about defending "our high place" (V, 732)<sup>2</sup> must be viewed in terms of the Father's ironic "smile" (V, 718).

Whether or not Raphael has seen that smile himself, he evidently takes his cue from words attributed to the Son:

Mighty Father, thou thy foes  
Justly hast in derision, and secure  
Laugh'st at thir vain designs and tumults vain,  
Matter to mee of Glory, whom thir hate  
Illustrates, when they see all Regal Power  
Giv'n me to quell thir pride, and in event  
Know whether I be dext'rous to subdue  
Thy Rebels, or to be found the worst in Heav'n. (V, 735-42)

Raphael does not demur at the prospect of divine cruelty, for he shows the dilemma in which the Son is caught. To agree with the Father by expressing doubt of His omnipotence would make him guilty like Satan (I, 120-1) of disloyalty and thus would make his performance ungodlike. The Son shows, however, that he is undeniably committed to the Father, whatever His plan. He states, in apparent agreement with the literal meaning of the Father's address, that God is "derisive" (V, 736), "mighty" (V, 735), and "secure" (omnipotent [V. 736]), and that He "laughs" (V, 737) at His enemy's "vain designs" (V, 737). This is clearly an allusion to Psalm 2:4<sup>3</sup> where God is described in similar terms, giving the Son royal prerogative to violently avenge the arrogant pagans: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Ps. 2:4).<sup>4</sup> This idea of God's derisive might is supported by the heightening of military plans ascribed to the Father by both the Son

and Abdiel. Apparently recollecting the Father's solemn declaration (V, 600), the Son prophesies that he has been given "all Regal Power" to "quell thir pride" (V, 739-40), to bring the rebellion under control.

Abdiel's later description of God's power and anger, narrated by Raphael, is even more graphic as he warns Satan of his impending punishment:

That Golden Sceptre which thou didst reject  
Is now an Iron Rod to bruise and break  
Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise,  
Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly  
These wicked Tents devoted, lest the wrath  
Impendent, raging into sudden flame  
Distinguish not: for soon expect to feel  
His Thunder on thy head, devouring fire.<sup>5</sup> (V, 886-93)

Satan's threat, according to Abdiel,<sup>6</sup> is merely a 'storm in a teacup,' and his insolent display of "puissance" (V, 864) will be repaid with an even more dreadful manifestation of force. God's "wrath impendent" (V, 890-91) is expressed metaphorically both as an "Iron Rod" (V, 887) and as thunder and flame. "Devouring fire" (V, 893) connotes a hungry beast and defines specifically the derision attributed to God by the angels. For now, it seems that Milton's God, like the Jahweh of the Old Testament, is prepared to go to great lengths to revenge those who reject His "Golden Sceptre" (V, 886).

A certain uneasiness about the Father's mockery has prompted a great deal of speculation about Milton's intentions in these episodes located at the center of Paradise Lost.<sup>7</sup> Arnold Stein's frequently praised article on the war in Heaven<sup>8</sup> uses as a starting point Samuel Johnson's complaint that Milton's epic battle is characterized by an indecorous "confusion of spirit and matter."<sup>9</sup> Stein suggests, however, that the confusion is intentional and that the war is "epic comedy. . .elevated

to the epic by magnificent imaginative power, made comic by controlled excess."<sup>10</sup> The Father's laughter at Satan and his followers is justified, says Stein, but not so is Satan's imitation of divine laughter, his breaking of holy discipline, and his trust in the external power of material arms.

While Empson sees a deceitful smugness in the Father's smile and a fail-proof opportunity for the Son to "win his spurs,"<sup>11</sup> for Stella P. Revard the war establishes God's monarchy and is a just expression of divine scorn for the conspirators.<sup>12</sup> Conversely, Philip Gallagher's challenge of a "royalist" interpretation of these events<sup>13</sup> envisions an ironic God in much the same way that Stanley Fish and Joseph Summers have done earlier. Fish finds God insensitive and the war a providential trial of angelic firmness,<sup>14</sup> and Summers wonders at the Father's excessive derision (the underground warfare and the defacing of Heaven's landscape) but faithfully attributes it to the Father's wish to show the wisdom of His choice of the Son as "Head" of the angels.<sup>15</sup>

The new critical consensus is that "the narration of the War in Heaven begins and ends at the throne of God",<sup>16</sup> for the simple reason that God wants His creatures to recognize His authority.<sup>17</sup> For these critics, as for Raphael, the Son merely appears to affirm that concern when he says that "thou thy foes / Justly hast in derision, and secure / Laugh'st at thir vain designs" (V, 735-37). The Son uses "derision" and "secure" because he depends on the fact that God is consolidating His position, His throne. But the Son still does not know--and Raphael seems even at the time of narration not to know yet --that the Father is preparing to abdicate (III, 313-20).<sup>18</sup> Neither does the Son know that he himself will shortly be humiliated (III, 238-40).

There is nonetheless a problem here related to the Son's future humiliation. On the one hand, he does not strike one as the model of humility in these central books. He speaks, for instance, about the Father's "just" mockery of His foes, and then later, when he attacks Satan's forces, he puts on a "countenance" of "terror. . .too severe to be beheld / And full of wrath bent on his Enemies" (VI, 824-26). But the Son is not being humble and arrogant according to the company he keeps; rather he changes between Book V and the later Book III. He learns new things about the Father and adjusts his behaviour accordingly. The Father's smiling irony is most important in Book V, then, because He knows, even in the process of warning His Son about Satan's might (V, 719-32), that His concerns will be misunderstood by the Son and angels alike, that the war in Heaven has first to be fought before the truth about His own humble ways can be understood. The Son himself will eventually come to realize how radical a surrender he must willingly undertake to show his loyalty to the Father and to merit His praise. While the Son is all severe justice, then, in Book V,<sup>19</sup> by the later dramatic time of Book III he is all mercy. The derision which he calls just in Book V becomes the "most just" (III, 294) way of compassion by Book III.

The obvious first step in the Son's education must be the nature of his "exaltation" in Book V. Hughes notes Kelly's view that the Son is not born (created) at this moment but exalted to the previously non-existent status of king, "ruler over the angels."<sup>20</sup> Other critics find in this episode something perplexing. One goes so far as to suggest that the double exaltation, here and in Book III, is an impropriety on Milton's part, considering that exaltation in Hebraic tradition was irrevocable.<sup>21</sup> The view that the Son's exaltation is a "political"

promotion<sup>22</sup> has lately been opposed by Labriola, as discussed in Chapter I, since there is evidence in the poem that the Son's exaltation is, in fact, a demotion:

In Book V the Father announces and presents the Son begotten as an angel. This begetting does not mean that the Son's divine nature is being created. It means simply that the Son in the presence of the angels has assumed their nature and form. . . Subject to the limitations of this lesser nature, the Son is humiliated, but the angelic nature has been exalted because it has been assumed by the deity.<sup>23</sup>

Labriola cites as evidence Abdiel's belief that the angels were automatically exalted when the Son was begotten:

How provident he is, how far from thought  
To make us less, bent rather to exalt  
Our happy state under one Head more near  
United. (V, 828-31)

Abdiel reiterates the same idea Labriola notices when he says that, "[the Son] the Head / One of our number thus reduc't becomes" (V, 842-43). There is as well a parallel in the "humiliation" of God's becoming man which suggests the credibility of the demotion theory. Danielson argues something similar: "For just as the 'humiliation' of the Son's human incarnation, foretold by God in Book III, will 'exalt / With [him, his] manhood' (III, 313-14), so the angels, as Abdiel asserts, are not 'obscured' by the Son's reign but rather 'more illustrious made'. . ." (V, 841).<sup>24</sup>

The demotion theory throws light on Abdiel's argument with Satan about equality and the future of hierarchy in Heaven. Satan is incensed that the Son's coronation threatens equality as he knows it:

Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,  
 If these magnificent Titles yet remain  
 Not merely titular, since by Decree  
 Another now hath to himself ingross't  
 All Power, and us eclips'd under the name  
 of King anointed, for whom all this haste  
 Of midnight march. (V, 772-78)

Satan also defines further his own preference for the status quo--he is "ordained to govern, not to serve" (V, 802). Hierarchy is the best possible political system because it is most free, he says, and true equality consists in the equal freedom of present government (V, 794-97). We realize, of course, that this is a contradiction in terms, and so does Abdiel who brilliantly refutes Satan's false logic:

As by his Word the mighty Father made  
 All things, ev'n thee, and all the Spirits of Heav'n  
 By him created in thir bright degrees,  
 Crown'd them with Glory, and to thir Glory nam'd  
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,  
 Essential Powers, nor by his Reign Obscur'd,  
 But more illustrious made, since he the Head  
 One of our number thus reduc't becomes. (V, 836-43)

If Satan sounds anxious about the Son's entering his own sphere of influence, the Son and the unfallen angels understand that the "exaltation" of a King can be construed only as the Son's humiliation. The creation of a King cannot lessen their status since, by becoming "Head" the Son is "reduc't" from godhead to leader of the angels.<sup>25</sup> The Son, creator of all the "bright degrees" (V, 838) in Heav'n, does not diminish, but enhances the pre-eminence of these degrees, Abdiel says, by adding his brightness and glory to them.

The Son's humiliation may elevate, and even "illustrate," the status of the angels, but it also has a levelling effect which creates true equality among Heavenly creatures. It is this last phenomenon which

Satan is anxious to avoid because, as Labriola says, "in the highest rank in Heaven [Satan] viewed his status as nearly godlike."<sup>26</sup>

Significantly, more than just a dislike of true equality lies behind Satan's decision to rebel. He is especially aggravated that the new laws governing the angels are inspired by, and will expect of all creatures, service of fellow creatures and not rulership over them. Satan rebels against the incipient politics of humiliation. The war in Heaven, however, effectively humiliates him and all the "bright degrees," good and bad, and in doing so demonstrates for the first time the potency of weakness and service.

By accepting demotion, the Son accepts the Father's justice as well as his own humiliation. Because the Son does not yet know the surprising ways of the Father as they are outlined in Book III, he has no way of interpreting accurately what purpose the Father has in mind for him. His affirmation of the Father's "derisive" nature and His "security" against foes indicates that he assumes that his alliance with the Father is a form of consolidation and stabilization of divine authority. Thus the Son would be in apparent agreement at this point with Gallagher who says that ". . .if you delete the irony [from V, 718ff] you have a God whose omnipotence is fatally compromised: you have, in short, Hesiod's Zeus. . .a master of real politic whose allies are indispensable."<sup>27</sup>

The Father's irony aside for the moment, there are many parallels between Hesiod's Theogony and Paradise Lost; Paradise Lost is in some ways modelled on the other work.<sup>28</sup> Besides the myriad allusions to details, Milton also borrows elements of a larger structure within Hesiod's work, a larger structure about which N. O. Brown writes, "At

least one basic element in the plan of the Theogony seems to be obvious and indisputable--namely, to trace the history of the divine government of the universe from the first patriarch Sky (Uranus) through his son Cronus, the head of the Titans, to its culmination in the reign of Zeus, the son of Cronus and head of the Olympian gods."<sup>29</sup> Brown's view implies that there are three central characteristics in Hesiod's Cosmos: the evolution of the Cosmos; the consolidation of kingship, specifically Zeus's kingship; and patrilineal ascendancy throughout the Cosmos (typified by tension between male order and female creativity).

These structural elements are also evident in Paradise Lost, but Hesiod's model is more important for its differences than for its similarities to Milton's work. One of the obvious parallels is that Satan, like Zeus, starts an armaments industry.<sup>30</sup> The Theogony tells how Zeus frees the long-imprisoned Titan brothers of Cronus and how he is rewarded by them with gifts of specific, powerful weapons: "Zeus also set free his Father's brothers from the cruel chains in which their father Sky had in a foolish frenzy bound them. They gratefully remembered his kindness and gave him the thunder and lightning-bolt and flash, which huge Earth had kept hidden till then. In these weapons Zeus trusts; they make him master over gods and men."<sup>31</sup> These weapons, forged by the cyclops, are necessary for Zeus's supremacy; with their aid he mounts a final, decisive offensive which ends the war and results in his election as king. A similar story unfolds in the war in Heaven. Satan's forces suffer great losses during the first day of battle against the "inviolable Saints" (VI, 398). As in the Theogony, the earth yields the materials for the construction of ingenious new military machines (VI, 470-81), and gunpowder ("ambient light," VI, 481)<sup>32</sup> with

which to fire the cannons. With the invention of new arms and their deployment the parallel between Zeus and Satan ends. In stark contrast to the movement of the Theogony, the fiend and his allies are defeated by the incumbent ruler and hounded from Heaven, an event which will be discussed later.

The description of the construction of Satan's arsenal is most important for two problems which it raises: Satan's perversion of the word (logos) and the discomfiting presence of chaos in Heaven:

Which of us who beholds the bright surface  
Of this Ethereous mould whereon we stand,  
This continent of spacious Heav'n, adorn'd  
With Plant, Fruit, Flow'r Ambrosial, Gems and Gold,  
Whose Eye so superficially surveys  
These things, as not to mind from whence they grow  
Deep under ground, materials dark and crude,  
Of spiritous and fiery spume, till toucht  
With Heav'n's ray, and temper'd they shoot forth  
So beauteous, op'ning to the ambient light. (VI, 472-82)

Chaos is revealed to be still latent in Heaven. Like his counterpart in the Theogony, Satan uncovers chaotic elements ("black tartarous cold infernal dregs" [VII, 238]) in the subsoil of Heaven.<sup>33</sup> On the surface all seems beautiful--Heaven is a garden of delightful forms to the viewer who sees only "superficially." But to look beneath the surface--since even Raphael credits himself with more than an attempt at accommodation ("though what if Earth / Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein / Each to other like more than on Earth is thought" (V, 574-76))--is to find a hidden, chaotic world of substance upon which created things feed. Satan reveals the interdependence of form and chaos, and Raphael's story raises some problems of ontology which must await brief discussion later in the chapter.

The second problem concerns the debasement of language; Satan

celebrates his successful artillery campaign (VI, 584-606) against the loyal angels by mocking their plight:

Satan beheld thir plight.  
 And to his Mates thus in derision call'd.  
 O Friends, why come not on these Victors proud?  
 Erewhile they fierce were coming, and when wee,  
 To entertain them fair with open Front  
 And Breast, (what could we more?) propounded terms  
 Of composition, straight they chang'd thir minds,  
 Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,  
 As they would dance, yet for a dance they seem'd  
 Somewhat extravagant and wild, perhaps  
 For joy of offer'd peace: but I suppose  
 If our proposals once again were heard  
 We should compel them to a quick result. (VI, 607-19)

Simply put, Satan perverts the word. What he calls a "dance" is really the confused scramble of angels vainly attempting to avoid cannon fire. "Proposals" are gunpowder exploding, and the "terms" which "compel" are not those of persuasive oratory but the physical force of arms. Satan's rhetoric has already been shown in hell to be indirect and scheming, but this passage affirms that he has already perverted language in Heaven. The essential problem of Satan's language is that he appears to represent the same tendency to be derisive as does God (V, 376),<sup>34</sup> and this only enlarges the problem of chaos still being immanent in the fabric of God's own habitation.

Such dualism is only natural to the throne of Hesiod's Zeus.<sup>35</sup> Zeus is the last and greatest god in the pagan cosmos, but what he produces is not all beautiful. Hesiod carefully juxtaposes the descriptions of the lineages of Night and Nereus to suggest the interdependence in the cosmos of the dark and terrible and the beautiful and good: "The polarity, which achieves its most emphatic expression in the contrast between Night and Nereus, runs like a continuous thread

through every stage of the cosmic process."<sup>36</sup> The final stage of Zeus's reign unites the worlds of men and gods and brings a new beauty to the divine cosmos through planned parenthood (controlled "proliferation" with select mates).<sup>37</sup> Despite the new anthropocentric order in the cosmos, and despite the fact that the product of Zeus's reign seems good because it restructures the old heavenly powers and establishes a more functional order based on diplomacy rather than on Cronus's repressive force, the reign itself has a dark, violent history:<sup>38</sup> "If this catalogue of Zeus' offspring was a complete description of Zeus' dispensation to mankind, we would have to say that Hesiod looked at the work of Zeus and saw that it was mostly good--not unequivocally good, for Hesiod is realistic and never forgets the force and violence on which Zeus' rule is based."<sup>39</sup> But Brown goes on to say that the violence in the cosmos does not originate with Zeus, and is rather a self-perpetuating tendency which began in the reign of Sky, and is always directly related to the desire of the child to overthrow the father from his position of authority. Zeus is no exception. He resorts to unparalleled violence to establish his kingship.

Zeus, in effect, consolidates his power. He is determined not to make the same mistakes as Sky and Cronus whose hate and repression resulted in their downfall. Zeus replaces violent repression with a policy of diplomacy, and this is exemplified by the absolute allegiance paid him by the Hundred-Hands and Styx (and consequently her children, Glory, Victory, Power, and Strength). In short, Zeus establishes personal supremacy, free from the threat of succession and humiliation, through cunning and diplomacy. Always, however, there lies behind the surface order the threat of a dualism which cannot be unified.

It has been remarked that Milton's God is also consolidating His throne through the agency of His Son:<sup>40</sup> "From the beginning it is clear that the Son understood that the real issue between him and Satan was a 'matter of Glory'. . . .The hate of the rebels illustrates or makes glorious the Son, that is, provides him the opportunity for true glory. . . ."41 The implication here is that the Father condones the Son's struggle to transcend the rebels heroically, that is, to become a greater hero than any of them. If, like Zeus, the Father really is consolidating His forces or His position, then the Son's "derision" and "security" are accurate descriptions and the Son is surely being "glorified" here. But Milton's ironic God is not fully understood by the Son until the later dialogue in Heaven (Bk. III). One could consider the Father a sadist were it not for His own intent to give up the Throne (III, 313-21).<sup>42</sup>

Evidently the Father can be self-mocking in His concern for omnipotence, since ironically He proposes to defend a throne which He is in the process of giving up. His concern with protection of "our high place" (V, 732), then, is no more serious a proposal than His command to the angels to rout the enemy. His creatures' understanding of the truth behind the irony must be achieved by experience, through a trial by merit, because at the heart of the Father's plan is His choice not to necessitate behavior, even that of the Son. Though now the Son responds seriously to God's supposed fears, later he will understand what Raphael seems not to have grasped even in the moment of his narration. Thus Milton's portrait of a democratic God helps to deal Elizabethan notions of authority and order the 'coup de grace,' if in a manner different from the one which he twice defended before all Europe, "overplied / In

liberty's defence, my noble task."<sup>43</sup>

What Raphael, on the other hand, has clearly learned from the war in Heaven is the lesson that the Father requires the humiliation of His creatures. Raphael's modesty about his own role in the combat limits this account to 3½ lines, and even these are shared with Uriel who helps him to vanquish "Adramelech, and Asmadai" (VI, 365). More importantly, while he features the heroic spirit of Michael and, especially, Abdiel, even the latter experiences some measure of humiliation in his vain hope to carry word of warning to the throne of God (VI, 19-21). Abdiel's minor humiliation adumbrates that which the angels must suffer before the war is over, though for now Abdiel finds "war in procinct." Heaven's plain is

Cover'd with thick embattl'd Squadrons bright,  
Chariots and flaming Arms, and fiery Steeds  
Reflecting blaze on blaze. (VI, 16-18)

The loyal angels ambitiously prepare for a military confrontation which God encourages. He tells Abdiel that this will be an "easier conquest" (VI, 37) than the one he faced alone against all of Satan's troops, easier "to subdue / By force who reason for their Law refuse" (VI, 40-41). The Father blesses the "heroic ardor to advent'rous deeds" (VI, 66) because the angels are fighting "in the Cause / Of God and his Messiah" (VI, 67-68), and He challenges His "invincible" (VI, 47) angels to "drive them out from God and bliss. . .with fire and hostile Arms" (VI, 50-52).

But the fierceness and disorder of the first day of battle (VI, 386-91)<sup>44</sup> belie the Father's literal word that this will be the "easier conquest." Though the day ends, as expected, in partial victory for the

loyal angels, and though Satan arrives at his own form of reductio ad absurdum--"Who have sustain'd one day in doubtful fight, / (And if one day, why not Eternal days?)" (VI, 423-24)--the second day takes a surprising turn; now the tide is turned against God's "refulgent Host" (VI, 527), as Satan employs his artillery against the over-confident good angels. The effect is impressive and unexpected:

Immediate in a flame,  
But soon obscur'd with smoke, all Heav'n appear'd,  
From those deep-throated Engines belcht, whose roar  
Embowell'd with outrageous noise the Air. (VI, 584-87)

Now the missiles

with such impetuous fury smote,  
That whom they hit, none on thir feet might stand,  
Though standing else as Rocks, but down they fell  
By thousands, Angel on Arch-Angel roll'd. (VI, 591-94)

The good angels are hurt as much by the verbal as by physical missiles (VI, 621-27): yet, because they are "invincible," they suffer everything but defeat. So the violence escalates. Incensed, and filled with renewed "rage" (VI, 635), the warriors discard their manufactured arms and uproot whole mountains for use as weapons in a scene that Stein calls the "battle of the landscape."<sup>45</sup>

The rest in imitation to like Arms  
Betook them, and the neighboring Hills uptore;  
So Hills amid the Air encounter'd Hills  
Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation dire,  
That under ground they fought in dismal shade;  
Infernal noise. (VI, 662-67)

The mindless, accelerating destruction threatens Heav'n "with ruin overspread" (VI, 670) and it is left, finally, to the Son to end the "Civil Game" (VI, 667). The Son's way is "prepared" by "Power Divine" (VI, 780) and his first act is to "command" (VI, 781) nature to be restored

to its former state--the Son, in effect, pre-enacts creation here. Next he commends the loyal angels' "faithful. . .Warfare" (VI, 803) and kindly informs them that their services are no longer needed (VI, 801-02) and that he will face the enemy alone:

Therefore to mee thir doom he hath assign'd;  
That they may have thir wish, to try with mee  
In Battle which the stronger proves, they all,  
Or I alone against them, since by strength  
They measure all, of other excellence  
Not emulous, nor care who them excels;  
Nor other strife with them do I voutsafe. (VI, 817-23)

There is no doubt that it is humiliating for Satan's whole army to be challenged by one angel (worse than the Philistine Goliath challenged by David), but it is equally humiliating for God's soldiers. The Son's rebuke--ostensibly aimed at Satan's crew--about judging worth by strength includes them all. It reflects on the pandemonium just past.

The Son's own strength, as he mounts the "Chariot of Paternal Deity" (VI, 750), changes his countenance to "terror" (VI, 824) and "wrath" (VI, 826). When he grasps "ten thousand Thunders" (VI, 836), he seems even more ambiguous. Stein comments, as the Son descends on the surprised and incapacitated enemy hosts (VI, 838-43), that "the scene itself is magnificent and superhuman as an expression of wrath and physical force. But the violence that the rebels naively set in motion returns to deprive them of all superhuman grandeur, and then of merely human dignity."<sup>46</sup> True, Satan's vast military machine (one third of Heaven's population) is powerless to confront the Son. The operative word here, however, is 'incapacitated': the enemy hosts are routed from Heaven not by brute strength but by a "Spirit" (VI, 848) which plagues their "Souls" (VI, 837);

Nor less on either side tempestuous fell  
 His arrows, from the fourfold-visag'd Four,  
 Distinct with eyes, and from the living Wheels,  
 Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;  
 One Spirit in them rul'd, and every eye  
 Glar'd lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire  
 Among th' accurst, that wither'd all thir strength,  
 And of thir wonted vigor left them drain'd,  
 Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fall'n. (VI, 844-52)<sup>47</sup>

Ultimately humiliated by this spiritual being made up of eyes (which see through their pretenses), the enemy angels are metamorphosed into a "herd / Of Goats or timorous flock" (VI, 856-57) and shepherded to the edge of the abyss. They are not physically thrown down but choose to throw themselves "Headlong. . .Down from the verge of Heav'n" (VI, 864-65).

This frenzied struggle is, of course, reminiscent of Hesiod's Titanomachia, but even so, it mocks classical epic warfare. The excess of Raphael's description ("Hurl'd with jaculation dire," VI, 665) makes this war unbelievable. But it shows clearly the angels' excessive concern with might, a concern which is symbolized by Abdiel's personal zeal for glory as he contemplates his upcoming battle with Satan:

O Heav'n! that such resemblance of the Highest  
 Should yet remain where faith and realty  
 Remain not; wherefore should not strength and might  
 There fail where Virtue fails, or weakest prove  
 Where boldest; though to sight unconquerable?  
 His puissance, trusting in th' Almighty's aid,  
 I mean to try. (VI, 114-20)

Granted the expectation that virtue and strength should be synonymous, the good angels, like Abdiel, are motivated by utter loyalty. While Satan correctly anticipates their secret ambitions when he accuses Abdiel of being "ambitious to win / From me some Plume" (VI, 60-61), they are nonetheless concerned for the way in which their might reflects on God's Right. "Bent on highest deeds" (VI, 112) is a direct response

to the Father's order to "drive them out from God and bliss" (VI, 52). So the angels trust in the righteous effectiveness of war. Milton's point depends on this fact, for the hierarchical, military ways of the angels are not God's ultimate ways. The Father intends to teach them the folly of trust in might by having them experience humiliation when they most expect to experience glory. The "Cause" (VI, 67) which the angels defend is not wrong (as the "good old cause" which Milton defended is never repudiated by him); the Father does not even blame them for the way in which they defend it. The wonder is that they remain steadfast in the face of the Father's apparent illogic. God simply teaches them, through suffering, how best to serve Truth. Their loyalty is their victory--the embarrassing display of might is a dress rehearsal for the way in which they will eventually be expected to participate in a community without individual glory or upward mobility.

There is yet a moment of great significance in Raphael's relation of the war which is often overlooked (and even the angel does not seem to comprehend the importance of this moment). Tired of the uproar and concerned that its "wild work" (VI, 698) is "dangerous to the main" (VI, 698), God calls on the Son to end it:

Two days are therefore past, the third is thine,  
 For thee I have ordained it, and thus far  
 Have suffer'd, that the glory may be thine  
 Of ending this great War, since none but Thou  
 Can end it. (VI, 699-703)

We recall that the whole of Raphael's narration of the war has been concerned with the theological question of God's omnipotence. Now the Father reveals to the Son for the first time that there is something He can't do, "since none but Thou / Can end it" (VI, 701-02). The Father

admits that He is in some real way limited, a contentious doctrine hotly denied by most of Milton's contemporaries and yet quietly affirmed by those whom we now call Arminians.

Danielson notes that "seventeenth-century orthodox Calvinists looked on Arminian teaching as a threat to the doctrines of divine providence and omnipotence."<sup>48</sup> Arminius opposed Calvinist predestination because it limited man's ability to participate in his own salvation and thus limited man's true freedom. Arminius blamed Calvin for making God responsible for the deaths of those who perished without salvation.<sup>49</sup> Danielson notes further that, though Arminius championed man's absolute freedom, God's omnipotence, and God's goodness, he avoided dealing seriously with the question of theodicy: that is, if God is both sovereign and good, how is the existence of evil explained?<sup>50</sup>

While the opening of Book III suggests that Milton makes use of the Arminian emphasis upon free will as a basis for reconciling omnipotence with goodness, the Father's revelation to the Son (VI, 700) suggests a further limit to His omnipotence, inasmuch as we have observed the co-existence of chaos within the ordered fabric of Heaven itself. One modification of what has come to be known as the Free Will Defense helps to explain how this is possible without automatically subscribing to a dualistic view of God. The twentieth-century theologian, Nicholas Berdjaev, has suggested that there are some inevitable logical limitations to God's omnipotence. "Freedom," he says, "is not created by God: . . .it is part of the nothing out of which God created the world."<sup>51</sup> Evil, he continues, cannot be ignored as a problem because it results from uncreated freedom (which is coextensive with chaos) and

thus exists primordially with God. Berdjaev's great contribution to theodicy is his perception that evil is thus a problem for God. Evil exists independently and therefore God suffers.<sup>52</sup> But Milton's God tells us specifically, in Book VII, that He is coextensive with "the Deep":

Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill  
 Infinitude, nor vacuous the space  
 Though I uncircumscrib'd myself retire,  
 And put not forth my goodness, which is free  
 To act or not. (VII, 168-72)

For the moment, we can only say that the Father confesses that there is nothing in space but Himself, and space, of course, includes chaos and form, evil and good. Book VI helps to establish to what extent the chaos which is part of the Father's habitation and, possibly, part of His being, is substantial.

The existence of chaos (or potential evil) independent of good is dramatically represented, for one, by Night whose strange power in Heaven preoccupies the narrator.<sup>53</sup> Though in the patristic tradition, God is omnipotent and can do with darkness what He wishes, in Paradise Lost Heaven is subject to its powers to a degree:

Now when ambrosial Night with Clouds exhal'd  
 From that high mount of God, whence light and shade  
 Spring both, the face of brightest Heav'n had chang'd  
 To grateful Twilight (for Night comes not there  
 In darker veil). (V, 642-46)

As in the Theogony, the darker side of Cosmos is represented by Night. Potential evil is further substantially evident in the "crude" (VI, 511) and "hidden" (VI, 516) elements of Heaven which Satan uncovers:

Th' originals of Nature in their crude  
 Conception; Sulphurous and Nitrous Foam  
 They found, they mingl'd, and with subtle Art  
 Concocted and adjusted. (VI, 511-14)

Satan's mimetic parody of creation opposes God's creation in every way-- in the specific substances used, in the subtle motives behind the "art," and in the "concocting" and "adjusting" reminiscent of witches' brews. Satan has become actualized evil, and his creation is actually evil. So evil is a development of chaos, it appears, and the Father intends to expel both from Heaven:

how hast thou instill'd  
Thy malice into thousands, once upright  
And faithful, now prov'd false. But think not here  
To trouble Holy Rest; Heav'n casts thee out  
From all her confines. Heav'n the seat of bliss  
Brooks not the works of violence and War.  
Hence then, and evil go with thee along,  
Thy offspring, to the place of evil, Hell. (VI, 269-76)

Michael's prediction of the expulsion of evil is echoed by the Son:

Then shall thy Saints unmixt, and from th' impure  
Far separate, circling thy holy Mount  
Unfeigned Halleluiahs to thee sing,  
Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief. (VI, 742-45)

Heaven's ideal state, says the Son, will be realized when the 'impure' is 'separated' from the pure. Then true hymns of praise will finally be possible.

For now, suffice to say that the reason the Father does not simply expel evil from His habitation is that He cannot act upon His creation by virtue of the logical limitation involved in His decree of freedom. Once He has withdrawn His will from existences which are yet sustained by His being, He cannot necessitate their obedience without contradicting His own will. If the Son (much less Raphael) cannot understand the revelation of "none but thou" at the time it is given, he still humbly and loyally accepts the responsibility of "ending this great War." (702)

Even the comments he now makes concerning the significance of this moment are modified by his experience of the power of the "Spirit" (VI, 848) and will eventually be corrected by the Father Himself in Book III.

Since the Son is created free like all of God's creatures, he must choose to accept the Father's assignment. He is not necessitated and the Father's whole design rests on this moment which He has "foreseen" (VI, 673) and "permitted" (VI, 674) so "That his great purpose he might so fulfil, / To honor his Anointed Son aveng'd / Upon his enemies" (VI, 675-77). If the Son says "no," then Satan's accusation is true that the Son is not God, and not worthy to be the King that the Father has declared him to be. Secondly, the Son's acceptance speech to "drive them out / From all Heav'n's bounds into the utter Deep" (VI, 715-16) proposes a variety of notions which he later discovers need to be qualified:

O Father, O Supreme of heav'nly Thrones,  
 First, Highest, Holiest, Best, thou always seek'st  
 To glorify thy Son. I always thee,  
 As is most just; this I my Glory account,  
 My exaltation, and my whole delight,  
 That thou in me well pleas'd, declar'st thy will  
 Fulfill'd, which to fulfil is all my bliss. (VI, 723-29)

It seems "most just" that each should glorify the other--the Father by trusting absolutely in the Son's loyalty and strength, and the Son by confirming his obedience to the "supreme of Heav'nly Thrones." This routing of the enemy and this mutual glorification, the Son says, is his "exaltation." Yet even here, he concedes that his moment of glory is temporary:

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, and in mee all whom thou lov'st. (VI, 730-33)

Since the Father is in the event both "hate" (VI, 734) and "love" (VI, 733), the Son must confirm his commitment to participate in all aspects of God's being: "whom thou hat'st, I hate, and can put on / Thy terrors, as I put thy mildness on, / Image of thee in all things" (VI, 734-36). Once Satan is "driven down" (VI, 738), he then will return the sceptre to its rightful owner.

But once the war in Heaven is over and creation is completed, the Father offers, in His dialogue with the Son, a new definition of His own personality, and indicates just how "glory" and "exaltation" are to be interrelated:

So Man, as is most just,  
 Shall Satisfy for Man, be judg'd and die,  
 And dying rise , and rising with him raise  
 His Brethren, ransom'd with his own dear life.  
 (III, 294-97, [my italics])

"Most just" no longer has to do with self-glorification, but with self-abnegation and death for the sake of others:

So Heav'nly love shall outdo Hellish hate,  
 Giving to death, and dying to redeem,  
 So dearly to redeem what Hellish hate  
 So easily destroy'd. (III, 298-301)

Abdiel's "easier conquest" over "hellish hate" is, in fact, easier because it attempts to "ransom" (VI, 297) righteousness with might. Similarly, the Son's glorious victory over Satan in Heaven is an easy one. For "hellish hate" is not to be outdone by glorious deeds or by reverence for the "throne," but by self-denial and suffering. Humiliation, as we

already know from the "later" Book III, is exaltation (VI, 313). Ironically, the surrender (VI, 730) that the Son speaks of is not to be a temporary relinquishing of power, but a permanent one in which the Father, and then even the Son, will give up the throne (III, 339-41). The Son must finally understand that the Father has declared He will be "All in All" only when all authority and hierarchy have been voluntarily given up.

The coeternal existence of freedom and potential evil, of the Father's natural goodness and His actual "inability" to necessitate the action of creatures (VII, 172), means that he must wait for the Son to effect the expulsion of chaos. The Father has truly "suffer'd that the Glory may be thine / Of ending this great War" (VI, 701-02)--He has "suffer'd" the sorrow of being burdened with and also disburdened of chaos. The Father's laughter is not cruelly taunting at the beginning of the war in Heaven because He is beginning the process of refining and surrendering His own authority.

The Father's role as eirone, which has been apparent since the first dialogue in Heaven, can now be redefined in terms of the function of irony in all His ways. "True irony," says Kenneth Burke, ". . . irony that really does justify the attribute of 'humility,' is not 'superior to the enemy'. . . True irony, humble irony, is based upon a sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy, as one needs him, is indebted to him, is not merely outside him as an observer, but contains him within, being consubstantial with him."<sup>54</sup> The Father's "cruel" mirth at the rebellion of one-third of His creatures, and His way of laughing up His sleeve at the antics of the loyal angels, need no longer offend, so long as we understand this as a test of His creatures' God-like humility. The scornful words to the Son--"Nearly it now concerns

us to be sure / Of our Omnipotence"--are finally revealed in another kind of ironic light, as the Father says, "For thee I have ordain'd it, and thus far / Have suffer'd" (VI, 700-01). The Son, no more than the reader, could have understood at the outbreak of rebellion that the Father was in fact confessing the limitations of His omnipotence, if not His consequent anxiety. Raphael, too, is far from understanding this aspect of the Father's ironic ways, premising the story, as he does, on God's derisiveness. More than a further test of the Son, then, the Father's laughter is His confession of kinship with the enemy. God, as critics since Blake have been wont to argue, needs Satan because He "contains him within, being consubstantial with him."

But Milton's difference from his Romantic enthusiasts is crucial, since his God seeks unity with His creation and, so, with antithetical tendencies within Himself. His apparent provocation of, and consequent scorn for, Satan is no more than an extension of the freedom He has decreed in creation to choose for good or evil. Satan's choice is finally an actualization of that evil which, logically, must have been potential from the beginning in the materials of creation for it to have become manifest at all.<sup>55</sup> But Satan's apparently "godlike" mockery is, in the event, mere parody--an unwitting imitation which fails either to subvert or to approximate its model. For Satan denies, in orthodox terms as well as more heterodox ones, his likeness to God, and so absconds with his authentic portion of the divine image.

It is the omniscience of the Father which thus finds a way of uniting His dichotomous being--a way which does not compromise the freedom of the creature any more than it compromises God's actualised goodness (and that He is good is clearly evident from the humility which is the cornerstone of His universal plan). It is also the Father's

omniscience which enables Him to employ a method of irony which can serve to educate the faithful reader of his ways. Burke's definition, again, is useful: "Irony arises when one tries, by the interaction of terms upon one another, to produce a development which uses all the terms."<sup>56</sup>

The Father's terms have become the various expressions of His free-willed creatures who, if they speak for themselves, also express varying "terms" of the divine nature. We have yet to explore in the next chapter the original character of these "terms." Suffice to say for now that conflicting powers do exist in Milton's Heaven, just as they do in Hesiod's Theogony. But the movements in each poem toward integration are precisely opposite; where Zeus consolidates his power through incorporation of all the light and dark forces of the cosmos into his sphere of authority, Milton's God is portrayed in the process of revealing His limitations and surrendering His authority. In moral terms, the Father may in fact be surrendering a potential for evil which has been manifested in free will. But in political terms, the discipline of humility is eventually to make of Heaven an egalitarian "Paradise," free of that monarchical absolutism which Satan unwittingly defends.<sup>57</sup>

To the extent that Raphael accurately relates the details of the war in Heaven, including the Father's command to the Son, his story responsibly presents to Adam and Eve all the important terms they need to uncover the Father's real purpose for "encouraging" the war, from His ironic "smile" to the victory of the Son. But as he makes clear before he even begins the story, Raphael lives and feels these developments in Heaven most intensely in terms of creaturely humiliation. Before the beginning of the story, he laments the "ruin of

so many glorious once / And perfer while they stood" (V, 567-68), and at its conclusion he echoes this sentiment, again in military terms, that "firm they might have stood, / Yet fell" (VI, 911-12). This example simply serves to establish the limited, if sympathetic, set of terms which govern the angel's understanding and consequently his education of Adam and Eve, for he is most comfortable when he speaks of things which he has experienced. Raphael nevertheless faithfully communicates even those proceedings which, whether he knows it or not, undercut the authority of his message and offer a different view of divine authority.

Notes to Chapter Two

The Politics of Humiliation

<sup>1</sup> Paul perceives God in just this way. He says, in Romans 3:1-2, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Mucy every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

<sup>2</sup> Curiously, the use of "our" is ambiguous. For the reader who believes that God is fearfully preparing a military defense of the royal palace it connotes the regal singular, austere and autocratic. For another reader it may ironically indicate community.

<sup>3</sup> See Hughes, p. 933, for Milton's own discussion of Psalm 2 in the De Doctrina.

<sup>4</sup> Though the warlike image of God depicted in this Psalm has deeply influenced Judaeo-Christian thinking, Milton uses it as a foil for his ironic vision of the Father.

<sup>5</sup> Note the similarity here of the angel's warning to Lot to flee Sodom lest he, too, is consumed by God's fire.

<sup>6</sup> One tends to trust Abdiel's word since he is described as "faithful only hee / Among innumerable false" (V, 897-98).

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of how Milton's changing of the epic from ten Books to twelve affects these central Books, see Joseph H. Summers, The Muse's Method: An Introduction to 'Paradise Lost' (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962), pp. 112-13.

<sup>8</sup> Arnold Stein, "Milton's War in Heaven--An Extended Metaphor," rpt. in Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Arthur E. Barker (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 264-83.

<sup>9</sup> Stein, p. 264.

<sup>10</sup> Stein, p. 270.

<sup>11</sup> Empson, Milton's God, p. 97.

12 Stella Purce Revard, The War in Heaven: 'Paradise Lost' and the Tradition of Satan's Rebellion (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980), p. 99.

13 Philip J. Gallagher, "Paradise Lost and the Greek Theogony," English Literary Renaissance, 9(Winter 1979), p. 140.

14 Fish, p. 192.

15 Summers, The Muse's Method, p. 132.

16 Revard, p. 262.

17 "Throne" is used by Revard as a metonym for "authority".

18 See Empson, p. 137.

19 Desmond M. Hamlet, One Greater Man (Lewisberg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1973), pioneers the idea that the Son reveals the integrity of God's justice and love; "Not only is the Son. . .like God's justice. . . , but more significantly, the Son is God's justice" (p. 35).

20 M. Y. Hughes, Milton, p. 316, n603-615.

21 Grant McColley, "Paradise Lost": An Account of Its Growth and Major Origins, with a Discussion of Milton's Use of Sources and Literary Patterns (Chicago: Packard, 1940), p. 82.

22 See Revard, p. 24-25.

23 Albert C. Labriola, "'Thy Humiliation Shall Exalt': The Christology of Paradise Lost," Milton Studies, 15(1981), p. 32.

24 Dennis Danielson, Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 222-23.

25 There is then a wonderful irony in God's fierce-sounding diatribe concerning man's sin "affecting Godhead" (III, 206)--He knows how "mercy" and humiliation play a role in the "reduction" of Godhead.

26 Labriola, p. 34.

27 Gallagher, p. 139.

28 See Gallagher, p. 130, for an outline of contemporary critics' treatment of Milton's debt to Hesiod.

29 Hesiod's Theogony, trans. Norman O. Brown (1953; rpt. Indianapolis Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1980), p. 7.

30 Theogony, p. 20.

31 Theogony, p. 67.

32 The "gunpowder" which Satan invents is the original for Zeus's "lightning bolt". Satan's contention that "they shall fear we have disarmed / The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt" (VI, 490-1) supports Gallagher's thesis that Satan's misrepresentation of events in Heaven inspires Hesiod's Theogony. Ironically, the "bolts" which Zeus and God use serve opposite purposes.

33 What makes Satan's digging significant to our conception of God's ontology is the fact that, while Zeus gets his materials from earth, the fiend finds his in Heaven itself.

34 Stein, "Milton's War in Heaven," says: From the start it is not only God who mocks, though God omnisciently sets the mood first" (p. 269).

35 I am indebted to Brown's "Introduction" for the following discussion of Zeus's cosmos.

36 Theogony, p. 28.

37 Theogony, p. 23.

38 The past is powerful. Violence breeds violence. The Homeric tale of Agamemnon and Iphigenia and the history of slaughter which results is the archetypal model for this truth.

39 Theogony, p. 28.

40 This seems to be the intent of Psalm 2:6:

Yet have I set my king  
upon my holy hill of Zion.

41 Revard, p. 255.

42 Empson, p. 138, finds this speech "wierdly political"--it is wierd because the intention of God is to "give up" politics.

43 Hughes, p. 170, sonnet 22.

44 See Joseph H. Summer's lengthy treatment of the two days of battle in Chapter V, passim.

45 See Stein, p. 270.

46 Stein, p. 272.

47 Kitty Cohen, "Milton's God in Council and War," Milton Studies, 3(1971), 159-84, writes: "And when the Son appears Milton does not describe another battle scene. Instead he describes a spiritual revelation (p. 175).

48 Danielson, p. 92.

49 Danielson, p. 72.

50 Milton's theodicy neither supports the extreme dualism of the Gnostics nor Origen's (and later Augustine's) privatio boni theory which was framed in reaction to the Gnostic belief in the substantial existence of evil. Milton's position in this greatest of arguments in the seventeenth century is more radical than any described by Danielson.

51 Danielson, p. 31.

52 Danielson, p. 32.

53 See PL II, 262-70; VI, 4-12; VI, 521.

54 Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (1945; rpt. Berkeley: Univ of California Press, 1969), p. 514.

55 See Danielson, Milton's Good God, p. 171, 196, for a discussion of the differences between potential and actual evil, and of the differing traditions of the Greek and Latin Church fathers. Danielson enumerates some of the evils created by a good God before any creaturely choices were made.

56 Burke, p. 512.

57 Satan, in this sense, is Charles defending and clinging to absolute monarchy. Milton's God is a republican who is giving up the throne. Milton's republican politics persist thus profoundly throughout his greatest poems.

### CHAPTER THREE

"I Am Who Fill Infinitude":

The Changing Terms of God's Creation

Raphael's narrative of the war in Heaven anticipates the conclusion he later draws for Adam about the dangers of cosmological speculation:

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 revealed  
Not of Earth only but of highest Heav'n. (VIII, 173-78)

There is now more than a lameness in his warning, coming as it does after so many "high" revelations, for it illustrates the sum of what he has learned from the trauma of war in Heaven--he knows more about personal humiliation than he does about any corresponding need in the divine nature. Raphael is a much better storyteller than he is a philosopher.

Adam, as his questions in Book VII and VIII show, is less than satisfied with Raphael's partial answers since their implicit burden of new information forces him to revise much of what he has already supposed about God's nature. In his own narrative of his awakening after creation, he candidly describes his initial understanding of God to God himself:

To attain  
The highth and depth of thy Eternal ways  
All human thoughts come short, Supreme of things;  
Thou in thyself art perfet, and in thee

Is no deficiencie found; not so is Man,  
 But in degree, the cause of his desire  
 By conversation with his like to help,  
 Or solace his defects. No need that thou  
 Shouldst propagate, already infinite;  
 And through all numbers absolute, though One. (VIII, 412-21)

His language at this point may well be calculated to ease Raphael's concern that he has not been "lowly wise," for his definition of God sounds very "NeoPlatonic." God is "absolute,"<sup>1</sup> "infinite," "perfect," and beyond the need to "propagate." Adam's description is also retrospective, however, a confession of first impressions which have been qualified by the details of life in Heaven. As we shall see, Adam's sudden appetite for astronomical studies is really an unappeased hunger for knowledge of the changing relations between "higher" and "lower" beings.

In particular, the war in Heaven forces Adam to revise his premise that in God "Is no deficiencie found," or that He needs no "like to help, / Or solace his defects." The Father of Raphael's story admits there is something He can't do; the Son is the only one who can "purify" Heaven (VI, 702). As Book VI suggests, the Father evidently wishes to refine His work by ridding Heaven of chaos and of "creating good from evil" (VII, 617).

Adam's first hierarchical model for God's static perfection is thus made untenable by Raphael's account of the startling events of the war in Heaven and of "things above Earthly thought" (VII, 82). Adam and Eve are startled to discover that God and Heaven may not be as "perfect" as they, at first, supposed. They are "filled / With admiration. . .to hear / Of things so high and strange, things to thir thought / So unimaginable as hate in Heav'n" (VII, 51-54). Once Adam realizes that his initial supposition, that "in thee / Is no deficiencie found"

(VIII,415-16), does not seem to answer the facts, then he is also curious to discover if God and man are not so different in other ways as well. For Adam, as well as the poet, "half yet remains unsung" (VII, 21) without the story of creation.

Adam's initial premise about the relationship between propagation and deficiency--"No need that thou / Shouldst propagate, already infinite" (VIII, 419-20)--is now the substance of his first great question. For Adam is already experiencing some larger "doubts" (VII, 60) which must remain unresolved until Book VIII, but which are represented here by his "desire to know / What nearer might concern him, how this World / Of Heav'n and Earth conspicuous first began" (VII, 61-63). He asks Raphael

How first began this Heav'n which we behold  
Distant so high, with moving Fires adorn'd  
Innumerable, and this which yields or fills  
All space, the ambient air wide interfus'd  
Imbracing round this florid Earth, what cause  
Mov'd the Creator in his holy Rest  
Through all Eternity so late to build  
In Chaos? (VII, 86-93)

The first part of this question, how the visible world began and where the ubiquitous, fluid air originated, is answered for Adam by the Father's own revelation which Raphael faithfully retells for man's benefit: "Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill / Infinitude, nor vacuous the space" (VII, 168-69). Adam thus learns that it is God ("I Am"), who fills the Deep (Chaos in Greek), not as spirit only but also as matter, since God makes Himself coextensive with both space and the ambiguous tohu vabohu translated in Genesis 1:2 as "void," and in Isaiah as "confusion."

Raphael, who does not like to speculate, makes no further comment on these ambiguous "terms" of the divine nature. Critics who do like to speculate (among them Hughes and Saurat) agree that this is one of the key passages in Paradise Lost for understanding Milton's ontology.<sup>2</sup> Maurice Kelley found in these lines positive evidence of Milton's materialism,<sup>3</sup> but critics have largely ignored this important finding. Walter Clyde Curry, for one, despite his suspicion of Milton's ontology, tries to save him from such a "crass" lack of spiritualism<sup>4</sup> by suggesting that the material creation is an "inherent" quality of His spiritual being.<sup>5</sup>

Quite recently the argument that Milton does not agree with the patristic and Christian conception of ontology has resurfaced in a more cogent, if limited form. Dennis Danielson, in his Milton's Good God, enlarges Kelley's argument by making an in-depth study of free-will and theodicy in Paradise Lost which establishes the theological viability of Milton's materialism: "For God himself, Milton believes, is material; and it is in that material that all potentiality and necessity inhere."<sup>6</sup> Though Milton "teeters on the brink of dualism,"<sup>7</sup> Danielson says, he does not follow the gnostics in denying divine omnipotence, for "genuine theodicy is incompatible with dualism."<sup>8</sup>

It may well be that "genuine theodicy" is incompatible with gnostic dualism<sup>9</sup> but there is a form of dualism which does not deny omnipotence. Though Danielson concludes that Milton "rejects the body-and-soul dualism that accompanies NeoPlatonist theology,"<sup>10</sup> it would seem rather that the Father Himself is in the process of resolving such a dualism. In other words, matter (from the Indo-European root mater, mother) is still a problem for the Father as spirit. The problem, simply stated, is this:

from whence does matter proceed and what is its ultimate relation to God?

In the Greek Theogony, as we will see, the answer was relatively simple: Earth and gods and man alike come into being out of the void. The cosmos evolved from the primacy of the female to the political ascendancy of the male, if at the expense of cabinet appointments, as it were, to the representatives of maternal chaos. Chaos, in other words, is accommodated, not expelled, in the Hesiodic cosmos.<sup>11</sup> Milton's theodical problem is to avoid such moral dualism without denying an original spirit-matter dualism. Thus Raphael narrates the Father's oracular pronouncement of the Beginning of all beginnings:

ride forth, and bid the Deep  
Within appointed bounds be Heav'n and Earth,  
Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill  
Infinitude, nor vacuous the space.  
Though I uncircumscrib'd myself retire,  
And put not forth my goodness, which is free  
To act or not, Necessity and Chance  
Approach not mee, and what I will is Fate. (VII, 166-73)

Kelley's view (which corrects Saurat's "retraction" theory) that God willed the origination of chaos, and that this materia prima came out of God's body (ex deo) at some point in time,<sup>12</sup> does not adequately explain the Genesis account or Milton's own insistence on making God "fill" the "Deep". The "Tohu vabohu" of Genesis 1:2, whether translated as "confusion" or "void," refers to objects that already have being, not that were created: "What is said in verse 2 of the chaotic condition of the earth, is equally applicable to the heaven for the heaven proceeds from the same chaos as the earth. 'And the earth was (not became) waste and void.' The alliterative nouns tohu vabohu, the etymology of which is lost, signify waste and empty (barren), but not laying waste and

desolating."<sup>13</sup> On the verbal authority of Genesis 1:2, the Heaven and the Earth are then created out of a pre-existent "void" or "chaos," not one that comes into being as Kelley supposes. What is left dark in Genesis--whence this pre-existent "void"?--is illuminated by Milton's divine oracle. God ("I Am") says He fills the Deep (Chaos in Greek) not as spirit only but as matter also. Both the repetition of the word "Deep" (at VII, 166 and VII, 168) in connection with God's name, and the separation of "I" and "myself" by "uncircumscrib'd" (VII, 170) dramatically figure the substantiality of "I am who fill," in the plural number of the verb, "infinitude." Though he seems not to realize it, Raphael's report of the Father's use of the verb "retire" (VII, 170) accords perfectly with His dialectical revelation of His "retirement" in Book III. Adam's difficulty, however, is that he has glimpsed something of the divine process of refinement through the war in Heaven without being privy to this later revelation of "retirement." So he is placed in as uncertain a position as the Son when he ventures to question the ways of the Father.

Adam is of course prompted by God Himself to question the Creator before he receives a mate. If the first part of that initial question shows no knowledge of God's materiality, the second part at least raises the question of God's apparent lack of sexuality. For Adam intuitively knows what "moves" man to create; man is deficient and this is "the cause of his desire / By conversation with his like to help, / Or solace his defects" (VIII, 417-19). Man's relationship with woman ("conversation" signifies both intellectual and sexual communion), is comforting and potentially ameliorative:

But man by number is to manifest  
 His single imperfection, and beget  
 Like of his like, his image multipli'd,  
 In unity defective, which requires  
 Collateral love, and dearest amity. (VIII, 422-26)

Through conversation man and woman attempt to perfect what is imperfect in them. The question remains, however, that if "deficient" man creates sexually, how does God create?

When Adam uses "mov'd"<sup>14</sup> to word the problem he does not yet realize just how close he is to seeing God in his own image. Hughes tells us that "mov'd" is translated in Hebrew as "brooded."<sup>15</sup> The narrator has already used "brooded," in reference to God's creation, immediately following his initial declaration that his purposes are sincere and that he intends to "[pursue] / Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme" (I, 15-16):

And Chiefly Thou O Spirit, that dost prefer  
 Before all Temples th' upright heart and pure,  
 Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first  
 Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread  
 Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss  
 And mad'st it pregnant. (I, 17-22)

The likelihood that Milton's God's creation is sexual, out of His/Her female body, as Raphael's metaphors will suggest, then comes as a further revelation to Adam of God's purpose in creating Eve out of Adam's body on a day when He sent the angels away on a mission to the gates of Hell. Man and woman are thus afforded the unprecedented opportunity to inquire into, as well as to share in, God's creative nature.

The first problem in understanding God's creativity is nonetheless the extent of His participation in the Son's active work. One recent critic states, specifically referring to the creation of the visible world, that "inherent in the description [of the impregnation] is the

sexual metaphor of the male (God) impregnating the female (matter)."<sup>16</sup> The problem with this very apt paradigm is that it separates God from the substance which He claims to be part of His being. The Father's claim in the poem is not an aberration if we accept the evidence for His material being in Milton's own De Doctrina Christiana: "Thus far it has appeared that God the Father is the primary and efficient cause of all things. With regard to the original matter of the universe, however, there has been much difference of opinion. Most of the moderns contend that it was formed from nothing, a basis as unsubstantial as that of their own theory."<sup>17</sup> Milton continues: "For the original matter of which we speak is not to be looked upon as an evil or trivial thing, but as intrinsically good, and the chief productive stock of every subsequent good. It was a substance, though at first confused and formless, being afterwards adorned and digested into order by the hand of God."<sup>18</sup> It seems apparent, then, that since the Son is the masculine "Spirit of God" (VII, 235), the first of created things,<sup>19</sup> and since the "Deep" is feminine, then "I am who fill / Infinitude" might be a dual being in more ways than Book VI intimates--He might be androgynous and include within Himself both masculine and feminine being.

The idea that Milton's God may be androgynous is not a new one.<sup>20</sup> Purvis E. Boyette's exploration of the role of the "two great Sexes" (VIII, 151) in Paradise Lost traces the history of the sexualization of the universe in philosophy and literature. Already in Plato's Timaeus, Boyette says, "feminine space is the universal nature that receives all bodies and things [while] form, image, and Idea are synonyms for the seminal force, the father, in the generation of the world."<sup>21</sup> Milton's vision of the "two great Sexes [which] animate the World" (VIII, 151)

is enriched by a Platonic tradition which allows for at least the externalized duality of feminine matter and masculine form. The difference, however, according to Boyette, lies in Milton's use of the idea that God Himself is in some way sexual, and that He can choose to be either sex, or both, as His mind desires: "Milton is making his way, however timorously, toward a position that not only holds matter to be basically good but one that asserts chaos to be a necessary constituent of the divine mind and by extension a functional part of man's nature. In this regard, he has moved away from the early Neoplatonic distrust of the body and taken a stand like that of Pico Della Mirandola in the Heptaphus (1489) in which matter and flesh are viewed as an expression of divine goodness."<sup>22</sup> The idea here is that matter and flesh are intrinsically good, and that they are an "expression" of divine goodness made by God because He chooses to make it. This is, nonetheless, an implicit form of NeoPlatonic ontology, for God's mind and spirit are still the great realities, while His materiality and sexuality are only figments of the divine imagination or states of His mind: "The material with which God created the world is itself an attribute of his own nature and such a world as may change all to spirit."<sup>23</sup> Book VII of Paradise Lost points, rather, to a closer relationship between matter and spirit, and to a conception of matter as being eternal.

The story of creation indicates that Milton's intentions are not to separate God from matter and thus from sexuality, but to show just how these things are a real part of God's being. First, the Father commands the Son to "bid the Deep / Within appointed bounds be Heav'n and Earth" (VII, 166-67) and the Son, by his "powerful word" (VII, 208), stills the "vast immeasurable Abyss / Outrageous as a Sea" (VII, 211-12). Once

peace is thus established, he begins to create:

and in his hand  
 He took the golden Compasses, prepar'd  
 In God's Eternal store, to circumscribe  
 This universe, and all created things:  
 One foot he centr'd, and the other turn'd  
 Round through the vast profundity obscure,  
 And said, Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,  
 This be thy just Circumference, O World. (VII, 224-31)

He inscribes a circle in the material (or body) of God, in chaos, and this bounded area he calls the "World." The Son, as Spirit, has really opened a womb in the material body, a womb from which all subsequent forms and all "subsequent good" will proceed. This created womb, however, is still barren:

Thus God the Heav'n created, thus the Earth,  
 Matter unformed and void: Darkness profound  
 Cover'd th' Abyss: but on the wat'ry calm  
 His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,  
 And vital virtue infus'd, and vital warmth  
 Throughout the fluid mass. (VII, 232-37)

The Son, the masculine "Spirit of God," "brooding" on the feminine body of the "Abyss," inseminates the womb he himself has created from, and in part of, the divine chaotic being.

Immediately after insemination, the new fertile womb begins the process of generation. It eliminates the "black tartareous cold Infernal dregs / Adverse to life" (VII, 238-39) and leaves behind the good. This creation is the prototype of birth by natural generation. The offspring of God's ensuing, magnificent travail is the "great Mother" (VII, 281), Earth, whose own womb is rife with life. She is inseminated ("fermented . . . to conceive"--VII, 281) by Ocean, and at the Creator's command, because she has the "idea" for all forms already within her, she yields those things "Whose Seed is in herself upon the Earth" (VII, 312):

He scarce had said, when the bare Earth, till then  
 Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,  
 Brought forth the tender Grass, whose verdure clad  
 Her Universal Face with pleasant green,  
 Then Herbs of every leaf, that sudden flow'r'd  
 Op'ning thir various colors, and made gay  
 Her bosom smelling sweet: and these scarce blown,  
 Forth flourish'd thick the clust'ring Vine, forth crept  
 The smelling Gourd, up stood the corny Reed  
 Embattl'd in her field. (VII, 313-22)

This description and more that follows is a catalogue of Earth's seemingly endless offspring and it testifies to her tremendous fertility which God has designed and sanctified (VII, 309), and has likewise physically initiated. All of this must throw new light on Raphael's idea that Heaven and Earth may be "like more than on Earth is thought" (V, 576).

Milton's ontology, then, does separate body and spirit, but not in the traditional way. God is both spirit and matter, male and female, order and chaos. The existence of this duality within the Father is the very reason why He creates--it is the cause that "Mov'd the Creator in his holy Rest / Through all Eternity so late to build / In Chaos" (VII, 90-93). The Father evidently wishes to develop, or to deal in some way with this inner duality.

The concept of an evolving God is an important insight into the dynamics of Milton's creation. William Empson seems to be the first to have noticed this fact that God evolves,<sup>24</sup> but since Empson is generally unsympathetic toward Milton's God, his observation has largely been ignored. There is good reason to believe in Milton's just God and still to take Empson's view more seriously. The parallel established in Chapter II between Hesiod's Theogony and Paradise Lost becomes in fact the key to understanding Milton's conception of an evolutionary universe. While the differences are, once again, more revealing than the similarities, it is the Theogony which seems to have provided Milton with

his most usable paradigm. For where Hesiod documents and justifies the evolving centralization of power in the political figure of Zeus, Milton celebrates in Paradise Lost the Father's decentralization of power. It is interesting to note that in the Greek work, each stage in the evolutionary process is accompanied by a change of rulers. The crucial difference between the two theogonies is the fact that in Paradise Lost the changes occur within the person of the Father Himself. The significance of this difference is explicable only in terms of the different roles of the "two great sexes" in each of these cosmologies. Both have in common the cosmic tension between masculine and feminine forces, that is, male order struggling with female creativity, but Milton's God handles this tension differently from Zeus, in ways which are fundamentally moral and theodical.

Norman O. Brown's introduction to his edition of the Theogony is invaluable for our discussion of theodicy. For his general point about sex in Hesiod's cosmos is that "the direction of the cosmic evolution is not only from a natural to an anthropocentric order, but also from the primacy of the female to the primacy of the male."<sup>25</sup> In the beginning, Hesiod's cosmos is matriarchical. Mother Earth comes into being from the Void and, in turn, proliferates and brings forth her first offspring "parthenogenetically." Among the children is the male child, Sky, who strikes the first blow in the war of the sexes by repressing Earth's other children, the Hundred-Hands. "Of all the children born of Earth and Sky, these were the boldest, and their father hated them from the beginning. As each of them was about to be born, Sky would not let them reach the light of day: instead he hid them all away in the bowels of Mother Earth. Sky took pleasure in doing this evil thing."<sup>26</sup> Earth retaliates by instigating a plot against Sky which successfully ends

in his castration. This early part of the cosmic struggle is dominated by the feminine, but it is short-lived. Cronus continues the repression, begun by Sky, by swallowing Rhea's children, and Zeus does so too, by swallowing Metis and by begetting Athena from his head.

The natural generation of children attests to a primal female creativity, but the attempt to suppress this creativity, because it represents a threat to male authority, is symbolic of the masculine urge to establish, at all costs, order and rule. Masculine order gradually dominates in the course of cosmic history and the repression of the feminine is climaxed by the birth of Venus, appropriately from the severed testicles of Sky, "the first victim of female revolt against male authority"<sup>27</sup>: "Aphrodite's affinity with the prototype of womankind and the contrast between her and Earth show that she is the divine symbol of the relation between the sexes in a cosmos dominated by males."<sup>28</sup> Though Zeus's reign is characterized by sly diplomacy, his "chauvinism" is especially strong as is well illustrated by his gift of woman to Epimetheus and his indiscriminate raping of Earth's women.<sup>29</sup>

In Hesiod's story, then, gods (and men) attempt to resolve the tension between the sexes through the imposition of male-centred hierarchy. In Paradise Lost, Satan, like Zeus and the other pagan deities, attempts to separate male and female entities--his philosophy is divide and rule. Sin is born from Satan's imagination (II, 758) (like Athena from the head of Zeus), and so is symbolically under his control; lasciviousness is natural to Satan and he rapes Sin immediately after she is born (II, 765). Satan also successfully separates Adam and Eve in Eden; but Satan is the antihero of Paradise Lost. Milton inverts Hesiod's patriarchal view of history by showing us, rather, the

androgynous nature of the true God. Milton's God has no desire to separate these elements within Himself, though these elements have a natural tendency to seek their individual ways. Instead, the Father frees feminine creativity by retiring "uncircumscrib'd myself" (VIII, 170), by withdrawing His imposing goodness from the body of the "Deep." The result is the wonderful fertility of free matter exemplified by Earth's bountiful generation (VII, 313 ff). None of Earth's "children" is repressed by the Father nor forcibly kept hidden in her bowels--the "bold" lion "pawing to get free" (VII, 464) as well as the gentle lamb which "bleating rose, / As plants" (VII, 472-73) are equally acceptable.

Milton's generative model for God's ontology is thus opposed to the male-hierarchical model which dominates the thinking of Hesiod, the early NeoPlatonists, and the Church patriarchs. But it is that patriarchal model which still underlies Raphael's 'degree' speech in Book V, possibly because, as Adam later suggests, God "peopl'd highest Heav'n" only "With Spirits Masculine" (X, 889-90). Raphael's narrative of the creation is nonetheless an exuberant celebration of what God hath wrought in creating from the feminine Earth, and distinguishes his capacity to accept, if not to interrogate, the Father in this process of change. His story of the womb of creation is magnificently at odds with the orthodox tradition of evil. For the idea that evil is privatio boni, the privation of good, has a fatal weakness for theodicy: moral "naughtiness" is too closely related to essential nothingness, the original naught. And things created out of nothing retain an element of nullity or nonbeing which, even in Augustine's terms, is a metaphysical evil.

The creation ex nihilo theory has the further disadvantage of suggesting that, in creating, God is simply "playing",<sup>30</sup> or creating for His perverse and whimsical omnipotence. But neither is Milton's

God bound by nature to create like Hesiod's autochthonic Void. He evidently creates ex deo, not for reasons of self-glorification, but as a way of Himself becoming. The evolution of God, as Milton saw in Hesiod, is nonetheless fraught with theodical peril. The end cannot justify the means, as it could for the Greek poet whose Zeus was not omnipotent, for omnipotence must be moral if it is to avoid the charge that creation is the plaything of a solipsist.

C. G. Jung's modern attempt to justify the God of scriptures, useful as it is as a negative model for reading Milton, depends upon the idea that evil originates in the divinity's involuntary limitation of moral knowledge. Jung's God occasionally forgets to do the best for His creatures: "But God in his omniscience would never make mistakes if only he consulted with it."<sup>31</sup> In Jung's view, Yahweh sometimes "forgets" to the extent that He is not always aware of the schemes of His "precious Satan,"<sup>32</sup> "to whose wiles even he occasionally succumbs."<sup>33</sup> Such negligence, according to Jung, is to blame for Job's suffering, and Job's unremitting steadfastness in the midst of this tragedy teaches us that man is in some ways morally superior to God. Job's story reveals God's "unconsciousness" and His dark side.<sup>34</sup> His wish to become incarnate thus began with His "collision" with Job, an event which marks the incipience of God's "humanization":

The inner instability of Yahweh is the prime cause not only of the creation of the world, but also of the pleromatic drama for which mankind serves as a tragic chorus. The encounter with the creature changes the creator. In the Old Testament writings we find increasing traces of this development from the sixth century B.C. on. The two main climaxes are formed firstly by the Job tragedy, and secondly by Ezekiel's revelation. Job is the innocent sufferer, but Ezekiel witnesses the humanization and differentiation of Yahweh.<sup>35</sup>

If Milton's God is like Jung's God in that He is changing, He is most clearly not lacking in omniscience. The Son's concern that neither the Father's "goodness" nor His "greatness" should "be question'd and

blasphem'd" (III, 165-66) makes it imperative to describe God's limitation of power in terms of His volition: He chooses to limit His sovereignty over His creatures by "form[ing] them free" and refusing to "revoke the high Decree / Unchangeable" (III, 124, 126-27). But if it is true that God is also differentiating Himself in the act of creation, then He is apparently limiting Himself by externalizing His own inner duality. The Father conceivably foresees some greater good for God and man alike in surrendering His throne to the Son of God and redeemed mankind. In this way the more odious implications of the felix culpa, that evil is really only illusion,<sup>36</sup> might be obviated, for God would not depend upon sin to increase His glory, but rather to bind Him ever more dearly to creatures who share His voluntary suffering.

The implicit ontological revelations of Book VII call for similar adjustments, in Adam's understanding, of the relation between the creature and a self-effacing creator. For Adam's creation of Eve teaches him his further likeness with God who has made the world by subducting it from His "side." When Raphael's story of creation ends, Adam remains briefly entranced, unaware that the angel's words have ceased: "Then as new wak't thus gratefully repli'd" (VIII, 4). Just as Eve "confesses" her dream encounter with "charming" Satan when she awakens (V, 28 ff), so Adam is about to "confess" his "story" (VIII, 205) to Raphael. What these incidents have in common is not that a sin has already been committed, but that a crisis looms. Though Eve is tempted in the dream by Satan's offer of "godhead" she does not accept. Her loyalty to Adam and God, which is tested and proven strong, shows her true "merit" in contrast to that which Satan would have. Moreover, by confessing to Adam, she initiates the united effort of both of them against Satan, for Adam responds to her need by comforting her with his reasonable answers. "Yet be not sad," he says, "Evil into the mind of God or Man / May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave / No spot or blame behind" (V, 116-19).

Eve's dream is nonetheless an augury of change, the first indication that the couple have that they might not remain as they are. "Be bounteous still," they pray to God, "to give us only good" (V, 205-06), and the Father sends Raphael whose completed story leaves Adam strangely in the position of Eve after her dream. "Then as new wak't," Adam likewise feels the winds of change blowing over Eden. In fact, Raphael's stories have raised new "doubt" (VIII, 13) in him about the relationship between "higher" and "lower" celestial bodies and, implicitly, between man and woman, given the figure of an androgynous God.

Adam is careful at first to limit his interrogation to the subject of astronomy. Earth is so small, only a "spot" (VIII, 17) in comparison with the "Firmament," and yet to all appearances, the "number'd Stars" (VIII, 19) travel incredible distances every day "merely to officiate light / Round this opacous Earth" (VIII, 22-23). So Adam says:

reasoning I oft admire,  
 How nature wise and frugal could commit  
 Such disproportions, with superfluous hand  
 So many nobler Bodies to create  
 Greater so manifold to this one use,  
 For aught appears, and on thir orbs impose  
 Such restless revolution day by day  
 Repeated, while the sedentary Earth,  
 That better might with far less compass move  
 Serv'd by more noble than herself, attains  
 Her end without least motion, and receives,  
 As tribute such a sumless journey brought  
 Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light;  
 Speed, to describe whose swiftnesse Number fails.  
 (VIII, 25-38)

Adam feels that speaking simply from the point of view of efficiency, it would be more sensible for the Earth to move about to receive its light from "sedentary" planets and stars. Apparently recalling Raphael's NeoPlatonic view that these Heavenly bodies are "more refin'd, more

spiritous, and pure / [Because] nearer to him plac't" (V, 475-76), he marvels that they yet serve the Earth. More specifically, it seems to him that the "superfluous," masculine, barren elements of Heaven appear to have been created for no other purpose than to serve the feminine and generative Earth. It is a question anticipated in Raphael's own magnificent picture of the womb of creation, and realized in Adam because of his unique experience of arguing with God for a mate. The manifest power of the "feminine" universe thus forces Adam to try to redefine the relative importance of knowledge and fecundity.

If Raphael were attentive to his own Heavenly models, he could simply answer that God's ways require humility of the creature and Creator alike. But Raphael is troubled by Adam's "doubts." Before he begins his rather lengthy reply, he informs Adam that "the great Architect / Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge / His secrets to be scann'd by them who ought / Rather admire" (VIII, 72-75). For Adam's ideas seem to dispute Raphael's earliest memory of ascent and degree and even his personal worth since he is "barren" (VIII, 94) like the sun. 'Too much knowledge is a dangerous thing,' he has already said, and now:

Already by thy reasoning this I guess,  
 Who are to lead thy offspring, and supposest  
 That bodies bright and greater should not serve  
 The less not bright, nor Heav'n such journeys run,  
 Earth sitting still, when she alone receives  
 The benefit: 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. (VIII, 85-97)

The tone is authoritative, but piqued. Raphael "outlines" Adam's

suppositions and seems bemused by Adam's queries. On the one hand, he is forced to concede that the nobler bodies "serve" the female Earth, but on the other hand, he lamely attempts to save hierarchy by calling the Earth "higher." The truth is that he is not certain of the abstract end of God's new creation, not certain whether feminine "fruitfulness" is higher or lower than masculine "brightness" on the Chain of Being, but he senses a lack of humility in Adam's question, a potential for anthropocentricity which he is swift to correct:

God to remove his ways from human sense,  
 Plac'd Heav'n from Earth so far, that earthly sight,  
 If it presume, might err in things too high,  
 And no advantage gain. (VIII, 119-22)

He thus re-establishes inadvertently the hierarchy of spiritual excellence with his implication that "earthly sight" and "earthly sense" are prone to error and are less excellent than Heavenly sight and sense (which by extrapolation includes angels). Raphael's repression of Adam's curiosity now becomes most explicit--he chastizes him for his concern with "matters hid" (VIII, 167),<sup>37</sup> warns him in spite of his narrative to leave knowledge of Heavenly creatures to God, directs his thoughts to "Paradise / And thy fair Eve" (VIII, 171-72) and reiterates the powerful moral that "Heav'n is for thee too high / To know what passes there" (VIII, 172-73).

If Heaven is indeed "too high," Milton as narrator is at some pains to indicate that Raphael's answer "to Adam's doubt" is "Benevolent and facile" (VIII, 64-65). Infrequent use of the word "facile" in the poem gives it some of the more negative connotations of "easy." Gabriel speaks of "The facile gates of hell too slightly barr'd" (IV, 967), and Eve complains to Adam, if after the Fall, "Too facile then thou didst not much gainsay" (IX, 1158). In perhaps the most fallen usage of the

word, Satan speaks in Paradise Regained of "Adam and his facile consort Eve" (I, 51). At the very least, then, Raphael's facile answer is "too slight" a bar to Adam's inquisitiveness, if it is not too slight an answer altogether.

God Himself, on the other hand, has from the moment of Adam's creation encouraged him to question Heaven and to understand God's own nature (VIII, 437 ff). Adam politely implies as much in his subsequent "defense" of himself, embarrassed and uncertain though he is after Raphael's rebuke:

Thee I have heard relating what was done  
Ere my remembrance: now hear mee relate  
My Story, which perhaps thou has not heard. (VIII, 203-05)

And so Adam begins a story which, though it does not leave Raphael speechless, teaches him things he did not know about God's ways, and which has far-reaching effects on life in Eden.

Raphael, it should first be remarked, is not ignorant of the feminine and its qualities, and in fact, when he first sees Eve, he is highly respectful of her ability to generate:

Hail Mother of Mankind, whose fruitful Womb  
Shall fill the World more numerous with thy Sons  
Than with these various fruits the Trees of God  
Have heap'd this Table. (V, 388-91)

Furthermore, he sings again, for Adam's benefit, the hymn the angels have sung to celebrate the wonderful creation of beings who are capable of "multiply[ing] a Race of Worshippers / Holy and just" (VIII, 630-31). He certainly sees Eve as a remarkable creature who is able to bear children, but she is an unknown quantity to him, a female, and so after his initial salutation, he pays little direct attention to her but speaks

rather to Adam.<sup>38</sup> Adam's questions about astronomy give further evidence of his desire to see Eve in relation to those traces of an androgynous God which are figured in Raphael's narrative. Though he is embarrassed by Raphael's rebuke to him to be "lowly wise" (VIII, 173), he shows his own heroic qualities and his personal authority by courteously standing up to this "pure / Intelligence of Heaven" (VIII, 180-81) to explain why he has new doubts.

Raphael seems pleased with Adam's apologetic stance, and the new "lowly wisdom" evident in his polite "while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav'n" (VIII, 210). The angel praises Adam in turn and, almost as a sign of new trust, confesses something to him which turns out to be deeply significant:

Say therefore on;  
 For I that Day was absent, as befell,  
 Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,  
 Far on excursion toward the Gates of Hell;  
 Squar'd in full Legion (such command we had)  
 To see that none thence issued forth a spy,  
 Or enemy, while God was in his work. (VIII, 228-34)

Remarkably, Raphael knows nothing first-hand about the creation of Adam and Eve because God sent him away that day in order to prevent Satan's clandestine activities, should he escape while God was creating (VIII, 235). Clearly, there is a kind of knowledge denied to Raphael (and possibly the other angels) here which concerns the relation of the sexes and which is more than ever important to Adam's understanding of his relation to God.

Adam relates how he was not satisfied to be the sole man in a world where all living beasts have partners to "partake" of each other's happiness. With a "presumption" which makes the Father "smile,"<sup>39</sup> yet with "humble deprecation" (VIII, 378), Adam "prevails" with God who seems

to have already "ordered" Adam to be content to be alone:

Let not my words offend thee, Heav'nly Power,  
My Maker, be propitious while I speak.  
Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,  
And these inferior far beneath me set? (VIII, 379-82)

Adam continues:

Thou in thy secrecy although alone,  
Best with thyself accompanied, seek'st not  
Social communication, yet so pleas'd  
Canst raise thy Creature to what highth thou wilt  
Of Union or Communion, deifi'd;  
I by conversing cannot these erect  
From prone, nor in thir ways complacence find,  
Thus I embold'n'd spake, and freedom us'd  
Permissive, and acceptance found. (VIII, 427-35)

Adam's independent reasoning, as God Himself admits, shows that he "Know[s] not of Beasts alone" (VIII, 438) but that in him is reflected the very image of God. Yet reason, the image of God in man, is only half of what man is. And so God agrees to complete him:

What next I bring shall please thee, be assur'd,  
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,  
Thy wish, exactly to thy heart's desire. (VIII, 449-51)

God delights in fulfilling Adam's desire, and in obliging His creatures, by granting their reasonable requests. The "help meet" He creates for Adam is fashioned from one of Adam's ribs, created out of his body as another androgynous image of God. The resulting differentiation is a wonderful creature of "different sex, so lovely fair, / That what seem'd fair in all the World, seem'd now / Mean" (VIII, 471-73). Adam has, in effect, argued God into completing him and, in the process, of revealing the type of His duality to man and woman alone.

It is a story unique in other ways to mankind, so it is not surprising that it is Raphael's turn to feel misgiving. For this ability

in man to prevail with the creator is a gift which the angels do not possess. Raphael, on the authority of the Son's example, is quite willing to accommodate man and let him become equal to the angels (V, 494). God, too, is willing to accommodate man, if to let him become equal to God Himself. Adam's argument with God and the stunning fact that man is allowed to create when angels are created barren, is proof of some greater tolerance or preference for man than is explicable in terms of Raphael's NeoPlatonic hierarchy.

This paradox of the lowly importance of man (and woman) is what Adam is struggling to understand, if in ways which Raphael finds presumptuous. For, of course, there is something naturally subservient about humility if it abdicates responsibility to the lower "motives" in human nature. Adam's story of his wooing of Eve, of their nuptials, and finally of his deepest confusion about passion and reason leads evidently to a conclusion which Raphael has feared:

yet when I approach  
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems  
And in herself complete, so well to know  
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,  
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;  
All higher knowledge in her presence falls  
Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her  
Loses discount'nanc't, and like folly shows:  
Authority and Reason on her wait,  
As one intended first, not after made  
Occasionally; and to consummate all,  
Greatness of mind and nobleness thir seat  
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe  
About her, as a guard Angelic plac't. (VIII, 546-59)

There is a wonderful humility in Adam's recognition of Eve's "nobleness."  
But when he describes his rational abilities--which have helped him  
answer Eve's question about the stars (VV, 660), which have comforted  
Eve in her distress at the hand of Satan (V, 95) and have successfully

sued for his right to be completed--as seeming like "folly" beside Eve's graces, he seems to Raphael to have overstepped the bounds of humility.

Raphael himself does not wait, after Adam's confession that "Authority and Reason on her wait," to reassert in no uncertain terms the old hierarchical model. As if he stepped as "Maia's Son" (V, 285) out of the pages of Hesiod, Raphael makes the answer to male-female tensions the relentless assertion of masculine authority. He does not hear in Adam's confessions the similar expression of the Father and the Son "waiting" on their creation, nor does he observe the way in which God has established without commandment the relation of the sexes. Probably recalling the Father's act of making the Son "Head of all Heaven," he rebukes Adam for failing his headship of Earth and for his uxurious passion. He calls Eve "less excellent" (VIII, 566), and accuses Adam of being "transported" by "an outside," by mere appearances. The wise course, Raphael advises, is to love and honour Eve, but not to lose his sense of authority: "weigh with her thyself; / Then value: Oft-times nothing profits more / Than self-esteem" (VIII, 570-72). The final irony of Raphael's instruction is that he has reversed even such models of humility which he has indeed understood from the war in Heaven.

Earlier critics have often found fault with Adam here. They suggest, generally speaking, that he is "attracted" for the moment by the idea of abandoning his own authority and reason."<sup>40</sup> Peter Lindenbaum criticizes Raphael instead for replying irrelevantly to Adam's concerns.<sup>41</sup> David Aers and Bob Hodge go so far as to say that, in this "covert rejection of hierarchy,"<sup>42</sup> Milton sympathizes with Adam's point of view, while Raphael's call for "male domination" is a "profoundly ungenerous response to Adam's celebration of Eve's loveliness."<sup>43</sup>

Peczenik, in stark contrast to both these views, trusts Raphael's motives completely and finds instead that, though Adam and Eve are equals in the garden they are nevertheless tempted to see each other in hierarchical terms.<sup>44</sup>

Adam's own position in his reply to Raphael seems unequivocal. He is only "half-abash't" (VIII, 595) because he knows he is not guilty of unreasonable passion:

Neither her out-side form'd so fair, nor aught  
 In procreation common to all kinds  
 (Though higher of the genial Bed by far,  
 And with mysterious reverence I deem)  
 So much delights me, as those graceful acts,  
 Those thousand decencies that daily flow  
 From all her words and actions, mixt with Love  
 And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd  
 Union of Mind, or in us both one soul;  
 Harmony to behold in wedded pair  
 More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.  
 (VIII, 596-606)

The repetitions of "harmony" recall the terms of his request to God for a mate, terms which far from meeting with rebuke were answered, in God's own words, "exactly to thy heart's desire" (VIII, 451):

Among unequals what society  
 Can sort, what harmony or true delight?  
 Which must be mutual, in proportion due  
 Giv'n and receiv'd; but in disparity  
 The one intense, the other still remiss  
 Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove  
 Tedious alike: Of fellowship I speak  
 Such as I seek, fit to participate  
 All rational delight. (VIII, 383-91)

Peczenik describes some of the images of harmony and mutuality which accompany Adam and Eve's earliest experiences. There is the metaphor of musical harmony--"the emblem of the lyre of marital accord"<sup>45</sup>--suggested by such musical terms as "intense," "remiss," "Air," and "sweetness."

There is also the mutuality of exchanged gifts--when Eve is created Adam gives Eve a rib and his own "cordial spirits" (VIII, 466) and Eve returns to him "the spirit of love and amorous delight" (VIII, 477). These images, she says, and other signs of reciprocity in Eden, such as the unfallen equality of strength, softness, contemplation and grace establish how attentive God has been to Adam's desire for an equal "helpmeet."

Of course God Himself has said to Adam that Eve is "thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self" (VIII, 450). This institution of human mutuality is one of the earliest examples in the cosmos of Paradise Lost of God's evolving "democracy." But Raphael's story of the war and of creation prove ominous for the status quo in the life of man and woman. That Adam should at all hearken to Raphael's warning in his eagerness to search out God's ways is the substance of human tragedy. But that Raphael should revert to his outmoded model of hierarchical authority is also pitiable, given his foreknowledge from the Father's word that "Man will hearken to his glozing lies / And easily transgress the sole Command, / Sole pledge of his obedience" (III, 93-95).

What the Father then has in mind by sending Raphael to "warn" the human pair is evidently something of a test, a temptation to abandon the democracy of Eden. The changes in Heaven which confront Satan and the Son in turn are now extended to the human world. Though Adam and Eve will fall, God is prepared, in His omniscience, to surrender His throne in a manner by which He shall somehow become "All in All."

What Books VII and VIII show us, then, is the travail of a material God refining Himself by becoming form, by creating a perfectly balanced and egalitarian paradise in which opposed forces are kept in order by mutual effort. This paradise is threatened by the well-intentioned

advice of a trusted member of the Creator's own cabinet, who is forced to argue for the superiority of authority and reason. If reason is dominant in Milton's cosmos, it is only because, without its ordering power, no balance could exist. In keeping with this idea we see that the Father's omniscience is the key to His omnipotence, and it opens up the way to change in His own being. God Himself is the subject of the old NeoPlatonic dualism of body and spirit. Without His intelligent and prescient design, the universe could not have moved first toward finitude and form and then toward eventual union. Similarly, in the affairs of men, Adam and Eve come to symbolize reason and passion, the mutual balance of which supports the balance of paradisaical nature. That balance is not directly overturned by the "wing'd Hierarch," but new conditions are established which make its maintenance all the more difficult to achieve. As events will shortly prove, Eve is now left to make her own adjustment to a new order in the Garden. The question is whether she, like Satan, will claim, "new Laws thou see'st impos'd; / New Laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise / In us who serve" (V, 679-81), or whether she will find new ways to serve the old order. A much greater balance than she understands now waits on her response.

Notes to Chapter Three

The Changing Terms of God's Creation

<sup>1</sup> Denis Saurat, Milton: Man and Thinker (New York: Dial. Press, 1925), p. 123, says of the ancient problem of the many deriving from the "Absolute": "How is it possible. . .to derive from the Absolute the only necessary cause of all that is, the existence of limited human beings?"

<sup>2</sup> Saurat, p. 124, suggests that God creates matter through a process of retraction. He has long since been refuted by Kelley and others.

<sup>3</sup> See Maurice Kelley, This Great Argument: A Study of Milton's De Doctrina Christiana' as a Gloss upon 'Paradise Lost' (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1941), p. 211.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Clyde Curry, Milton's Ontology, Cosmology, and Physics (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1957), p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Curry, p. 182.

<sup>6</sup> Danielson, Milton's Good God, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> Danielson, p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Danielson, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> The Gnostics depicted an external struggle between a Supreme God and a lesser God, Jahweh, who created the visible world for his own glorification against the wishes of the true God.

<sup>10</sup> Danielson, p. 101.

<sup>11</sup> See also the discussion in Chapter Two above.

<sup>12</sup> See Kelley, pp. 208-11.

- 13 Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, trans. Rev. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1977), II, p. 48.
- 14 The very wording Adam uses denies the Aristotelian notion of the unmoved mover and the immutability of that model.
- 15 Hughes, Milton, (PL, VII, n. 235-37).
- 16 Michael Lieb, The Dialectics of Creation: Patterns of Birth and Regeneration in Paradise Lost (Amherst: Univ. of Mass. Press, 1970), p. 59.
- 17 Hughes, Milton, p. 975.
- 18 Hughes, Milton, p. 976.
- 19 Kelley disagrees with Saurat's nineteenth-century Absolutism and states that Milton clearly established in the De Doctrina that the Son is the first created being and that therefore God is not static.
- 20 See Marilyn R. Farwell, "Eve, the Separation Scene, and the Renaissance Idea of Androgyny," Milton Studies, 16(1982), p. 12.
- 21 Purvis E. Boyette, "Milton and the Sacred Fire: Sex Symbolism in 'Paradise Lost'," Literary Monographs, 5(1972), p. 73.
- 22 Boyette, p. 83.
- 23 Boyette, p. 82.
- 24 Empson, p. 130.
- 25 Hesiod's Theogony, trans. Norman O. Brown (1953; rpt. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1980), p. 17.
- 26 Theogony, p. 57.
- 27 N. O. Brown, p. 19.
- 28 N. O. Brown, p. 19.
- 29 Ovid's Metamorphoses, a Latin "Theogony" of sorts, catalogues extensively, in inmock-heroic terms, the various incidents of Zeus's sexual assaults on Earth's women. See Brooks Otis, Ovid as an Epic Poet (Cambridge: At the Univ. Press, 1966).

<sup>30</sup> See Berdjaev, The Destiny of Man, trans. Natalie Duddington (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 23.

<sup>31</sup> Carl G. Jung, Answer to Job, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Princeton Univ. Press, 1958), p. 53.

<sup>32</sup> Jung, p. 56.

<sup>33</sup> Jung, p. 53.

<sup>34</sup> Jung, p. 54.

<sup>35</sup> Jung, p. 66.

<sup>36</sup> Danielson dedicates his Chapter 7 to a discussion of the "Fortunate Fall's theodical repugnancies" (p. 205).

<sup>37</sup> Dennis H. Burden, The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of Paradise Lost (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), declares that the only knowledge forbidden to Adam before the Fall was astronomy (p. 19).

<sup>38</sup> Angels are naturally masculine if Adam is right at X, 889-95 about "Spirits Masculine."

<sup>39</sup> The Father's smile here as at V, 718, is a strong indication of His tenderly ironic intent.

<sup>40</sup> J. H. Summers, The Muse's Method: An Introduction to 'Paradise Lost' (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962), p. 165.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Lindenbaum, "Lovemaking in Milton's Paradise," Milton Studies, 7(1974), p. 293.

<sup>42</sup> David Aers and Bob Hodge, "'Rational Burning,': Milton on Sex and Marriage," Milton Studies, 13(1979), p. 20.

<sup>43</sup> Aers and Hodge, p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> Peczenik, p. 41.

<sup>45</sup> Peczenik, pp. 30-31.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### "The Cure of All":

#### Sympathy as the Sum of all God's Ways

Though he does not fully understand his own commission, Raphael comes to test how firmly man is committed to the natural and political democracy in Eden. We have seen that his hasty reliance on the old familiar terms of authority bespeak his limited ability to imagine (and teach) the truth about the Creator's plan of universal democracy. Raphael's intellectual confusion precipitates a corresponding confusion in Adam and Eve's perception of their specific mutual responsibility and Book IX explores their crumbling relationship. Adam's sincere desire to search out God's ways eliminates the possibility that he now takes on his authority for reasons of self-glorification (though later the distinction blurs) and his obedience to the angel's parting advice reflects a certain misdirected humility. Regardless of his motives, Adam's uncharacteristic behaviour just before the Fall changes the rules for Eve in Eden, as we shall see, and tests her loyalty to "God in him" (IV, 299) "without whom," she has said, "[I] am to no end, my Guide / And Head" (IV, 442-43). How will Eve respond to the new conditions Adam imposes? If "New laws [raise] new minds" (V, 680), then new conditions from Adam (Eve's "Law," IV, 637) may well force new ideas in Eve. Furthermore, what divine purpose could possibly be served by the disruption of what till now has been a democratic union of reason and passion? Whatever it is, Raphael's worst fears are realized in Eden in the aftermath of his visit.

One of the obvious indications that a change has indeed taken place in Eden is the change in Eve's own psychology in response to temptation. Where formerly she woke from Satan's tempting dream as "glad. . . / To find this but a dream" (V, 92-93), she now is eager to face the trial itself. Once she remained proof against his specious reasoning even though he flattered her by calling her "Nature's desire" (V, 45), by praising the power of the fruit to "make Gods of Men," and by declaring that Eve deserved to "Ascend to Heav'n, by merit thine" (V, 80).<sup>1</sup> She even wept at memory of nothing but a dream, her tears "the gracious signs of sweet remorse / And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended" (V, 134-35). But now, with her dream as a negative example to guide her, she apparently finds new merit in what are really the same old arguments.

The new element in her thinking is betrayed in her expression of conscious intent:

For us alone  
 Was death invented? or to us deni'd  
 This intellectual food, for beasts reserv'd?  
 For Beasts it seems: yet that one Beast which first  
 Hath tasted, envies not, but brings with joy  
 The good befall'n him, Author unsuspect,  
 Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.  
 What fear I then, rather what know to fear  
 Under this ignorance of Good and Evil,  
 Of God or Death, of Law or Penalty?  
 Here grows the Cure of all, this Fruit Divine,  
 Fair to the Eye, inviting to the Taste,  
 Of virtue to make wise: what hinders then  
 To reach, and feed at once both Body and Mind? (IX, 166-79)

"The Cure of all" suggests some sort of injury which would seek redress, however "rash" (IX, 780) the hand that would seek its cure by such a means. Eve's rashness is all the more plain because she has been forewarned of the danger that awaits her alone without the protection of her 'guardian' (IX, 269), for Adam has advised her that

thou know'st  
 What hath been warn'd us, what malicious Foe  
 Envyng our happiness, and of his own  
 Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame  
 By sly assault; and somewhere nigh at hand  
 Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find  
 His wish and best advantage, us asunder,  
 Hopeless to circumvent us join'd. (IX, 252-59)

And yet, strangely, despite Adam's warning (and the green memory of her dream), Eve insists that this talking serpent ("subtlest Beast of all the Field" IX, 86) is above suspicion (IX, 771), and that "it envies not but brings with joy / The good befall'n him" (IX, 770-71), and is neither deceitful nor guileful (IX, 771-72). Eve's unexpected "blindness" to the danger of which she should be conscious and which ends in the loss of mankind's "sweet repast, [and] sound repose" (IX, 407), requires careful study because, more than most major problems in Paradise Lost, this one points to the complex way in which man, himself caught in a cycle of change, plays a role in God's drama of change.

Studies of Eve's temptation have often concluded, among other things, that she falls easily because of an inferior intellect,<sup>2</sup> and an intellectual blindness.<sup>3</sup> Eve's "blindness" and "inferiority" can possibly be seen in her gullibility, but these qualities are not characteristic of the inexplicable change of mind she experiences between her wiser first impulse--"Serpent, we might have spar'd our coming hither, / Fruitless to mee, though fruit be here to excess" (IX, 647-48)--and her irrational exclamation, "What hinders then / To reach, and feed at once both Body and Mind" (IX, 777-78). Eve's extempore loss of ability to judge may not be as extempore as is often thought.

John S. Diekhoff, for instance, proposes that Eve's use of arguments from Areopagitica is a form of rationalization of "the desire for

temptation which is itself the beginning of defilement."<sup>4</sup> If so, from where does Eve's desire for temptation come? J. M. Evans answers this question with the opinion that morally perfect man cannot have been successfully tempted by a superior intelligence but must rather have been deceived.<sup>5</sup> Empson suggests another possibility altogether: Eve is not really to blame because Raphael's very coming to the garden (which God has initiated) leads understandably to the Fall.<sup>6</sup>

It is J. B. Broadbent who offers one of the most convincing arguments to dispel the notion that Eve falls because she wishes to. Adam and Eve, he says, begin to find "the possibilities of their existence a little beyond their reach."<sup>7</sup> Eve's desire for children and her sense of futility at controlling the fertility of Eden, Broadbent adds, are signs of the approaching crisis. "[Milton] makes Adam and Eve move from a careless innocence in Book IV toward a point at which they have to make a decision. This point lies in an area of acute anxiety which is already sin, properly considered--here Milton agrees with Kierkegaard as well as Augustine."<sup>8</sup> Eve's angst, then, is perturbing enough to motivate her "voluntary" involvement in the argument at the beginning of Book IX.

The argument, however, would appear to have a dramatic cause which precipitates the psychology of angst. The narrator records in Book VIII Eve's reasons for absenting herself from the dialogue of man and angel; they do not include any admission of intellectual inferiority, but rather a fine union of reason with passion:

Her Husband the Relater she preferr'd  
 Before the Angel, and of him to ask  
 Chose rather; hee, she knew, would intermix  
 Grateful digression, and solve high dispute  
 With conjugal Caresses, from his Lip  
 Not Words alone pleas'd her. (VIII, 52-57)

Eve leaves, in fact, just at the point when Adam asks why the Earth should be "Serv'd by more noble than herself" (VIII, 34), and goes to tend to "Her Fruits and Flow'rs, / To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom, / Her Nursery" (VIII, 44-46). Neither of the males inquires after her or her "Grace that won who saw to wish her stay" (VIII, 43), though later she will have the grace merely to hint at what she has "overheard." Her rejoinder to Adam's charge, that "The Wife, where danger or dishonour lurks / Safest and seemliest by her husband stays" (IX, 267-68), is a particularly tactful reminder that he has on occasion been too busy talking to "guard her" or even stay together with her as he proclaims:

Offspring of Heav'n and Earth, and all Earth's Lord,  
That such an Enemy we have, who seeks  
Our ruin, both by thee inform'd I learn,  
And from the parting angel overheard  
As in a shady nook I stood behind  
Just then return'd at shut of Ev'ning Flow'rs. (IX, 273-78)

Most telling now, perhaps, is the grace of her confession that she has overheard at least something of Raphael's stern admonition to Adam.

Eve says, in effect, that on "returning" from some unspecified place she chanced to hear Raphael's "parting" words about their mutual "Enemy." She does not seem to have her facts straight. The last time that Raphael or anyone referred to the "Enemy" was in the closing lines of Book VI, long before Eve left the two "men" to chat by themselves. At that time Raphael spoke forcefully of Satan's intention to "ruin" man's paradise:

The discord which befell, and War in Heav'n  
Among the Angelic Powers, and the deep fall  
Of those too high aspiring, who rebell'd  
With Satan, hee who envies now thy state,  
Who now is plotting how he may seduce  
Thee also from obedience, that with him  
Bereav'd of happiness thou mayst partake  
His punishment, Eternal misery

Which would be all his solace and revenge,  
 As a despite done against the most High,  
 Thee once to gain Companion to his woe.  
 But list'n not to his Temptations, warn  
 Thy weaker. (VI, 897-909)

But Raphael does not mention Satan in his closing remarks to Adam in Book VIII, and so either Eve has her facts confused, or she is referring to a different "Enemy" altogether.

The latter is the more probable suggestion. Eve has indeed heard Raphael speaking about an enemy, if only in the last "parting" words, "as in a shady nook I stood behind, Just then return'd at shut of Ev'ning Flow'rs" (IX, 277-78). But she has more likely overheard more of the conversation than she admits, and she politely wishes to inform Adam of this fact in order both to save him from any possible embarrassment and, in unwitting accord with the ways of the Father, to test him. We might infer that she has overheard more than she admits because her arguments refer indirectly to the other "enemy" singled out by Raphael in his appeal to Adam's masculine authority:

Be strong, live happy, and love, but first of all  
 Him whom to love is to obey, and keep  
 His great command; take heed lest Passion sway  
 Thy Judgment to do aught, which else free Will  
 Would not admit; thine and of all thy Sons  
 The weal or woe in thee is plac't; beware.  
 I in thy persevering shall rejoice,  
 And all the Blest: stand fast; to stand or fall  
 Free in thine own arbitrement it lies.  
 Perfect within, no outward aid require;  
 And all temptation to transgress repel. (VIII, 633-43)

Raphael's references to passion and temptation make sense only insofar as they recall Adam's prior confession that he loves Eve so much that "Authority and Reason on her wait," (VIII, 554) and that, though he is her co-creator, he feels inclined to serve her. At the time, Raphael

replied to this by rebuking Adam for his subjection to "less excellent" Eve and for his immoderate regard for "carnal pleasure" (VIII, 592). If Eve represents anything in Eden, as she well knows, it is exactly passion, generation, and, by implication, carnal pleasure.

It is possible that Eve has even heard Adam tell how he argued God into completing Himself. She confesses as early as Book IV that he has lent her being (483), and recalls her role as part of Adam's "Soul. . .My other half" (487-88). Adam recounts to Raphael God's promise, in such terms, to create "thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, / Thy wish, exactly to thy heart's desire" (VIII, 450-51). Whether or not she has heard the whole of Adam's concern with serving her, it is apparent now from her response to Adam's arguments that she has overheard Raphael's injunction to him to be authoritative. Because she believes that Adam loves her as he always did, because she remembers that in the past Adam has simply corrected her excesses lovingly, and because she wishes to save him any embarrassment, she admits only obliquely to overhearing them. That way, Adam can "save face" by immediately reassuring her of his continued love and his disagreement with the angel's model of authority. In short, her indirection seems meant to test Adam, since her "Enemy. . .who seeks / [Their] ruin" appears in this sudden assertion of authority which runs counter to everything Raphael has told them about humility and the delegation of authority in Heaven. Without realizing it, really out of his fear for their safety, Raphael has changed the political climate in Eden much as God did in the first "exaltation" in Heaven. So Eve faces the same test as the loyal angels in remaining faithful in spite of appearances. But she is uncertain what is meant by her "humiliation," and she is not content to be tested without first trying her husband.

The fact that Eve is testing Adam must change the common assumption that she shows a distasteful "temerity" by beginning this argument which is "at least in part irrelevant."<sup>9</sup> The argument begins when Eve suggests that they work separately to maximize their efforts:

Thou therefore now advise  
 Or hear what to my mind first thoughts present  
 Let us divide our labors, thou where choice  
 Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind  
 The Woodbine around this arbor, or direct  
 The clasping Ivy where to climb, while I  
 In yonder Spring of Roses intermixt  
 With Myrtle, find what to redress till noon. (IX, 212-19)<sup>10</sup>

Eve has had a lot of time to think about this moment--a week has passed since Raphael left Eden, as is plain from the description of Satan's flight after Eve's dream: "thence full of anguish driv'n, / The space of seven continu'd Nights he rode / With darkness" (IX, 62-64). Eve's action and her argument have been carefully pre-meditated and her motives are much deeper than her literal suggestion to separate.

Eve's conversation gives further evidence of careful planning, and of the fact that she is testing Adam. For her arguments about separation are based entirely on Adam's own words in Book IV. In the first place, Eve's apparent deep concern with the utilitarian business of "dress[ing] / This Garden" and the related fear that "Our day's work [will be] brought to little, though begun / Early, and th' hour of Supper comes unearn'd" (IX, 224-25)--solved by her petition to divide their labours for the sake of efficiency--should jolt Adam's memory because he has earlier used similar arguments to acclaim God's generosity (IV, 423-24). Moreover, Eve's interest in efficiency and separation challenges Adam's loving declaration that "To prune these growing Plants, and tend these Flow'rs, / Which were it toilsome, yet

with thee were sweet" (IV, 438-39). Any move to prevent her would prove that such labour is still sweet indeed.

But Adam does not notice the paradox inherent in her argument. Worse, he does not seem to be aware of the fact that she makes frequent references to his own words to argue her erroneous point:

Adam, well may we labor 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 labor 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. (IX, 205-12)

For where Adam has spoken of "our delightful task" (IV, 437) and "our pleasant labor" (IV, 625), Eve uses "Our pleasant task"; they must "lop" the "wanton growth" of the "branches overgrown" (IV, 627-29), he says, and Eve repeats this idea with "lop overgrown" and "with wanton growth derides" (IX, 210-11). Adam has sensed the way nature "mock[s] our scant manuring" (IV, 628) and admitted without anxiety that the reformation of their walkway is really too much for them and that it will "require / More hands than ours" (IV, 628-29). Eve too speaks of how their pruning simply encourages more "luxurious" growth and so, "till more hands / Aid us" (IX, 207-08), they must work apart. Eve is not excessively puritanical and she has no great desire to separate their work; she is repeating Adam's words of Book IV as if to restore her former condition. Her potential solution--"what to my mind first thoughts present" (IX, 213)--is evidently a trial balloon sent up to test Adam for his reaction.

In the worst possible way, however, Adam misses the point and confirms Eve's fears about the change in their relationship. Thus the

first human tragedy begins. Obediently trying out the model of authority and self-esteem which Raphael has advised him to assume, Adam describes how indispensable his strength is to their safety. Though Adam thinks he is acting in their best interest, the whole effect of his speech is disagreeable and pompous; he condescends to grant Eve a brief absence from him "if much converse perhaps / Thee satiate" (IX, 247-58). Though he praises her intellectual abilities--"well hast thou motion'd, well thy thoughts imploy'd / How we might best fulfill [our] work" (IX, 229-30)--he casts some aspersions on her reasoning power, saying that without him she is not really competent--"other doubt possesses me, lest harm / Befall thee sever'd from me" (IX, 251-52)--and here, the strained praise is obvious (as is the contradiction). Finally, and most unfortunately, Adam brings his self-glorifying argument to a climax by his laboured identification with the angels:

thou thyself with scorn  
 And anger wouldst resent the offer'd wrong,  
 Though ineffectual found: misdeem not then,  
 If such affront I labor to avert  
 From thee alone, which on us both at once  
 The Enemy, though bold, will hardly dare,  
 Or daring, first on mee th' assault shall light.  
 Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn;  
 Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce  
 Angels. (IX, 299-308)

Adam confirms Eve's worst fears, then, by affirming indirectly his relative superiority and by imitating the angel's authoritative demeanor. His attitude bespeaks his real loss of reciprocal sympathy which was the hallmark of their paradise.

The tone of Adam's remarks is also uncharacteristically formal. He speaks with false weightiness. Phrases like "such affront I labor to avert," "will hardly dare," and others are laboured and without passion.

J. B. Broadbent notices the aphoristic quality here: "In the quarrel between Adam and Eve the drama tightens into domesticity. Eve suggests dividing labour. Adam answers sententiously. . . Our response is confused because we recognize the verses' proverbial authority."<sup>11</sup> Broadbent catalogues Adam's sententiae: "For nothing lovelier can be found / in Woman, than to study household good" (IX, 232-33); "For solitude sometimes is best society, / And short retirement urges sweet return" (IX, 247-50); and "The Wife. . . / Safest and seemliest by her Husband stays" (IX, 267-68). Both Adam and Eve exemplify a general tendency here, Broadbent concludes, towards "sophistry," "subversion," and "self-importance."

Adam is obediently self-aggrandizing, however, just when Eve is carefully listening for signs of surrender and love. He answers instead with his sententious, "I from influence of thy looks receive / Access in every Virtue," (IX, 309-10), and "Why shoud'st not thou like sense within thee feel / When I am present, and thy trial choose / With me, best witness of thy Virtue tri'd" (IX, 315-17). All of Adam's arguments refer back to himself. They lack the singularly good reason of his advice to Eve after her dream or in reply to her questions about the stars (IV, 660).

The assumptions of Adam's sententiae are what Eve must now resist. She replies both to his term "domestic" (IX, 318) and to Adam's "smug" assertion about his being the "best witness" of her virtue:

If this be our condition, thus to dwell  
 In narrow circuit strait'n'd by a Foe  
 Subtle or violent, we not endu'd  
 Single with like defense, wherever met,  
 How are we happy, still in fear of harm?  
 But harm precedes not sin: only our Foe  
 Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem  
 Of our integrity: his foul esteem  
 Sticks no dishonor on our Front, but turns  
 Foul on himself: then wherefore shunn'd or fear'd

By us? who rather double honor gain  
 From his surmise prov'd false, find peace within,  
 Favor from Heav'n, our witness from the event. (IX, 322-34)

These arguments, corresponding to Milton's own Areopagitica, are hardly the stuff, as Raphael would have it, of "all her shows" (VIII, 575), as opposed to Adam's "realities." Eve argues better than Adam, who should be arguing from best or right masculine reason, according to Raphael. "Our 'witness of virtue'," she says to him, "is not your approval Adam, but that of Heaven manifested in inner 'peace.'" Milton has stated something similar in his most famous treatise:

Good and evil we know in the field of this world  
 grow up together almost inseparably; and the  
 knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven  
 with the knowledge of evil. . . .As therefore the  
 state of man now is, what wisdom can there be  
 to choose, what continence to bear without the  
 knowledge of evil? . . .I cannot praise a fugitive  
 and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed,  
 that never sallies out and sees her adversary,  
 but slinks out of the race where that immortal  
 garland is to be run for, not without dust  
 and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into  
 the world, we bring impurity much rather: that  
 which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what  
 is contrary.<sup>12</sup>

Milton clearly believes in the earlier work that the knowledge of good and evil are interdependent and evil exists inevitably. Yet here too, Adam and Eve must be "purified" by "trial" as must all God's creatures. The trial pattern, of course, has been established by the Son's trial in Book III, and the angels' trial in Book VI.

In their trial by the contraries of opportunity and obedience, Eve seems to take her view from Adam himself, for she says, "But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt / To God or thee, because we have a foe / May tempt it, I expected not to hear" (IX, 279-81). In fact, Adam

has reasoned just so in support of Eve's completeness and fortitude:

yet be not sad.  
 Evil into the mind of God or Man  
 May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave  
 No spot or blame behind: which gives me hope  
 That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,  
 Waking thou never wilt consent to do. (V, 116-21)

In Book IV, then, Adam has affirmed the impotency of evil (if not well-meaning good) to taint goodness simply by its presence (though the effect of Raphael's presence in Eden might make us wish to examine this truth more closely). Furthermore, he has forcefully declared his confidence in Eve's absolute proof against temptation, not only in the surreal world of dreams but in actual encounters with evil during waking hours.

Adam's faith in Eve's goodness and fidelity has evidently undergone a sea-change since the dream--he truly has been "charmed" (with all its connotations of being bewitched) into reconsidering Eve's status in Eden during the week since Raphael's departure. Now, just as Eve's perspective mirrors the argument of the civil libertarian in Areopagitica, so Adam's point of view narrow-mindedly reflects the self-serving premises of the censors. Just as Raphael, in his confusion at Adam's "arrogance," resorts to an obsolete language, so Adam now responds to Eve's argument for freedom from restraint by parroting the Angel's language and weakly falling back on the "wing'd Hierarch's" (V, 468) authoritarianism.<sup>13</sup>

Raphael has, to a degree in his caution to Adam, equated love and obedience, love and self-esteem, and love and authority. In stark contrast to the "equal" relationship initiated by God's "Thy likeness. . . thy other self" (VIII, 450), Raphael recommends that "authority" and "reason" must subject and restrain the will of "things / Less excellent" (VIII, 565-66). The assumption is that Eve's proper place is below Adam

on the scale of nature, and to ensure that "she will acknowledge thee her Head" (VIII, 574), Raphael has reasoned, Adam must change his original, even "natural" ways. He must believe in his superiority and in "self-esteem, grounded on just and right" (VIII, 572).

There is an awkwardness in the way Adam attempts to obey the angel which even Eve notices. Adam says, in defense of his new role: "misdeem not then, / If such affront I labor to avert / From thee alone," (IX, 301-303). Eve even mocks such superciliousness, though gently: "only our Foe / Tempting affronts us" (IX, 327-28). But the truth remains that Adam's language has changed. His expression of love, once based on service to Eve, now is mixed with the language of authority: "Not then mistrust, but tender love enjoins, / That I should mind thee oft, and mind thou me" (IX, 357-58). The shift from the subjunctive to the imperative reflects the degree to which Adam now devalues Eve's will in relation to his own.

But the clinching difference in Adam's form of speech to Eve consists in its parroting of Raphael's commands. "Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part; Do thou but thine" (VIII, 561-62), Raphael insists. Adam ends his advice to Eve with Raphael's own words: "rely / On what thou hast of virtue, summon all, / For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine" (IX, 373-75). Like Hesiod's gods and heroes, Adam has begun to treat with woman not in love but with a mind to control.<sup>14</sup> While Eve does "go," and though she is "weak" without Adam, the authority which he wields, and which Raphael has promised him will gain Eve's respect and submission (VIII, 574), produces ironically the opposite effect.

The balance in Eden has then changed, and if this change is symbolized by the shifts in Adam's language, Eve herself is now "guilty" of reverting to Adam's earlier language in Book IV, even as Adam has

adopted the language of Raphael in Book VIII. Eve gives Adam the opportunity to make amends and to reassure her that he does not in fact assume, with the angel, her inferiority. But he misses her tactful confession, and in short, fails her test and so fails to restore the balance in Eden towards which he falsely thinks he is working. His awkward authoritarianism, contrasted with the continued love he feels for Eve (IX, 840 ff), suggests that Adam does not know what he believes any more. What is most gripping at this stressful moment when the balance is shifting in Eden is Eve's kindness, despite the judgment of "less excellent." She shows here her potential for humility and renunciation, though she is thwarted and finally goaded by Adam's awkward assumption of a borrowed language to assert herself.

It is often argued that Eve fell because she was deceived, but that, since Adam fell despite his knowledge and by choice,<sup>15</sup> he is guilty of a more culpable sin. Dennis Danielson tackles the problem of the origin of sin by suggesting that Adam had it in his power to prevent the fall:

But the point is that all Adam apparently need do in order to prevent Eve's wandering off by herself is to forbid it. And because it is constraint, not command, that negates freedom, he can forbid it. He would not thereby violate Eve's freedom to go if she so chose, any more than God's commanding them not to eat of the forbidden fruit prevents their freely doing so. Therefore, despite Adam's warning Eve, his failure to command her renders his parting words poignantly ironic: "God towards thee hath done his part, do thine" (IX, 375). For if Adam applied the advice to himself he would not hesitate to forbid Eve's going, and the Fall might never occur.<sup>16</sup>

Danielson emphasizes both Adam's "stupidity" for not commanding Eve to stay and the inappropriateness of his emphatic conclusion that "force

upon free will hath here no place."<sup>17</sup> The great problem in Milton's version of the Fall, however, is exactly the introduction of a new sort of authority into the garden just when Eve is least able to support herself and most needs Adam's love and advice.

There is an inexorable inertia of errors at work, a sort of phenomenological dialectic being enacted which has as its logical conclusion an elusive balance between authority and humility of the sort which the Son exemplifies in Book III. Raphael's reversal of the very principles of humility which the war in Heaven has taught him comes under duress out of the fear that man will fall because of a latent arrogance. Raphael's error in judgment is the root which feeds the erroneous authority Adam wields and which paradoxically generates this test of Eve's humility. Hypothetically speaking, even if Eve had chosen not to assert herself here, that still would not have made Adam's actions right. So to suggest, as Danielson does, that free will favours Adam's use of "force" over Eve is to misunderstand the central point that Milton is making, that the assumption of authority produces its own test of the creature's humility, just as it has before in Heaven.

In the dialogue with Satan just before the Fall, and in the monologue after it, Eve reveals such motives for being tempted. Her rationale for working apart from Adam, for instance, is curiously worded as she tells him to

direct  
The clasping Ivy where to climb, while I  
In yonder Spring of Roses intermixt  
With Myrtle, find what to redress till Noon. (IX, 216-19)

"Redress" is perhaps an unwitting expression of her mood because it denotes the correction of and compensation for an abuse or a wrong

experienced. But she does feel abused. Shortly before she eats the fruit, Eve confesses to no one but herself that God

Forbids us then to taste, but his forbidding  
Commends thee more, while it infers the good  
By thee communicated, and our want. (IX, 753-55)

"Want" in Paradise Lost generally means "lack" rather than desire or wish.<sup>19</sup> Eve feels her lack of goodness, of which Raphael has unknowingly informed her as she listened in the bushes, and she is convinced that the Tree can provide for her "want" ("communicate" is aptly chosen to express precisely the nature of her lack). Eve says, "For good unknown, sure is not had, or had / And yet unknown, is as not had at all" (IX, 756-57). She seems to be remembering a state of ignorance when she did not know of any good she lacked, a state shared by Adam before the angel informed them otherwise, and a state when mutual restraint and proper governance were natural to man.

Eve's anxiety is further described by her admission, just as she reaches for the fruit, that "Here grows the Cure of all, this Fruit Divine" (IX, 776). She feels that what she is about to do will remedy ("redress") a painful injury she has suffered, an injury powerful enough to allow her to rationalize the one act God has clearly forbidden. And when she eats the fruit, Eve candidly and explicitly describes just what it is that the Tree has given her and what "wants" it will "cure":

But to Adam in what sort  
Shall I appear? shall I to him make known  
As yet my change, and give him to partake  
Full happiness with mee, or rather not,  
But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power  
Without Copartner? so to add what wants  
In Female Sex, the more to draw his Love  
And render me more equal, and perhaps,  
A thing not undesirable, sometime  
Superior: for inferior who is free? (IX, 816-25)

The most significant feature of this confession that she feels "inferior" to Adam and wishes to "redress" the balance (even, occasionally, to be "superior" to Adam) is the awful revelation that she is doing all this to "draw his Love." Eve has evidently felt unloved because of the intrusion of authority and the new disposition of Adam to be her "Head." The motivation to be tempted and the Fall are thus not sudden, but are rather the result of a gradual problem rooted in the alienation of the "Female Sex" in Eden through the talk of man and angel.

Injured love seems to motivate Eve's hypertension too after eating the fruit. Now her sudden confusion about her future with Adam and her desire for equality quickly become fear of God's punishment, fear not of death itself, but fear of losing Adam, for "then I shall be no more, / And Adam wedded to another Eve, / Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct" (IX, 827-29). Eve thus does all to recover the old state of their love. Even when she determines that "Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe" (IX, 831), she is not consciously inspired by a desire to hurt him: "So dear I love him, that with him all deaths/I could endure, without him live no life" (IX, 832-33). Of course, Eve's fallen logic is not convincing, not like the gospel precept: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Once Adam discovers Eve's sin, though he is horrified by her rash deed ("speechless he stood and pale"--IX, 894), he loses little time debating what to do. He says to himself,

for with thee  
 Certain my resolution is to Die;  
 How can I live without thee, how forgo  
 Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly join'd,  
 To live again in these wild Woods forlorn? (IX, 906-10)

The whole tragic moment seems to be finished almost before it starts. Adam eats, he and Eve "enjoy" a short, wild bestial bout of lovemaking (IX, 1034 ff). Then, "confounded" and "struck'n mute" (IX, 1064), they feel the first pangs of guilt. And guilt soon inflames the domestic argument about heroic love which ends Book IX.

From the onset of this first quarrel, it should be clear that Adam feels bereft or deceived. He blames Eve for their fallen state, a state which is not what they convinced each other it would be (IX, 936):

O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear  
To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught  
To counterfeit Man's voice, true in our Fall,  
False in our promis'd Rising. (IX, 1067-70)

And Eve, whose mind, like Adam's, is now "toss't and turbulent" (IX, 1126), forgets her original recognition of the real "Enemy" in Eden and oddly blames Adam's vacillation and lack of authority for her "transgression" (IX, 1161).

The irony which helps to structure Book IX is now most evident in its conclusion: the drama of the temptation and Fall ends with Adam's injured love just as it had begun with Eve's. In reply to her own "facile" accusations about Adam's indecision, Adam cries:

Is this the Love, is this the recompense  
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, express't  
Immutable when thou wert lost, not I,  
Who might have liv'd and joy'd immortal bliss,  
Yet willingly chose rather Death with thee:  
And am I now upbraided, as the cause  
Of thy transgressing? (IX, 1163-69)

Adam is suddenly aware that he has thrown away his hopes for "immortal bliss," but what seems to hurt him most is Eve's ingratitude and self-serving when he has given up so much for her out of "affection."

Book IX, then, is from first to last about injured love. Eve falls because she attempts to "redress" the imbalance in Eden. But Adam's injured love expresses the futility of choosing love over God--that is, of choosing human love over divine love. Adam makes just such a wrong choice before he eats the fruit:

if Death  
 Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life;  
 So forcibly within my heart I feel  
 The Bond of Nature draw me to my own,  
 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. (IX, 953-59)

Adam now sees Eve only as the original extension of himself; more than anything, the possessives show that Adam is being self-serving, although his imputation of like behaviour to God is more subtly revealing:

Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,  
 Though threat'ning, will in earnest so destroy  
 Us his prime Creatures, dignifi'd so high,  
 Set over all his works, which in our Fall,  
 For us created, needs with us must fail,  
 Dependent made; so God shall uncreate,  
 Be frustrate, do, undo, and labor lose,  
 Not well conceiv'd of God, who though his Power  
 Creation could repeat, yet would be loath  
 Us to abolish, lest the Adversary  
 Triumph and say; Fickle their State whom God  
 Most Favors, who can please him long? Mee first  
 He ruin'd, now Mankind; whom will he next?  
 Matter of scorn, not to be given the Foe. (IX, 938-51)

These words echo the Son's argument in Book III, but there the Son declares that Satan must not (cannot) be allowed to "frustrate" the Father's creation, not as Adam would have it, because He would "labor lose, / Not well conceiv'd of God" (IX, 944-45), but "so should thy goodness and thy greatness both / Be question'd and blasphem'd without defense" (III, 165-66). Where the Son reasons to save the Father's

goodness, Adam sees only the loss of God's greatness, and so proves his deepest blindness in making God self-serving like himself.

If Adam has "ennobl'd" his love for Eve, as she would initially believe, he has done so at the expense of his love for God. For the absence of divine love in the subsequent dispute and the refusal of blame are only the denouement . . . to a profession of love which, since Raphael's departure, has really been an expression of self-concern. That angst which Broadbent, citing Augustine and Kierkegaard, regards as the ground of sin<sup>20</sup> is indeed made possible by Raphael's hapless message of "self-esteem," for it compromises the paradigm of the Father's order of service in humility and destroys the reciprocal sympathy which has been the end of such humility. What began as a test of Eve's humility and of her readiness to adjust to the terms of the changing order in Eden without self-assertion devolves into a petty and unsympathetic assertion of rights and regrets. Book IX recounts the consequences of this new concern for self in Eden, though it stops short of explaining what purpose could be served in the Father's commission of such a teacher for our first parents.

At the very least, it is apparent that Eden is changing as Heaven did before. Changes in the politics of Heaven, we recall, resulted both in the expulsion of evil from Heaven and the great revelations about the Father's humble ways and His changing nature. We know that God's purposes must be served by Raphael, despite his limited understanding and his inadvertent destabilization of the perfect balance in Eden. And so the unresolved issue remains just how this new order (the utter defeat of Adam's and Eve's and Eden's harmony) will play a role in the larger evolution towards universal harmony and universal democracy.

The coming of the Son in Book X both to judge and serve the couple fallen from grace offers an especially interesting new paradigm for Adam on several counts:

then pitying how they stood  
 Before him naked to the air, that now  
 Must suffer change, disdain'd not to begin  
 Thenceforth the form of servant to assume,  
 As when he wash'd his servants feet, so now  
 As Father of his Family he clad  
 Thir nakedness with Skins of Beasts. (X, 211-17)

Because Adam has failed in the wake of Raphael's warning to reconcile humility with authority, he must face the issue again in the Son's personal example. For how can one whose justice must alienate him yet pity him as a Father? Or by extension, as Adam will later argue, how can children who are alienated from grace ever pity the parent who left them such a curse for patrimony? What is even the point of sacrifice when Adam's "sacrifice" for Eve has been so wanting in dignity and love? Finally, given the likeness of Eve's humility to the Son when she offers to sacrifice herself for her husband, how is Adam to respond without compromising his outraged sense of justice that he has been punished for another's sin?

The problem of reading aright this latest version of the paradigm of humility is impossible so long as Adam persists in his self-concern. But persist he does, to the point of blaming God for his "perfet gift, so good, / So fit, so acceptable, so Divine / That from her hand I could suspect no ill" (X, 138-40). Now the Son's rebuke not only complicates the question of humility, but seems to forbid any solution but the manly exercise of authority:

Was shee thy God that her thou didst obey  
 Before his voice, or was shee made thy guide,  
 Superior, or but equal, that to her  
 Thou didst resign thy Manhood. . . Adorn'd  
 She was indeed, and lovely to attract  
 Thy Love, not thy Subjection, and her Gifts  
 Were such as under Government well seem'd,  
 Unseemly to bear rule, which was thy part  
 And person, hadst thou known thyself aright. (X, 145-56)

It is as harsh a word as we hear the Son speak in the poem, and of itself seems to offer the final vindication of Raphael's message.

The dramatic context of divine pronouncements is nonetheless as important in Book X as it ever was in Book III. Specifically, the Son reprimands Adam for substituting the love of his wife for the love of God--a just criticism. But, in his petulant speech, Adam has now made her his God to evade the question of his responsibility. He makes her his authority in a way which he had earlier claimed to Raphael was only analogical:

yet when I approach  
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems. . .  
 Authority and Reason on her wait,  
 As one intended first. . . (VIII, 546-55).

The Son makes use of a similar analogical language to argue quite the contrary: "her Gifts / Were such as under Government well seem'd." Whether they were in fact best kept under authoritative rule is not clear. The punning antithesis of "unseemly" simply confirms what Adam and the reader know too well: Eve's self-assertion has been disastrous.

The Son's final challenge to Adam is thus the duty of self-knowledge, since Adam has indeed failed to know himself "aright" in his eating of the fruit. The question remains, What does the "Oracle" (X, 182) mean in asserting so flatly that "to bear rule, . . . was thy part," when the Son's own example suggests a greater paradox of rule and service? How

"rightly" can Adam then know himself even at this moment? And of what use are models of humility when his "ruling" hatred of Eve will tempt him to deny the value of her humiliation and repentance?

The dialectical nature of the education which makes it possible for truths to be given authoritatively, if not unalterably, is evidently continued in the Son's rebuff, since Adam is soon engaged in a lonely, embittered argument with himself. What finally becomes apparent in his psychomachia is that the Son's disapproval serves as a test of the sufficiency of his education, even as the Father's stern criticism in the dialogue in Heaven offers a test of the Son's self-knowledge.

Adam's new attempt to "know himself aright" begins honestly enough with some conviction of his blame:

hide me from the face  
Of God, whom to behold was then my highth  
Of happiness: yet well, if here would end  
The misery, I deserv'd it, and would  
My own deservings. (X, 723-27)

But the tortuous windings of his thought lead again and again to a doubt of God's design, culminating in an explosion of hatred at the sight of Eve which reveals his woeful misreading of God's ways in terms of the inadequate philosophy taken over from Raphael:

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, to warn all Creatures from thee  
Henceforth; lest that too heav'nly form, pretended  
To hellish falsehood, snare them. (X, 867-73)

Adam's accusation seems unthinkable, even as a projection of his blame, though it is more an extension of his finding fault with God for having given him such a "perfect" gift as his Pandora.

The Son's reproof has not led, then, to any sudden access of knowledge on Adam's part. Rather, he uses the Son's authority to further excuse his "Government":

But for thee  
I had persisted happy, had not thy pride  
And wandering vanity, when least was safe,  
Rejected my forewarning. (X, 873-76)

On a literal level, Adam claims that Eve's "wand'ring vanity" has made his erstwhile blissful state intolerable. Implicitly, however, he exaggerates the happiness of that solitude before Eve's creation. The Father, we recall, has sent Raphael to "advise him of his happy state" after Eve is created. Likewise, Adam has felt the need for companionship almost immediately after his creation (VIII, 355). He now forgets that he once argued vigorously with God to have a companion, and so must share responsibility for her very existence, let alone her actions. Finally, he forgets that God has called her "thy other self" (VIII, 450), making her a half of a whole entity which was mutually dependent for its balance and completeness. The most reprehensible quality in Adam's hatred, however, is in the fact that in denouncing Eve he denounces the joy God has shown in Adam's power of reason--a power of reason which specifically chooses an intellectual equal in Eve to be his helpmeet ("Among unequals what society / Can sort, what harmony or true delight? / Which must be mutual"--VIII, 383-85).

Adam's hatred reaches its logical climax in a wish that God's creation of the world could have corresponded sexually to Heaven:

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,

Or find some other way to generate  
Mankind? this mischief had not then befall'n. (X, 888-95)

At this point, Adam is speaking the same hierarchical language to which Raphael has reverted in his lone attempt to correct Adam's "excessive" humility, and the theme of his diatribe has a striking resemblance to the connection he has drawn between himself and the angels (IX, 330 ff).

Adam's whole "vicious barrage of misogyny"<sup>21</sup> is, of course, a defense mechanism triggered by the futility of masculine reason to save itself. For Adam has already attempted to find his way back to God by deliberating the causes which have shaped him and the options which might still be open to him. He poses a variety of solutions, but inevitably finds them inadequate. 'Did I ask to be born?' 'I was created inadequate to "hold / The good I sought not" (X, 751-52). 'Will I die, now, body and soul, and so forget, or must I die a "living Death?"' 'Why should all of my offspring, "all mankind" (X, 822), suffer for the sin of their primogenitor?' Adam's chief concern is for his offspring, more specifically, for his blighted relation to them:

Ay me, that fear  
Comes thund'ring back with dreadful revolution  
On my defenseless head; both Death and I  
Am found Eternal, and incorporate both,  
Nor I on my part single, in mee all  
Posterity stands curst: Fair Patrimony  
That I must leave ye, Sons; O were I able  
To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!  
So disinherited how would ye bless  
Me now your Curse! (X, 813-22)

At the point when Adam sees the horror of his having children, he recognizes the ineffectuality of the mind to conquer despair or to bridge the "Abyss of fears" (X, 842) into which his conscience has driven him:

Him after all Disputes  
 Forc't I absolve: all my evasions vain  
 And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still  
 But to my own conviction: first and last  
 On mee, mee only, as the source and spring  
 Of all corruption, all the blame lights due;  
 So might the wrath. (X, 828-34)

Broadbent finds this self-loathing and offered self-sacrifice deficient in drama: Adam's "echo of the Son's offer of redemption" is "difficult to feel," as is the reality of the hell Adam claims to experience (X, 842), because "the Hell Adam is in, and the Heaven he is moving toward, have no sufficiently physical quality for the connection to bear on."<sup>22</sup> Milton becomes more convincing, he says, when he comes to the role of Eve. In Adam's monologue "there is dramatic debris, but no drama. . . Drama revives with Eve."<sup>23</sup> But in another sense, Adam's self-loathing is unconvincing because he still does not feel himself to blame; as his outburst of hatred soon shows, it is Eve (and, in her creation, God) whom he feels to be at fault. Therefore his offer to play the scapegoat is little more than concealed resentment at the injustice of God's ways.

Eve, on the other hand, comes to Adam with a deeply-felt conviction of the wrong she has done him. With a remarkable sympathetic correspondence, Eve understands Adam's suffering. She feels what he feels, his pain becomes her greater pain. And in her humble sufferance of his absolute misogyny, she suddenly answers Adam's question why God should create "this fair defect / Of nature, and not fill the world at once / With men as Angels without Feminine" (X, 891-93). She embraces Adam's feet, begs for peace between them (X, 911), and pleads for his forgiveness. Finally, in the face of his outright denial of her love, she says:

Forsake me not thus, Adam, witness Heav'n  
 What love sincere, and reverence in my heart  
 I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,  
 Unhappily deceived; thy suppliant  
 I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not  
 Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,  
 Thy Counsel in this uttermost distress,  
 My only strength and stay. (X, 914-21)

Eve's pleading for love supplies something which has been missing in Adam's barren exercise of reason.<sup>24</sup> For her sympathy and her profound humiliation open the way at last to another sort of exercise of Adam's authority.

Here, as after her dream, Eve calls on him for help, especially for his "counsel." She confesses her fear of living alone, "forlorn of thee" (X, 921), even for the few hours they may have left to live. Each has injured the other, she candidly explains (though she does not remind him that her injury began before the Fall). And now, by "both joining, / As join'd in injuries," (X, 924-25) she offers a new, if brief, union against the foe. In a powerful moment of surrender, Eve takes all of the blame on herself:

On me exercise not  
 Thy hatred for this misery befall'n,  
 On me already lost, mee than thyself  
 More miserable; both have sinn'd, but thou  
 Against God only, I against God and thee,  
 And to the place of judgment will return,  
 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. (X, 927-36)

Eve's gesture of humiliation is finally her successful response to the test of a changed order which she had earlier failed. Though she is fallen, and hence unlike the loyal angels who have rejected Satan's claim that "New laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise / In us who

serve" (V, 680-81), she has returned to the old order of service, at least to a faithful service of Adam.

The question of what role Eve really plays in the regeneration of mankind has probably been addressed as often as any other in Paradise Lost.<sup>25</sup> Among the most cogent is J. H. Summer's observation that she mirrors Christ's primary, grand gift--his atonement for man:

Eve's speech is crucial to the earthly and the total pattern. It is a speech of human love after man's fall, and it marks an end to the battle between man and woman--otherwise as endless as the war between the angels would have been without the direct intervention of the Son. It is the prelude to renewed praise, and it makes possible continued life and a new creation. Eve offers herself as a redeemer, and however inadequate she is to fulfill that role, her attempt mirrors the redemptive actions of the Son, both in His first moment of undertaking and throughout the poem.<sup>26</sup>

Jun Harada, responding to Summer's view, criticizes the "almost unanimous agreement"<sup>27</sup> that Eve acts as a redeemer. He calls the notion "untenable" because Eve suggests sexual abstinence and suicide after "achieving Adam's redemption."<sup>28</sup> Harada grounds his case on Eve's continued wish to be accepted by Adam, and says that even here, in the face of Adam's raving, she takes on his sin in order to re-establish that acceptance. In consequence, "It is Eve who transforms herself into Adam's 'me' and this provides a mirror in which he can see himself. . . . The faults for which he blames her are nothing but what he, himself, has been and done."<sup>29</sup> Eve's subsequent selflessness then stimulates Adam's discovery (peripety) of a greatness in her he had earlier denied, and thus also of a new degree of self-knowledge. But Eve cannot be a redeemer in the true sense because her solutions are "unrighteous and pagan."<sup>30</sup> Rather, it is her function to trigger the possibility for redemption--since Adam comes to know good by Eve's evil. Harada concludes

"that discovery is accompanied by the final peripety in the scene, the reversal of fortune from separation and enmity to the intensified reunion of man and woman. . .it may safely be said that for the first time in the epic Adam and Eve transcend self through the act of self-destruction (the Fall) and by sacrifice of self (reconciliation)."<sup>31</sup>

Neither Eve as the image of the Son, nor Eve as the image of Sin seems, however, to be the best way to characterize what she now symbolizes to Adam. For her sacrifice can have little in common with the Atonement since she is simply assuming the burden of their mutual guilt. Adam, in accusing her of being "Unwary, and too desirous, as before" (X, 947), is likewise doing more than blaming her for his kind of sin in his despairing soliloquy. His impulse to speed to "that place / . . . before thee, and be louder heard" in petition "that on my head all might be visited" (X, 953-55) is finally his acknowledgement that surrender and self-sacrifice are the superior virtues. But his reason tells him that no sacrifice they could ever make would save their "hapless seed" (X, 966). Eve's passionate surrender has opened the gates to reconciliation each with the other, but not with God.

The regeneration comes about because Eve's frantic response to Adam's despair for his children opens a new avenue to the exercise of reasonable authority. Eve's sympathy is suddenly too passionate; it volunteers their mutual destruction, thus making an end of their unborn children. Self-sacrifice is suddenly debased by her proposal of suicide and murder, precisely because her affinity for Adam's feelings is an expression of concern for him alone. He whom the narrator once described as being "for God only, shee for God in him" (IV, 299) now proves the truth of that maxim, even as he proves the potential harmony of authority

with humility. For he restrains Eve's passionate excess and so rights the balance that had been lost in their relationship with God. If Eve admits that her own counsel is inadequate "In this uttermost distress" (X, 920), and that she needs his clear thinking as much as his "gentle looks" (X, 919), Adam confesses his greater need of God. But it is Eve's demonstration of her genuine love for Adam that now makes available to him new meanings in what God has pronounced in His judgment:

Then let us seek  
Some safer resolution, which methinks  
I have in view, calling to mind with heed  
Part of our Sentence, that thy Seed shall bruise  
The Serpent's head; piteous amends, unless  
Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand Foe  
Satan who in the Serpent hath contriv'd  
Against us this deceit. (X, 1028-35)

The former sentence, which so perplexed and depressed Adam, is suddenly discovered to be man's hope of grace. Adam now sees that "wilful barrenness. . .cuts us off from hope" (X, 1042-43) and in swift succession, he recalls God's "gracious temper" (1047), the not-so-fatal nature of His curse, and the potential for regeneration in "sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek" (X, 1092).

What is remarkable about Adam's discovery of grace is that it might have been apparent to him from the outset in the "Oracle's" prophecy, were he not so filled with blame of Eve and God, were he not, in short, so lacking in humility. But then the Son had also emphasized the failure of Adam's authority--no misrepresentation in fact--without explaining how authority is to be wed to humility. The means of grace are thus made oracular, and are left implicit, because Adam could not become truly regenerate without first becoming truly humble. That he does so is eloquent testimony to the suffering of Eve's example, although

her will is as sorely tested as his. And Adam exercises at last a proper authority in his scanning of the Son's example. In every sense, then, the implicit message of the prophecy is God's respect for free will. Adam and Eve are both left to make their own inferences--"unless be meant"--pretty much in the same way that the Saviour was left, in the dialogue in Heaven, to make inferences from the premises of God's argument.

Adam's recollection of the Judge's appearance makes the parallel for the reader with the dialogue in Heaven complete:

in whose look serene,  
When angry most he seem'd and most severe,  
What else but favor, grace, and mercy shone? (X, 1094-96)

But the difference in the educational dialectics of each test lies in the human limitation of man and woman, each containing but one half of what is necessary to realize the means of grace. Only in the combination of these two unique gifts is regeneration made possible. Thus Eve's grand, humble surrender, born out of sympathetic understanding of her mate, is the incentive for Adam's leap of faith; her appeasement of Adam's reason (like the Son with God) is the preliminary to Adam's free, creative interpretation of that prophecy formerly made by the Father and interpreted by the Son in Heaven. In such fashion is Justice tempered with Mercy (X, 77-78), is Reason united with Passion and Authority with Humility.

iii

What waits a final answer is why God should want, at all, to surrender His authority to His creatures; why, in effect, He should desire to create in the first place. Milton's God creates in order to refine Himself; creation is, in a manner of speaking, His "Cure of all."

"Cure" is an appropriate term in that the Father suffers from a body/spirit duality which He wishes to unite and heal. But His absolute dedication to free will makes it impossible for Him to command such a union, and suggests that the Father Himself cannot will His own change, but must rely on His creation and the ongoing creativity of His free-willed creatures to complete the process He has begun. Book VII has shown us the first steps in the refinement of God's being; thus the generation of Earth and the creation of man and woman are products of this communion between feminine body and masculine spirit.

Since the God of Paradise Lost will not necessitate the actions of His agents, how is this union to be accomplished? Satan's example has taught us that created bodies must decide either to choose God or be rejected by Him--"my day of grace / They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste" (III, 198-99). That such a choice exists at all depends on the fact that, by creating, God is in effect letting go of the feminine body--that is, He gives the feminine, material part of His being free will. Subsequently, the feminine material in reality becomes free will itself, as the Father's own words confirm:

no Decree of mine  
 Concurring to necessitate his Fall,  
 Or touch with lightest moment of impulse  
 His free will to her own inclining left  
 In even scale. (X, 43-47)

By thus freeing the feminine will and waiting for it to choose Him (to come back to Him from its wandering, as Eve comes back to Adam) God finds a way of healing the disparate halves of His being and of fulfilling His goodness. He awaits the ultimate hierogamy and the "golden days" when all creatures that remain will be joined to His spirit ("as join'd in injuries," X, 925) and He will finally be "All in All."

The tests which the Father applies to His creatures--and Satan, the Son, Raphael, Abdiel, Adam and Eve are all equally tested--are designed and administered to force the creature either to choose or reject its Creator. Self-glorification, self-assertion, selfish independence, and especially authority without humility work against the very foundations of union. God's ideal of union then motivates His reverence for humility, for service and free will.

Humility does not come easily to man and angels, but it is an essential trait which is arrived at only through suffering. The evolution of God and an incomplete change in man and woman toward goodness, both of which are always accompanied by sorrow, as Books XI and XII continue to record, are really synonymous, for it is the evolving humanization and democratization of the human race that is the signature of evolution within the godhead itself. At the centre of Milton's vision of God's ways lies the fact that the chaotic is a part of God and God cannot command its annihilation for then He would be destroying a part of Himself. By becoming form through creation the Father humbly waits for His creatures to choose to destroy that chaos for Him.

The net result for Adam is adumbrated by his "ascent" with Michael "In the Visions of God" (XI, 377) to a share in foreknowledge itself:

O Visions ill foreseen! better had I  
 Liv'd ignorant of future, so had borne  
 My part of evil only, each day's lot  
 Enough to bear; those now, that were dispens't  
 The burd'n of many Ages, on me light  
 At once, by my foreknowledge gaining Birth  
 Abortive, to torment me ere thir being,  
 With thought that they must be. (XI, 763-770)

Adam's "problem of foreknowledge" is, by analogy, the problem of the Father who has decided to create beings who He knows will suffer. The

narrator points the analogy--"as when a Father mourns / His children, all in view destroy'd at once" (XI, 760-61)-- in ways which illustrate the problem of paternity shared by God and Adam alike. For each must surrender himself to his creation, to the future, to the ongoing process whereby inherent dualities are reconciled, and the Creator is made complete in His creature. As the Father says to the Son, "Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt Reign / Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man, / Anointed universal King" (III, 315-17). So too Adam finally defines for himself and for his heirs the triumphant meaning of the Incarnation:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!  
 That all this good of evil shall produce,  
 And evil turn to good; more wonderful  
 Than that which by creation first brought forth  
 Light out of darkness! (XII, 469-73)

Notes to Chapter Four

Sympathy as the Sum of All God's Ways

<sup>1</sup> The arguments which attempt to explain the origin of evil in Eden range from Blackburn's view that humans are created with a "full complement of human appetites" and that the Fall is an "actualization of potentialities" (p. 130) to George Williamson's view that "Eve's dream reveals her vanity" (p. 287).

<sup>2</sup> Bundy, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> James Holly Hanford, "The Dramatic Element of Paradise Lost," Studies in Philology, 14 (1917), p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> John S. Diehoff, "Eve, the Devil, and Areopagitica," Modern Language Quarterly, 5 (Dec., 1944), p. 432.

<sup>5</sup> Evans, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Empson, p. 147.

<sup>7</sup> Broadbent, p. 255.

<sup>8</sup> Broadbent, p. 198.

<sup>9</sup> Diekhoff says that "Eve's stubbornness is wrong, her pique is wrong, her disobedience is wrong, and her arguments are at least in part irrelevant" (p. 433).

<sup>10</sup> Eve is obviously aware that these are not her first thoughts, but well-mulled suggestions for action.

<sup>11</sup> Broadbent, p. 250.

<sup>12</sup> Hughes, p. 778.

<sup>13</sup> Raphael and Adam express the same general attitude toward the feminine that Satan has solipsistically and impulsively manifested on his daughter, Sin.

<sup>14</sup> Maybe this is the reason why Eve finds Raphael unattractive, as is pointed out by Peter Lindenbaum, "Lovemaking in Milton's Paradise," Milton Studies, 6(1974), p. 296.

<sup>15</sup> A. B. Chambers, "The Fall of Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost," in New Essays on 'Paradise Lost', ed. Thomas Kranidas (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971), for instance, feels that the proper hierarchy in Paradise Lost is overturned when "Eve, taking delight in the serpent's suggestion, obeys the lower creature, and when Adam willfully chooses to exalt his wife above himself as the 'best of all God's works,'" (p. 130).

<sup>16</sup> Danielson, p. 127.

<sup>17</sup> Danielson, p. 128.

<sup>18</sup> Eve's reference to "clasping ivy" ironically recalls their work at V, 215 to "[Lead] the Vine / To wed her Elm."

<sup>19</sup> See Hughes, PL, IX, n199.

<sup>20</sup> Broadbent, p. 198.

<sup>21</sup> Gallagher, "The Role of Raphael in Samson Agonistes," p. 120.

<sup>22</sup> Broadbent, p. 264.

<sup>23</sup> Broadbent, pp. 264-65.

<sup>24</sup> Adam and Eve, reason and passion, as separate entities, are the contemplation and action of Plotinus's famous model.

<sup>25</sup> Empson states that, until Adam has reasoned with Eve God does not perceive her as repentant (p. 167). A. E. Barker underrates the significance of Eve's repentance and suggests that Adam's perception is the crucial act (p. 65); Fish states that "Eve moves forward blindly, haltingly and finally, as God would have it, effectively" (p. 275).

<sup>26</sup> Summers, p. 177-78.

<sup>27</sup> Jun Harada, "The Mechanism of Human Reconciliation in Paradise Lost," Philological Quarterly, 50(Jan. 1971), p. 543.

<sup>28</sup> Harada, p. 543.

<sup>29</sup> Harada, p. 551.

<sup>30</sup> Harada, p. 552.

<sup>31</sup> Harada, p. 549, discusses the sixteenth-century preoccupation with proving that suicide was not a culpable offense and documents Milton's own opposition to that trend.

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