

MILTON'S EVE: REDRESSING THE PANDORA TRADITION IN *PARADISE LOST*

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Dedication

Dedicated to my mom for hearing about my research long before it was composed, to my niece Elodie for a brighter future, and to all the women I have come to know in the name of being set free.

Acknowledgements

“I will give thanks to you, LORD, will all my heart.”

—A Psalm of David, 9:1

In the course of crafting this thesis, I have found overwhelming support in professors, family, and friends without whom this project would not have been possible.

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Abstract:

This thesis argues that Milton fundamentally questions and retells the traditional misogynistic narratives of Eve in his representation of her in *Paradise Lost*. Milton does this by redressing Eve with the Pandora tradition, not as a means of cementing the patriarchal readings that have long followed her narrative but rather accentuating Eve's superiority as a woman with freewill. Like Pandora in the classical and patristic traditions, who releases evil upon mankind according to Hesiod's *Theogony*, Milton's Eve is the first woman in the Hebraic-Christian tradition to bring evil into the world through the Fall. Milton employs traditional narratives, such as Genesis 1-3, the *Lives of Adam and Eve*, and Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, and long-held misogynistic perspectives, refashioning those stories to make an argument for Eve, not for her innocence or Adam's ultimate culpability, but rather for her free will and humanity. My thesis argues that although Eve sins and shares the "forbidden fruit" with Adam, Milton portrays her as a dynamic character who experiences the stages of "growing up" attributed to humanity: in doing so, he retells one of the most pivotal religious narratives not to condemn women but to support them as mostly "equals"—different in sex, but co-lords in dominion of creation in the seventeenth-century context. The thesis focuses on Milton's representation of Eve in *Paradise Lost* (with some attention given to *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and *Areopagitica*) and goes beyond current scholarship on Milton's Ovidian Eve to consider the reframing of earlier, mostly negative traditions and demonstrate that Eve is not simply a superior example of womanhood than her classical counterpart Pandora, but a strong wife, mother, and leader in God's perfect creation worthy of the title "Mother of Mankind."

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Introduction

“Adam’s last will and testament read, ‘Don’t believe Eve’s version’.”

—Old Jewish Folk Saying¹

Eve and Pandora have been framed for murder.² The first woman in the biblical account, Eve ate the “forbidden fruit” from the Tree of Knowledge³ and shared it with her husband Adam, condemning the world to sin and death (Gen. 3:1-7). In a parallel

¹ Kim Chernin, *Reinventing Eve* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 149.

² C. S. Lewis, “The Fall,” 157-161, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. 1942 (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2022).

³ Genesis records Eve’s eating of the “forbidden fruit” to be in direct disobedience to God: in Genesis 2, God tells Adam that he may freely eat of any tree in the Garden, “[b]ut of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it” (16-17). The given consequence is “surely” death, understood as sin and spiritual death in addition to that of physical suffering and death. Although the biblical narrative does not document Adam’s communication of this to Eve, whose secondary creation is delayed to the following page, Eve’s initial response to the serpent’s temptation—albeit subtly revised—suggests a familiarity with God’s warning: All quotations from Genesis and relevant biblical books are from *The Holy Bible*. King James Version, edited by Rev. C. I. Scofield, D. D., New York, NY: Oxford UP, 1945.

narrative,⁴ Pandora received a jar,⁵ opened it,⁶ and likewise unleashed evil upon the world (*Works and Days* 92-105.95).⁷ Eve is an archetypal Pandora,⁸ “whose curiosity loosed

⁴ Pandora’s narrative is mirrored in the atmosphere and setting of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The Golden Age refers to the classical age of the first race of men, who were created by Cronos in his ruling as the king of the gods. They lived in harmony as vegetarians, eating only wild fruit and the honey “that dripped from trees” and drinking milk, always singing and dancing and never aging, resembling the prelapsarian Paradise. Adam and Eve, like the Golden Race, are introduced to a world largely untouched by the evils of sin for the pleasure of their creator and are vegetarians, who eat the fruit of the trees and rule in peaceful dominion. Milton employs Pandora’s Golden Age as an archetype of Eden to condition his narrative for Eve’s representation and pursuit towards redemption: George F. Butler, “Milton’s Pandora: Eve, Sin, and the Mythographic Tradition.” *Milton Studies*, 44 (2005), 153-178. 158-159; Robert Graves. *The Greek Myths*, introduction by Rick Riordan, deluxe ed. 1955 (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2012), 10-11.

⁵ Erasmus translated Hesiod’s accounts into Latin in the early sixteenth century and stumbled in his translation for the Greek word *pithos* [“jar”]. While the word *pithos* would have implied a Grecian ceramic storage jar, his translation confused it with the word *pyxis* [“box”] familiar to the myth of Psyche. He changed “Pandora’s ceramic pot (or, jar)” to the trope of “Pandora’s box” and correlated the two myths of Pandora and Psyche: Natalie Haynes, *Pandora’s Jar: Woman in Greek Myths* (London, UK: Picador, 2020), 8.

⁶ Unlike the author of Genesis, who records Eve’s familiarity with God’s warning to facilitate her disobedience, contrary to popular opinion, Hesiod does not record the giving of the jar to Pandora or any instructions not to open it. His narrative begins with her opening the jar and scattering its contents on the ground, almost in emphasis of an undescribed direct disobedience to Zeus, to unleash miserable evil upon mankind.

⁷ Hesiod. *Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia*. Edited and translated by Glenn W. Most (London, UK: Harvard UP, 2018).

⁸ Myth and ideology are only separated when the subject matter determines a difference, not in its approach but its simple scientific representation. Pandora and Eve are the products of the cultures that have interpreted them, most of which have been those in the West of enforcing a traditional, archetypal portrayal of women through the “loathed and laudable” figures. Milton’s coloring of Pandora and Eve in his *Doctrine of Discipline and Divorce*, *Comus*, and *Paradise Lost* offer the opportunity to see a partnership of the equally, highly intelligent and involved Adam and Eve within the fairy tale-like atmosphere of the Garden of Eden. In *Paradise Lost*, for instance, he demonstrates the correlation with Pandora and Eve as the first women in classical and biblical traditions and how the pagan Pandora informed Renaissance perspectives and continues to inform modern perspectives of Eve. To many people familiar with the characters, Pandora and

evil”⁹ and whose childish frivolity and vanity, inherent to her secondary creation,¹⁰ have relegated her to the home. Although both Eve and Pandora are mothers of mankind and have become models of feminine behavior,¹¹ in a society in which Christianity is still a

Eve are one in the same, considering their histories of secondary creation and disobedience, but Milton clearly understands the opposite: that Pandora is not Eve and that Eve is superior because she was endowed with choice, positioning her as an individual not made with the sole intention of being gifted but of co-partnership in ruling the Garden: Vita Daphna Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity: Eve, Gender, and Ideologies in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (New York, NY: Oxford UP, 2012), ix; Ben Halpern, “‘Myth’ and ‘Ideology’ in Modern Usage,” *History and Theory*, 1, no. 2 (1961), 129-149, 134.

⁹ Male curiosity is the exercise of a “good” philosophical conflict, while female curiosity is the exercise of “bad behavior.” In Babrius’s fable, the man’s curiosity and satisfaction in the opening of the jar is a morale lesson depicting the pursuit of knowledge and rest of contentment, personified as the release of “good.” Curiosity in men is rewarded with the distinction of having contributed to the intellectual, philosophical, and societal development of society, while curiosity in women is regulated as “bad behavior,” personified in the release of “evils” and containment of “good,” or Hope.

¹⁰ In the Hebrew tradition, Eve’s second creation (Gen. 2:21-22) is immediately followed by her marriage (Gen. 2:23) and the serpent’s temptation to her Fall (Gen. 3:1-7). Genesis does not elicit a description of Eve beyond the circumstances of her creation or a depiction of her marriage to Adam. Although she does not receive an eloquent beautification like Pandora, Eve is represented in unification with Adam: neither receive a physical description, and both are unashamed in their nakedness (Gen. 2:25). Their physical appearance has thereby been subjected to speculation—dark hair and eyes and olive or warm skin tones—associated with the Garden’s setting in the Middle East. Later writers and artists would attempt to remedy this through pictorial representations dependent on their own culturalized biases. In some Jewish commentaries (and relevant stories in the tradition), Eve’s abrupt wedding is illustrated, in which God dresses her, and angels sing and dance in celebration: Dudley R. Hutcherson, “Milton’s Eve and the Other Eves,” *Studies in English*, 1 (1960), 12-31, 18.

¹¹ The figure of Eve is the result of a culturally constructed idea of women. As Eve has come to represent all women, all women have come to represent Eve. Although Judas Iscariot and Pontius Pilate have not been made representations of all men for killing the Son of God, the patriarchal ideology submits Eve’s sin to all women: if Eve fell to the temptation of Satan and seduced her husband into her sin, then all women would do the same: Arbel, ix; Amanda W. Benckhuysen, *The Gospel According to Eve: A History of Women’s Interpretation*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 7, 42-43.

dominant religion, Eve's narrative is approached with reverence for authority unfamiliar to most kinds of literature,¹² including Pandora's myth.¹³ This pervasive piety and

¹² Although Judaeo-Christian tradition still holds to Eve's narrative as sacred, many modern interpreters have turned to secular readings of the Garden of Eden and now consider it to be a myth. In her book, *Approaching Eden: Adam and Eve in Popular Culture*, Theresa Sanders argues that additions were made to the story in order to establish contextual unity and "'heavenly authority' for requiring a woman to obey the man she married". This eliminates a single writer and suggests that Eve's dual creation narratives are the result of two writers "with two different understandings of God". Albeit not so much a contradiction as an example of humanity's complexity and the oral tradition's pivotal role in belief, with the suggestion of dual writers, human authorship becomes a concern.

First, the Pentateuch—the first five books of the Bible, Genesis to Deuteronomy, as the Jewish Torah—is largely believed to have been redacted in the fifth century B.C.E., in which editors "took multiple strands that had reached them from the past, compared them, corrected them, cut pieces from them, added pieces to them, adjusted them, reconciled them to the best of their abilities, and wove them together." The identity, number of, and choosing of these editors is unknown, as is the amount of strands—narratives, myths, fragments, genealogies, and records—"consulted and assembled" in the process.

In traditional representations of the Pentateuch, those accepted by Jewish rabbis, Moses is the sole writer with only brief portions considered to be added and revised by his successor, Joshua. Bible scholars have argued that the entire written Torah was revealed to Moses at Mount Sinai and was thereby composed approximately between 1312 to 1280 B.C.E., but as belief in Moses diminished, German professor Julius Wellhausen (1883) proposed the alternative authorship of 'J', 'E', 'D', and 'P'. In this interpretation, the story of Adam and Eve was written by "someone designated as the J author," who is speculated to have lived in Jerusalem somewhere in the tenth century B.C.E. Wellhausen himself believed that the 'J'-author (Jahwist for the German spelling of Yahweh or *Jahweh*) lived around 950 B.C.E. and was followed by 'E' (named Elohist, after God's name *Elohim*) in 850 B.C.E., who drew from and continued the 'J'-author's writing of Genesis. Their writings were woven together, as the 'D' and 'E'-authors were in 600 to 500 B.C.E. Other scholars have argued that 'J' lived in the ninth or eighth century B.C.E., or even as late as the sixth century B.C.E. Whenever this mysterious 'J' lived, modern scholars believe that he compiled myths and folktales, both Jewish and Babylonian, to create "a new theological vision" with a particular interest in women that as with "Homer," the composer of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, has recently been speculated to have been a woman. J's existence as a woman is largely irrelevant to modern Judaeo-Christian beliefs since their foundation is built on the Bible as Truth, as that of which records what God inspired, author's identity thereby unnecessary: (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 22-25; Anderson, *Genesis of Perfection*, 11, in, Sanders, *Approaching Eden: Adam and Eve in Popular Culture*, 23; Stephen

veneration has endowed the story with more power and influence¹⁴ and has made it a source of reference¹⁵ and the “primary justification for the religious subjugation of women”¹⁶ in Judaeo-Christian traditions. Understanding this interpretation is paramount

Greenblatt, *The Rise and Fall of Adam and Eve* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2017), 33-36.

¹³ With a foundation in early traditions, myths—or, as in the representation of a single myth or collective mythology, *mythos*—is the morale and historical “fingerprint” and hold a “collective importance” because they illustrate the fundamentals of a culture. Although modern readers may be tempted to read them as collections of entertaining stories with little importance or relevance in contemporary society, myths were at one-point facets of a believed religion—i.e., classical *mythos* was the dominant religion of the Greeks and Romans—and express both the long-held and evolving perspectives of their believers. Western society was built upon the foundations of the classical, and the rewriting of the myths (or, at least, the reconsideration of myth) through the lens of feminism and humanism introduces more contemporary perspectives challenging the authenticity of portrayals and bringing restitution to condemned women. It “is not only a way of deconstructing masculine perceptions or saving fractions of lost feminine experience from within the bounds of a masculine order.” By studying the correlation between myth and contemporary thought, marginalized women receive a second chance to tell their stories with their own voice. The necessity of this is best demonstrated in the figure of Pandora, as the first woman. Vered Lev Kenann explains that she “embodies an irresolvable tension that is traditionally understood as constitutive femininity—the tension between an outer appearance and a concealed interiority.” Pandora possesses an attractiveness to men because she is a scapegoat for the problems of mankind. She is “othered” as a means of providing an explanation for the female creation and existence: *Pandora’s Senses: The Feminine Character of the Ancient Text* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 7, 9; F. E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon* (New York, NY: New York UP, 1967), 120-121; Barry P. Powell, *Classical Myth* (New York, NY: Oxford UP, 2018), 3-4.

¹⁴ Depictions of Eve’s fall as a schema for the female sex have infiltrated “every aspect of Western culture,” influencing people’s perceptions and justifications of the existing relations between sexes: Ruth B. Bottigheimer, “An Alternative Eve in Johann Hübner’s Children’s Bible,” 73, in Gillhouse, 261.

¹⁵ Women could not petition for more autonomy even into the twentieth century, as they were referred to the Bible for the patriarchal defense—that is, the sin of Eve: Benckhuysen, 205.

¹⁶ Gillhouse, 260.

to recognizing the consistent oppression of women in Western culture, as the individual words of the Adam and Eve story have a history of being weaponized to argue for feminine inferiority, crookedness,¹⁷ and sorrow, interpretations that have well-persevered into the twenty-first century.

Wioleta Polinska termed the masculine ownership, objectification, and denigration of female bodies as “religious patriarchy,”¹⁸ as Hebraic-Christian religions have an undeniable influence on the patriarchal structures taking advantage of women. In the American King James Version, Eve’s punishment is described as “pains and [...] *conceivings*” (Gen. 3:16, italics mine), a plural form suggesting increased pain in childbirth and increased number of pregnancies.¹⁹ Taken as evidence for their having sex in the Garden, Eve’s rare conception is reversed following her sin, when she is cursed to be a servant to her husband and a slave to her own body. Having a “quiver full” (Ps. 127:4-5), this feminine consequence is much of the reason many Christians still choose to abstain from birth control, natural and medical, and have as many children as possible, even with recent economic downturns. Success in frequent childbirth signifies a righteous woman, whose devotion is restrained to her family’s abundance, while as the Jewish Mishnah²⁰ asserts, death in childbirth is punishment for her transgressions: “if they are

¹⁷ As Sanders recounts, some critics have observed that ribs are curved rather than straight and signify that women are naturally “crooked and not to be trusted”: *Approaching Eden: Adam and Eve in Popular Culture*, 26.

¹⁸ “Dangerous Bodies: Women’s Nakedness and Theology,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 16, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 45-62, 45.

¹⁹ Sanders, *Approaching Eden: Adam and Eve in Popular Culture*, 26-27.

²⁰ Some of the earliest documents following the initial writing of the Adam and Eve story in Genesis, the Midrash and Talmud (400 B.C.E.) established the patriarchal overseeing of women, justifying the superior roles of men over women’s “natural”

not meticulous in the performance of *niddah*, the dough offering (*hallah*) and the kindling of Sabbath lights.”²¹

In an old Irish poem, “Eve’s Lament,”²² Eve admits that she “outraged Jesus of old” and “robbed [her] children of Heaven,” when she “plucked the apple” and showed that “women will not cease from folly” (v. 2-3, 9, 12). She continues to cry that “There would be no hell [. . .or] fear, if it were not for me” (v. 15, 16) in a biblical justification for the patriarchal subjugation of women: Eve represents the consequence of feminine liberty, as impurity (v. 8), “folly” (v. 12), “hell” (v. 15), and “sorrow” (v. 15). When she takes the blame for the Fall, the masculine sex is pardoned and given a license, a job to protect humanity from the feminine threat. This tradition of and consistent reference to Eve’s sin and suffering is not lost on modern readers, who may remember Mark Twain’s humorous telling of the Adam and Eve story²³ or C. S. Lewis’s *Perelandra*,²⁴ depicting a rather foolish woman as the downfall of humanity. Science fiction, as a genre, has played

inferiority: Jolene Edmunds Rockwood, “The Redemption of Eve.” *New Mormon Studies* (1998), 3-36, 3.

²¹ M. Shabbat 2:6, in, Natalie C. Polzer, “Misogyny Revisited: The Eve Traditions in Avot de Rabbi Natan, Versions A and B.” *AJS Review*, 36, no. 2 (November 2012), 207-255, 212.

²² *Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry*, translated by Kuno Meyer (London, UK: Constable & Company, Ltd., 1911), 34.

²³ In his *Diaries of Adam and Eve* (1905), Adam learns from Eve, who names the animals, discovers fire, and introduces invention and compassion into the Garden, but complains about her frequent attempts to eat the “forbidden fruit,” often literally pulling her down from tree.

²⁴ In the second installment of his science-fiction series, Lewis sets his protagonist Elwin Ranson on a paradisaical Venus, where his sole purpose is to prevent a woman from “emulating Eve and disobeying God’s orders”: Sanders, *Approaching Eden: Adam and Eve in Popular Culture*, 191.

host to a “considerable fraction”²⁵ of stories²⁶ based on Genesis from where an astronaut stops an alien Eve from plucking a foreign fruit²⁷ to portrayals of feminized AI that are passive, weak submissive, and generally inferior in comparison to male counterparts.²⁸ In these representations, men “babysit” women in a solemn, masculine duty to control the feminine sex and thereby sin. This simplification recalls Pandora and Eve’s infantilization in children’s literature, depicting Pandora as a naughty toddler²⁹ and Eve a

²⁵ Sanders, *Approaching Eden: Adam and Eve in Popular Culture*, 192.

²⁶ See “Over and Out” (1963) and *Wall-E* (2008): “Over and Out” is an apocalyptic episode of the original *Twilight Zone* that aired “roughly a year after the Cuban missile crisis and just one week after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy,” focusing on Adam Cook and Eve Norda as they become our first earthly parents, despite coming to earth from an alien planet. An animated movie set in 2810, when the planet has been so overwhelmed with trash that humans have long been forced to flee, Wall-E (an acronym for “Waste Allocation Load Lifter: Earth-class”) falls in love with another robot named Eve (i.e., “Extraterrestrial Vegetation Evaluator”). Together, they work to restore the Earth and to begin repopulation: Sanders, *Approaching Eden: Adam and Eve in Popular Culture*, 202-205, 210-212.

²⁷ 1957 *New Yorker* Cartoon by Whitney Darrow, Jr.: Sanders, *Approaching Eden: Adam and Eve in Popular Culture*, 191-193.

²⁸ See Helva from Anne McCaffery’s *The Ship Who Sang* (1969) and Rachel from Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* (1982).

²⁹ In Nathaniel Hawthorne’s retelling for children, *A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys* (1851), Pandora is described as a naughty child, whose disobedience serves as a lesson for readers. Her representation as “a spoiled brat” is humored in the postmodern era with television shows and book publications, such as *Max and Ruby’s First Greek Myth* (1993) and *Be Patient, Pandora!* (2014). In the latter, Pandora is a toddler who has been consistently told not to open her box and, as Maurice describes, “does everything but open it: she touches it, leans on it, sits on it, stands on it, [and] bounces on it, causing it to spring open and send its content—cupcakes—flying out”: Lisa Maurice, “Tempting Treasures and Seductive Snakes: Presenting Eve and Pandora for the Youngest Readers,” 69-80, *Gender, Creation Myths and Their Reception in Western Civilization: Prometheus, Pandora, Adam and Eve*, edited by Lisa Maurice and Tovi Bibring (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 69-70.

“flawed model.”³⁰ Eve is a symbol representing a corrupted source of life, alienated from humanity’s goodness by her fixed subordination,³¹ “greed, stupidity, amoral curiosity, willfulness, lack of sexual control, and cupidity.”³² Eve’s tradition is about masculine domination. From this, a revision focused on Milton’s humanist portrayal of the story and tradition of Adam and Eve encourages masculine and feminine, autonomous identities, each with qualities that contribute to a sufficient whole in relationships and society.

³⁰ To color the thematic atmosphere, children’s Bibles utilize the fantastical settings in relevant literature and thereby form an Eden that feels more innocent. The Edenic language of birth encourages the interpretation of an infantilized Adam and Eve in their childhood of Eden. Most children—despite their religious affiliation or religious-based education—had a familiarity with the biblical creation story, involving Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden. As Stuart Z. Charmé records, when polled, most naturally identified with a same-sex character. Boys favored Adam. Girls favored Eve, both giving reasons based upon their sex. However, those who did not identify with a character based upon sex mentioned Adam by name, expressing that they chose him because he was more impressive in his role and position than Eve. He was created first, was more powerful, and was given the responsibility of naming the animals, while Eve was simply created to serve him. Their childish attitude parallels the infantile reactions of Adam and Eve, Adam in his lack of thinking when taking the fruit and Eve’s ignorance from not having been tutored alongside Adam. When asked why Adam was created first, the children gave two reasons: (1) “God is male (or a man) and therefore prefers men” and (2) “men are stronger and better than women.” The influence of the traditional perspective on gender is compounded by the hesitation the boys had at the prospect of women being created first in comparison to the girls, who demonstrated a greater willingness to allow the initial creation of men: “Children’s Gendered Responses to the Story of Adam and Eve,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 13, no. 2 (Fall 1997), 27-44, 29-33; M. C. Steenberg, “Children in Paradise: Adam and Eve as ‘Infants in Irenaeus.’” *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 12, no. 1 (Spring 2004), 1-22, 1.

³¹ Deirdre Keenan McChrystal, “Redeeming Eve.” *English Literary Renaissance*, 23, no. 3 (Autumn 1993), 490-508, 490-491.

³² John Phillips, *Eve: The History of an Idea*, in, McChrystal 491.

In the Pentateuch,³³ Eve’s entire story—creations, temptation and subsequent fall, and expulsion from the Garden with Adam—is contained within Genesis 2-3³⁴ in a total of forty-two words. She appears in two creation narratives: first, as a creature fashioned with Adam *imago Dei*, and second, as a subordinate creature fashioned “from [Adam’s] body for his need”³⁵ (Gen. 1:27; 2:18, 22). Despite her initial egalitarian creation story, suggesting her co-dominion in the Garden, Eve’s secondary creation has been more readily recognized in Christian communities. Befitting the “patriarchal status quo,”³⁶ the narrative lacks descriptions of her immediate presentation and marriage to Adam. This

³³ The primary source for the Judaeo-Christian representations and interpretations of Eve.

³⁴ The only addition to the narrative comes in the following chapter, when Eve conceives and bears three sons—Cain (4:1), Abel (4:2), and Seth (4:25).

³⁵ Milton alludes to this interpreted submission in Book IV of *Paradise Lost*, when Satan first spies on Adam and Eve. Whether out of enumeration or sexual titillation, envious or jealous, he favors Eve and describes her curls as that “which impli’d / Subjection” (*PL* 307-308.285), perverting her shared lordship of the Garden to her yielding to Adam “with coy submission” (*PL* 310.285). Milton reuses this perspective, when Eve admits that she was formed from and for Adam: “O thou for whom / And from whom I was form’d flesh of thy flesh” (*PL* 4.439-440.288). Redressing Eve for a more positive portrayal, emphasizing her equality and free will, Milton represents patriarchal prerogative through Satan’s perspective, suggesting a perversion of God’s intended purpose. When Satan refers to Adam and Eve as “both / Not equal, as thir sex not equal seem’d / [...] Hee for God only, shee for God in him” (*PL* 4.295-296, 299.285), Milton is not giving value to the perspective, but the opposite: in his commentary on the ideology, he is saying that is a “decidedly Satanic” perspective, adopted by mankind after the Fall: All quotations from Milton’s *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, John. *Complete Poems and Major Prose*. Edited by Merritt Y. Hughes, (Indianapolis, IL: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003); Yael Shemesh, “Eve, The First Woman: On Choice and Responsibility,” in *Gender, Creation Myths and Their Reception in Western Civilization: Prometheus, Pandora, Adam and Eve*, 107-117, edited by Lisa Maurice and Tovi Bibring (Broadway, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 108-109; Joseph Wittreich, *Feminist Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987), 95.

³⁶ Gillhouse, 261.

assumption of consent and free will mirrors Pandora's being given over to Epimetheus. Like Pandora, Eve is silent and dependent upon her husband for life. She is not given a voice, not even for her own name: that responsibility belongs to Adam, who names her, as he named the animals. It "never occurs to him to ask for her name"³⁷—and certainly not to ask for her opinion on the subject. Eve is largely silent and submissive to the will³⁸ of God and man in a presupposed role of femininity that when broken, leads to death. In the Hebrew narrative, Eve lacks a voice. In regard to a feminist reading, we do not have her thoughts, as we have Adam's: Adam was lonely, fulfilled only upon Eve's creation, but we do not know if she was lonely—angry, confused, curious, excited, or fulfilled.

From this stifled representation, two traditions have emerged: the first, an interpretation of Eve based upon what is found in Genesis and the second, an interpretation of Eve based upon revisions³⁹ and subtle shifts of the narrative to support a

³⁷ Shemesh, 109.

³⁸ Sayantan Pal Chowdhury and Siliguri Baradakanta Vidyapith argue that Eve submits to the wills of the men around her because she "does not know her own will." In this perspective, Eve is prey to patriarchal control, a secondary creature, not unlike an animal, made to be domesticated and ruled: "Whiteman's 'A Woman Waits for Me' and Eve's First Speech (Paradise Lost Bk. IV): Feminine Voices," *International Journal of English Language, Literature, and Humanities*, 1, no. 2 (August 2013), 39-48.

³⁹ John Stephens, Robyn McCallum, and Elizabeth Gillhouse have argued that when Eve's story is retold to children, authors have made subtle changes reflecting their own cultural zeitgeist to rationalize and support the subordination of women in Western culture. This retelling of the Scripture has related the Bible to that of a folk or fairy tale, influenced and limited by the historical period and cultural ideals of its writing. The Bible is not correlative to a retelling of Cinderella, where the story shifts but the motifs remain the same, because it is still sacred and is limited by the presence of the Church, who would reject a too strongly rewritten edition. Bottigheimer traces this imprint of revision to children's Bibles, where the story of Adam and Eve has been dissected and put back together again for, in quoting Stephens and McCallum, "a new textual and ideological configuration." The telling of the story of Adam and Eve to children, whether with comment, judgment, or relevant ill-intent, has served to introduce and reinforce traditional gender roles and gender identity that encourage the subordination of women

certain agenda. The first interpretation claims that Adam and Eve share culpability for the Fall: Eve fell to Satan's temptation and chose to eat the "forbidden fruit," and Adam chose to eat the fruit Eve offered and was punished with her. John Milton adopts this representation in *Paradise Lost* (1647), in which he develops her character more positively to emphasize freewill, equality, and eventual role as a spiritual leader for Adam. In the second interpretation, however, Eve's narrative is built on "ideological abuse"⁴⁰ and misrepresentation to portray her as the sole culprit of the Fall and an evil seductress, who plotted Adam's murder.⁴¹ The Early Church Fathers and poets—Tertullian of Carthage (c. 160 – 225), Faltonia Batitia Proba (c. 320 – 370), and Aelia Eudocia Augusta (c. 401 – 460)—regarded this Eve as "the devil's gateway" and "the origin of all ills," an "impious wife," who, "filled with madness," birthed evil into the

due to their inferiority and tendency towards moral weakness and emphasize the pervasive nature of the patriarchal ideology of "arrogance, envy, insecurity, and misogyny" pushed onto the text: Charmé, 27-44; Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "An Alternative Eve in Johann Hübner's Children's Bible," 73, in Gillhouse, 261; John Stephens and Robyn McCallum, *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children's Literature*, 4, in Gillhouse, 259-260.

⁴⁰ Mieke Bal refers to this "ideological abuse" by her coined term "ideostory," describing figures whose stories have been purposefully misrepresented for a cultural purpose: here, reinforced patriarchal power and control: "Reading as Empowerment: The Bible from a Feminist Perspective," 88, in Gillhouse, 261.

⁴¹ This patriarchal perspective of Eve was spearheaded through the manipulation of *Gen.* 3:6, where the verse is rewritten to substitute the implication of "tempts" for "temptress." Tertullian capitalized on this interpretation in his claim that "Eve 'persuaded' Adam" and told women to dress mournfully for their role in mankind's condemnation, feeding into Gregory Nazianzen's criticism that she "beguiled her husband by pleasures": Jean M. Higgins, "The Myth of Eve: The Temptress," *JAAR*, 44, no. 4 (1976), 639-647, 640; Norris, Pamela. *Eve: A Biography* (Washington Square, NY: New York UP, 1999), 196-197.

world for “the population of hell.”⁴² Bonaventure (1221 – 1274) argued that Eve’s “wicked persuasion” “corrupted her husband,” while a fourteenth-century author believed that Eve prayed for her husband’s desolation and counseled him into the Fall.⁴³ Ignorant, or shrewdly aware of her wrongdoing, Eve brought about sin from her feminine wiles, much to the horror of the innocent, ever-unsuspecting Adam. In the nineteenth century, Ginzberg commented that Eve begged and pleaded for Adam to eat the fruit, crying out in lamentation for his relinquishment to her.⁴⁴ Weak in will and in thought, Eve desired knowledge and wisdom so greatly that she sacrificed her life, and upon realizing her hubris,⁴⁵ desperately “sought redemption through gnosis, [...] feminine spiritual power [within her...], a source of spiritual awakening.”⁴⁶

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton refashions Eve not as an evil seductress, but as a woman who embodies the ideal “spiritual companionship”⁴⁷ of marriage and who seeks to “find

⁴² Benckhuysen, 15, 20-21.

⁴³ Jean M. Higgins, “The Myth of Eve: The Temptress,” *JAAR*, 44, no. 4 (1976), 639-647, 640.

⁴⁴ The tradition is perhaps best summarized in a fifteenth century witch-hunters’ manual, which references the Old Testament: “[T]he Scriptures have much that is evil to say about women, and this because of the first temptress, Eve, and her imitators”: Higgins, 640-641.

⁴⁵ C. S. Lewis argues that according to Genesis, the Fall was not caused by sex, but *hubris*. He says, “The story in the Book of Genesis rather suggests that some corruption in our sexual nature followed the fall and was its result, not its cause,” that of which can be understood as the desire to “be like gods”: *Mere Christianity* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2009), 49.

⁴⁶ Frank, 94.

⁴⁷ Milton’s perspective of marriage was founded on what he called “spiritual companionship,” the mutual passion and devotion between and a man and woman in physical and mental likeness and in the blessing of procreation. He believed in shared equality and in the excellence of both sexes in accordance with the edicts of the Fall.

herself.” He employs Graeco-Roman anti-woman ideologies condemning women, evident in Pandora’s myth and the often passive, weak, and victimized portrayals of women, to illustrate Eve’s relationship to the classical *mythos* and ultimately her superiority to Pandora and Ovidian archetypes. In Book IV, Milton’s Satan watches Adam lead “With Flowers, Garlands, and sweet-smelling Herbs / Espoused Eve” (*PL* 709-710.294) to “her Nuptial Bed” (*PL* 709.294), draped in ornamental language familiar to Hesiod’s portrayal of Pandora:

“Brought her in naked beauty more adorn’d,
More lovely than *Pandora*, whom the Gods
Endow’d with all thir gifts, and O too like
In sad event, when to the unwiser Son
Of *Japhet* brought by *Hermes*, she ensnar’d
Mankind with her fair looks, to be aveng’d
On him who had stole *Jove*’s authentic fire.” (4.713-719.294-295)

Although the comparison between Pandora and Eve suggests a negative interpretation, Milton’s development of the biblical character in paralleled structure to Pandora represents his epic effort not to redeem Eve but to consider her emotional responses and rationale for eating the fruit. In *Milton’s Eve*, renowned Milton scholar Diane Kelsey McColley brings a feminist⁴⁸ perspective and observes that by describing Eve like

Although he argued for symphonic harmony in marriage and the “mutual benevolence’ of the marriage bed,” he understood the benefit of divorce when two individuals lacked compatibility and experienced the spiritual discord of an inappropriate and ill-suited couple: McColley, Diane Kelsey. “Milton on the Sexes,” 175-192, in *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, edited by Dennis Danielson (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1999), 182-183.

⁴⁸ Feminist criticism “has been the most fecund recent growth area in Milton studies.” For some time, the primary attitude of Milton’s perspectives towards women have been that of a misogynist, most notably popularized by Samuel Johnson, an influential critic of Milton, who believed that “Milton’s enthusiasm for liberty did not extend to his own household, [that in fact, he] ‘was severe and arbitrary’ [with] ‘a Turkish contempt of females as subordinate and inferior beings...He thought woman made only for obedience, and man for rebellion’.” This has arguably been sufficiently explored,

Pandora and positioning her within the *mythos*, Milton distinguishes “the traces of truth and the parodies in the myth.”⁴⁹ In building upon McColley’s scholarship, I argue that as an archetype of Eve, Pandora represents the passivity and silence that has been attached to Eve (and to women generally). Milton’s Eve draws from classical and Christian traditions in order to move away from the anti-woman culture of the West⁵⁰ and to

examined, and disputed by the now feminist perspective suggesting that Milton is a defender of women, not because he champions Eve as a heroine- or redemptive-type figure, but because Eve’s significance is not limited to her womanhood. Milton puts Eve first. In *Paradise Lost*, Eve is the leading character, depicted as the most dynamic alongside Satan, and is suggestive of “wholeness and interdependence” in her differences from Adam and the male sex: Abdullah F. Al-Badarneh, “Milton’s Pro-Feminist Presentation of Eve in *Paradise Lost*,” *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 3, no. 4 (July 2014), 105-109, 105-106; Samuel Johnson, *Life Milton*, 91, in Margarita Stocker, “Feminist Approaches in *Paradise Lost*,” 50-58, in *Paradise Lost* (London, UK: Palgrave, 1988), 50-51; McColley, “Milton on the Sexes, 175-192; Jillie Orth Reimer, “Eve Transcending Demeaned: The Construct of Female Gender in *Paradise Lost*,” *Criterion: A Journal of Literary Criticism*, 8, no. 2 (7 July 2015), 1-9, 2, 1-3.

⁴⁹ *Milton’s Eve* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 69.

⁵⁰ Misogyny defines much of Western culture. In Europe and the United States, women consistently suffer belittlement: the terms—“whore,” “minx,” “cougar,” and “punk”—from early English drama to present conversation have defined women “to keep them ‘properly’ subordinate” by reducing their existence to a “worthless” archetype of sex. Women of every century have labored in occupations befitting those in lower classes with low skill and low remuneration and have all-too often been paid significantly less, if at all. In a 2025 study of the gender pay gap in the U.S. over the previous two decades, the Pew Research Center found that on average women earned “85% of what men earned” compared to 81% in 2003. The wage gap has shrunk slightly and is noticeably “smaller for workers ages 25 to 34 than for all workers 16 and older.” Reasons cited for the gap include women being “treated differently by employers” (50%), making “different choices about balancing work and family” (42%), and working “in jobs that pay less” (34%). The gap is exasperated by pressures at home, as roughly two-thirds of working mothers in the U.S. “feel a great deal of pressure to focus on responsibilities at home”: Judith M. Bennett, “Misogyny, Popular Culture, and Women’s Work.” *History Workshop Journal*, 31, no. 1 (1991), 166-188, 166; Richard Fry, and Carolina Aragão. “Gender Pay Gap in U.S. Has Narrowed Slightly Over 2 Decades.” *Pew Research Center*, 2 March 2025: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/03/04/gender-pay-gap-in-us-has-narrowed-slightly-over-2-decades/>; Savannah Xaver, “Anti-Female Language of

demonstrate the equality and worthiness of Eve (and all women) to Adam in the Garden. I speak to the current scholarship by arguing that Milton sought to represent an egalitarian society in Adam and Eve and build upon it by arguing that he redressed Eve in Pandora and Ovidian myths to petition for feminine autonomy. Milton is not a misogynist, but an advocate for the shared humanity and blame and consequence of transgressing in the Garden.

In retelling “the source and symbol of many of the negative traits assigned to women,”⁵¹ Milton gives Eve a voice and represents “our Great parents” (*PL* 1.29.212) as “equals”—different in sex, but shared “Lords of all” (*PL* 4.290.285). Milton’s Eve is the crown of God’s creation, superior to Pandora in appearance and purpose: Eve has free

the Early Modern Stage: Abuse, Degradation, and Resistance” (dissertation, Western Michigan University, 2023).

⁵¹ Frank, 80.

will,⁵² as a dynamic character who “grows up” in the epic.⁵³ Although William F. Phipps, George F. Butler, Mandy Green, Thierry J. Alcoloumbre, and Lisa Maurice, among others, have given much attention to Eve’s position as a Christian Pandora, little has been said about Milton’s reforming of her image, inspired by the apocryphal collection of the *Lives of Adam and Eve* and her personification as a goddess of nature and fertility.

⁵² Milton’s allusion to Pandora in his literary representation of Eve likewise brings balance, as it “absolves God from the responsibility of creating evil” and in doing so crowns her in the “more adorn’d” (PL 4.713.294) classical narrative. He does not suggest Eve is a Pandora, but rather provides a divine justification for the release of evil: Zeus created the jar for Pandora, and God likewise created the Tree of Knowledge and placed it in the Garden for Adam and Eve. As Milton asserts, what sets their narratives apart is the purpose for each creation: Zeus schemed against mankind in his creating and gifting Pandora with the jar, while God endowed mankind with complete autonomy through freewill. The Tree of Knowledge was not placed in the Garden for Eve to eat the “forbidden fruit” but was placed for Eve to have choice. Endowed with an independent will, Eve did not need to consult her husband. Her free will in the deliberate, informed choice to wander alone in the Garden and to make decisions without permission demonstrates the equality inherent to her shared Miltonic representation with him in Book IV—“Two of far nobler shape erect and tall, / Godlike erect, with native honour clad / In naked majesty seemed lords of all” (PL 4.288-291.285)—and her traditional narrative in *Gen.* 1:27. Both are given dominion—Adam over the animals, Eve over the flowers—and in the harmony of “spiritual companionship” are equal rulers, who balance one another’s strengths. In the classical tradition, Pandora brought balance in that she was a vessel of evil for man’s vessel of goodness, but Milton’s Eve is balanced in herself: created for good, Eve is sufficient through choice even in her sin: Benckhuysen, 40; Butler, 154; McColley, *Milton’s Eve*, 154, 69-70; McColley, “Milton on the Sexes,” 183; McColley, Diane Kelsey. “Subsequent or Precedent? Eve as Milton’s Defense of Poesie,” *Milton Quarterly*, 20, no. 4 (December 1986): 132-136; Stella P. Revard, “Eve and the Doctrine of Responsibility in *Paradise Lost*,” *PMLA*, 88, no. 1 (January 1973), 69-78.

⁵³ Eve is a dynamic character, who pushes the plot forward. We see her evolve from a naïve creation with an identity dependent on Adam to an independent woman with a structured autonomy and a redemptive identity that supplies a unique perspective to her marriage. Although he endures an existential crisis following his consumption of the fruit and overcomes his desire to commit suicide, Adam is largely static. His character development is solely motivated by God and Eve—God, who creates for him a “help,” and Eve, who both gives him the “forbidden fruit” and urges him toward redemption (*Gen.* 2:20).

In this thesis, I argue that Milton redresses Eve in the Pandora and its correlative Ovidian tradition to focus on her emotional rationale for and responses to eating the “forbidden fruit” in order not to alleviate Eve of all culpability, but to demonstrate Adam and Eve’s shared role in the Fall. By Christianizing pagan allusions in an allegory of myth, Milton disputes Eve’s misrepresentation in tradition and asserts her superiority to Pandora for a seventeenth-century audience, ultimately becoming a champion not only for women, but for humanity. I will go beyond current scholarship on Milton’s Ovidian⁵⁴ Eve to show that Eve is a better example of womanhood than her classical counterpart Pandora and a strong wife, mother, and leader in God’s perfect creation, worthy of the title “Mother of All Living.” A cog in the machine, I want my scholarship along with that of Eve’s tradition in Judaeo-Christian beliefs, Milton, and modern Western culture to bring attention to the continued misrepresentation and denigration of women, to argue for Milton’s championing both men and women as a modern humanist, and to suggest Eve’s

⁵⁴ True to the Renaissance and Restoration, as an Orphic poet, Milton marries his writing to Ovid’s. The Christianized allegorical and rhetorical of Ovid characteristic of Milton’s poetry was popularized in 1565 and 1567 with the publication of Arthur Golding’s translation of *Metamorphosis* followed by George Sandy’s in 1621 as five books, 1626 as a complete text, and 1632 with the addition of a commentary respectively. The translations energized Puritan opposition to the stage, especially in the mid-seventeenth century with Oliver Cromwell, but despite this opposition and allegory’s going out of style, Sandy’s translation was reprinted in nearly every decade following its publication in the 1600s. Milton’s reading of Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* inspired the earliest stages of his creative expression in poetry and illustrates his imitation of (and reference to) the Ovidian style, especially in his “Elegy I to Charles Diodati.” As Stanivukovic explains, Milton’s poetry is “coloured and eroticized by an Ovidian lens, specifically a reading of *Metamorphosis*,” so that Milton himself becomes a kind of apprentice to Ovid’s interpretation of the classics: Goran Stanivukovic, “Engendering Metamorphosis: Milton and the Ovidian Corpus,” *Ovid and the Renaissance Body* (Toronto, CAN: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 208-211.

role, not as inferior but as a representation of human ambition, curiosity, free will, and independence.

Milton is not using Eve to redeem Pandora, but is using Pandora to argue for Eve's superiority. Milton's Eve is typically perceived as "an ideal female human being, a perfect woman—perfect, at least, before the Fall"⁵⁵—but as I assert, she is perfect first as a human, who "grows up," gets married, struggles to find her identity and purpose within her home and workforce, suffers marital disagreements and infertility, and perseveres towards redemption and a fresh start. I argue that in *Paradise Lost*, Milton brings attention to divinely intended womanhood and the effects of religious eroticism on feminine representation. Although Eve's narratives, primarily Genesis 1-3 and the *Lives of Adam and Eve*, have been revised to blame, curse, and condemn her to fit patriarchal prerogatives of femininity, Milton's Eve is a vessel of hope.

Eve's Creation in the Hebrew Tradition:

As with Hesiod's portrayal of Pandora, the Hebrew tradition has dual narratives of Eve. In the first, God breathes life into man, both male and female:

So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (*Gen.* 1:27-28)

God's co-creation and blessed co-dominion of mankind suggests equality. Although different words are employed in the first creation in comparison to the second in English

⁵⁵ Karen L. Edwards, "Resisting Representation: All about Milton's 'Eve'." *Exemplaria*, 9, no. 1 (1997), 231-253, 231.

translation, a dominion of sex is not inherent to Genesis.⁵⁶ The lack of goodness in Adam's loneliness and Eve's creation as a "help"⁵⁷ should maintain an equal contribution to the development of mankind, but since Eve's secondary creation suggests an inherent subordination and inferiority to her husband, the second narrative has been popularized in more patriarchal readings.

In the second narrative, Eve is formed from man for man. God first creates Adam from *'adamah* (clay or dirt) outside the Garden and names him *'adam* (or, "humankind"),⁵⁸ but as the single crown of creation formed from the image of God and distinguished in dominance over the living world, he was alone (Gen. 1:27). Although he is given a home and an authoritative role in the paradise of the Garden, Adam lacks companionship in a like-species: "Adam gave names to all cattle [...] but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:20). In a Jewish commentary, a forerunner to Milton's literary representation, Adam expresses his loneliness: "Every one has a partner, yet I have none."⁵⁹ God recognizes his loneliness and provides a "help meet" for him. A translation of the phrase *'ezer kenegdô*, the Hebrew refers to "a companion corresponding to," or on in equality,⁶⁰ and suggests Eve's intended equality with Adam,

⁵⁶ Benckhuysen, 208, 210-211.

⁵⁷ As Shemesh understands, the Hebrew literally translates to "a helper over against him" or, as in the Revised Standard Version, "'a helper fit for him' (Gen. 2:18)": 109; Benckhuysen, 212.

⁵⁸ Norris, 10, 19.

⁵⁹ Norris, 19.

⁶⁰ See note 40.

despite her secondary creation. The Genesis account reiterates Adam's yearning for fit companionship and describes God's solution in the creation of Eve:

And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. [...] And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. (Gen. 2:18, 21-22)

In this account, Eve is fashioned from Adam's rib in the Garden. Her formation from man for man has been interpreted as an inherent subordination to the one who gave her life, compounding her potential inferiority, as implied in receiving her appearance from Adam and not God himself.

The inclusion of only the most pertinent moments in comparison to Eve's thoughts and feelings encourages the interpretation of potential subordination, since the present viewpoint is the passive male rather than the active female, and negates the pivotal questions that influence other creation (and awakening) stories, such as Pygmalion and Sleeping Beauty: Where was Eve and what was she doing in-between the time of her creation and her presentation to Adam?⁶¹ While the Bible remains silent, Milton elaborates on her life in the Garden and in her relationship with Adam, presenting her as an autonomous individual with her own desires and developing identity, bringing restitution to the "teasingly elliptical"⁶² account has encouraged this interpretative inferiority in the patriarchal culture, especially with Paul's elaboration in *Romans*. As Green understands, "[h]aving Eve wake to life entirely alone allows her to experience a

⁶¹ Mandy Green, "The Virgin in the Garden: Milton's Ovidian Eve," *Modern Language Review*, 100, part 4 (October 2005), 903-922, 905-906.

⁶² Green, 905.

sense of self separate from her relationship to Adam, and thereby encourages the reader to see her as a fully integrated human being, and not simply to view her in terms of Adam's response to her."⁶³ Milton's representation of an independent Eve, who is allowed to live at least briefly in a space, where Adam is still asleep and unaware of her existence, is not feminist so much as humanist. In reading Milton, we are intended to take his representation of Eve. He demonstrates that everyone is an individual, who at one point or another will exist without a partner and thereby construct a psyche that is uninfluenced by a romantic relationship. Adam had a life without Eve. Eve did not have a life without Adam, which suggests that her solitary existence (albeit momentary) is evidence of her sufficiency to stand alone.

While Adam was created in the image of God, the second narrative signifies that Eve was created in the image of Adam. Milton represents this potential subordination as an exercise of virtue,⁶⁴ that is, Adam and Eve balance one another in the display of inherent characteristics. The stereotypical virtues of the masculine in "fortitude, clear-headed justice, fidelity to principle, and reason" and the feminine in "sympathy, gentleness, and fidelity" are shared between Adam and Eve. While Adam displays more masculine qualities in his meeting and naming Eve, he later leans into the feminine virtue of sympathy for his role in the condemnation of mankind to the postlapsarian. Eve's virtues likewise develop. When Adam's virtues are more masculine, hers are more feminine and vice versa.⁶⁵

⁶³ Green, 906.

⁶⁴ McColley, *Milton's Eve*, 27.

⁶⁵ McColley, "Milton on the Sexes," 183.

According to Pamela Norris, however, Eve’s creation in the Garden ensures her shared dignity with its perfection, and the intimacy of her creation—that is, having been taken from Adam’s rib⁶⁶ (or in some translations, his side), the closest flesh to his heart—symbolizes Eve’s connection to her husband and the intended loving relationship between a man and a woman.⁶⁷ For Adam, loving Eve is the same as loving himself, as illustrated in his reaction to her creation: “And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh: She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man” (Gen. 2:23).⁶⁸ The development of her name symbolizes her unique worth: while Adam was named by God after the general Hebrew term for “man,” she was named twice by her husband—first as the term for being taken “out of Man” and second as the title of “the Mother of All Living,” or Eve (Gen. 3:20).⁶⁹ In the Hebrew tradition, the name Eve *proceeds* the Fall—as opposed to Milton’s interpretation, in which the name Eve *precedes* the Fall—and represents Adam’s unwavering adoration for his wife, despite the induction of the postlapsarian world. His devotion is complete and unbroken. The finality of Eve’s creation—as formed from the former crown of creation, Adam, by God—positions her as the new crown.

⁶⁶ Although Norris’s reframing suggests a more positive account, critics, such as John A. Phillips and Elizabeth Gillhouse, have disagreed “with this inversion of traditional interpretations” because revisions to the material, substituting Adam’s side for the word “rib” are too embedded in our cultural consciousness to separate for a defense: Gillhouse, 262.

⁶⁷ Norris, 19.

⁶⁸ Benckhuysen, 29.

⁶⁹ Benckhuysen, 19; Norris, 10.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton revisits the narratives of Eve and brings them in conversation with the classical *mythos* of Pandora, who becomes the adorned crown of “the Mother of All Living” to accentuate her freewill (Gen. 3:20). Green explains, “Milton deftly manipulates the motif of Eve’s virginity, interweaving a number of different mythological strands to create a richly braided effect that intensifies his thematic design.”⁷⁰ He updates the tradition that has largely depicted Eve as a “murderer,” who seduced Adam into the woes of sin and death. Although she falls to Satan’s temptation and chooses to eat the “forbidden fruit,” sharing it with Adam, Milton’s Eve rescues Adam from suicide and thereby provides a future for both the “Father of Man” and relevant humanity after the Fall. She ultimately restores balance to their relationship and leads their prayerful repentance to God. By developing an informed perspective of Eve that relies on primary source material, particularly that of the Bible and Jewish writings, and not contemporary representation, Milton correlates the love of Adam and Eve to their shared fall and portrays Eve as an equal in her companionship. He complicates the figure of Eve by fixing on Pandora and the *mythos*. Milton does not seek to redeem the “Mother of Mankind” but rather to illustrate her motivations towards redemption as a spiritual leader.

Milton and the Creation of Pandora in Hesiod:

Pandora, the “beautiful mischief,”⁷¹ is arguably the most misunderstood character in the classical *mythos*. In his *Theogony*, Hesiod depicts her creation as a punishment:

⁷⁰ Green, 905.

⁷¹ Dora and Erwin Panofsky, *Pandora’s Box: The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1956), 3.

Prometheus, the titan of foresight, disobeyed the king of the gods in bringing fire to humanity, and in jealous wrath, Zeus commissioned the creation of an evil (*kakon*) (561-613.49-51). Although Hesiod records Hephaistos, the “much-renowned Lamé One,” as the architect of the female sex, sources, such as Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, credit Prometheus with the creation of mankind (569-570.49). As a “trickster” in mythological and folkloric motif,⁷² Prometheus’s nature brings an emphasis to the deceptive and untrustworthy characterization of Pandora.⁷³ Associate Professor of Law at Drake University and creative defense attorney, Sally Frank argues that this has urged men to distrust their own wives⁷⁴ and daughters and in Judaeo-Christian cultures and explains the patriarchal need to supervise women—lest they connive betrayal and desolation. Milton rewrites this interpretation of Pandora⁷⁵ to support Eve as a superior example of

⁷² See Aeschylus’s *Prometheus Bound* and Plato’s *Protagoras*.

⁷³ Trusting a woman is equivalent to trusting a deceiver. German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer along with numerous recent scholars, including Dora and Erwin Panofsky and Vered Lev Kenann, have continued to argue the biased, inaccurate portrayal of Hesiod’s Pandora and the likelihood of the Fifty-eighth Fable of Babrius, a variation positioning a man in the place of Pandora, serving as the most authentic rendering of her mythological tradition. Beyond its gender reversal, Babrius’s fable ascends Hesiod’s conception of “feminine frailty” to represent man’s conflict of choosing between knowledge and contentment: he either opens the vessel Zeus has given him and satisfies his curiosity, perceived as the pursuit for knowledge, or does not open the vessel and continues his wrestle with contentment. Ultimately, he settles upon the former and tears open the vessel, forfeiting the goods inside and closing the lid upon Hope: Richard Martin, ed. *Bulfinch’s Mythology* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1991), 14; Panofsky, 4, 6, 8; William E. Phipps, “Eve and Pandora Contrasted,” *Theology Today* (October 1976), 34-48.

⁷⁴ “Eve Was Right to Eat the ‘Apple’: The Importance of Narrative in the Art of Lawyering,” *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*, 8, no. 79 (1996), 79-118, 80.

⁷⁵ Milton would have been familiar with her traditional portrayal and subsequent interpretations in the Renaissance. Pandora’s narrative was one of the first texts to be translated into Latin and printed in Latin and the original Greek with extensive commentaries. Hesiod was “widely studied” and was central to the academic curriculums

womanhood. He alludes to classical myths, such as Prometheus’s trickery—“to be aveng’d / On him who had stole *Jove’s* authentic fire” (PL 4.718-719.295)—with reference to Epimetheus’s parentage in “*Japhet*” (PL 4.717.295) and the Noah-like characters of Deucalion and Pyrrha as a prototype for Adam and Eve,⁷⁶ forming a bridge between the classical and the Christian and suggesting Eve’s pure creation and intention in Eden.

In Hesiod’s first narrative, Zeus delegates the creation of the first woman to Hephaistos, who molds her from the earth and prepares her for Athena (570-573.49). The goddess of wisdom adorns the unnamed woman with “silvery clothing,” a “highly wrought veil” with “freshly budding garlands that arouse desire,” and a golden crown (573-580.49).⁷⁷ In *Pandora’s Jar*, the renowned classicist Natalie Haynes observes that once finished with their work, Hephaistos and Athena presents “the *kalon kakon, ant’agathoio*—beautiful evil, the price of good—to the other gods, who realize [...the] mortal men will have no device or remedy against her.”⁷⁸ The Golden Age of mankind had not had an encounter with evil prior to the introduction of Pandora; that is, mankind had never experienced deceit, guile, seduction, and temptation or edicts of the flesh, such

of the period, demonstrated in Milton’s references to the mythological tradition in his prolusions and his teaching Hesiod to both Edward and John Phillips: Butler, 154.

⁷⁶ The daughter of Epimetheus and Pandora, Pyrrha became the new “Mother of Mankind” after Zeus sent a Genesis-like flood to destroy the entire world: Butler, 154.

⁷⁷ Carved into the illustrious crown is “all the terrible monsters the land and the sea nourish” (580-584.49). Pandora, still in an unnamed form, is clothed in the symbolism of her creation: she is decorated with the horrific violence of Charybdis, Chimaera, and Scylla as if she were their crown, their epitomic representation.

⁷⁸ Haynes, 11.

as hunger, pain, and suffering, and was thereby grossly unprepared for the punishment. In lacking the experience and subsequent wisdom to evade her temptation, mankind fell to her, “this beautiful evil thing,” and received a dual curse: (1) “the deadly race and tribe of women, [as] a great woe for mortals, dwelling with men,” who will bring suffering upon men in marriage, and (2) for the man who attempts to escape the suffering of marriage, the lack of provision in his advanced age from the children he would have had (585-586.49, 591-612.51-52). Although Hesiod’s narrative portrays Pandora as the punishment for Prometheus’s stealing fire, she serves a second role in bringing balance to mankind, that the goodness of men is balanced through the evil of women (609-612.53).

In this second narrative, Zeus tells Prometheus with great pleasure that committing trickery will result in an equivalent embracing of evil, reinforcing his stealing fire as the inciting incident for Pandora’s creation (53-58.91).⁷⁹ Hephaistos is likewise commissioned and mixes “earth with water as quickly as possible,” shaping her into a “beautiful, lovely form” with the appearance of a goddess (59-64.91). He endows her with a human voice and finishes preparing her for the gods’ individual contributions: Athena’s teaching her to weave, Aphrodite’s showering of “grace and painful desire and limb-devouring cares,” and Hermes’s sculpting of her character as devious, sly, and untrustworthy (59-68.91-92). While Athena adorns her, the Graces with sweet Persuasion gild her in golden jewelry, and the Seasons crown her with flowers, the god of thieves steps forward to bless her with a name—Pandora, the “All-Gift” (69-82.93).⁸⁰ Prepared

⁷⁹ Hesiod expounds upon his portrayal of Pandora in *Works and Days*. Among rebuking his brother and relevant sibling relationships, he condemns women as creatures with “a dog’s mind and a thievish character”: 67-68, 93.

⁸⁰ Pandora is a *parthenos*, a young woman of marriageable age: Haynes, 13-14.

with a name and “lies and guileful words” to seduce mankind, Pandora was given as a gift to Prometheus’s brother—god of hindsight Epimetheus, who did not remember his brother’s warning not to receive any gifts from the gods “lest something evil happen” and welcomed her as his wife—with one more gift: a jar (77.93, 87-88.93). Enslaved to her curiosity, Pandora opened the jar, unleashed evil,⁸¹ and upon realizing the horror of what she had done, slammed the lid back onto the jar⁸² and forever trapped one final being: Elpis (Anticipation, or Hope) (92-105.95).

Seeking Pandora, The Rewritten Myth:

Although Hesiod’s narrative has been the most recognizable representation of Pandora’s creation, scholars have dismissed its credibility in recent years in lieu of mounting evidence about his misogynistic intentions and her earlier origins. In his twentieth-century publication, *The Greek Myths*, the renowned classicist and translator Robert Graves challenged Hesiod’s account, as he writes, “[...] Pandora is not a genuine myth, but an antifeminist fable, probably of his own invention though based on the story

⁸¹ Aesop’s fables likewise present a positive interpretation by replacing Pandora with Epimetheus: Instead of Pandora opening the box, Epimetheus—*lichnos anthropos*, or “a curious [and] greedy man—opened the box and released the female virtues of Peace, Fortune, and Health: Haynes, 9, 19.

⁸² Although Pandora’s narrative lacks a divine curse in comparison to Eve’s sufferance of submission and pain in childbirth, her femininity suggests a curse in its humanity, as a natural concoction of good and evil. Eve is likewise a vessel—beautiful in appearance but ugly in reality—whose traditional narrative, like Pandora’s, offers her no voice in being given (or taken) by Adam. Milton rectifies this by giving Eve a voice and ambition: Thierry J. Alcoloumbre, “Eve and Pandora: Myths in Dialogue,” 57-69, in *Gender, Creation Myths and Their Reception in Western Civilization: Prometheus, Pandora, Adam and Eve*, edited by Lisa Maurice and Tovi Bibring (Broadway, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 59.

of Demophon and Phyllis.”⁸³ When Graves argues that “Pandora is not a ‘genuine’ myth,” he is not suggesting that she is not a fundamental character in the classical *mythos*, but rather that unlike her classical relatives, Pandora is not a carefully preserved myth handed down through the oral tradition. Pandora’s inherent role in the *mythos* has been reworked and refashioned so that she is no longer the figure “originally” identified by the Greeks, but rather Hesiod’s own patriarchal invention that through literary transmission, became familiar to audiences.

Hesiod’s omission of the physical, divine representation of Pandora—that was undoubtedly well-known in Hesiod’s lifetime through evidence in myth and statues—suggests he employed his narrative as a misogynistic rant against women in comparison to an honest portrayal as an unadulterated account preserved from antiquity of the female figure. William E. Phipps describes Hesiod’s malicious rewriting of Pandora’s myth in his additional warnings toward women: all Pandora’s daughters (i.e., all women) inherent her deceitfulness and guile with beauty that is uniquely designed to tempt and lure men into the misery of domestic life.

The myth of Pandora can be understood as Hesiod’s own misogynistic perspective that may have been supported by likeminded persons in ancient Greece. It would not have been representative of the whole (or, earlier traditions). For instance, in

⁸³ The positive characterization of the “All-Giving” Pandora is supported by her worship in Athens as well as Hesiod’s consistent misrepresentation of myth. For instance, he introduced the division of the bull to explain Prometheus’s punishment and the classical tradition to sacrifice only the fat and thigh-bones to the gods, which was explained in Genesis as a result of Jacob’s wrestling with an angel, who dislodged his hip. This suggests the sacrificial custom was a result of Israel’s influence on Greece, as supported by the inclusion of “winged souls” in the original telling of Pandora’s myth: Graves, 129-130.

Athens, Pandora was worshipped as the Earth and fertility goddess Rhea with honored statues in temples, supported by the association of her name to the Earth, of which he shows no awareness.⁸⁴ Pandora's state as a minor goddess is supported by her lack of literary importance to Latin writers, such as Ovid, Vergil, Horace, Lucan, Cicero, Seneca, Martianus Capella, and Macrobius, who did not write about her—save for Boccaccio and Tertullian of Carthage.⁸⁵ In his *Genealogia deorum*, Boccaccio changes the myth of Pandora by translating *omnium munus* ["gift to all"] to *omnium minus* ["devoid of everything"], and although he leans towards a male representation of Pandora in renaming her Pandorus, his meaning by the name of "all full of bitterness"⁸⁶ resembles the same misogynistic characteristics Hesiod demonstrated in his *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. Boccaccio's writings illustrate a tweak to the myth to accentuate the suffering Pandora bears, while Tertullian of Carthage, an early Church Father, who rejected the so-called pagan mythological traditions, insisted that "there was no Pandora," only Eve who condemned humanity to death. His criticism encouraged Gregory of Nazianzus, who argued that Eve as Pandora's biblical counterpart and an expert example of "vanity, fraudulence, immodesty, self-seeking adulation, and prurience" made her a "deadly delight."⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Paintings, such as the Athenian *kylix* attributed to the Tarquinia Painter in approximately 460 B.C.E., depict Pandora with a ceramic pot inscribed with the name "Anesidora" ("she who sends up gifts"), a name of reverence for a fertility goddess: Haynes, 14; Phipps, 37.

⁸⁵ Panofsky, 9.

⁸⁶ Panofsky, 10-11.

⁸⁷ Panofsky, 12.

Beauty and Marriage in Milton's Pandora and Eve:

Milton crowns Eve in Pandora's symbolism of marriage. Pandora and Eve are created and instantaneously married to Epimetheus and Adam, respectively. While the latter is physically veiled for a wedding, Eve's nakedness exposes her ceremonial union with Adam as an elopement ordained by God in the Hebrew tradition. Milton reworks the narrative to imply a conventional marriage by paralleling her "ringlets" (*PL* 4.306.285) of hair to Pandora's "highly wrought veil" (*Theogony* 580-584.399) and Adam's weaving "Of choicest Flow'rs a Garland to adorn / Her Tresses" (*PL* 9.840-841.398). Milton brings attention to Eve's superiority in the shared role of beautification. In the classical myth, Athena dresses Pandora with the garland of desire to ensure her success in seducing Epimetheus and in turn all of mankind, suggesting that the first woman would not have been attractive enough otherwise—or, at least, that the gods were concerned about her looks (despite being those of a goddess) enough to crown her with an additional arousal of desire. Eve, on the other hand, inherently arouses desire, as evidenced by Adam's reaction to her creation in both Genesis and *Paradise Lost* (Gen. 2:23; *PL* 8.532-533.375). Adam creates the garland to express his own admiration of her natural being, not to enhance her beauty. He is already aroused by her, as evidenced by both his admission of weakness and their love-making scenes in Book IV and Book VIII, and does not need to edit (or to add) to her beauty to afford his attraction.

Eve's Fall in the Hebrew Tradition:

Wedding or not, within three verses of Adam's reaction to her creation, Satan in the form of a serpent approaches Eve:

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God hath made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of

every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (Gen. 3:1-5)

Satan begins by planting doubt of God’s benevolence, as he encourages Eve to consider for what purpose a good God would create a harmful tree and forbid their eating its fruit in Paradise. To combat his initial temptation, Eve is dependent on the knowledge Adam has communicated since she was not created until after God’s warning: “And the LORD God commanded the man, [...] Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17). A result of Satan’s seduction, her “telephone game” with Adam, or her own internalized fear of the Tree of Knowledge—Eve distorts the divine narrative with the addition of “neither shall ye touch it” and concedes to Satan’s manipulation in the first lie and the appeal to pride (Gen. 3:2). Satan lies in telling her that “[she] shall not surely die” and continues to construe that her eating the “forbidden fruit” will unveil good and evil (Gen. 3:4-5).⁸⁸

In the climax of Satan’s temptation, Eve falls: “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to

⁸⁸ John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 141: Albeit enveloped in his fabrication, the latter is not a lie since eating the fruit opened their eyes to good and evil (and did not result in immediate death), but in divergence to Satan’s narrative, the consequence is sin: they have “miss[ed] the mark” and will know both perfect righteousness and the wickedness that will eventually lead to physical and spiritual death (*Rom.* 6:23). In the Old Testament, the word ‘sin’ refers to “missing the mark,” but the verb *ḥṭ*’ can also refer to “failing to meet an objective,” as demonstrated in both *Judges* and *Proverbs*. The meanings change because they are not determined by their inherent etymology but rather their usage in the text.

make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Gen. 3:6). Genesis does not portray Eve as a temptress.

Although she eats the “forbidden fruit” and shares it with her husband Adam, Eve does not seduce him into sin. She gives him the fruit, and he eats it, a point that most people miss. In the same way it affords Eve with the free will to choose rightly, the Tree of Knowledge affords Adam. He consents to her. Genesis implies that Adam’s sin brings sin on mankind as conditioned in the Jewish commentary *2 Esdras*, one of the earliest uses of postlapsarian terminology:

“O Adam, what have you done?
For though it was you who sinned,
The fall was not yours alone,
But ours also who are your descendants.” (Walton 143)

The “head” of the home, Adam was responsible for the familial adherence to spiritual leadership (i.e., God) and according to early Jewish writers was owed the blame for the Fall, as he should have ensured Eve was more prepared to encounter temptation in the Garden. In consideration of a shared culpability, Eve’s name is not mentioned. It is rather Adam’s descendants who share his responsibility for the Fall.

This thesis argues that Milton refashions Eve with the classical *mythos* to foster her voice and equality in her shared dominion of the Garden. Although Renaissance readings have mostly interpreted Eve and Pandora through a negative lens, Milton challenges their villainized interpretations in *Paradise Lost*. He acknowledges their role in deception, but represents their conflicts as more nuanced since he seeks not to redeem

Eve but to present her as a “fallible figure of regeneration and renewal”⁸⁹ through Pandora. The thesis will conclude that Milton refashions Eve with the Pandora tradition to illustrate her emotional rationale for eating the “forbidden fruit” and to assert her worth as a woman, wife, and mother. Despite the consequences of the Fall, Milton’s Eve is superior to Pandora in beauty and free will and assumes the identity of “the Mother of All Living,” not because of her sin but because of her role in redemption (Gen. 3:20).

In the first chapter of the thesis, I argue that in *Paradise Lost*, Milton reforms the image of Eve institutionalized by tradition and her cultural eroticism. He does this by using her “golden tresses” (*PL* 4.305.285) to express her emotional state and strength, to foreshadow Satan’s temptation and her Fall, and to argue her fruitful odyssey from sin to redemption. Milton subverts Eve’s culpability and shame through the animation of her “wanton ringlets” (*PL* 4.306.285) as an expression of penitence and Satan’s erotic expectancy. The chapter focuses on Book IV, lines 304 – 311, and builds upon limited criticism on Eve’s shared relationship to the Pauline tradition and Satanic-inspired eroticism.

In the second chapter of the thesis, I argue that in his writing *Paradise Lost*, Milton drew from both biblical and apocryphal material, including the *Lives of Adam and Eve*, to construct a representation of Eve’s character and tradition in relation to Pandora, but unlike previous portrayals, Milton’s Eve symbolizes the thematic hope of mankind. She is a vessel of hope, the future promise of the Son’s salvation. Milton presents Eve as a spiritual leader, who not only initiates reconciliation with Adam and urges him towards repentance, but as a Son-like figure, represents the salvation of unification. This makes

⁸⁹ Butler, 154.

Eve a central figure in Milton's representation of free will and redemption. The chapter focuses on Milton's *Paradise Lost*—Book VIII, lines 469 – 482—in relation to the Greek and Latin *Lives of Adam and Eve* and builds upon limited criticism of the influence of the Hebrew Apocrypha on Milton's portrayal of Adam and Eve.

In the third chapter of the thesis, in *Paradise Lost*, I argue that Milton refashions Eve as a goddess of nature and fertility, who pursues the apotheosis in a single relationship with her flowers. Milton's Eve idolizes her work as a gardener in Eden, neglecting her marital union with Adam, and pursues separation to “find herself” in an identity independent of him. In *hubris*, Eve wants to transcend her natural “roots” in lordship of the Garden, resulting in her temptation and Fall. Eve's *hamartia*, her mistake likened to a flower's fate when uprooted, makes her human. I argue that it is this humanity that makes Milton's Eve both a providential goddess of nature and fertility through Pandora and Ovidian allusion and the mother of mankind. The chapter focuses on Book IX, lines 215 – 225, and contributes to current scholarship on Milton's ecological representation of Eve and the Earth. The conclusion focuses on moving forward in and teaching a humanist representation of Milton's *Paradise Lost* to a new generation of students, who may not be familiar with Milton's redressing of Eve and championing of women in seventeenth-century England.

Chapter One: Pauline Theology and Religious Eroticism in Milton's Eve

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton reforms the image of Eve institutionalized by Pauline tradition. The Pauline tradition is the critical interpretation and pastoral direction of Jesus of Nazareth's crucifixion and resurrection as expressed in Paul's epistles to small, newly established churches in Europe and his young disciples Titus and Timothy. Pried from a Hebraic heritage established in the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament (or, the Second Testament), and apocryphal literature, Apostle Paul's teachings employ his training as a Jewish Pharisee to comment on the fundamental ideologies—his developmental thoughts on God and self, salvation, and eschatology—in addition to “relational intersections with other religious actors and groups around the Mediterranean”¹ affecting the emerging Christian Church in the first-century.

With her introduction in Book IV, Eve's “wanton² ringlets” (*PL* 4.306.285)³ symbolize a “vine curling around an elm” in a classical image of marital union⁴ and an

¹ Benjamin L. White, “The Pauline Tradition,” *TigerPrints: Philosophy and Religion* (2022), 39-54, 39.

² As Kent R. Lehnhof understands, Milton “deliberately draws upon the concupiscent meanings of ‘wanton’ in order to emphasize the complete absence of carnality in Eve's prelapsarian appearance”: that is, Eve's most promiscuous feature is not, as patriarchal prerogative has dictated, cunning cuckoldry, but rather her natural waves and ringlets, untamed and unreflective of vanity: Kent R. Lehnhof, “‘Nor Turned I Weene’: ‘Paradise Lost’ and Pre-Lapsarian Sexuality,” *Milton Quarterly*, 34, no. 3 (October 2000), 67-83, 72.

³ All quotations from Milton's *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, John. *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, edited by Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis, IL: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003).

⁴ Catallus, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid understand the image of a “vine curling around an elm” to symbolize the sacred union of a husband and a wife. As Todd H. Sammons explains, Milton would have been introduced to the classical writers between his Fourth and Seventh Forms at St. Paul's School in London: Todd H. Sammons, “‘As

“ivy clinging to a tree” in juxtaposed extramarital eroticism.⁵ Milton responds to the coarse interpretations of Paul’s⁶ language towards women⁷ by leaning into the “dubious capabilities”⁸ of her serpentine association⁹ and acknowledging her cultural “erotic

the Vine Curles Her Tendrils’: Marriage Topos and Erotic Countertopos in *Paradise Lost*,” *Milton Quarterly*, 20, no. 4 (December 1986), 117-127, 117-118.

⁵ Sammons, 117.

⁶ In the seventeenth century, New Testament passages were interpreted as “divinely inspired truth” or the individual perspective(s) of the writer. A Protestant reader could enjoy what was considered to be the divine inspiration of Scripture correlative to the canonical Old Testament and ignore the misogynistic opinions of contemporaries, such as St. Jerome. Despite the forgiveness and freedom attributed to the Gospel, an almost complete embrace of Apostle Paul’s more critical interpretation of Jesus’s crucifixion and resurrection has become the acute introspection of the Bible. A Roman born citizen—“But I was *free* born” (Acts 22:28)—the Apostle Paul was a first-century Hellenistic Jew, whose influence was established in the sequential years of Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension and whose converted prerogative reflected Palestinian Judaism and early Christian philosophy within a Graeco-Roman context. His statements about “justification by faith” have served to guide the conversations of Western interpreters on work and salvation and in particular relevance to women factualize gendered restrictions and requirements of the legalistic tradition: Amanda W. Benckhuysen, *The Gospel According to Eve: A History of Women’s Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 1; Anne Ferry, “Milton’s Creation of Eve,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 38, no. 1 (Winter 1988), 113-132, 114; Krister Stendahl, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” *The Harvard Theological Review*, 56, no. 3 (1963), 199-215, 200; Cynthia Long Westfall, *Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle’s Vision for Men and Women in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 11.

⁷ Secondary creation (2 Tim. 2:13), roles in silence and servitude (Eph. 5:22-24; 2 Tim. 2:9-12), and genetic degradation with atonement in childbearing (2 Cor. 11:3; 2 Tim. 2:14-15)—Paul’s passages on women have been debated since his writing but have largely served as the ammunition required to argue for a “Christian” prerogative to control.

⁸ Robert D. Newman, “Entanglement in Paradise: Eve’s Hair and the Reader’s Anxiety in ‘Paradise Lost’,” *Interpretations*, 16, no. 1 (Fall 1985), 112-115, 113.

⁹ In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Eve’s serpentine association recalls Cleopatra’s Edenic pose, poised with a curling serpent at her breasts in a sixteenth-century Flemish

resonance”¹⁰ in his poetry. Carnal puns and allusions to masculine and feminine sexual exploits and genitalia were largely the standard for his Renaissance contemporaries—Shakespeare, Middleton, and Johnson—and Milton himself even repurposes the opening lines of the erotic poem, “The Description of a Woman,” in his portrayal of Eve:

Whose head befringed with bescattered tresses
Seemes like Apollo’s when the morne he blesses
Or like vnto Aurora when shee setts
Her long disheuel’d rose crown’d tramaletts

Like to the tendrells of a flattering vine.¹¹

Reminiscent of Adam’s “ever new delight” (*PL* 5.19.303), the unambiguous language recalls the “[d]ishevell’d” (*PL* 4.306.285) nature and time attributed to sex and the classical association of a curling vine¹² to the sacred union of marriage. The woman’s

engraving: Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography* (Washington Square, NY: New York UP, 1999.), 144.

¹⁰ Sammons, 119.

¹¹ F.W. Moorman, *The Scriptorum Historiae Augustae*, 404, lines 1-4, 8, in Sammons, 119-120.

¹² Albeit mirrored in Hebrew literature, when the vine metaphor is associated with marriage in Psalm 128:3, Milton is probably using the image from John 15: there, Christ professes to his disciples that he is “the vine” (5). Milton’s familiarity with the Bible can be understood through the different versions available in the seventeenth century. He read both the Hebrew and Greek texts and “used both the Junius-Tremellius Latin Bible and the *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta* of Brian Walton.” Although he was a talented linguist and would have read portions of the Bible in their original languages, Hebrew for the Old Testament and Koiné Greek for the New Testament, in order to develop his own “understanding of nuance and connotation,” Milton’s linguistic capabilities were not all encompassing and would have required him to rely on classical philologists, Christian Hebraists, and commentators—scholars Paul Fagius, Hugo Grotius, and John Selden. In his writing *Paradise Lost*, Milton largely employed the English translations of the period, knowing and reading from the 1539 Great Bible, the 1568 Bishop’s Bible, the 1610 Catholic Douay-Rheims version, and even more confidently the 1560 Geneva Bible, as “the single most important Protestant translation of the sixteenth century.” Although Milton did not believe in committing to a single translation and employed a variety of materials, he signaled “the importance of Scripture to his poetry merely by

“bescattered tresses” is sexually suggestive, but like Milton’s employment of Eve’s “golden tresses” and “wanton ringlets” (*PL* 4.305-306.302) is no more sinful in the divine creation of and adherence to the marital bed and “cannot be read in a [sinful] sexual fashion.”¹³

Paralleled in Milton’s writing, in his first encounter with God’s crowns of creation, Satan spies on Adam and Eve in Eden with special interest in and “charged with sexual imagery”¹⁴ for Eve:

Shee as a veil down to the slender waist
Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Dishevell’d, but in wanton ringlets wav’d
As the Vine curls her tendrils, which impli’d
Subjection, but requir’d with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best receiv’d,
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet reluctant amorous delay. (*PL* 4.304-311.302)

echoing the language of the King James Version.” Renowned Milton scholar Jeffrey Shoulson reports, “[i]t has largely been accepted [...] that Milton’s English Bible translation of choice was the King James, or Authorized, Version, first published in 1611.” The King James represented the best textual and philological scholarship of the period and would have interested Milton for its well-known superiority and attribution of transitional distinction in biblical scholarship: Mary Ruth Brown, “*Paradise Lost* and John 15: Eve, the Branch, and the Church,” *Milton Quarterly*, 20, no. 4 (December 1986), 127-131, 128; Mary Ann Radzinowicz, “How Milton Read the Bible: the Case of *Paradise Regained*,” 209-210, in Shannon Osburn, “An Analysis of the Feminist Contradictions and Harmonies in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the Biblical ‘Genesis’,” West Texas A&M University, 15-28, 16; Jeffrey Shoulson, “Milton’s Bible,” 69-80, *The Cambridge Companion to Paradise Lost*, edited by Louis Schwartz (New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 2014), 69-70.

¹³ Lehnhof, 72.

¹⁴ James Grantham Turner, *One Flesh*, 270, in Lehnhof, 73.

Milton's focus on hair—Eve's "veil down to the slender waist" and Adam's "Hyacinthine Locks" (*PL* 4.301.285) that hang long to his shoulders, fitting Pauline regulations¹⁵—rather than facial features or genitals, which modest Milton limits to "mysterious" (*PL* 4.312.285) wonderings, elicits Eve's theological and visual¹⁶ sexualization. In the Renaissance's renewed favor of the Virgin Mary,¹⁷ Eve was simplified from

¹⁵ See 1 Corinthians 11:14-15: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering": All quotations from *Acts* (and any relevant books of the *Bible*) unless otherwise specified are from *The Holy Bible*. King James Version, edited by Rev. C. I. Scofield, D. D. (New York, NY: Oxford UP, 1945.)

¹⁶ Manipulation of Eve capitalized on the heightened interest in her needlelike juxtaposition to the Virgin Mary. In Francesco Marmitta's *Virgin and Child*, Mary is virginal and pitiful, depicted with her naked child on her lap or as in a painting dated to 1410 by the artist known as Master of the Strauss Madonna, enthroned and flanked by angels with Eve, whose "otherwise naked body loosely draped in a diaphanous robe" is prostrate in worship. This Mary is a queen, not only explicitly elevated above Eve, who lies at the foot of her throne and is looking up at her feminine redeemer, but is an epitomic illustration of divine femininity: that is, the consummation of redeemed womanhood. In other depictions, as in the simple biography constructed in her honor, describing the main events of her life with Jesus, at the foot of her son's crucifixion: Norris, *Eve: A Biography*, 238-241.

¹⁷ "[R]eenergized in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century," cultural focus returned to representations of Eve fostered by the early Church Fathers and medieval artists and theologians, who manipulated Genesis 3:6 and Pauline theology to correlate feminine subordination with sexual passivity: that is, the temptation of Eve: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Tertullian of Carthage rewrote the verse to substitute the implication of "tempts" (or, "temptation") in regard to Eve for "temptress": Jean M. Higgins, "The Myth of Eve: The Temptress," *JAAR*, 44, no. 4 (1976), 639-647, 640; Shannon Miller, "Gender," 152-163, *The Cambridge Companion to Paradise Lost*, edited by Louis Schwartz (New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 2014), 152-153; Norris, 196-197.

“stereotypical scapegoating [...] as a temptress”¹⁸ to that of a concentration on the “Temptation, Fall, and Expulsion in a cartoon-strip narrative,”¹⁹ rendering her archetype as a personification of lust and an erotic embodiment of the Fall and the Denial of Guilt.²⁰ Milton’s ambivalent language of Eve’s “[d]ishevell’d” and “wanton ringlets” anticipates Pauline blame and guilt in the later usage of “words such as ‘[l]uxuriant’ (260), ‘error’ (239), and ‘[s]eized’ (489), which measure Eden’s integrity [and anticipate] its ruin.”²¹ This anticipation of the Fall in Satan’s simile of “Subjection” reflects the Pauline decreed feminine subordination and meekness to her closest masculine authority—father, brother, or preferably husband—and humors reason as Eve’s asserting separation and independence from Adam,²² but the reader must remember that this passage is in Satan’s perspective and portrays his thoughts, not the “standard marital gloss”²³ expected after the prior passage’s admission of shared lordship.

¹⁸ Diane K. McColley, “Milton and the Sexes,” 175-192, *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, edited by Dennis Danielson, 6th ed. (New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 1989), 179.

¹⁹ Norris, 240.

²⁰ Mati Meyer, “Eve’s Nudity: A Sign of Shame or Precursor of Christological Economy,” 243-258, *Between Judaism and Christianity: Art Historical Essays in Honor of Elisheva (Elisabeth) Revel-Neher*, edited by Elisabeth Revel-Neher, Katrin Kogman-Appel, and Mati Meyer (Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), 244.

²¹ Stephen B. Dobranski, “Clustering and Curling Locks: The Matter of Hair in Paradise Lost,” *PMLA*, 125, no. 2 (March 2010), 337-353, 343.

²² In the Puritan perspective, a woman’s separation from her husband signified her separation (as a part of the Church) from Christ, her apostasy as falling away from the Christian faith: Brown, 127.

²³ Sammons, 120.

Milton distinguishes his interpretation as being informed by but not limited to biblical and cultural appropriations and correlates Eve's loose tresses to physical, emotional, and spiritual strength and to her looming transgression. His foreshadowing is not intended to assert Pauline significance, but rather to portray her "most essential human relations"²⁴ in justification of the ways of God to man: despite her narrative and visual tradition, Eve made a mistake. Milton's description of Eve's tresses as "discompos'd" (*PL* 5.10.302) and "all disorder'd" (*PL* 10.911.428) contrast her depictions of purity, particularly Satan's "seeming pure" (*PL* 4.316.302) allusion to Pandora,²⁵ implying his "contaminating influence"²⁶ rather than Eve's predisposition to sin. Borrowing from classical conventions,²⁷ Milton employs Eve's tresses to signify her

²⁴ Douglas Anderson, "Unfallen Marriage and the Fallen Imagination in *Paradise Lost*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 26, no. 1 (Winter 1986), 125-144, 136.

²⁵ Jonathon H. Collett argues that Milton's use of myth for his descriptions of Eden and its inhabitants as "based on the sensual beauty of the myths" is pried from the early Church Fathers and serves as an effective application "[a]s long as the reader is frequently reminded that these myths are fictions and as long as they are applied only to the prelapsarian world": Jonathon H. Collett, "Milton's Use of Classical Mythology in 'Paradise Lost,'" *PMLA*, 85, no. 1 (January 1970), 88-96, 89.

²⁶ Dobranski, 343.

²⁷ Milton's familiarity with classical conventions can be understood through his proficient education in Greek and Latin and imitation of earlier writers and works. As Maggie Kilgour explains, "[b]eginning at grammar school, students were taught to read, write, and speak Latin. While Greek was taught at higher levels, Latin was the basis for all learning, and the language of writing and conversation." Milton was influenced by a Renaissance upbringing: he wrote and spoke in the classical tongue, copied the works of great authors back and forth from Latin to English to Latin again, and had the opportunity to attend productions of the Greek plays. English engagement with Homer and Euripides in theatre was limited to foundational references in classical prose and as the century progressed, was coupled with developments in pedagogical production and portrayal. In 1567 and 1575-1582, the Westminster and St. Paul's students performed Euripides's *Iphigenia* and *Orestes*. In 1597-1600, curriculums of classical literature and philosophy, including Hesiod and Homer, became more prominent, each paired with the frequently printed Greek grammar anthology, Pierre Davantès's *Praxis*, that included an excerpt

“current perfection” and to suggest the ways, in which prelapsarian Paradise can—and ultimately will—go wrong.²⁸

Critics have given much attention to Milton’s treatment of eroticism and sexual activity in *Paradise Lost*. Renowned Milton scholar Diane Kelsey McColley has argued that Milton’s presentation of Adam and Eve, informed by scriptural and classical thought, illustrates a “high regard for both human dignity and the goodness of the visible creation, including sexuality as a divine gift.”²⁹ In her pioneering study, *Milton’s Eve* (1983), she continues to argue that Milton’s borrowing from the classical tradition—that is, the sexuality of Juno and Jove—signifies a juxtaposition to Adam and Eve, whose prelapsarian lovemaking is not the result of “deceitful seduction”³⁰ but rather a sinless expression of divine unification.³¹ Ann Ashwood likewise suggests that although she is

from *Orestes*. Milton’s bilingual education was the cornerstone to his intimate familiarity with the minds of classical writers, stimulating a respect for tradition while broadening and challenging his thinking to that of originality and literary creativity. Fluent in Latin, Greek, and Italian with the ability to read numerous additional languages with an education fostered by classical literature—Hesiod, Homer, Virgil, and Ovid—Milton became a poet, “as he experimented with the different classical meters and genres,” mostly scriptural, mythological, and folkloric. This robust familiarity with the classical *mythos* can be seen in the countless Latin and Greek echoes and allusions to “classical epics, odes, pastoral, elegy, drama, [and] satire”: throughout his poetry and prose, he references Orpheus, Vulcan, the dying soldier Euryalus, Patroclus, Achilles, Odysseus, Aeneas, Proserpina the wife of Roman Pluto, Pandora, and others: Maggie Kilgoure, “Classical Modes,” 57-67, *The Cambridge Companion to Paradise Lost*, edited by Louis Schwartz (New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 2014), 57-64.

²⁸ Sammons, 120.

²⁹ McColley, “Milton and the Sexes,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, 178.

³⁰ Diane Kelsey McColley, *Milton’s Eve* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 65-66.

³¹ McColley, *Milton’s Eve*, 66.

pried from Hebraic-Christian traditions, Eve's "beauty shadowed by fatality"³² makes her a confluent model of classical myth, while Jeffrey S. Shoulson understands Milton's narrative detail to the Greek and Roman classics, specifically Ovid, to be suggestive of "some form of devaluation,"³³ not that of Christian Eve but rather her juxtaposed allusions: Pandora, Proserpina, Helen of Sparta (later, Helen of Troy), and Psyche. Milton scholar Mandy Green readily agrees that association of iconic, mythological figures and their depreciation "magnify the imaginative power of [Eve's] presence."³⁴ Milton's employment of Satan as the device for which he often delivers Pauline context—and Eve in her reclamation of the words that have subordinated her to Adam—

³² Demetrakopoulos argues that Eve's beauty "enslaves Adam's mind, just as it captivates and enthralls her own fanciful ego." As a fatal beauty, Milton's Eve recalls Pandora, whose beauty captivated Epimetheus and birthed the release of evil, as she too is capable of not only "rendering Adam carnal and bestial," but a metamorphosis from flowers to beast—beauty to monster: 100; Ann Ashwood, "Psyche and Eve: Milton's Goddess without a Temple," *Milton Quarterly*, 18, no. 2 (May 1984), 52-58, 52.

³³ Provoked by Paul's coarse posture on women, as informed by the creation and fall narrative of Genesis 1-3, understood in Ephesians 5:22-24 and 1 Timothy 2:9-15—many women have suffered and continue to suffer the prescribed, strict subscription of "divinely ordained," morale apparel, behavior, and vocation conveniently separated from autonomous representations of the feminine in the Mediterranean—Rahab, Esther, Athena, the Amazons, and Penelope—that bore its exegesis. Paul's passages referring to the secondary creation of women (2 Tim. 2:13), their roles in silence and servitude (Eph. 5:22-24; 2 Tim. 2:9-12), and their degradation from Eve's deception and salvation in relevance to childbearing (2 Cor. 11:3; 2 Tim. 2:14-15) have been capitalized upon in Western interpretation to argue feminine inferiority as a divine curse for Eve's beguiled nature and subsequently that of all women, an argument that is not sufficiently subverted until John Milton's writings in the mid-seventeenth century. As Westfall understands, the "passages that concern gender have not been understood in the contexts of the discourses in which they occur, the biblical theology of the Pauline corpus as a whole, the narrative of Paul's life, a linguistic understanding/analysis of the Greek language, or an understanding of the culture that is sociologically informed": Jeffrey S. Shoulson, "The Embrace of the Fig Tree: Sexuality and Creativity in Midrash and in Milton," *ELH*, 67, no. 4 (Winter 2000), 873-903, 874; Westfall, 3.

³⁴ Mandy Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 28.

carries this mythical devaluation, especially in relation to her sister Pandora, as Joseph Wittreich coined, a “decidedly Satanic”³⁵ invention.

Maggie Kilgour explains that Milton’s classical allusions draw from scriptural rhetoric to focus on the “Christian truth that Milton tells,”³⁶ not Eve’s Renaissance as an erotic temptress, but rather as an individual in a spiritual relationship with God. In the animation of her tresses, Todd H. Sammons explains that Milton “sets himself two extremely difficult tasks [in *Paradise Lost*:] [f]irst, he must describe a perfect place (Eden) and unfallen beings (prelapsarian Adam and Eve) to fallen beings (us readers), [...and] [s]econd, he must begin suggesting how those unfallen beings fell,”³⁷ foreshadowed in Eve’s culturally untraditional behavior as an unfallen woman with animated tresses that reflect the epic’s “pattern of ‘separation, initiation, and return’.”³⁸ Milton scholar Kent R. Lehnhof reinforces this sexual implication as an oxymoron³⁹ of intimacy, that is, “Milton repeats the same pattern of suggesting sinfulness in order to refute sinfulness,”⁴⁰ while in more recent scholarship, Stephen B. Dobranski has explained that Milton’s alliance of scriptural, classical, and folkloric allusions in Adam

³⁵ Joseph Wittreich, *Feminist Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987), 95.

³⁶ Kilgoure, “Classical Modes,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Paradise Lost*, 60.

³⁷ 119.

³⁸ *Paradise Lost as ‘Myth’*, 23, in Ashwood, 52.

³⁹ See Sammon’s: “[A] rhetorical device [...] yokes together two opposing ideas in order to name something that neither idea can name alone”: 119.

⁴⁰ 72-73.

and Eve's tresses reflects the couple's close link to heaven.⁴¹ Eve's hair is animate, expressive of not only her emotional state but her strength in circumstances of temptation and desperation.⁴² Although scholarship has referred to Milton's hair imagery in both *Paradise Lost* and classical history,⁴³ little has been said about the relationship between Pauline theology and Eve's cultural eroticism. In this chapter, I argue that Milton rectifies Eve's religious eroticism emphasizing her culpability and shame, fixed by Pauline theology, through the animation of Eve's tresses as an expression of penitence⁴⁴ and correlation between Satan and "erotic expectancy."⁴⁵

Milton's Eve and Religious Eroticism, Miltonic and Traditional Depictions of Eve:

Milton's Eve is beautiful. Using tender diction, "slender waist" and "golden tresses" (*PL* 4.304-305.285), Milton describes Eve with a gentleness that mirrors her purposed formation and natural character "For softness...and sweet attractive Grace" (*PL* 4.298.285).⁴⁶ Satan's interpretation of Eve's hair as yielded subjection portrayed as "coy submission, modest pride" (*PL* 4.310.285), demonstrating his imposing personal sin onto her and in paradoxical compliment, suggesting Milton's intervention of autonomous,

⁴¹ 343.

⁴² Newman, 113.

⁴³ Milton understood that the Pauline tradition, interpreted for a patriarchal form and influenced by pagan desire, created a "double image" in Eve's cultural representation: a corrupted and monstrous but redeemed woman and employs this doubled metamorphosis to further emphasize the "moral and physical degeneration" of the pagan symbolism attributed to Eve: Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 28.

⁴⁴ Newman, 114.

⁴⁵ Lehnhof, 73.

⁴⁶ Sammons, 119.

feminine selfhood: that is, Eve has an individual will. As Dobrenski understands, Eve “is not just coy (‘holding back’) nor just submissive (‘giving in’), but coyly submissive—and modest proud and reluctantly amorous as well.”⁴⁷ For Adam, it is love at first sight, but for Eve, who has not known a life beyond her union with her husband, there is a delay only resolved, when she realizes that she would rather die than condemn Adam: an experience reserved as an explicit demonstration of love.

In Milton’s invocation of independent sexuality and femininity, Eve’s hair reflects her nature: largely described alongside Adam’s “Hyacinthine Locks” (*PL* 4.300.285), Eve’s “vinelike curls”⁴⁸ are distinctly plant-like and reflect that of a living organism. Sixteenth-century writers “believed that hair was alive,” an expression of vitality seen in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, when his mother Gertrude is afraid of him because his “bedded hair, like life in excrements, / Start up and stand an end” (3.4.121-22)⁴⁹ appears “to come alive supernaturally.”⁵⁰ Milton thereby employs her tresses to signify her prelapsarian sinlessness as much as freedom.

Milton’s invocation of hair imagery and its expression of human life is not limited to his *Paradise Lost*, but rather finds its origins in the Old Testament with Samson—who upon losing his hair forfeits his strength, Nazarite relationship with God, eyes, freedom, and ultimately his life⁵¹—myths, and visual representations in Western culture. In

⁴⁷ 119.

⁴⁸ Dobranski, 343.

⁴⁹ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in Dobranski, 344.

⁵⁰ Dobranski, 344.

⁵¹ See the biblical book of Judges, chapters 13-16.

mythical narratives, such as the thirteenth-century Old Norse *Edda*, “gold hair” is not merely a synonym for “blonde hair,” but rather an “indication of the hair’s sacred or life-giving qualities”⁵² and reflects feminine divinity and status. In English depictions, however, such as Herrick’s Bishop Joseph Hall returns to the classical tradition’s monstrous portrayal of loose tresses “as a symbol of sin.”⁵³ The seventeenth century poet Marvell’s “The Gallery” likewise describes his “Inhumane” lady with loose tresses “playing in the Air.”⁵⁴

Throughout the Western tradition, Eve’s body has never been her own—that is, until *Paradise Lost*, when her feminine autonomy is personified in “wanton ringlets” (*PL* 4.305.285)—and has been the center of Christian conversation.⁵⁵ In “The Female Body,”

⁵² As Dobranski explains, in *Paradise Lost* and Milton’s contemporaries, angels “flowing, golden tresses [...] indicate its divine authority and glorious nature”: 340.

⁵³ Newman, 113.

⁵⁴ Barbara K. Lewalski and Andrew J. Sabol, *Major Poets of the Earlier Seventeenth Century*, 1094-96, in Newman, 113.

⁵⁵ Artists have continued to adopt the classical motif of loose tresses as a symbol of transgression or evil, as with Medusa’s free, ever curling and seeking snakes. Auguste Rodin (1840 – 1917) famously sculpted Eve’s body with a “hunched posture [and] bent knee,” her arms twisted across her breasts (but failing to hide her pointed, right nipple) nestling her head bent in shame, her carved tresses shielding her features from view. In *Eve After the Fall*, most commonly remembered as *Eve*, the French artist sought to emphasize Eve’s serpentine nature of “disgrace and infamy” in a twisted, marble sculpture with a “coily positioned left foot to seem to express shame, guilt, submissiveness, and the harsh sentence of motherhood that are associated with her femininity.” The Edenic portrayal mirrors an earlier depiction, in which the nineteenth-century artist Alexander Mosses (1793 – 1837) portrayed her as hunched, leaning on Adam with features shadowed by her loose tresses. Although they adopt an unfavorable depiction of Eve as an Atlas-figure, the weight bearer of the postlapsarian world, alongside an innocent or seemingly ignorant Adam, both portrayals focus on the state of Eve’s veiled hair. Rodin’s Eve is shielded by gentle curls tucked in a classical style, pulled away from her stomach and thoughts of impending motherhood, while Mosses’s Eve is contorted with loose waves that tangle in Adam’s fingers on her spine and cover his genitals. The former’s association with motherhood (and Adam’s correlative

Margaret Atwood explains that the “Female Body has many uses”⁵⁶ and as Wioleta Polinska elaborates a classical commodity that has served as “the object of men’s gaze”—useful, but “weak, passive, and available for men’s sexual needs.”⁵⁷ In Byzantine art, depictions of Eve focused on explicit exposure: “visible and voluminous breasts,”⁵⁸ “nipped,”⁵⁹ with a pubis emphasized by dark brown *tesserae*⁶⁰ or barely covered by a fig leaf providing little dignity or even asexualized, as “young, delicate, and angelic-like”⁶¹ freshly extracted from Adam like an omen of the Fall. Eve’s sexual portrayal capitalizes on contemporary beauty standards and its own tradition of “primarily white,

fatherhood), understood by “swelling breasts, and impregnation [as Lehnhof explains] direct the reader to carnal conclusions.” Bound or loose, covering shared shame and symbolizing her ensnaring of Adam in sin—the erotic positioning of Eve’s hair represents her physical, emotion, and spiritual state: Vita Daphna Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity* (New York, NY: Oxford UP, 2012), 39; See Alexander Mosses’s *The Expulsion of Adam and Eve* (1829) in Lydia Figes, “From the Garden of Eden to ‘Killing Eve’: Deconstructing the First Woman in Art,” last modified July 3, 2019, <https://artuk.org/discover/stories/from-the-garden-of-eden-to-killing-eve-deconstructing-the-first-woman-in-art>; Lehnhof, 73.

⁵⁶ Margaret Atwood, “The Female Body,” 2-3, in Polinska, Wioleta. “Dangerous Bodies: Women’s Nakedness and Theology,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 16, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 45-62, 45.

⁵⁷ Polinska, 46.

⁵⁸ The explicit imagery dated to A.D. 359 occurs “on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus”: Meyer, 244.

⁵⁹ On a fifth-century mosaic fragment, originally from a church at Maaut el-Na’aman in northern Syria and now preserved in the Cleveland Museum of Art, the mosaic depicts a full-length Adam and Eve: Meyer, 244.

⁶⁰ The image can be found in the Octateuchs, depicting the Creation of Eve, dated from A.D. 1000 to 1300: Meyer, 244-246.

⁶¹ Meyer, 245.

heterosexual, Western women.”⁶² Eve extends beyond the parameters of her own conventions to that of European erotica.

When depicted together, Adam and Eve represent a compromise between scriptural context and classical aesthetic, either with the omission of sexual organs and highlight of characteristic femininity—pale coloring with long tresses, gendered⁶³—or the partial omission of sexuality—pubic areas covered with Adam’s chest defined, Eve’s bare and prominent, the focus alongside the Tree of Knowledge behind and between them.⁶⁴ Coupled again, in the eleventh-century presentation of the Denial of Guilt, Adam and Eve are young with gendered bodies, Adam’s form heavy and stout as befitting a man and Eve’s form “endowed with visible nipples”⁶⁵ pointed towards the snake, and reinforce gendered sexuality. Adam does not suffer from continuous artistic assault by accentuating genitalia for pornographic consumption, but rather Eve. Symbolized by a “white, soft, pampered body,”⁶⁶ Eve’s body has been fabricated for Western “male spectators”⁶⁷ that has contextualized later advertised feminine portrayals of desire and relevant nudity. Directly pulled from and encouraged by subordination of women in Pauline theology, Eve’s erotic representation is manifestation of masculine fascination

⁶² See note 57.

⁶³ Meyer, 246-247.

⁶⁴ Meyer, 247.

⁶⁵ In another interpretation, combining the feminine denial of guilt with punishment, Adam faces God, while Eve attempts to hide: Meyer, 247-248.

⁶⁶ Polinska, 46.

⁶⁷ Polinska, 45.

with subjection. As Polinska understands, “great artists” follow God’s direction as having created naked women from Adam’s form and thereby as godlike creators themselves.

Milton’s “Morning After,” Satan’s Intimate Enticement of Eve in Book V:

Following the loss of her virginity,⁶⁸ Eve has a “dishevell’d” (*PL* 4.306.285) and “discompos’d” (*PL* 5.10.303) slumber, while Adam wakes from an “Aery light” (*PL* 5.4.302) sleep to admire his new wife Eve and awake her for another day of Paradisal caretaking:

Now Morn her rosie steps in th’ Eastern Clime
 Advancing sow’d the earth with Orient Pearle
 When *Adam* wak’t, so custom’d, for his sleep
 Was Aery light, from pure digestion bred
 And temperae vapors bland, which th’ only sound
 Of leaves and fuming rills, *Aurora*’s fan
 Lightly dispers’d, and the shrill *Matin* Song
 Of Birds on every bough; so much the more
 His wonder was to find unwak’n’d *Eve*
 With Tresses discompos’d, and glowing Cheek,
 As though unquiet rest: hee on his side
 Leaning half-rais’d, with looks of cordial Love
 Hung over her enamor’d, and beheld
 Beauty, which whether waking or asleep,
 Shot forth peculiar graces. (*PL* 5.1-15.302)

⁶⁸ With the consummation of their marriage in the “Nuptial Bow’r” (*PL* 8.510.374), Lehnhof argues that the floral attributes of the bower “argue against the idea the idea that Adam and Eve have sex prior to the Fall,” while Saint Augustine considers the prelapsarian sex to be an “imaginative expression.” In his interpretation, Adam and Eve probably did not have sex in the Garden—but with no definitive proof in opposition, thereby believes that they could have made love with “the female genital organ being preserved (14.26).” This suggests that Milton may have “in mind just such an act of virginity-preserving presentation when he writes of roses that are repaired in the same instant as they are plucked”: 70-71.

The first morning of Milton's Edenic Paradise is "presented as a classical dawn scene, complete with the requisite personified rosy figure,"⁶⁹ recalling Milton's invocation of "The Description of a Woman" with Aurora, "rose-crowned" in mirror of Adam's "Garland wreath'd for Eve" (*PL* 9.892.399). Having suffered a Satanically induced dream, Eve appears distressed, her "Tresses discompos'd" from being tempted, as Satan sought to "raise/At least distemper'd, discontented thoughts," fostered by pride (*PL* 4.806-807, 809.297).

In contrast to Adam's naïve, blissfully ignorant experience, Eve's disturbed sleep foreshadows her later Fall, when a more confident Satan speaks directly and she bids him to "Lead then" (*PL* 9.631.393) to the Tree. As Kristin A. Pruitt recounts, E. M. W. Tillyard has famously expressed that her intimate, dreamed experience with Satan suggests her passing "from a state of innocence to one of sin," to which Irene Samuel agrees is a "wish-fulfillment dream"⁷⁰ of Eve's desire to eat the "forbidden fruit," but if her hair reflects her strength and state, then her dishevelment is more reminiscent of her victorious battle with evil—or, even the more innocent yet erotic reminiscence of sex's natural tussling. This consideration of her hair's active animation of struggle is supported by their utter disorder, when after she shares the "forbidden fruit," seeks forgiveness and a re-unification with Adam. Satan's invocation of sin assaults Eve's innocence: understood in his invading her dreams, her intimate solitude in rest with Adam, he

⁶⁹ Maggie Kilgour, "Eve and Flora (*Paradise Lost* 5.15-16)," *Milton Quarterly*, 38, no. 1 (March 2004), 1-17, 1.

⁷⁰ 95.

“produces the drama of self on the stage of Eve’s imagination,”⁷¹ mimicking Adam’s “gentle voice” (*PL* 5.37.303) and adopting his role as Eve’s co-partner to seduce her towards “envy, [...] reserve forbids to taste” (*PL* 5.61.303).

Satan, Pandora, and Disheveled Tresses, Milton’s Reforming of Eve’s Pauline

Erotica:

Recalling the invocation of *Paradise Lost* (*PL* 1.1-6.211), Milton refers to the epic tradition, familiar to Homer and Virgil, and Pandora *cum omnibus malis in vasculo inclusis*,⁷² mythic popularity that culminated in the sixteenth-century publications of Robert Stephanus’s *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1531),⁷³ Charles Stephanus’s *Dictionarium Historicum, Geographicum, Poeticum* (1553),⁷⁴ and Natale Conti’s

⁷¹ Pruitt, 96.

⁷² “With all kinds of evil enclosed in a small vessel”: Conti. *Natalis Comitibus Mythologiae, sive Explicationum Fabularum, Libri Decem* (Frankfurt, 1581), 316-318, in Butler, 157.

⁷³ George F. Butler argues that Milton was been familiar with Robert Stephanus’s *Thesaurus*, including the Latin account of the myth of Pandora, and was probably preparing his own supplement to the work: George F. Butler, “Milton’s Pandora: Eve, Sin, and the Mythographic Tradition,” *Milton Studies*, 44 (2005), 153-178, 158.

⁷⁴ Charles Stephanus’s *Dictionarium Historicum* was “one of the standard Renaissance classical dictionaries,” first published in 1553 with nine subsequent editions published by 1600. With later editions drawing from Conti, Vincenzo Cartari, and correlative writings, the *Dictionarium* was, as Butler asserts, “the most definitive work of its kind in the seventeenth century.” Milton would have been familiar with the work from not only its excellent reputation in the century’s scholarship, but because it could be found in every school library to aid students in the reading of Ovid and could have thereby been found at Christ’s College. Butler acknowledges that although Milton does not explicitly refer to it in his writings, Edward Phillips “drew extensively” from the *Dictionarium*, presumably after being introduced to the resource by Milton: 157-158.

Mythologiae (1567/8).⁷⁵ Milton “[synthetizes] his reading of Hesiod, Fulgentius, Boccaccio, Erasmus,⁷⁶ Conti, and other writers,”⁷⁷ embellishing “more adorn’d” Eve with resemblances to Charles Stephanus’s “ornauerunt” and Conti’s Latin “was given all arts by the gods,”⁷⁸ but the best resemblance can perhaps be traced to Milton’s *Divorce* tracts. In commenting on Plato, the Academics, and Stoics, Milton substitutes Eve for Pandora as a companion to Adam to argue that she was “a greater blessing from God” (1.2.707) in classical and Christian contexts. He writes:

[W]ho knew not what a consummate and most adorned Pandora was bestowed upon Adam to be the nurse and guide of his arbitrary happiness and perseverance, I mean his native innocence and perfection, which might have kept him from being our true Epimetheus. (2.3.714)

⁷⁵ Published first in Venice, Natale Conti’s *Mythologiae* became one of the most influential mythographic summaries with more than thirty editions released during the Renaissance. Not only did its appearance in Charles Stephanus’s *Dictionarium Historicum* provide some of the credibility necessary to position the textual resource as pivotal scholarship, but the *Mythologiae* “appears on a 1599 list of books at Merchant Taylors’ School, and Charles Hoole recommended it as a text in his *A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole* (1660).” As Butler further reports, Dati mentioned Conti to Milton in a letter, which substantiates any argument that Milton would have most certainly been familiar with the *Mythologiae*: 157.

⁷⁶ Milton scholar John M. Steadman augments that “Milton explicitly rejected the conventional martial subject [of the epic hero] in favor of the theme of spiritual combat: the internal warfare conventional in the imagery of St. Paul and Prudentius and elaborated by St. Gregory, Erasmus, and Downname”: that is, the deliberate heroic virtues of *Paradise Lost* are not expressed in a single unit beyond the Son, but are rather spread as moral, intellectual, and theological admiration and emulation between characters. This means that Eve and Satan, as correlative and juxtaposed figures of transgression, function as heroic ideals: John M. Steadman, “The Idea of Satan as the Hero of ‘Paradise Lost’,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 120, no. 4 (13 August 1976), 253-294, 256.

⁷⁷ Butler, 161.

⁷⁸ Butler, 162.

Milton's paradisaical language reflects his earlier argument not only in Eve's "adorned" nature or her correlation to the mythical figure herself, but also in Adam's comparison to Epimetheus, who foolishly ignored his brother Prometheus's warning and embraced Pandora as his wife.

Although both men were warned about potential danger, Adam has the ability to petition for penitence and the freewill of choice. Milton scholar Lehnhof explains that Milton's God immediately recognizes the lack of good in man being alone but nevertheless—"a perfect agent engaging in perfect acts of creation"⁷⁹—waits for Adam to recognize his deficiency, to petition for rectification, and in wisdom to prayerfully consider God's response. Unlike the myth of Pandora, in which Zeus guilefully has the first woman crafted to curse mankind, in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, God delays and creates Eve to suspend Adam's recognition of loneliness and individual deficiency. Ultimately, she becomes the consummation of perfection, when in her adorned transfixion, she is led to an enthusiastic Adam.

Milton's Satan is the first to recognize Eve's nudity. As the first night begins to eclipse Eden and "erotic expectancy intensifies,"⁸⁰ Satan is suspended between his perverted attraction to Eve and his pride, comparing her "troublesome disguises" (*PL* 4.739.295) to Pandora and the mythic conceits of lovemaking—"deceit, adultery, and aggression"⁸¹:

Brought her in naked beauty more adorn'd,
More lovely than *Pandora*, whom the Gods

⁷⁹ 68.

⁸⁰ Lehnhof, 77.

⁸¹ Lehnhof, 73.

Endow'd with all thir gifts, and O too like
 In sad event, when to the unwiser Son
 Of *Japhet* brought by *Hermes*, she ensnar'd
 Mankind with her fair looks, to be aveng'd
 On him who had stole *Jove's* authentic fire. (*PL* 4.713-719.294-295)

McColley has argued that Milton's Eve is a rectification of mythical Pandora,⁸² but in Satan's perspective, fermenting with pride and envy, Eve's alignment with Pandora implicates her. Because his *hubris* will not allow him to take responsibility for his wrongdoing, his expulsion from heaven and introduction of sin into Eden, Satan imposes his blame onto Eve and perverts her equal and sufficient creation as a co-partner with Adam to a predisposed containment of evil. Milton scholar John M. Steadman understands that "[l]ike his subsequent disguises as stripling cherub, cormorant, toad, and serpent, it [as a convention of Satanic heroism] is an illusion deliberately fostered by the father of lies; and Satan himself is partly aware of his deception."⁸³ This partial awareness—albeit not manifested in explicit admittance—is arguably the result of his “process of moral self-determination, [...a] preoccupation with self, along with the craving for dominion and the hunger for glory”⁸⁴ that provides him individual purpose but not spiritual and emotional maturity from pride to humility.

Although he can (to some extent) accept his own perversion as “the Evil one” (*PL* 9.463.389), Satan cannot accept God's paradoxical virtue and its embodiment in prelapsarian Paradise and thereby defaults to its subversion. This manifests in his envy and lust for Eve, who “in her looks all sums Delight” (*PL* 9.454.389), a “Pleasure” (*PL*

⁸² McColley, *Milton's Eve*, 68-69.

⁸³ Steadman, 255.

⁸⁴ Steadman, 254.

9.455.389) to behold. “[C]harged with sexual imagery,”⁸⁵ conceived “[f]rom his own evil” (*PL* 9.464.389), Satan refers to Eve’s “naked beauty” (*PL* 4.713.294) as that of a “Nymphlike step fair Virgin pass” (*PL* 9.452.389), recalling his special interest in Eve’s virginal nature—creation in innocent virtue and loss of her virginity in the “[s]hort pleasures” (*PL* 4.535.290) of the “Nuptial Bow’r” (*PL* 8.510.374). Milton’s Satan is most interested in Eve’s concealed “mysterious parts” (*PL* 4.312.285) and

[...] half her swelling Breast
Naked met his under the flowing Gold
Of her loose tresses hid. (*PL* 4.495-496.290)

In response to Pauline eroticism and the seventeenth-century reader’s suspended titillation, Milton shifts attention from Eve’s breast to her hair, shielding her body and thereby preserving her purity. With a “self-conscious discomfort, [...] frustrated in [his] erotic pleasure,”⁸⁶ Satan desires Eve and seeks to usurp Adam for his own self-assertion “[o]f guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge [...] and all his thoughts / Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites” (*PL* 9.466, 471-472.389).

Milton’s Satan envies Eve as a virginal vessel to corrupt, an erotic projection. As McColley argues, “as long as she remains unfallen Eve redeems beauty,”⁸⁷ and in doing so the mythological allusion to Pandora, who unlike Eve needed to make herself beautiful in order to arouse masculine desire. In Hesiod’s representation, Pandora is nothing more than her appearance and sin and is mirrored in both Eve’s Genesis and Miltonic presentation, but in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Eve is an autonomous figure, whose very

⁸⁵ Turner, James Grantham, *One Flesh*, 270, in Lehnhof, 73.

⁸⁶ Lehnhof, 73.

⁸⁷ McColley, *Milton’s Eve*, 67.

tresses personify her energetic vitality and the strength in her victorious battle with Satan, even in the most intimate setting of her own dreams. Eve is naked and perfect until the Fall, subverting Pauline “covering” as a Satanic⁸⁸ result of the Fall. Eve’s subordination and sexualization was conceived by Satan, who, in turn, spread the evil of the Fall to mankind.

Conclusion:

Wrought by Satan’s pride and sexual frustration, Eve’s sin is the catalyst for divorce. Albeit temporary, when Eve enters the postlapsarian and leaves Adam in the prelapsarian world, their relationship is broken. Where she once believed she was eating the fruit that would make her Adam’s “Superior” (*PL* 9.825.397) and bring self-fulfillment to her role in the Garden, Eve recognizes that she has eaten “Death” (*PL* 9.792.396) and approaches Adam with her sin. The act recalls her naivety in allowing herself to be alone with and tempted by Satan (*PL* 9.517-855.390-398) as much as the foreshadowing symbolism of her “wanton ringlets” (*PL* 4.306.285) and the “wanton wreath in sight of *Eve*” (*PL* 9.517.390). Eve’s tresses are a classical image of marriage, as ivy clinging and curling around an elm,⁸⁹ albeit distorted by Satan’s serpentine eroticism for his own dubious purposes, understood as a mirror to her emotions: this vine-like image of Eve’s betrayal brings to mind that “in many Renaissance emblem books ivy

⁸⁸ 95.

⁸⁹ Sammons, 117.

kills trees,”⁹⁰ but as she was ignorant of her temptation, Eve “does not yet realize that, ivy-like, she is about to help Adam kill himself”⁹¹ upon sharing the fruit.

Beyond the act’s invocation of the power of hair, its virtuous strength in covering eroticism,⁹² and her initial possessiveness of Adam, Eve does not wish Adam harm and betrays him to death unwittingly. This “ivy/tree countertopos,”⁹³ her tresses in marital and extramarital eroticism, is found upon Eve’s “humble” (*PL* 10.912.428), when with “tresses all disorder’d” (*PL* 10.911.428), she is broken, divorced from that which has given her life. Eve begs for a reunification to her marriage with Adam and by doing so invokes a second Renaissance emblem, in which a vine “curling around a *dead* tree meant friendship (or love) lasting beyond death.”⁹⁴ Once natural and flowing, uncorrupted—Eve’s hair symbolizes more than marriage now, as balance and the vitality of her world with Adam⁹⁵ and can only be restored to its golden luxury upon spiritual and marital reconciliation. In this, Milton’s Eve is no longer a woman without an identity, but a wife whose newfound independence brings her to support and rejuvenate her husband. Where she once unknowingly betrayed him, Eve knowingly urges Adam to repentance. In Christian tradition, observance of Paul’s urging women to cover their hair refers to covering of feminine life, silencing of women, but in *Paradise Lost*, Milton revives Eve.

⁹⁰ Sammons, 124.

⁹¹ See note 90.

⁹² Dobranski, 349.

⁹³ Sammons, 119.

⁹⁴ Sammons, 125.

⁹⁵ Dobranski, 350.

She is not an emblem of sexual promiscuousness or wanton betrayal, but an image of God's mercy and graciousness: despite Satan's attempted usurpation of Adam and subversion of Eve's nakedness in glory, God mends divorce wrought by sin and rejoins "our Great parents" (*PL* 1.29.212).

Chapter Two: Milton's Eve and the Apocryphal *Lives of Adam and Eve*

Milton's *Paradise Lost* reminisces preexilic Paradise and anticipates the postexilic state¹ of "our Great parents" (*PL* 1.29.212),² which was also mythologized in the *Lives of Adam and Eve*,³ an apocryphal collection likely known by Milton. Written

¹ While Milton's *Paradise Lost* characterizes the prelapsarian and postlapsarian experiences of Adam and Eve in the Garden, this chapter focuses on the apocryphal exploration of Adam and Eve's preexilic Paradise and mostly postexilic acclimation in the world beyond the walls of Eden. In some of the most known versions—the Latin, Armenian, and Georgian—the Books of Adam and Eve begin with a "penitence narrative" in the first few months after Adam and Eve's Fall and expulsion from the Garden: Gary A. Anderson, "The Punishment of Adam and Eve in the *Life of Adam and Eve*," 57-81, *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2000), 57.

² All quotations from Milton's *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, John. *Complete Poems and Major Prose*. Edited by Merritt Y. Hughes, (Indianapolis, IL: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003).

³ The *Lives of Adam and Eve* are apocryphal narratives that have served as "the earliest and most influential narrative[s] about Adam and Eve after the Hebrew Bible." Translated and preserved in Greek, Latin, Armenian, Georgian, Slavonic, and Coptic, the *Lives of Adam and Eve* "fill in the gaps of the Genesis story" and have been a vastly popular addition to Judaeo-Christian tradition. Due to overwhelming popularity in late antiquity to the Middle Ages and Renaissance, numerous editions with varying textual similarities and differences have emerged, but as scholars have agreed, the primary texts are the Greek (GLAE) and Latin (VLAE) translations: both texts are the earliest editions and represent the most influential interpretations of the narrative.

Composed approximately between A.D. 100 and 300 (potentially as late as A.D. 400), the Greek text (*ApMos*, *The Apocalypse of Moses*, or *Apocalypse*) is largely understood to be the first surviving composition of the story's oral tradition. The GLAE picks up where the biblical narrative left off in Genesis 3 with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden and bleeds into Cain's murdering of Abel and familial restoration brought by Seth's birth in Genesis 4. The Latin text (*Vita Adae et Evae*), on the other hand, was composed later in parts between A.D. 400 (potentially as late as A.D. 500) to 740 and elaborates on the Greek account, as its primary source for translation. It describes Eve's failed repentance for her seduction in the Garden, portrays her second temptation by Satan's appearance as an angel of light, her pregnancy and the birth of Cain, and Adam's death, burial, and ascension to heaven. At the heart of their unique features, of the most prominent narratives in tradition, the Greek account includes Eve's account of the Fall but lacks the "penitence narrative," while the Latin account has a substantial "penitence narrative" with the addition of Eve's second temptation but lacks Eve's account of the Fall.

and composed throughout the first centuries, following Christ's resurrection and ascension, the apocryphal Adam and Eve narratives⁴ are conflicting. In one account, the

The absence of a Hebrew text is unfortunate, but with educational assumption that the story circulated orally in Hebrew and Aramaic, "it is most probable that there did exist an original Hebrew document or documents from which the Apocalypse and *Vita* were translated, the Greek directly [in poor Greek] from the Hebrew and the Latin directly either from the Hebrew or from the Greek." The probable initial composition in Hebrew, originating in Palestine, and potential employment of "biblicized Greek" in translation permits an authorship that is largely "problematical" but is at least suggestive of a Jew with insufficient Greek and knowledge of the "Philonian exegetic method" but an appropriate familiarity with the canonical pseudograph, the relevant theology and lore of Judaism, and the emerging presence of a Christological context. In recognizing the recent developments in related scholarship, John R. Levison argues that "[f]or much of the twentieth century, the *communis opinio* was that the Latin and Greek versions of the *Life of Adam and Eve* were two recensions whose origins could be traced to a hypothetical Hebrew or Aramaic *Vorlage*," scholarly opinion diverging primarily on the question of the original. We may never have a conclusive original text: Gary A. Anderson, "The Original Form of the *Life of Adam and Eve*: A Proposal," 215-231, *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2000), 215; Vita Daphna Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity* (New York, NY: Oxford UP, 2012), 3-5; Vita Daphna Arbel, "Guarding His Body, Mourning His Death, and Pleading for Him in Heaven: On Adam's Death and Eve's Virtues in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve," 103-126, *Coming Back to Life: The Permeability of Past and Present, Mortality and Immortality, Death and Life in the Ancient Mediterranean*, edited by Frederick S. Tappenden and Carly Daniel Hughes with assistance of Bradley N. Rice (Montreal, QC: McGill University Library, 2017), 103; "Life of Adam and Eve," 249-295, *The Old Testament Pseudograph*, translated and edited by James H. Charlesworth and M. D. Johnson, 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 249-253; John R. Levison, "The Exoneration and Denigration of Eve in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*," 251-275, *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2000), 251; A. Piñero, "Angels and Demons in the Greek 'Life of Adam and Eve'," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period*, 24, no. 2 (December 1993), 191-214, 191-192; Stella P. Revard, "For Metanoia to Apocalypse: 'Paradise Lost' and the Apocryphal 'Lives of Adam and Eve'," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 104, no. 1 (January 2005), 80-102, 80-81.

⁴ Not unlike Milton's pulling from Genesis 1-3 and the Books of Adam and Eve—each of which have a harsh reality, attempted mediation, and successful mediation with the continuation of mankind—this standard literary pattern and set of motifs is a single unit, that is, "each of these scenes is part of a larger organic whole," as the tradition of the Garden of Eden and ultimately Eve's culpability (and by relation, that of all women): Anderson, "The Original Form of the *Life of Adam and Eve*: A Proposal," 221.

composers blame⁵ Eve for bringing about death, as Adam tells Seth the cause of his “pain and illness” (GLAE 5.1-5.271) resulted “When God made us, me and your mother, through whom I am dying” (GLAE 7.1.271, VLAE 32.1-2.270).⁶ The statement affirms Eve’s culpability, as much as God’s believed dubious intent in creating her—that is, man was predetermined to fall by a woman. Throughout the passage, he continues to blame Eve (“you”) for what she has done to him (“me” and “us”), separating himself and his sons as men from feminine culpability⁷ and liability⁸ in life. But in counter narratives,

⁵ Modifications in the M manuscript of the Greek Life of Adam and Eve show efforts to transplant Adam’s blame from Eve, suggesting an individual or cultural shift towards a shared culpability, later embraced by Milton in *Paradise Lost*: Levison, “The Exoneration and Denigration of Eve in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*,” 257-258.

⁶ I intend to employ both the Greek and Latin *Lives of Adam and Eve* in my critical interpretation of Milton’s Eve in *Paradise Lost*. All quotations from the Latin *Life of Adam and Eve* (LLAE) and the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* (GLAE) are from “Life of Adam and Eve,” 249-295, *The Old Testament Pseudograph*, translated and edited by James H. Charlesworth and M. D. Johnson, 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983).

⁷ In the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, Eve is aware that she is sinning when eating the “forbidden fruit” but argues that she was not aware, when she tempted Adam to do the same. She did not actively seduce Adam, “but the devil through her (21:3).” This possession is emphasized by Eve’s omission of prayer. While Adam’s testament includes his praying, Eve is critically forgetful of her prayer in her account of transgression. Eve weeps upon her confession, that of which as Anne Marie Sweet has argued, exonerates her as an “unwitting victim of Satan.” The penitence “accords a dignity to Eve not found in most other literature dealing with the protoplasts. In the *Bios*, Eve is counted among the righteous” because her penitence is accepted by God and allows her to be “a visionary of heavenly things,” cementing her role as both “an exemplar for all sinners who face death” and “among the great figures of Israel’s history”: Ibid., 125, 141-144, 150, 156-157, 199, in Levison, “The Exoneration and Denigration of Eve in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*,” 255; Levison, “The Exoneration and Denigration of Eve in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*,” 254; A. M. Sweet, *A Religio-Historical Study of the Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, in Levison, “The Exoneration and Denigration of Eve in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*,” 254-255.

⁸ Arbel, “Guarding His Body, Mourning His Death, and Pleading for Him in Heaven: On Adam’s Death and Eve’s Virtues in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve,” 104.

Eve's culpability is exchanged for her "playing a beneficial role in the context of Adam's death."⁹ John R. Levison has argued that the Apocalypse of Moses (GLAE) is "an originally independent tradition in which the autobiographical narrator, Eve, employs a variety of literary techniques to exonerate herself in her version of the primal transgression, curses, and expulsion from paradise."¹⁰ These natural confictions are evidence that the narratives are not conventions of a set standard or formula, but rather are varied expressions and representations of Hebraic perspectives and traditions, "paradoxically associating [Eve] with notions that are considered to be both loathed and laudable in theological and social circles."¹¹

The *Lives of Adam and Eve*¹² served as a valuable source to Milton in his writing of *Paradise Lost*. In quoting L. S. A. Wells, "in his contribution to R. H. Charles's volumes [of the apocryphal narratives]," Professor of Old Testament Interpretation and a forerunning scholar in Biblical Hebrew, John R. Levison argues that "it seems at least tenable that S. Paul and the author of 2 Enoch were near contemporaries of the original

⁹ See note 5.

¹⁰ "The Exoneration of Eve in the Apocalypse of Moses 15-30," 135-150, in "The Exoneration and Denigration of Eve in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*," 253.

¹¹ Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity*, ix.

¹² The Greek and Latin *Lives of Adam and Eve* should be read as two literary compositions that share common material, not two recensions whose value can only be determined by the reconstruction of an original: Levison, "The Exoneration and Denigration of Eve in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*," 252.

author of Apoc. Mos.¹³ and moved in the same circle of ideas.”¹⁴ Although the authors did not live in the same period, considering St. Paul wrote in the first century and the apocryphal authors wrote between the third and seventh centuries,¹⁵ they reflect the same Hebraic-Graeco-Roman ideals. This is more affirmed by J. D. G. Dunn in his *Theology of Paul the Apostle* (1998), when he poses the question, “Where did Paul draw his Adam theology from?”¹⁶ The answer is largely the same as Milton’s: Genesis 1-3 and the apocryphal narrative of the *Lives of Adam and Eve*,¹⁷ with the convenient addition of Pauline theology. As Levison continues to express, the correlation between Paul’s writing and that of the apocryphal narratives suggest an earlier writing than our earliest surviving manuscripts and a familiarity that would make “the reference to [Epithumia] as the origin

¹³ Arguably, the best textual study and scholarship on the Greek version of the *Lives of Adam and Eve* as of the turn of this century is “that of Nagel,” whose dissertation in 1974 was an extensive volume elaborating on all of the “textual forms of the Greek that he knew of.” Anderson correctly asserts that “[a]lthough the Armenian ‘Penitence of Adam’ had not yet been published, he did comment on the relation of the Georgian text to the various Greek families,” ultimately relating the Georgian form most closely “to a family of four Greek manuscripts, ATLC”: “The Original Form of the *Life of Adam and Eve*: A Proposal,” 215-216.

¹⁴ L. S. A. Wells, “The Books of Adam and Eve,” *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, 2.130, in “Adam and Eve in Romans 1.18-25 and the Greek *Lives of Adam and Eve*,” *New Testament Studies*, 50 (2004), 519-534, 519.

¹⁵ Arbel, “Guarding His Body, Mourning His Death, and Pleading for Him in Heaven: On Adam’s Death and Eve’s Virtues in the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve*,” 105.

¹⁶ J. D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 82, in Levison, 520.

¹⁷ Michael Stone published the first of several treatments of the Armenian version in 1981, followed by Gary Anderson’s conclusions that the Armenian text may be a “more original reading than the Latin” and may have suffered less Christianization: Levison, “The Exoneration and Denigration of Eve in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*,” 251.

of sin¹⁸ in Rom 7.7 and GLAW 13.6; the separation of soul and body at death in 2 Cor 5.1-5 and GLAE 13.6; and the laying of blame at Eve's feet"¹⁹ possible. A sufficient study of Hebrew and Pauline theology would have to make use of the apocryphal narratives for a full representation of biblical writing, especially in regard to Adam and Eve.

Milton's use of the Bible in *Paradise Lost* is well documented. Although Milton worked to expand his biblical material throughout his prose and poetry, often at the expense of classical ideas, Jeffrey Shoulson suggests that Raphael's account of creation in Book VII "is the site of many (though by no means all) of the poem's most explicit and direct quotations from the Bible, as the lines"²⁰

'Again, God said, 'Let there be firmament
Amid the waters, and let it divide
The waters from the waters'; and God made
The firmament' (7.261-64)²¹

closely resemble the King James Version's translation of Genesis 1:6-7: "And God said, Let there be firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the

¹⁸ The key point in both the apocryphal *Lives of Adam and Eve* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, both set of transgression narratives differ: while in the latter, Milton's Eve shares the "forbidden fruit" with Adam after making him aware of her transgression, to which he knowingly and readily eats, in the Georgian and Armenian versions of the Books of Adam and Eve, Adam eats unaware: Anderson, "The Original Form of the *Life of Adam and Eve*: A Proposal," 217.

¹⁹ See the list in M. D. Johnson, "Life of Adam and Eve," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985): Levison, 520.

²⁰ Jeffrey Shoulson, "Milton's Bible," 69-80, *The Cambridge Companion to Paradise Lost*, edited by Louis Schwartz (New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 2014), 70-71.

²¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in Shoulson, 71.

waters. And God made the firmament...” Milton’s explicit lifting of material is rare and in the employment of lines, such as these, still “never allows the Bible only to speak for itself,”²² following the quotation with his own imaginative and theological interpretation. This profession of biblical reliance informs his interpretation of St. Paul’s representation of Eve. While Paul “glosses over the divine judgment of Genesis 3:16 [...] and notoriously uses the deceived and transgressing Eve to subordinate not only wives to husbands but women to male authority, and to ordain silence,”²³ Milton supports Eve and redresses his primary source material with the togetherness of marital union, the “wholeness” of the Garden: Adam and Eve fell—albeit for different reasons, but still together—divorced and rejoined by God. Adam and Eve’s reunification in the conclusion of *Paradise Lost* recalls Jesus’s words in Matthew’s Gospel: in addressing the Pharisee’s tests on marriage and divorce, He responds, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt 19:6).²⁴

Although Milton informed his writing of *Paradise Lost* with the Bible first and foremost, correlative Jewish sources, including the *midrash aggadah*, *Genesis Rabbah*, and *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* populate the epic. Shoulson argues that Satan’s envy and erotic desire for Eve, an extra-biblical element more familiar to the Books of Enoch than

²² Shoulson, 71.

²³ David Quint, “Getting What You Wish For: A Reading of the Fall,” 153-196, *Inside “Paradise Lost”’: Reading the Designs of Milton’s Epic* (Oxfordshire, UK: Princeton UP, 2014), 153.

²⁴ See also Mark 10:9; All quotations from Matthew and (relevant biblical books) unless otherwise specified are from *The Holy Bible*. King James Version, edited by Rev. C. I. Scofield, D. D. (New York, NY: Oxford UP, 1945.)

canonical readings, “appears to have originated”²⁵ from the midrashic approaches. Parallels between the midrashic accounts and *Paradise Lost* have birthed numerous scholarly approaches to both the direct and indirect influences, better informing our understanding of Milton’s familiarity with the *Lives of Adam and Eve*, another writing of Jewish tradition. Although we cannot assert that he knew one and therefore the other, Milton’s recognized awareness to (and usage of) extra-biblical material strengthens the substance of his experiences with the material. Milton would have been familiar with “Paul’s conception of Adam,”²⁶ that N. T. Wright and Dunn interpret as a long held “Adam-speculation”²⁷ in Jewish Adam tradition: in the same way Eve is not the result of a single verse or narrative, Adam is understood to be his own tradition passed down in oral and literary texts. Milton was subject to biblical authority, but he was also subject to the purposes of his literary epic and embraced sources beyond those most readily accepted to create a more informed interpretation of the first man and woman in the Garden. Next to the biblical material, which permeates *Paradise Lost* and served as Milton’s primary source alongside his own imagination and interpreted theology, the *Lives of Adam and Eve* offered him more commentary to Paul’s writings and more material with which to work.

Composed from mankind’s formation and subsequent temptation in biblical and apocryphal perspectives, Milton’s Adam and Eve represent Edenic normalcy of preexilic

²⁵ 74.

²⁶ Levison, 522.

²⁷ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 79-101 and N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, 19, in Levison, 522.

Paradise: love at first sight,²⁸ consummation of marital “spiritual companionship,”²⁹ equal dominion, and shared spiritual vitality with God and spiritual entities. As Milton scholar Diane Kelsey McColley explains, “They are called to dress and keep a garden that is the epitome of global nature, ‘planted with the trees of God’ (7.738), [...] and Milton, unlike most Western poets and artists, shows Adam and Eve doing so.”³⁰ Adam and Eve are entrepreneurial co-partners, as the first man and woman with the responsibility to oversee the fruitful development of God’s natural creation, a job that supersedes the angels’ fleet-footed postal service as divine messengers.

Together, “hand in hand” (*PL* 12.648.469), they tend to a “fruitful Earth” (*PL* 8.96.365), where the animals—albeit not subservient—are “naturally obedient”³¹ and as a

²⁸ Although Milton’s Adam falls in love with Eve at first sight, not unlike Ovidian Apollo and Daphne, Mandy Green explains that Eve’s instinctive reaction “is evidently not [a likeminded] experience”: Mandy Green, *Milton’s Ovidian Eve* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 184-185.

²⁹ In Milton’s perspective of marriage, men and women should be joined in “spiritual companionship”—that is, mutual passion and devotion for the benefit of shared intellectual conversation, consummated by the blessing of procreation. Diane K. McColley argues that this is “a love ‘begot in Paradise by that sociable [and] helpful aptitude which God implanted between man and woman toward each other’ and is demonstrated in Adam and Eve’s mutual devotion, intellect, and lordship of the Garden. In “spiritual companionship,” as a symphonic and symbiotic marriage, the mutual benefit manifested in the equality and excellence of both sexes to the extent the Fall would allow: Diane K. McColley, “Milton and the Sexes,” 175-192, *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, edited by Dennis Danielson, 6th ed. (New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 1989), 183.

³⁰ Diane Kelsey McColley, “Milton’s Environmental Epic: Creature Kinship and the Language of *Paradise Lost*,” 57-74, *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*, edited by Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace (Charlottesville and London, UK: UP of Virginia, 2001), 59.

³¹ McColley, “Milton’s Environmental Epic: Creature Kinship and the Language of *Paradise Lost*,” 60.

result of her gentle tone are “more duteous to [Eve’s] call” (*PL* 9.521.390) than to Adam’s.³² Adam names the animals, and Eve the flowers.³³ She “waters and props her fruits and flowers,”³⁴ nursing the Earth as its mother. As McColley argues in her *Milton’s Eve* (1983), this “pictorial tradition makes the Garden a place of idle pleasure,”³⁵ where the daily routine of work—albeit extensive, sufficiently exhaustive as a good work ethic³⁶—is softened by “prelapsarian sex in the bower, [...] angelic consumption when Raphael joins [them] for lunch,”³⁷ and the minimal nature of the Garden’s management—pruning trees for more fruitfulness and picking up flowers that have fallen to soften their

³² As a *femme fatale*, Eve’s calls are more responsive “From every Beast, [...] / Than at *Circean* call the herd disguis’d” (*PL* 9.521-522.390). Later emphasized in Satan’s transformation into a serpent having something to do with Eve, as a beast, Satan is “sexually aroused by Eve’s attractiveness,” as her fitness for a beast. In this analysis, Eve is perceived in the shape of a beast, or a serpent, as a reflection / an image of herself: King-Kok Cheung, “Beauty and the Beast: A Sinuous Reflection of Milton’s Eve,” *Milton Studies*, 25 (1987), 197-124, 197; Wolfgang E. H. Rudat, “‘Thy Beauty’s Heav’nly Ray’: Milton’s Satan and the Circean Eve,” *Milton Quarterly*, 19, no. 1 (March 1985), 17-19, 17.

³³ Diane Kelsey McColley, *Milton’s Eve* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983): 113.

³⁴ McColley, “Milton’s Environmental Epic: Creature Kinship and the Language of *Paradise Lost*,” 59.

³⁵ McColley, *Milton’s Eve*, 6.

³⁶ Typically linked with the labor of the Fall, Milton asserts that prelapsarian productivity reflects the prioritization of a good work ethic, encouraged by the fulfilling nature of God’s will. Milton largely aligns with the Protestant’s perspective on works as a “sign, albeit not a means, of salvation” and characterizes Adam and Eve’s labor in the Garden, informed by the “emerging capitalist economy of early modern England,” as a calling: Luna Lunger Knoppers, “Rewriting the Protestant Ethic: Discipline and Love in *Paradise Lost*,” *ELH*, 58, no. 3 (Autumn 1991): 545-559, 545-546.

³⁷ Beatrice Bradley, “Creative Juices: Sweat in *Paradise Lost*,” *Milton Studies*, 62, no. 1 (2020), 107-135, 111.

steps. This observation is not to argue for the lack of work in Milton's Eden, but rather to accentuate its paradisaical nature: largely reflective of the modern idealist's hope of marriage, the extraordinary circumstances of the Edenic standard have served as the rubric for masculine and feminine characterization and coupled expectations.

Despite their naïve hope for a paradisaical retirement, Adam returning to his zoological caretaking and Eve to the nurturing of "her flower-children,"³⁸ anticipation of the Fall and its consequences births suspense for the revelation (*apocalypse*)³⁹ suggests Milton's knowledge and his use of certain elements from the apocryphal *Lives of Adam and Eve*.⁴⁰ Eve is not supposed to have a happily-ever-after ending in the ash of the Fall: patriarchal audiences, especially those beset in the Hebraic-Christian tradition of divine vengeance and justice,⁴¹ want to see Eve suffer for her role in Adam's (and by relation, man's) death. In the Adam and Eve Books,⁴² Adam and Eve have departed the Garden

³⁸ James Nohrnberg, "Naming Milton's Eve," *Milton Studies*, 60, no. 1-2 (2018), 1-22, 3-4.

³⁹ Revard, 81.

⁴⁰ Throughout the chapter, I will refer to the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* by its apocryphal identity and the Latin *Life of Adam and Eve* by the Latin term for life: Greek Apocrypha (or, Apocalypse) and *Vita*.

⁴¹ "The LORD is a God who avenges. O God who avenges, shine forth. Rise up, Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve" (Ps. 94:1-2): For more instances of Hebraic pleas for vengeance in the Bible, see the biblical Psalms.

⁴² I intend to employ both Greek *Lives* in my critical interpretation of Milton's Eve in *Paradise Lost*. Throughout the chapter, I will refer to the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* by its apocryphal identity and the Latin *Life of Adam and Eve* by the Latin term for life: Greek Apocrypha and *Vita*. The Adam and Eve Books can be understood interchangeably with the *Lives of Adam and Eve*.

and in the opening days of their postexilic⁴³ experience give themselves over to lamentation, “unable to reconcile with one another or to come to terms with what has happened.”⁴⁴ Still hopeful God’s forgiveness will beckon their readmittance to Paradise, but hungry and disoriented—they build a tented shelter and search for food, finding “nothing as they had in Paradise, but only such as animals to eat” (VLAE 1.1 – 6.1.258), before resolving to a devoted fast in penitence. Although the apocryphal tradition portrays her as the “Devil’s vessel,”⁴⁵ an animalistic⁴⁶ wife devoid of spiritual aptitude

⁴³ With its substantial “penitence narrative,” the two themes of the *Vita* are “*Adam’s ignorance* and the *discovery of the punishments*.” Adam and Eve’s abrupt and almost immediate expulsion and postexilic experience intensify Adam’s surprise upon finding himself cast out. Adam is adamant that God will forgive them and restore their place in Paradise, going so far in the Apocalypse, as to bargain with God to eat from the Tree of Life (GLAE 28.1-4.285). Upon their expulsion, Adam refuses to gather food until Eve implores him and offers no opportunity for rebuttal. Anderson observes that although Adam does not rebuke her leadership, he recognizes his ignorance as the cause of his circumstances, heightening Eve’s guilt. This is not removed from the tradition, but is rather a well rooted motif in Eve’s own complaint: “since *on account of my action*... (3:2)” Anderson continues to argue that Adam’s ignorance and Eve’s culpability is such an ingrained motif that it is must be representative of the original material: “The Original Form of the *Life of Adam and Eve: A Proposal*,” 218-221.

⁴⁴ Revard, 87.

⁴⁵ Professor of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies at the University of British Columbia—Vita Daphna Arbel explains the strictly oppositional perspectives attached to Eve’s portrayal in the Apocryphal with scenes that depict her in association with “the devil’s illicit sexuality and desire” in contrast to a devoted wife: Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity*, 3.

⁴⁶ In the Georgian and Armenian versions of the *Lives of Adam and Eve*, Eve’s beastly nature is personified in her deciding to eat grass, when their search food proves futile. The announcement recalls Adam’s dominion over the animals and his learning agriculture and suggests Adam’s dominion over his carnal wife: Johannes Tromp, “Cain and Abel in the Greek and Armenian/Georgian Recensions of the *Life of Adam and Eve*,” 277-296, *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2000), 288-289.

necessary to lead and care for Adam in his life and death, Eve is the one to suggest lamentation: in the context of Protestant salvation, repentance “involves not just confession, but bewailment of sin,”⁴⁷ as exercised in the biblical Lamentations. Eve’s initial movement towards lamentation signifies that she is the first to move from sin to repentance.

Critics have long given attention to Eve’s “movement towards repentance.”⁴⁸ McColley argues Eve’s choice of both sin and redemption provides a “model for a regenerate reading”⁴⁹ of *Paradise Lost*. Walter S. H. Lim observes that “Eve might have been first to fall, [...] but she is also the first to reconstruct the rupture that had taken place between herself, and Adam and between them both and God.”⁵⁰ Mandy Green argues in her *Milton’s Ovidian Eve* (2009) that Eve’s paradoxical characterization—associated and contrasted with sin, an epitome of both virtue and evil—is further complicated by her poetic alignment with the Son. This “significant and profound”⁵¹ linkage suggests her redemptive role as an instrument for mankind’s salvation before the incarnation of Christ.

In context, Milton’s Eve is an Ovidian device meant to bring balance back to Eden, her harmonious relationship with Adam, and their shared vitality with God.

⁴⁷ Revard, 86.

⁴⁸ Green, 82.

⁴⁹ McColley, *Milton’s Eve*, 76.

⁵⁰ Walter S. H. Lim, “Adam, Eve, and Biblical Analogy in *Paradise Lost*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 30, no. 1 (Winter 1990), 115-131, 124-125.

⁵¹ Green, 80-81.

Green's analysis builds on Daniel W. Doerkson and James Nohnberg's observations of Eve as an archetypal damsel in distress,⁵² whose apparent weaknesses correlate her to the Son most strongly, as it is her humility that reflects the Son's servant leadership and love, the "very opposite of the pride and hate characteristic of Satan (3.298)."⁵³ She "[places] herself at risk"⁵⁴ and comes to Adam with the antidote to his suffering, the pre-incarnate embodiment of the Son's Gospel message: hope. As Lim understands, the anticipation of postexilic experience suspends the reader with Adam and Eve's "continuing pilgrimage and expresses an open-ended vision of hope," but Milton's *Paradise Lost* offers more than a hopeful ending. Adam and Eve themselves are characterized by the motif of *elpis*: hope in each other, God's will and mercy, repentance, return to Paradise, and children, including the "Promis'd Seed" (*PL* 12.623.468). Eve herself contains and brings hope. In her relationships with repentance and her correlation to the Books of Adam and Eve and mythological Pandora, Milton's Eve symbolizes the thematic hope of mankind in *Paradise Lost*.

"Milton's Lifting of Material," Influence of the *Lives of Adam and Eve on Paradise Lost*:

Milton "did not fashion [*Paradise Lost*] himself," but relied on the "influence of earlier writers stretching all the way back to the earliest Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal

⁵² Nohnberg, 2.

⁵³ Doerksen, 125.

⁵⁴ Eve's prompting of redemption unarguably recalls the selfless, divine obedience of the incarnate Son: Doerksen, 125-126.

sources,” pride of which “must be attributed to the Latin *Vita Adae et Evae*.”⁵⁵ The Books of Adam and Eve were enormously popular upon their oral and written composition from late antiquity to the Renaissance: as they aged and gained “certain literary units,”⁵⁶ adopting and forfeiting characterized perspectives and motifs of Eve, numerous editions were likewise composed and printed. Illustrated in the pervasive influence of the *Lives of Adam and Eve* on late Roman and Medieval legends, Christological motifs about early Pseudepigraphal characters, and Early Modern and Renaissance publications⁵⁷—Milton had direct and indirect access to the apocryphal collection. Although the first official Greek edition was not published until 1866 by Constantin von Tischendorf,⁵⁸ based on

⁵⁵ Gary Anderson, “The Exaltation of Adam and the Fall of Satan” in *Literature on Adam and Eve. Collected Essays*, 256, in Revard, 80.

⁵⁶ Arbel, “Guarding His Body, Mourning His Death, and Pleading for Him in Heaven: On Adam’s Death and Eve’s Virtues in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve,” 105.

⁵⁷ Examples include Peter Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica* (1100s) and Hugo Grotius’s Latin drama *Adamus Exul* (1601): “Life of Adam and Eve,” 255-256.

⁵⁸ As Arbel explains in her *Forming Femininity in Antiquity*, recent textual scholarship and translations by John Sharpe (1969) and Marcel Nagel (1974), whose work Daniel Bertrand attempted to fully reconstruct in 1987, has indicated the existence of many manuscripts belonging to the family of the apocrypha and specifically the *Lives of Adam and Eve*. Primary scholarship and translations that should be prioritized in any modern study include John Levison’s *Texts in Transition* (2000) and relevant articles that introduced a unique perspective on the text and the characterization of Adam and Eve in the birth of the twenty-first century and Johanne Tromp’s *The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek: A Critical Edition* (2005) that “has undertaken a detailed examination of the manuscript tradition and the relationships among the individual versions.” While Levison fought for the independent treatment of the apocryphal editions, Tromp sought “to produce a single critical edition perceived to be as close as possible to an original text”: Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity*, 5; “Life of Adam and Eve,” 249-250.

four manuscripts (A1, B, C, and D),⁵⁹ and “was not readily available in English translation”⁶⁰ until the following century, Greek and Latin manuscripts of the *Lives of Adam and Eve* were widely circulated during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance with the *Vita* (prevalent in English translations) as the most familiar composed form in seventeenth-century England and Europe.⁶¹ Compounded with his known interest in Jewish and Christian theological-ideological thought, the *Vita*’s widespread availability in its Latin form and English translations encourage likelihood of Milton’s familiarity alongside that of the Greek Apocryphal, which—albeit not as well circulated—could be “found in libraries in Paris, Venice, and Rome—all cities that Milton visited during his journey to the continent in 1638-39.”⁶²

Following the publication of R. H. Charles’s *The Apocrypha and Pseudograph of the Old and New Testament* in 1913,⁶³ inspired by the revival of interest in the apocryphal writings by Michael Stone, M. D. Johnson, James H. Charlesworth, and Gary Anderson, renowned Milton scholars E. C. Baldwin, Arnold Williams, J. Martin Evans,⁶⁴ Golda

⁵⁹ The manuscripts were used for the first and primary “English translation of Wells [1913] and the German of Fuchs [1909-1938]”: “Life of Adam and Eve,” 249-251, 255-257.

⁶⁰ Not only were English translations delayed, but as Revard explains, “[t]ranslations of Georgian, Armenian, and Slavonic Lives, together with some Coptic fragments, were not published until the twentieth century”: 82-83.

⁶¹ Revard, 82.

⁶² Revard, 84.

⁶³ Revard, 80.

⁶⁴ In the 1960s, J. Martin Evans published one of the first complete tracings of “the fall theme in literature up to Milton,” emphasizing Milton’s interest and superlative

Werman, and Stella P. Revard “have remarked upon the parallels between the Greek *Life, The Apocalypse of Moses*, and the Latin *Vita Adae et Evae* and passages in *Paradise Lost*.”⁶⁵ Although *Paradise Lost* acts within Eden’s borders, Milton answers most of the questions raised in the Books of Adam and Eve concerning the aftermath of the Fall, particularly in regard to Adam and Eve’s reconciliation. In the Genesis narrative, Moses tells his readers about their paradisaal expulsion.⁶⁶ The audience is not privy to the details of the act: conventional to the genre, much of which frames Eve’s seduction and admission, conversations and thoughts are restricted to the imagination until the birth of Eve’s sons and the murder⁶⁷ of Abel. In the apocryphal books, however, the expulsion from Eden is the inciting incident contextualizing the narrative. Adam and Eve have been forced from the only home they know and must learn to fend for themselves, all while Eve is three months pregnant (LLAE 18.4.264). They are the added imagination, encouraged in Genesis. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton “draws on both Biblical and extra-Bible material”⁶⁸ to describe Adam and Eve’s reconciliation and peace not found in either

incorporation of the *Lives of Adam and Eve* in his *Paradise Lost*: “Life of Adam and Eve,” 256.

⁶⁵ See note 40.

⁶⁶ Genesis 3:23-24: “Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

⁶⁷ Levison observes that “every manuscript except M refers, in direct address to Adam, to Cain as ‘your [singular] son,’ while M explicitly reads ‘our son’. Unlike most manuscripts, manuscript M displays a consistent tendency to include Eve in a central role: “The Exoneration and Denigration of Eve in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*,” 256.

⁶⁸ Revard, 81.

narrative. His interpretation depicts Adam and Eve, not with the traditional, overly dramatized “bitter tears and shame” of their departure, but seeking unification, peace, and hope in the future, that of which will ultimately be fostered and brought forth by Eve. Milton unifies the narratives and provides answers for the unknown.

Recent scholarship asserts the almost definitive influence of the *Lives of Adam and Eve*, particularly that of the Latin *Vita* on Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Parallel characterization, moments, and themes⁶⁹ suggest a vehement argument for Milton’s lifting of material. In her argument for apocryphal influence on Adam and Eve’s expulsion in the final lines of *Paradise Lost*, Revard argues that “[t]o effect this picture of penitential tranquility, Milton turned to sources such as the *Lives of Adam and Eve*, but transferred the penitential process that the human couple usually undergo in the postexilic state⁷⁰ to the period between their fall and their exile.”⁷¹ Milton’s reworking of the apocryphal experience includes their paradisaal reconciliation so that they are able to

⁶⁹ That is, Satan’s deceptive reason for his disposal from heaven, not as a result of pride but rather his unwillingness to worship Adam and Eve (VLAE 12.1.262 – 17.3.264) and corrupted belief of self-creation and inferiority (VLAE 14.262; *PL* 5.661.318, 9.567-611.391-392); functional correlation between Milton’s Abdiel and the *Vita*’s Michael; Adam and Eve’s shared lordship and division of work in the Garden (VLAE 32.270; *PL* 9.205-212.383); and Adam’s dropping of Eve’s garland (GLAE 21.281; *PL* 9.892-893.399). The loss of righteousness and glory and the concluding visions further suggest a strong correlation to apocryphal materials: “Life of Adam and Eve,” 256.

⁷⁰ In the *Lives of Adam and Eve*, the “penitence narrative” is delayed until after Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the Garden, as they come to a “*gradual discovery* of their punishment.” Our first parents only begin to realize the gravity of their Fall and expulsion, when God does not allow them to reenter Paradise and they are forced to begin anew outside the walls of Eden: Anderson, “The Punishment of Adam and Eve in the *Life of Adam and Eve*,” 58.

⁷¹ Revard, 82.

embark beyond Eden “hand in hand” (*PL* 12.648.469). Reconciliation and redemption⁷² thereby occur earlier and better demonstrate their unified circumstances. Their final act in the Garden is not one of temptation and sin’s consequence, but rather reformation. Milton may have lifted the characterizations and motives attributed to Satan and Eve from the Books: Satan’s temptation of Eve by inciting her towards thoughts of inherent inferiority—“for inferior who is free?” (*PL* 9.825.397)—cite the *Vita* Satan’s own corrupted belief of created equality but forced inferiority, when he claims Michael forced him to worship Adam: “I said to him, ‘Why do you compel me? I will not worship one inferior and subsequent to me. I am prior to him in creation; before he was made, I was already made. He ought to worship me” (*VLA* 14.3.262). The correlation suggests Milton’s familiarity with the apocryphal books as much as his divergent representation of Adam and Eve from his Western contemporaries.⁷³

A “Helpmeet,” Eve’s Purposed Creation for Spiritual and Intellectual Hope:

⁷² In the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, Eve’s redemption is further emphasized by the birth of Seth, when Adam admits that God is not only his, but Eve’s with “our God”: Levison, “The Exoneration and Denigration of Eve in the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*,” 256.

⁷³ Despite their later creation, God’s imparting of *imago dei* and freewill incited human superiority to the angels. The divergence in traditional perception of angels as something to be worshipped alongside God further gave Milton a motive to augment Satan’s prideful rebellion beyond simple pride. Considered a weak motivation for celestial warfare, Milton sought a motive that would be more fitting to the dynamic characterization for a villain, such as that of Satan. He fostered Satan’s prideful rebellion with influences of envy and jealousy, pried from the apocryphal tradition. Refashioned for Eve, Milton relates Eve’s struggle for self-identity with Satan’s deception of Adam, recalling the theological motif of her seductive deception and enriching her serpentine correlation with Satan: this is not only effective for his humanizing of Satan, but also Eve: Arnold Williams, “The Motivation of Satan’s Rebellion in ‘Paradise Lost’,” *Studies in Philology*, 42, no. 2 (April 1945), 253-268, 260.

Eve unifies the Pandora/Eve narrative and mythological traditions and represents the bringing of hope. In *Paradise Lost*, Adam dreams about Eve as a biblical “helpmeet,” spiritual and intellectual hope through the floral, ornamental language of Pandora and Proserpine:

The Rib he form'd and fashion'd with his hands;
 Under his forming hands a Creature grew,
 Manlike, but different sex, so lovely fair,
 That what seem'd fair in all the World, seem'd now
 Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd
 And in her looks, which from that time infus'd
 Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
 And into all things from her Air inspir'd
 The spirit of love and amorous delight.
 Shee disappear'd, and left me dark, I wak'd
 To find her, or for ever to deplore
 Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:
 When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
 Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd. (*PL* 8.469-482.373)

Contextualized by her formation and their consummated meeting and marital embrace, Adam recognizes Eve's spiritual leadership through hope, when “other pleasures all abjure” (*PL* 8.480.373). Eve symbolizes the bringing and fulfilling of hope. She is a container of anticipation, not unlike Pandora, whose creation anticipated deeper sensuality and hope in the distinctly feminine. As the first perfect woman, Eve represents the fundamental assumption of hope for feminine success in selfhood, marriage with Adam as the first man in epitomic Paradise, and familial reproductivity.

As he recounts her creation *de deo*,⁷⁴ Adam's imaginative dream about a creature “so lovely fair” is likened to Eve, who upon awakening finds her to be as “as delightful as

⁷⁴ Everything was formed from the substance of the Father: Kent R. Lehnhof, “Paradise Lost and the Concept of Creation,” *South Central Review*, 21, no. 2 (Summer 2004), 15-41, 15.

the woman in his dream”⁷⁵ (*PL* 8.471.373). He recalls God’s provision of his desire for “likeness,” “fit help,” “other self,” and “wish, exactly to thy heart’s desire” in feminine grace (*PL* 8.450-451.373). Clothed in glory by the Graces, who “placed golden jewelry all around her body,” Eve’s steps of grace and her “Beauty’s powerful glance” evoke Pandora’s seductive edification in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*, but in Milton’s emphasis of God’s forming her sufficient goodness, ornamental language refers to Eve’s superior beauty and virtue, rather than cunning character: naked, she is more beautiful and readily accepted by her husband than Pandora when robed in golden classical glory (73-74.93⁷⁶; *PL* 8.485, 488.374; 8.533.375).

A Range of Disguises, Forms of Pandora and Proserpina in Milton’s Eve:

⁷⁵ Nancy Rosenfeld, “‘Eve’s Dream Will Do Here’: Miltonic Dreaming in Keats’s ‘The Eve of St. Agnes,’” *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 49 (2000), 47-66, 64.

⁷⁶ All quotations from Hesiod’s *Works and Days* are from Hesiod. *Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia*. Edited and translated by Glenn W. Most (London, UK: Harvard UP, 2018).

Eve's tradition has predisposed her to a range of mythological disguises:⁷⁷ Pandora, Helen of Sparta (later, Helen of Troy),⁷⁸ Psyche, Aphrodite, and Proserpina⁷⁹ to symbolize her bringing hope to Adam and mankind. Critics have long understood the pivotal value of Milton's reliance on the classical tradition in his characterizations. McColley argues that his "representation [...] advances the 'Renaissance' confluence of classical and Christian thought,"⁸⁰ while Green asserts that Milton portrays Eve in "a series of Ovidian guises, ranging from the self-absorbed Narcissus to Pyrrha the perfect wife,"⁸¹ to unify her mythological sisters of desire in sufferance of paradisaal rape. Creation, curiosity, temptation, seduction, rape, birth, and hope frame traditional interpretations of Eve, Pandora, and Proserpina: Eve is seduced by the serpent but births the redemptive line for the "Promis'd Seed" (*PL* 12.623.468); like Eve, Pandora is given

⁷⁷ Inspired by his "interest in the apocryphal or *retold Bible*," Milton's Eve is not that of solitary effort, but poetic "recollections of the glorious women of mythology"—direct and indirect allusions to heroines and goddesses. For instance, as appropriate to classical epical structure, Milton refers to Eve's beauty through "general means rather than in specific terms" more familiar to epithets and incidents—"fair Eve" and "the fairest of her Daughters Eve"—than mirror descriptions: Gary A. Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination* (New York, NY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002): xvii; Dudley R. Hutcherson, "Milton's Eve and the Other Eves," *Studies in English*, 1 (1960), 12-31, 12-13, 15.

⁷⁸ Homer's Helen of Troy understood that her affair (and later, marriage) with Paris was the means for her fated role as "a song for ages to come (*Iliad* 6.357-58)." Like Helen, Eve has suffered a misogynistic tradition of condemnation that paradoxically has served as a voice for feminine restoration: Nohrnberg, 3.

⁷⁹ Milton refers to Persephone by her Roman name Proserpina and to Hades by his Roman equivalent Pluto: Anthony Welch, "Milton's Forsaken Proserpine," *English Literary Renaissance*, 39, no. 3 (Autumn 2009), 527-556, 528.

⁸⁰ McColley, "Milton and the Sexes," 178.

⁸¹ Green, 41.

to a husband, a marital consummation not accompanied by any expression of consent; and as with both Eve and Pandora, Proserpina is forced to compromise with a new homestead. In *Paradise Lost*, as informed by the *Vita*, Eve works to rescue her husband by descending into the pits of guilt and shame to bring him to the life of redemption: she gives birth, “distressed with pains” (LLAE 19.2.264), to bring forth hope for the future.

Despite gendered subordination suggested by her secondary creation, Eve’s tender speeches recall the Son’s love and mercy, the essential character in word and action of salvation that attracts Adam’s worship and the Earth’s fidelity. As Anthony Welch has argued, the Garden itself is an erotic rival to Adam for Eve, since it desires—cherishes and even covets—her for symbiotic union of marriage: personified as a man through Satan’s lyrical serenades,⁸² the Garden lusts after Eve, who from her creation has remained as an intense sexual attraction,⁸³ “a world of desire,”⁸⁴ comparative to Pluto’s pursuit of Proserpina. Recognized by Adam, Eve’s very body mirrors the Garden’s natural topography, as a “sexualized, animistic landscape” understood to be “embedded feature of the *locus amoenus*.”⁸⁵ Eve is Eden and is thereby violated by sin.⁸⁶

⁸² Welch, 542.

⁸³ Welch, 540.

⁸⁴ See note 84.

⁸⁵ 540.

⁸⁶ This feminine archetype of desire, highlighted by her chastity as imposition of her innocence, is reminiscent of Proserpina and Milton’s *Mask at Ludlow Castle*, in which the anticipated scene of the Lady’s ravishment is yellowed by his allusion to Roman Pluto’s rape of the goddess in the flower fields of Sicily. In the Younger Brother’s fear for his sister the Lady’s safety, “that her maidenhead will be seized by ‘the rash hand of bold Incontitence,’” his Latin “*rapere*: to grasp, seize, ravish” stings with the pertinent sexual violence of Proserpina’s de-flowering—that is, her road to Hell with Pluto as a stolen wife and queen and her restoration to her mother Ceres as an awakened goddess of

Eve defines feminine form and purpose according to the masculine expectations for and stereotyping of women: inferior with soft and greedy, unstable bodies⁸⁷ and insufficient intellect, nursed by an unhealthy impulse towards seduction that ensures more pleasure in sex⁸⁸ from her transgression of consumption and lust.⁸⁹ A model of femininity, Eve functions as an anticipated instructor of wisdom who exemplifies values of domesticity, wifeness, and motherhood. Traditional Eve is conventional as an

fertility. Eve similarly suffers ravishment of her Garden by sin. Eve arguably further suffers ravishment in the “Nuptial Bow’r” by Adam, since her position towards Adam is unknown and her consent to sex is barely implied, never explicitly given: Welch, 527-528.

⁸⁷ In Greece, feminine “softness”—that is, the fleshier nature of the female physique in comparison to the masculine—associated women with physical inferiority, since men’s harder, “well-toned” body was more reminiscent of the admired athleticism of the gods. This “softness” was explained as being “more porous,” absorbing moisture and becoming “loose and flabby” until menstruation, when the absorbed food and drink would be converted into blood. This blood would leak from the “spongelike flesh” of her breasts, a process that could lead to madness and if this menstruation did not occur, could “similarly lead to manic behavior.” This monthly draining would release the superfluity from the liquid her body “greedily drank up.” Compounded by the belief that the womb danced around the body, wandering and subsequently “causing fainting fits,” until the application of “foul or sweet-smelling odors” coaxed it back into position—female bodies were unnatural and unless sufficiently controlled, would lead to the collapse of ethical civilization: Pamela Norris, *Eve: A Biography* (Washington Square, NY: New York UP, 1999), 138-139.

⁸⁸ See the Classical myths of Teiresias: Annette Giezecke, *Classical Mythology A to Z: An Encyclopedia of Gods and Goddesses, Heroes and Heroines, Nymphs and Spirits, and Monsters and Places*, illustrated by Jim Tierney (New York, NY: Black Dog and Leviathan Publishers, 2020), 261-262.

⁸⁹ In her tradition, Eve is superfluity and promiscuousness, self-destructive tendencies in *extremis*, and a lack of self-regulation and thereby fundamental necessity of “good citizenship” with critical anticipation of fits of madness that could “topple civilization”: Norris, 156-157.

attractive but nonsensical and emotional *parthenos*⁹⁰ and upon consummation of marriage, a duplicitous wife, but in *Paradise Lost*, Milton's Eve is the excellence of her sex: the "spirit of love and amorous delight" (*PL* 8.475.373) that brings sweetness to Adam's coarse masculinity, gifted Eve like God the Creator is herself the "[g]iver of all things fair" and Adam's love at first sight (*PL* 8.477.373). His idolization of Eve and ultimate vehemence of love to perish with her reverberates as the hope he has felt with her: although Milton's Eve gave her husband the "forbidden fruit," Adam's fatality was in his love. He did not succumb to feminine wile in temptation, but his submission of will to Eve—or as critics have argued,⁹¹ Adam's narcissistic tendencies to his "flesh, heart, and soul" (*PL* 8.499.373).

Eve offers comfort and hope. In his portrayal, Milton reinforced Eve's gifted nature as a "helpmeet," informed by a divergent telling of the myth of Pandora: "sent in good faith, by Jupiter, to bless man,"⁹² Pandora was meant to be a blessing in the same way Eve was meant to fill an innate human need for mutual love and companionship. Milton recalls the meaning of Pandora herself—"All-gifts," as a vessel and a container of

⁹⁰ A virginal maiden, Milton's Eve has the "Virgin Majestie" attributed to Artemis: Green, 512; Natalie Haynes, *Divine Might: Goddesses in Greek Myth* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2024), 63.

⁹¹ Renowned writers and scholars C. S. Lewis, Paul Turner, E. M. W. Tillyard, J. A. Waldock, Stanley Fish and Claudia M. Champagne have remarked on Adam's idolizing of Eve as an exercise of his own narcissistic tendencies and hubris, understanding the creature Eve to be in submission to his passion and thereby cannot lose the hope of security she provides: Claudia M. Champagne, "Adam and His 'Other Self' in *Paradise Lost*: A Lacanian Study in Psychic Development," *Milton Quarterly*, 25, no. 2 (May 1991), 48-59, 48.

⁹² Bulfinch. *Bulfinch's Mythology*, edited and with a commentary by Richard Martin (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 16.

blessing—and fosters Eve’s character and development as a pre-Christological embodiment of hope signifying her containment of the “Theological Virtues”: faith, hope, and charity.⁹³ Recalling Paul’s words,⁹⁴ Milton refashions Eve’s traditional representation—both theological and mythological—as the innate defense for a superior, virtuous, and hopeful perception.

Adam, Eve, and Pandora—The Pursuit of the Perfect Marriage in Milton’s *Paradise*

Lost:

Milton’s Eve contains the hope left in Pandora’s jar. When “our Great parents” (*PL* 1.29.212) separate⁹⁵ in the Garden, Adam refers to his distance from Eve as “[b]eyond his hope” (*PL* 9.424.388). The words refer to his aspiration of desire—Adam’s fornication with his idolized wife Eve—and to his ever-festering anxiety that his absence will result in an opportunity for their Foe to tempt her. Adam considers his role, as “the

⁹³ Vincent Geoghegan, “Pandora’s Box: Reflections on a Myth,” *Critical Horizons: A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory*, 9, no. 1 (May 2008), 24-41, 29.

⁹⁴ See 1 Corinthians 13:13: “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity.”

⁹⁵ Intriguingly, the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* explicitly states that after their creation and marital union, “Adam and Eve were together,” suggesting that albeit somehow unaware, Adam was nearby when Eve was tempted. As Johannes Tromp correctly asserts, this presumes that “there is no hint to a separation of any sort between Adam and Eve” in the Greek text, but in Georgian and Armenian versions, Eve separates from Adam for his “good,” since she believes she alone has brought evil upon him, and remains in the west. Eve leaves Adam, when she is three months pregnant (*Georg.* 18:3), and does not reunite with her husband until Cain’s birth, when God finally shows mercy and permits Eve to have assistance in the delivery of her firstborn. Eve no longer has to suffer alone. Tromp observes that after Cain’s birth, reunited, “Adam and Eve are said to go to the east, where they stayed eighteen (*Georg.*: eight) years and two months; only then Eve conceives again and gives birth to Abel (22:2-3; cf. *Gr.* 1:2-3)”: 2:1, in Tromp, “Cain and Abel in the Greek and Armenian/Georgian Recensions of the *Life of Adam and Eve*,” 284, 288.

faithful side/That gave thee being” (*PL* 9.265-266.385” to his “Associate sole” (*PL* 9.227.384) Eve to be that of a protector—one, who “still shades thee and protects” (*PL* 9.266.385). In Book IX, Adam voices his instincts for protection and his hesitancy to separate:⁹⁶

The Wife, where danger or dishonor lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her Husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures. (*PL* 9.267-269.385)

Adam is not arguing for Eve’s inferiority, but rather for their combined strength when united against Satan. *Paradise Lost* is an epic formed from a confluence of themes: reinterpretation of tradition, redemption and reconciliation, and hope in addition to the pivotal role of marital unification. Although he admits temptation could still occur when together, Adam understands that their success and relevant unification as a marital couple is making decisions and facing obstacles together. This portrayal substantiates Milton’s interpretation of unification as the fundamental element of a successful marriage and rectification of the apocryphal tradition’s emphasis on Adam and Eve’s ever-festering dissociation.

Adam protects Eve, but when she is contained, that is, unable to express her free will and autonomy, hope becomes compromised. Although his succumbing “endows [Eve] with freedom to act creatively rather than from necessity,”⁹⁷ compared to the Son,

⁹⁶ Adam and Eve’s separation receives a sense of reconciliation when they leave the Garden “hand in hand” (*PL* 12.648.469) in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and when “they stayed together” after Cain’s murdering Abel in the Georgian and Armenian versions of the *Lives of Adam and Eve*: Tromp, 294.

⁹⁷ Stella Revard, “The Dramatic Function of the Son in *Paradise Lost*: A Commentary on Milton’s ‘Trinitarianism’,” 51, 58, in Diane Kelsey McColley, “Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of *Paradise Lost*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 12, no. 1 (Winter 1972), 103-120, 110.

who exercises obedience to God by choice, Adam prioritizes the sanctity of his love and union with hope. When Eve asks to separate from Adam in the Garden, he cannot see beyond his love or refute her desire for liberty, which as McColley remarks is a “first step in the Fall.”⁹⁸ “Led by her Heav’nly Maker,” to her “nuptial Sanctity and marriage Rites,” with “every gesture dignity and love,” Eve is sinless in Adam’s perspective: she is an “adorn’d” goddess of “Innocence and Virgin Majesty” (*PL* 8.485-501.374), who looks back at theological-mythological representations and looks forward to Christological salvation, like Pandora’s jarred hope. In his 1644 second edition of *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton argues that Eve as a Pandora-figure

[...] bestow’d upon Adam to be the nurse and guide of his arbitrary happinesse and perseverance, I mean his native innocence and perfection, which might have kept him from being our Epimetheus. (2:293)

The correlation between Eve and Pandora has largely been defended by critics, but as George F. Butler asserts, it further alludes to Adam’s innocence and naivety before the Fall.⁹⁹ Milton uses Pandora to demonstrate Eve’s superiority, not to redeem Pandora, whose *mythos*, as demonstrated by his “Nativity Ode,” bows to Christianity and Christ’s salvation. He applies the Pandora myth not only to Eve—or, even as a means to express her superiority—but as a foil to Adam’s masculine success and failures: first, Adam is more aware than Epimetheus, who blindly opposed his brother’s warning and welcomed Pandora with open arms, but still suffers from the same innocence, and second, Adam received Eve as a gift, not a punishment. Eve was a blessing, which Milton again

⁹⁸ McColley, “Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of *Paradise Lost*,” 105.

⁹⁹ George F. Butler, “Milton’s Pandora: Eve, Sin, and the Mythographic Tradition,” *Milton Studies*, 44 (2005), 153-178.

constitutes in his *Divorce Tracts* as a “greater blessing from God,” greater than the land and animals of his creation as a feminine *imago dei* conception of completion. Although Adam is not too unlike Epimetheus, Eve is dynamic. She is future in the same way hope is the future, the hope of the temporary and ultimate redemption. Without Eve, Adam and mankind would be damned to despair.

As her bodyguard, Adam’s role is to protect the future. Milton scholar Fredson Bowers argues Adam’s decision evidences the repudiation of “his duty to protect Eve, and, breaking the hierarchical chain of being, allows her as a free agent to seek temptation because he cannot bring himself to enforce authority and reason on her disturbed passion and beauty...in his role as protector Adam had no right to relieve himself from his responsibility to Eve by making her a free agent.”¹⁰⁰ Adam’s failure to protect Eve compromises their paradisaical place. He does not lead or provide any biblical counsel, when guidance is requested. Instead, Adam forfeits his primary position as a companion to Eve: that is, Eve is on her own. Adam’s lovesickness and idolization assures the subversion of his authority not to restrict Eve’s feminine leadership and freewill in the Garden through patriarchal prowess, but to make the right decision as her “Head” (*PL* 8.574.376).

Reflected in the apocryphal tradition, Adam ruminates on blaming Eve but remains silent to any individual contribution for improvement. He waits for Eve to tell him what to do. In the opening chapters, the writer of the *Vita* explains:

Then Eve said to Adam., ‘My lord, I am hungry. Go and seek doe us that we may eat. Perhaps the LORD God will consider us and pity us and call us back to the

¹⁰⁰ Fredson Bowers, “Adam, Eve, and the Fall in *Paradise Lost*,” 266, 271, in McColley, “Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of *Paradise Lost*,” 105.

place we were before.’ And Adam rose and walked seven days over all that land and found no food such as they had had in Paradise. (2.1-2.258)

In both the apocryphal narrative and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Adam is largely static and is reliant on Eve as not only a source of hope and a symbol of future, but as a marital and spiritual leader. He cannot make decisions without being influenced by his wife, whereas Eve is independent and can make decisions—albeit sometimes the wrong ones—without the consultation of her husband. Not privy to the divine and angelic conversations Adam held prior to her creation, and largely, thereafter, Eve should not be blamed for wanting to exercise her liberty or to find an identity beyond her immediate union with Adam. She is autonomous in nature, whereas Adam is critically dependent: he has to remain with her and in the case of their separation, cannot separate his thoughts from her.

In this interpretation, Adam should receive more blame, but as much as separation is an exercise of Eve’s free will, it is also an exercise of her sufficiency. As McColley asserts, “If Eve is not sufficient, with Adam’s counsel, to stand without Adam’s physical presence, her union with ‘God in hee’ defective, her faculties flawed, and her will is not free. If she is flawed, and Adam is to cleave unto her, God created a predisposition to sin.”¹⁰¹ Although Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, would endow her separation as the moment death came into being,¹⁰² it is this very moment of individual expression that identifies Eve with autonomous strength and ability as a container and instigator of hope. Adam was separated from his Hope (both figurative and literal) but had hope in Eve’s overcoming Satan’s temptation—despite lack of spiritual tutelage. When Eve concedes

¹⁰¹ McColley, *Milton’s Eve*, 147.

¹⁰² Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity*, 63.

and Adam likewise falls with her, their relationship is fractured—and Adam despairs. He loses hope because he loses Eve, that of which is only reconciled upon Eve’s initiation of penitence. Lim understands that “Eve’s important role as the one who initiates the process of reconciliation and regeneration in *Paradise Lost* is complemented by her identity as the mother of hope and promise.”¹⁰³ “Mother of All Living,” Eve is the sole mother of Earth and the first mother of mankind: she is the mother of Seth, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and by relation, the God promised nation of Israel.¹⁰⁴

Lamentation and the Son, Milton’s Heroic Eve in *Paradise Lost*:

A model for the Protestant Christian duty of pursued reconciliation, Eve becomes the tragic hero of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and serves as the epic’s vehicle for hope. She introduces lamentation, that of which would frame much of the role of womanhood in antiquity, and an urgency towards redemption. Overcome by lamentation from their recent expulsion in the Apocalypse, Eve cries: “Rise, my lord, and do away with me that I might depart from you and from the presence of God and from the angels so that they will cease to be angry with you on my account” (29.8-10.259). Mirrored in the *Vita*, Eve’s request is not spawned by her own suffering, but that of her husband Adam. She thinks not of her ceasing to exist or her damning to hell, permanently separated from all she holds dear: Adam, God, and the angels—only Adam’s wellbeing. Eve is willing to sacrifice her life and future with Adam, so he can return to prelapsarian Paradise with another Eve. Eve is not a gleeful servant of Satan in temptation, but rather an effective

¹⁰³ 125.

¹⁰⁴ Eve is the mother of Mary, a role that portrays her as a physical mother through the fertility of her womb and spiritual mother through her bringing of hope: Lim, 126.

agent of Christological redemption, who “kept hope alive” and led Adam back to God, securing the continued existence of mankind and the familial line of Christ. Vincent Geoghegan comments that “[h]ope is summoned by its opposite and maintains its existence within that tension.”¹⁰⁵

In the context of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the Books of Adam and Eve, Satan sought to ruin Eve but merely provided the catalyst she needed to consummate her identity and find strength in her unique contribution of spiritual leadership in her marriage to Adam. Her seduction is not Satan’s victory, but the quiet absolute of Eve’s maturity in the preexilic and readiness to survive her postexilic circumstances. Like the Son, in what appears to be her greatest weakness, the consequences of her sin, she is inwardly strong, “her tears recalling (only in a general way) Christ’s over Jerusalem or in Gethsemane.”¹⁰⁶ Eve cries for those who will die in her stead, not for her own suffering. This lamentation of genuine sorrow in Eve’s vessel of hope gives context to Adam’s own struggle in *Paradise Lost*.

Satan and Pandora, Reversal of the Pauline-Mythological Defectiveness in Milton’s Eve:

Eve’s “villainy” is not a legitimate examination of her represented character, so much as a covering to reinforce the patriarchal prerogative. As Milton understood, apocryphal Eve is devoid of a happily-ever-after ending, not because she is deserving of God and Adam’s silence and withholding of mercy but because her composition peeled away from its authoritative source. Archetypes of Eve, conceived in subordination, taken

¹⁰⁵ 31.

¹⁰⁶ Doerkson, 126.

from the primaeval rib, women are “the lack,” the lack of superior masculine physicality and intelligence and parts for creation, instead formed with “defective” psyches and genitals, but Milton refashions Eve with beauty, not as her defining characteristic but as an accompaniment to her fulfillment of Adam’s desire for “spiritual companionship.” The marriage of tradition and *mythos* suggests that a “culturally constructed”¹⁰⁷ Eve is what Adam (and by relation, all men) desire in concept, understood by Adam’s ecstatic reaction to her appearance—“Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn’d”—but that the reality was a disappointment due to her predisposition towards sin and deceit (*PL* 8.482.373). Eve was a rotten apple from the start, and as descendants of her feminine conceit, all women are characterized by darkness, cursed pain and suffering in birth and death,¹⁰⁸ but these qualities attributed to Eve’s undesirable relationship with Pandora are present only in Satan’s perspective, when he attempts to undermine the quality of God’s creation with doubtful admission of the word “Seems” (*PL* 8.535.375), critical of the “Fruits, and Flow’rs” (*PL* 8.527.375) that make her an object as “Too much of an Ornament” (*PL* 8.538.375).

The Death of Eve, Active Reconciliation:

In the Books of Adam and Eve, Adam died cursing Eve: Eve died praising God (GLAE 14.277, 43.8.295; VLAE 44.276, 50.3.294). In the closing chapters of the *Lives of Adam and Eve*, Eve and her redemptive son Seth set out to find a tree with medicinal oils

¹⁰⁷ Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity*, ix.

¹⁰⁸ Because they had an “uncanny” relationship with the human body in childbirth (helping babies to emerge from the darkness of birth to the light of life) and in mourning and burial rituals (helping the dying to transition from the light of life to the darkness of death), an “unnatural” contact foreign to men, women in antiquity had a status of contact with the spiritual world: Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity*, 74.

at the borders of Eden in order to ease Adam's pain upon death, but in the danger of the postlapsarian world, Seth is bitten by a snake and becomes another transgression for which Adam blames Eve. He curses her, when she returns and explains what has happened: "Why have you wrought destruction among us and brought upon us great wrath, which is death gaining rule over all our race" (GLAE 14.1-2.277)? His dismissal of her efforts to help him are a vicious demonstration of his pervasive selfishness and denial. He blames her for the action of the serpent, not unlike that of the Garden: in not preventing the snake's attack, despite intimately knowing the looming serpentine threat,¹⁰⁹ the bite becomes a symbolic representation of her transmission of Satanic temptation and the relevant Fall, its sinful nature of postlapsarian mankind. In other words, mankind is born with a natural compulsion towards sin, a carnal nature, because first, Eve sinned and second, she allowed Seth to be assaulted by the same evil.

In these accounts, Adam never forgives Eve. In the same breath, he spits the blame of initial transgression in the Garden on her, demanding that she tell their children about what happened—not simply because it will inform them, but because it will reaffirm and justify his bitterness:

And he said to her, 'Call all our children and our children's children, and tell them how we transgressed.' (GLAE 14.3.277)

¹⁰⁹ In the *Vita*, Adam is not deceived by Satan, but rather his wife Eve alone. Eve, on the other hand, is deceived twice by Satan: first, in the Garden, when he offers her the "forbidden fruit," and second, following her expulsion, when Eve follows Satan instead of repenting and lamenting her sin (VLAE 9-11.260). Anderson observes that "[a]s Eve comes out of the water, having succumbed a second time to the temptation of the devil, her flesh is transformed for the worse: 'All the form of her beauty had been destroyed'." Eve's sin corrupts her appearance: that is, Eve becomes a physical reflection of her sin. Although Pandora's physical appearance remains intact upon opening her jar, she is no longer a beautiful *parthenos* but has been corrupted by her transgression. Eve's appearance is once again at the center of the Garden of Eden story: "The Punishment of Adam and Eve in the *Life of Adam and Eve*," 79.

Although Adam's employment of the plural pronoun *we* suggests a shared transgression and confession, it is undermined by his indignant frustration. Apocryphal Adam has no imagination that Eve could be blessing to him, only as a curse predisposed to make him fall. Nine hundred years after their expulsion, he still possesses a deep hatred for his wife, and his position, in which he is suffering the physical effects of sin through death, encourages him to blame her once again. In his perspective, Adam is dying, not because of any fault of his own (beyond that of listening to his wife) but because of her. Eve is the scourge of his legacy.

In comparison to Milton's Adam and Eve, who reconcile within the preexilic experience and foster forgiveness between one another and with God, apocryphal Adam and Eve are divergent unto death: Adam cannot move forward in forgiveness, and Eve, largely depicted as a result of her predisposed nature, cannot seem to repent properly—or, is perhaps subject to a refusal to do so—but wants to serve her husband well. While Adam curses her, Eve tries to bring reconciliation to the narrative. She listens and obeys him: Eve recounts the biblical temptation narrative to Seth (GLAE 15-30.277-287), cries out to God in lamented repentance (GLAE 32.287), and suffers final injustice and consequence of her original sin: she is merely told about Adam's death (GLAE 17.3). Eve is not given right to be present upon her husband's death and is not even privy to the location of his burial. She rather has to beg God and her children to allow her to be buried alongside him (GLAE 42.1-2), recalling the Satanic perspective of "Hee for God only, shee for God in him" (*PL* 4.299.285) illustrated by her having to call out for Adam to intercede on her behalf for personal repentance (LLAE 18-20.264). Eve still has to seek masculine permission and authority even in Adam's death, here through the direct fruit of

her own labor: Seth. She follows his instructions and ultimately cries out to God: “I have sinned much” (GLAE 32.2.287), a vehement confession that gives birth to misogynistic self-deprecation, expressing her unworthiness and sinfulness, but leads to the prayerful praise of Eve’s own death: begging not to be separated from Adam in death, burial and afterlife, Eve prays, “let no one separate us (now)” (GLAE 42.8.295), beats her breasts, and gives up the spirit. It is Eve again, who seeks the hope reunification with God and of her marriage, while Adam remains static in bitterness, unforgiveness, and the *hubris* of worry and despair.

Despite the independent, unmitigated voices having reshaped her narrative apart from biblical influence, adding and subjecting scenes of omission and exoneration, Eve’s spiritual leadership in first moving towards penitence and urging Adam to seek God’s mercy is a constant motif. She is the first to admit her disobedience in Genesis (3:16),¹¹⁰ the first to admit her rationale of desire in the Greek Apocryphal, and the first to seek peace in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Milton scholars have long argued Eve’s initiation of peacemaking—“active reconciliation, more than mere loyalty and an attitude of obedience”¹¹¹—that characterizes Eve as a heroine, not unlike the Son. Eve’s admission and initiation of penitence is more than an observance of obedience, as for her, it is an exercise of responsibility in shared lordship of the Garden: Queen of Eden and the human race, “Mother Earth”—Eve directly confesses her sin (GLAE 19.279; *PL* 9.886.398). She has nothing to hide from her husband or God.

¹¹⁰ Because she admitted to her sin, Eve received a less severe punishment for the Fall.

¹¹¹ Doerksen, 2.

In the Books of Adam and Eve, Eve is a paradox: despite her second succumbing to Satan's deception and allowance of a serpent to bite her son Seth, she is an "ethical and moral teacher [...and] a worthy beholder of astounding divine visions,"¹¹² honored with the dressing of Adam's body upon his death¹¹³ because she seeks substance in divine repentance above pursuit of her own life. As source material for Milton's Eve, in solitary conviction, she takes the blame for the Fall and offers herself as a sacrifice for Adam's restoration: "And Eve said to Adam, 'My lord, would you kill me? O that I would die! Then perhaps the Lord God will bring you again into Paradise, for it is because of me that the LORD God is angry with you'" (VLAE 3.1-2.258). In his choosing "one strand of a tradition and [rejecting] another,"¹¹⁴ Milton adopts Eve's readied desire to commit suicide or be murdered by Adam for his penitence but rejects Adam's rebuke, cursing Eve as potentially bringing "some further curse" (VLAE 3.2.258). His narrative Eve is a "living [figure] whose being is not restricted to some prehistoric geological era,"¹¹⁵ whose selfless offer of sacrifice pushes Adam forward in divine obedience.

¹¹² Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity*, 3.

¹¹³ In antiquity, women typically treated the deceased by washing, anointing, and dressing them with shrouds for the burial rites. As Arbel explains, "In Greece, for instance, women customarily closed the eyes and mouth of the deceased," while in Roman burial customs, women (particularly that of a relative, as a wife or a mother) closed the eyes and mouth of the deceased after placing a coin under their tongue for passage in the Underworld. The corpse was then "washed, anointed, and sprinkled with perfume, and a wreath was placed around the head": Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity*, 74-75.

¹¹⁴ Revard, "For Metanoia to Apocalypse: 'Paradise Lost' and the Apocryphal 'Lives of Adam and Eve'," 88.

¹¹⁵ Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination*, xvii.

Stella P. Revard understands that Adam's motion is a representation of her unequivocal love, brought forth by Eve not in deception but in "pity for his suffering and in penitence for her own [soul]."¹¹⁶ Eve's applauded gesture towards repentance is further not for the preservation of her own soul, but Adam's. In *Paradise Lost*, this selfless sacrifice—not unlike that of the Son—illustrates Eve's spiritual maturing from her initial temptation and fall, when she exercised *hubris* in desiring superiority and sought to share the "forbidden fruit" with Adam to avoid Adam being "wedded to another Eve" (*PL* 9.828.397). She is no longer lusting after a derivation of power, but hoping for the preservation of the man she loves—even at the behest of Adam's return to the Garden and formation of another Eve. Miltonic Eve's admission and offer of self-sacrifice brings healing to her relationship with Adam,¹¹⁷ who remembers his need for repentance and Eve's significant help, and consummates the point of her creation: hope.

Conclusion:

Although the *Lives of Adam and Eve* are ambiguous and Milton's absolute familiarity with them cannot be concretely established, the parallels between the materials are undeniable, and as Arbel argues, the *Lives* "provide unique access to what appears to be a discourse that juxtaposes a number of overlapping and at times conflicting possibilities, both traditional and subversive"¹¹⁸ that in context of Milton's *Paradise Lost*

¹¹⁶ See note 114.

¹¹⁷ See note 114.

¹¹⁸ "Guarding His Body, Mourning His Death, and Pleading for Him in Heaven: On Adam's Death and Eve's Virtues in the Greek Life of Adam and Eve," 121.

may have very well informed his rendering of the canonical material. Beyond knowledge of extra-biblical material, Milton's Eve is informed by the "helpmeet" purpose of her creation, as that of reunification, and its consummation in odyssey from sin to repentance. In hope, Eve connects prelapsarian and postlapsarian Paradise in the same way she redresses the suffering of a preexilic to postexilic acclimation as a "compassionate figure, asserting her views about her caring role, virtues, elevated status, [...] and access to holiness."¹¹⁹ Stepping in front of Adam to take God's wrath, not unlike the Son, she hopes to soften the impact for Adam and to restore his Edenic life as much as his happiness: Eve offers hope through her sacrifice, trapped in the jar as mankind's freedom of anticipation. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve are reunited by God and leave Eden "hand in hand with wand'ring steps" (*PL* 12.648.469), their fractured state now rejoined as one flesh, neither to curse but both to cherish.

¹¹⁹ See note 118.

Chapter Three: Eve's Flowers and Apotheosis in *Paradise Lost*

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton refashions Eve as a goddess of nature and fertility.

Surrounded by apples,¹ pomegranates,² thornless roses, flowers, and vines,³ conventional

¹ In *Paradise Lost*, Milton does not refer to the “forbidden fruit” as an apple until after the Fall, and even then, only in Satan’s speeches. As Roy Flannagan argues, “Milton characteristically allows Satan to name the fruit [as an apple: Book 9, line 584] and thus trivialize it.” In Milton’s perspective, the type of fruit does not matter one, because “if the act of eating [still] constitutes disobedience” and two, because the primary texts themselves do not articulate a distinction. As Milton scholar Robert Appelbaum explains, although the Hebrew does not specify the kind of “fruit,” Rabbinic traditions have suggested the word could have referred to wheat, figs, or apricots. Grapes were a particularly favored choice, since Israel was rich with vineyards and consumption was considered as either *eating* or *drinking* the fruit, thereby suggesting the “forbidden fruit” of grapes as an intoxicating wine: J. M. Evans, *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition*, 45-46, in Robert Appelbaum, “Eve and Adam’s ‘Apple’: Horticulture, Taste, and the Flesh of the Forbidden Fruit in ‘Paradise Lost’,” *Milton Quarterly*, 36, no. 4 (December 2002), 221-239, 224; James Patrick McHenry, “A Milton’s Herbal,” 45-115, in Appelbaum, 222; Roy Flannagan, *The Riverside Milton*, 53, in Appelbaum, 222-223.

² John H. Walton argues that the “forbidden fruit” of the Tree of Knowledge “can be identified botanically [as] either a pomegranate or date palm” and as in Assyrian *mythos*, is typically “flanked by winged genies [...] or some variety of caprids, deities and icons of hunting in the Near East. The genies are often pictured as holding date-palm clusters to symbolize pollination and fertility: Pushkar Sohoni, “Caprids in Early Iran: Static Forms, Dynamic Meanings,” 441-451, in *Animals in Archaeology: Integrating Landscapes, Environment and Humans in South Asia*, edited by Pankaj Goyal, vol. 1. (Thiruvananthapuram: University of Kerala, 2023), 441-442; John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate*, contribution by N. T. Wright. IVP Academic, 2015.

³ Maggie Kilgour, “Eve and Flora (“Paradise Lost” 5.15-16),” *Milton Quarterly*, 38, no. 1 (March 2004), 1-17, 2.

features of an Ovidian⁴ earthly paradise in “Eternal Spring”⁵ (*PL* 4.698.284),⁶ Milton’s Eve nurtures Eden. She tends,⁷ tills, and keeps the Garden: a mother to a nursery of plants⁸ with “Roses⁹ bushing round” (*PL* 9.426.388) that “at her coming sprung” (*PL*

⁴ Milton draws on Ovid for his knowledge about classical deities and rituals in *Paradise Lost*: Dudley R. Hutcherson, “Milton’s Eve and the Other Eves,” *Studies in English*, 1, no. 5 (1960), 12-31, 13; Kilgour, 2.

⁵ John R. Knott, “Milton’s Wild Garden,” *Studies in Philology*, 102, no. 1 (Winter 2005), 66-82, 66.

⁶ All quotations from Milton’s *Paradise Lost* are from Milton, John. *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, edited by Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis, IL: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003).

⁷ Milton’s use of the verb “to tend” illustrates an “innovation in the language of georgic relative to Virgil, his primary precursor, as well as deviation from his biblical sources,” where Adam and Eve’s labor in the Garden is typically expressed as “dress,” “keep,” and “till” in English. As Milton scholar Seth Lobis explains, the verb relays to “culture,” suggesting that our first parents’ gardening of or *tending* to Eden is not simply prelapsarian labor, but a way of life. It implies the direct application of “care and service,” the “ministering of” or “fostering” and “cultivating.” In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve do not care for the Garden out of duty, but love: Seth Lobis, “Milton’s Tended Garden and the Georgic Fall,” *Milton Studies*, 55 (2014), 89-111, 90-92.

⁸ Ken Hiltner, *Milton and Ecology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2003), 40.

⁹ John Gerald’s *The Herbal or General History of Plants: The Complete 1633 Edition as Revised and Enlarged by Thomas Johnson* illustrates the significance of roses in seventeenth-century England, suggesting that as a symbol of royalty, the rose serves as “the chiefest and most principall place among all flours whatsoever,” esteemed for its beauty, virtues, and fragrance as much as for its honor and ornament as the English scepter. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton’s roses signify the perfect union between Adam and Eve, while his thornless roses are “an emblem of paradisiacal life,” symbolic of the lack of toil and pain in prelapsarian Eden. Although the word can be a general modifier for the plants and flowers that are not members of the traditional genus attributed to the rose, in *Paradise Lost*, ‘roses’ refer to a heavenly amaranth that “carry plumes of tiny purple-red flowerets that dry very well, hence ‘unfading’ in the Greek etymology” and by relation ‘undying’: John Gerald, 1259 in Linnea White, “What to Sight and Smell Was Sweet: Flowers and Gardening in *Paradise Lost*,” *Colloquy Undergraduate Research Journal*, 1, no. 7 (May 2013), 41-45, 41; Michael Gillum, “Milton’s Roses and Amaranth,” *Anq*, 20, no. 1 (Winter 2007), 28-34, 28.

8.46.363), Eve shares the Garden's nature—as “tantalizing, wandering, rich, sensuous, and superficial (not trivial, but simply concerned with surfaces).”¹⁰ Inspired by Ovid,¹¹ Milton “depicts Eve, while womanly fertility, pastoral dalliance, and Eve's partially cloaked, partially open physically characterize the Garden.”¹² For Eve, Eden was:

A happy rural seat of various view:
Groves whose rich Trees wept odorous Gums and Balm,
Others whose fruit burnish with Golden Rind
Hung Amiable, *Hesperian* Fables true. (*PL* 4.247-250.283-284)

These luxurious feminine elements reflect Eve's “amiable” nature, sensual appeal,¹³ and mythological portrayal. Milton's reference to the Hesperian gardens recalls the classical

¹⁰ Heather James, “Milton's Eve, the Romance Genre and Ovid,” *Comparative Literature*, 45, no. 2 (Spring 1993), 121-145, 125.

¹¹ Ovid's *Metamorphosis* was arguably Milton's favorite Latin reading upon old age. Like his favorite English poets, who were also Ovidians—Spenser and Shakespeare—Milton's passion distinguishes him as “a true son of the English Renaissance,” already becoming old-fashioned with new attitudes of nascent neoclassicism: Charles Martindale, “Paradise Metamorphosed: Ovid in Milton,” *Comparative Literature*, 37, no. 1 (October 1985), 301-333, 301-302.

¹² James, 123.

¹³ In her evolution from prelapsarian to postlapsarian, Milton's Eve suffers the loveliness of her “inheritance from many women”:¹³ with “surprising beauty and grace,” Eve is the “loveliest of women” and “lovely maid, fairest of women,”¹³ but with the pressure as the first woman, wife, and mother, whose actions would ultimately define the sex. Eve's loveliness is almost “[h]yponetically sexual, [...] with a mysterious, magical, and highly powerful eroticism,” that surprises Eve (*PL* 4.453-479.289), excites Adam (*PL* 9.395-397.387), and paralyzes Satan (*PL* 9.422-492.388-389). Directly or indirectly, the details recall the glorious women of classical *mythos*, most of whom share Eve's complicated reputation: “Juno, Pandora, Aphrodite, Hera, Athena, a wood nymph, an oread or dryad, Delia, Pales, Pomona, and Ceres”¹³ with Proserpina, Eurydice, Diana,¹³ and Circes. By focusing on its rich description in poetic lyricism and imagination, Milton pries the reader from Edenic stereotypes of Eve as “cruel Eternal Feminine incarnate”¹³ in order to petition for shared lordship in the Garden's creative stewardship and design¹³ in addition to the Fall. To separate Eve from her *mythos* as a “Fatal Woman,”¹³ a woman with “‘diabolically cuddly beauty,’ which makes her ‘fatal, idol-like,’” not unlike Circe, Aphrodite, or Helen of Troy, Milton associates Eve with the beauty and wonder of Eden's floral paradise: Hutcherson, 12; Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, I, 68, 60, in

daughters of Hesperus, the brother of Atlas—as Aegle, Arethusa, and Hesperethusa—who tended to its orchard of golden fruit, surrounded by an inlet sea and guarded by a dragon, later slain by Heracles in his labors.¹⁴ Although Milton’s Garden is not home to golden fruit or a guardian dragon, Eden does host similarly “forbidden fruit” and serpentine Satan, who upon Adam and Eve’s consummation of sin¹⁵ is “Now Dragon¹⁶ grown” (*PL* 10.529.419), in addition to its occupants’ roles as gardeners. Milton closely follows Homer, Pindar, and Plutarch’s association of Elysium to Eden’s “flow’ry lap” (*PL* 4.254.284) with roses and ivy to violets, myrtle, hyacinth, and laurel, many flowers of which are listed in Comes’s *Mythologiae* (1605), known to Milton.¹⁷ As with Milton’s

Hutcherson, 13; S. A. Demetrakopoulos, “Eve as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman,” *Milton Quarterly*, 9, no. 4, (December 1975), 99-107, 99; James, 123.

¹⁴ Milton would have been most familiar with myth from Charles Stephanus’s Latin dictionary: D. T. Starnes, “The Hesperian Gardens in Milton,” *The University of Texas Studies in English*, 31 (1952), 42-51, 43.

¹⁵ A. Louise Cole argues that in *Paradise Lost*, Milton gives Sin a feminine form, drawing from the New Testament Greek form of sin as a feminine *hamartia*, “mistake,” despite Latin and seventeenth-century writers preferring a neutered, unisex understanding of sin as *peccatum*. This decision “to feminize Sin might have been a deliberate attempt to link her with lust and its consequences,” drawing on James 1:15 and strengthening the correlation between his personifications of Sin and Death. As a feminized form, Sin is able to give birth to deeper sin and in its relationship with lust, sexual objectification as evidenced by Adam and Eve’s postlapsarian, frenzied sex. Milton is not saying that Eve is Sin, but rather that Sin is a separate being seducing Satan towards further evil: “Childlessness, Monstrosity, and Redemption: Exploring Motherhood in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*,” 73, no. 2 (June 2014), 184-205, 193-195.

¹⁶ The Bible refers to Satan as a dragon in Revelation 12:9: “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him”: All quotations from Revelation and (relevant biblical books) unless otherwise specified are from *The Holy Bible*. King James Version, edited by Rev. C. I. Scofield, D. D. (New York, NY: Oxford UP, 1945.)

¹⁷ Starnes, 47-48.

floral descriptions in *Comus*, Eden enjoys an eternal spring, corresponding to prelapsarian Eve's eternal youth, and boasts "flowers of mingled hue, especially hyacinth and roses, and the presence of Venus and love"¹⁸ in Elysium Fields, a classical heaven on earth.

Milton's flowers are more than a decorative virtue of "[t]he season, prime for sweetest Scents and Airs" (*PL* 9.200.383): "Flow'rs that breath'd" (*PL* 9.193.383), the flora is as actively alive in morning worship¹⁹ as the fauna and "all things that breathe" (*PL* 9.194.383). Fragile and transient, the flowers symbolize Eve's beauty and desire as the "awe of Man" (*PL* 4.705.294) and her shifting identity from a reluctant Flora, Daphne, and Proserpina fleeing from and being subjected to rape to following postlapsarian reconciliation,²⁰ Deucalion's virtuous wife, Pyrrha.²¹ This transition, as illustrated by roses "without Thorn" (*PL* 4.256.284) to thorned roses, suggests the

¹⁸ Starnes, 48.

¹⁹ Ruth Summar McIntyre, "'Flowers Worthy of Paradise': Milton and the Language of Flowers," *Milton Studies*, 47, (2008), 145-167, 145.

²⁰ Cole argues that Milton "introduces lovemaking between the first couple while they are untainted in the Garden" to foreground Eve's tensions with fertility, both conception and childbearing. Although Eve is not considered to be a "barren woman" of the Bible, she experiences, as I argue, immediate fertility in conceiving flowers and correlative nature as "Mother Earth," but a "delayed fertility" in conceiving children as the mother of mankind. In all narratives of Eve, including Genesis, the *Lives of Adam and Eve*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Eve does not conceive children in the Garden, despite being given "a divine injunction" to be fruitful and to multiply in order to populate the Earth and to meet the demands of their work. This delayed motherhood to mankind allows her "to contemplate postlapsarian motherhood" and to focus on the nurturing of her flowers. Milton's Eve channels her mothering nature in her flowers in an effort to distract herself from the expectation of human-motherhood and its lack of fulfillment: 184-185.

²¹ Mandy Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 511-512.

proverbial nature of “youth, beauty, and happiness:”²² Ovid writes, “the thorn is despised when the rose petals have fallen,”²³ so Eve is despised upon the Fall.

Iris, all hues, Roses, and Jessamin
Rear'd high thir flourisht heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; underfoot the Violet,
Crocus, and Hyacinth with rich inlay
Broider'd the ground, more color'd than with stone
Of costliest Emblem, (*PL* 4.698-703.294)

These flowers adorn Eve’s shelter and set the scene of her work and temptation, as when Satan finds Eve in her desired “Spring of Roses” (*PL* 9.218.383). Milton’s Edenic flowers symbolize the state of “our Great parents” (*PL* 1.29.212)—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—and in specific relation to Eve, serve as a mythological mirror to her Pandora and Ovidian substructure: as with her hair, Eve’s dominion of nature illustrates her “constantly shifting identity,”²⁴ almost as an Ovidian shape-shifter, and her relationship with God, Adam, and the Garden and state of selfhood not as a complimentary²⁵ woman, but as a human.

²² Green, *Milton’s Ovidian Eve*, 282-283.

²³ Green, *Milton’s Ovidian Eve*, 283.

²⁴ Green, *Milton’s Ovidian Eve*, 511.

²⁵ Beth Allison Barr cites the president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Russell Moore, for his redressing of the term *complementarianism* as simple *patriarchy*. Although both can refer to Christian gender hierarchy (and can be employed interchangeably), *patriarchy* more closely resembles traditional “male ecclesiastical leaders,” male legal power, and “a society that promotes male authority and female submission,” not intended evangelical separation from the world. Christians should not look like the world: in this case, proper Christianity should not reflect the patriarchal values of a Graeco-Roman civilization, or in its later development, Western culture as a whole: *The Making of Biblical Womanhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2021), 12-13.

In Book IX, Satan enters Milton's Paradise (*PL* 9.189.383) and watches Adam and Eve's morning delegation of the labor, communing "how that day they best may ply / Thir growing work" (*PL* 9.201-202.383), where in exercising her ability to speak freely, Eve reminds

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. (*PL* 9.204-12.383)

Adam and Eve's first argument is fought over flowers.²⁶ Diane Kelsey McColley recognizes that Milton's facilitation for Eve's reclamation is her work: alongside Adam, Eve is *working*²⁷ in the Garden and finds her dignity²⁸ (*PL* 4.619.292) in the labor. She dresses Eden (*PL* 9.204-205.383) and tends to "Plant, Herb, and Flow'r" (*PL* 9.205.383). "[E]njoined" with Adam (*PL* 9.206.383), Eve must "by day / Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind" (*PL* 9.209-210.383),²⁹ tending to the wanton growth of the wild Garden "till more hands / Aid us" (*PL* 9.206-207.383). Although both Adam and Eve believe

²⁶ Milton's Eden relies on our first parents' prelapsarian behavior of a "growing, dynamic [...] state of being" to signify human perfection: Adam and Eve are not perfect, but are "humanly convincing" in their suffering "the frailties of fallen humanity," even in the prelapsarian Garden, and in their own independent evolution because they demonstrate adaption and growth. Sin does not determine growth, but rather growth determines perfection: Joan S. Bennett, "'Go': Milton's Antinomianism and the Separation Scene in Paradise Lost, Book 9," *PMLA*, 98, no. 3 (May 1983), 388-404, 388.

²⁷ Diane Kelsey McColley, "Subsequent or Precedent? Eve as Milton's Defense of Poesie," *Milton Quarterly*, 20, no. 4 (December 1986), 132-136, 133.

²⁸ Knott, 74.

²⁹ White, 42.

their work to be a “pleasant task,”³⁰ they recognize the limit of their combined labor and the need for childbearing. Eve’s words suggest her consistent awareness, and arguably self-consciousness, in regard to her childlessness³¹ and the lack of fulfillment of God’s divine degree to multiply. Eve’s awareness leads her to self-development. Joanna Piciotto correlates Eden’s “incremental growth of flowers and their responsiveness to cultivation [...to] fit emblems for the progress of knowledge.”³² As she seeks her identity, Eve’s growth is reflected in the Garden.

Milton’s Eve recognizes the sustained tending required of the Garden. In *Paradise Lost*, Eve nurses, props, prunes, waters, and selects³³ her “Fruits and Flow’rs” (*PL* 8.44.363). She checks the fruitless trees (*PL* 5.214.307) for needed tending and adorns the “barren leaves” (*PL* 5.219.307) of her bower. As with “Lady Flora” in Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, Milton’s Eve brings “greenness” or “*renovatio* and renewal”³⁴ to Eden. She is the crown of God’s creation and, like her familiar counterpart Pandora, is crowned

³⁰ McColley, *Milton’s Eve*, 152.

³¹ The word “barren” signifies a woman’s biological inability to bear children that in the Hebrew Bible, refers to a period of time in which a woman is to remain childless until God’s reversal. Although the period is not permanent, Eve’s inability to conceive in the Garden (despite an active sex life in Milton’s portrayal) implies a defective form in her perspective: even in perfection, Eve suffers feelings that she is not and thereby searches for fulfillment, or rectification. She does not yet understand that her sexuality functions as a means of daily worship: Cole, 187-188, 192.

³² Joanna Piciotto, “Reforming the Garden: The Experimentalist Eden and ‘Paradise Lost,’” *ELH*, 72, no. 1 (2005), 23-78, 57.

³³ Diane Kelsey McColley, “Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of *Paradise Lost*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 12, no. 1 (Winter 1972), 103-120, 104.

³⁴ Kilgour, 3.

with a “fresh-sprouting meadow” (576-577)³⁵: first, upon her awakening “on flow’rs” (PL 4.451.289) along the banks of the murmuring waters (PL 4.453.289) and nearly second, when Adam

Waiting desirous her return, had wove
Of choicest Flow’rs a Garland to adorn
Her Tresses, and her rural labors crown,
As Reapers oft are wont thir Harvest Queen. (PL 9.839-842.398)

Milton’s crowning of Eve as a goddess of flowers recalls classical *mythos*, where Flora and Pandora are enthroned alongside “Nymphs, Graces, and Aphrodite (*Cypria* F 5 Davies)”³⁶ and connects Eve to Sappho’s floral crowning of *parthenos*. This crowning of young, virginal women suggests not only Eve’s renewing virginity following the “Nuptial bow’r” (PL 8.510.374) in Eden, but as with Daphne, her own desire to remain *perpetua virginitas*.³⁷ Despite her professed readiness to become “Mother of All Living” (Gen. 3:20), Eve wants to preserve the independence attributed to her maidenhood³⁸ and in this resemblance to Apollo’s first love, can be understood as fleeing from her marriage in the separation scene.

As Flora or Daphne escaping from their pursuer, Milton’s Eve takes the lead and directs the conversation to the needs of the day’s labor:

whether to wind

³⁵ All quotations from Hesiod’s *Works and Days are from* Hesiod. *Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia*. Edited and translated by Glenn W. Most (London, UK: Harvard UP, 2018).

³⁶ Jan N. Bremmer, “Pandora or the Creation of a Greek Eve,” *The Creation of Man and Woman* (2000), 19-33, 22.

³⁷ Mandy Green, “The Virgin the Garden: Milton’s Ovidian Eve,” *Modern Language Review*, 100, no. 4 (2005): 903-922, 912.

³⁸ Green, “The Virgin in the Garden: Milton’s Ovidian Eve,” 914.

The Woodbine round this Arbor, or direct
 The clasping Ivy where to climb, while I
 In yonder Spring of Ross intermixt
 With Myrtle, find what to redress till Noon:
 For while so near each other thus all day
 Our task we choose, what wonder if so near
 Looks intervene and smiles, or object new
 Casual discourse draw on, which intermits
 Our day's work brought to little, though begun
 Early, and th' hour of Supper comes unearn'd. (*PL* 9.215-225.383-384)

Still focused on her flowers—hoping to escape to one of her favorite gardening spots,³⁹ where working alone, absentmindedly tending to her “Groves, but Delia's selt / In gait surpass'd and Goddess-like deport” (*PL* 9.388-389.387)—Eve understands the Garden's need for order but by prioritizing her flowers, exposes herself to Satan's temptation. Eden is not an English garden that requires constant tending to grow,⁴⁰ but is perfect because of its rich wilderness, “an aspect of its enormous fertility, and hence as an exemplification of the profusion of God's goodness.”⁴¹

In their nurturing, Adam and Eve give license to Eden's free will and intervene to cultivate and round, direct, and redress (*PL* 9.216-19.383) only for its health and beauty. This paradox of order and a tendency to disorder in overgrowth—“Fruit-trees overwoody reach'd too far (*PL* 5.213.307)—is for the need of gardening: in Milton's Garden, “the

³⁹ Knott, 74.

⁴⁰ White, 42.

⁴¹ D. H. Burden, *The Logical Epic*, 44, in M. W. R. Symes, “‘A Paradise within Thee’: The Relationship between the Garden and Man in ‘Paradise Lost’,” *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 3 (1973), 94-107, 101.

need for activity of some sort”⁴² distinguishes floral from fauna⁴³—and by relation, Eve and Pandora, who was crowned with a headband representing the wild animals of the earth.⁴⁴

Analogous to Eve’s desire for individuality,⁴⁵ working *in* and *among* nature,⁴⁶ prior to the Fall, Eve begins to speak to her flowers:⁴⁷ she worships and prays with them in the morning⁴⁸ and listens when they minister to her,⁴⁹ going so far as even to lament over them upon realizing her impending expulsion from Eden after the Fall (*PL* 11.268-285.439). But despite her shared lordship and effective labor, Eve’s activities are carefully watched by Adam, who “desiring more her stay” (*PL* 9.398.387) and fearing the

⁴² Symes, 102.

⁴³ While the animals roam without direction, Eden exchanges parental nurturing for feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment.

⁴⁴ Bremmer, 22.

⁴⁵ In seeking her identity, Milton’s Eve does not want to sacrifice her maidenhood to be a wife, as she enjoys the virginity and independence it offers. She wants to continue to “participate fully in the entire range of prelapsarian activities—education, working in and sharing responsibility for the human environment (the garden), discussing and analyzing new experience, exercising her powers of symbolization in naming the plants, composing love poetry and divine praises”—without the expectations a husband would bring in making her a wife and in anticipation, a mother. Barbara K. Lewalski argues that like the Lady in Milton’s *Comus*, Eve is “sufficient to have stood” and recognizes that she had the capacity and responsibility to make her own decisions. She does not want to sacrifice that and finds solace in her desire in her flowers, who respond bountifully to her and do not impose restrictions upon her role as their mother: “Milton on Women—Yet Once More,” *Milton Studies*, 6 (1974), 3-20, 3.

⁴⁶ McIntyre, 148.

⁴⁷ Hiltner, *Milton and Ecology*, 45.

⁴⁸ McIntyre, 148-149.

⁴⁹ McIntyre, 149.

Enemy's assault (*PL* 9.290-316.385-386) always wants to stay together. Eve respects his concern and works in harmony with him until the separation scene, when with the pattern of growth and authority established and "yet sinless" (*PL* 9.659.393),⁵⁰ she seeks her independence in an identity no longer dependent on her husband.

Karen Edwards has argued that Milton's Eve puts her flowers first: Eve did not value her life with Adam more than her experience in the natural world and as a result, was led astray.⁵¹ This version of Eve in Milton's prelapsarian Garden is a nurturer, as a mother and gardener before she is a wife. In this role, Eve embodies the mingled mythological personages of Daphne, Flora, and Proserpina, each of whom enjoyed states of developing self-hood amidst flower groves before being raped. Charles Martindale, Maggie Kilgour, Christopher Bond, Anthony Welch, and Mandy Green, among others,⁵²

⁵⁰ McColley, "Free will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of *Paradise Lost*," 112-113.

⁵¹ Karen Edwards, *Milton and the Natural World: Science and Poetry in 'Paradise Lost'* (New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 1999), 249.

⁵² Critics have given much attention to the separation scene in *Paradise Lost*. Maurice Kelly, E. M. W. Tillyard, A. S. A. Waldock, and B. E. Gross, among others, led scholarship in the mid-twentieth century that favored the Fall's conception as the result of an argument about work, formed by gendered weakness: Adam's intemperance and Eve's vanity. Millicent Bell joined Gross in his assertion that Milton's Adam and Eve are already sinful prior to their explicit Fall and are dissociated from their love into two separate beings: in what has been understood as Eve's insubordination to Adam, our first parents are divorced. Upon the second wave feminism movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Milton scholar George Williamson argued that Adam's "fundamental weakness is born out of the greatest human need, relief from solitude," to which after reading Eve's troublesome dream in Book V, Fredson Bowers readily agreed that Adam failed to protect his wife and assert his dominion in the household, a failure that allowed Eve the opportunity and free will to pursue temptation.

However, in the latter half of the century, criticism shifted to embrace more humanist and feminist perspectives. In *Milton's Eve* (1983), a study on Milton's Eden as "an organic community of interconnected lives" that still remains an authoritative voice in Milton ecological scholarship, McColley believes Eve has little solitude and thereby

have asserted that Milton's purposeful employment of classical allusions is not only to suggest Christianity's superiority to paganism, as understood in his correlations between Pandora and Eve, but to represent her relationship with Eden as something more than simple guardianship.

McColley and Hiltner, two of the most renowned eco-critics in modern Milton scholarship, alongside their predecessor M. W. R. Symes, who argued Adam and Eve's parallelism to Eden,⁵³ followed in the footsteps of Kathleen M. Swaim. In her 1973 article, "Flower, Fruit, and Seed: A Reading of *Paradise Lost*," Swaim understood Milton's poetry to be both floral and fruitful, its lyricism reflecting Eve's maturing, as symbolized in the Garden's own descriptions.⁵⁴ Although much has been written on the separation scene, conclusive only according to the period and trends of the century, and Eve's mythological personages, little has been said recently about Eve's relationship to work and flowers. Milton blends pagan allusions with Christian elements to highlight the latter's superiority, especially in its intended portrayal of Eve and women. In this chapter, I argue that Milton's Eve personifies a goddess of nature and fertility, as a providential

desires the independence and freedom attributed to separation. Rosamund Paice admits that McColley's ecocriticism has had a pervasive effect on Milton scholarship, heavily influencing Ken Hiltner's *Milton and Ecology* (2003). Hiltner agrees with Eve's rootedness in the Garden. Milton scholar Stella Revard agrees that in growing towards perfection, Eve wants to be alone, not because she is disobedient but because like that of the Son's relationship to the Father, Milton's Eve wants to act creatively, rather than out of necessity: McColley, "Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of *Paradise Lost*," 104-107, 112-113; Diane Kelsey McColley, *Milton's Eve* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983): 111; McIntyre, 148-149; Paice, 268; Hiltner, 44-45.

⁵³ Symes, 104, 106.

⁵⁴ Kathleen M. Swaim, "Flower, Fruit, and Seed: A Reading of *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies*, 5 (1973), 155-176.

mother in and over her Edenic flowers, through Pandora and Ovidian allusion, alongside her role as the mother of mankind.

The Garden of Eden, Milton's Arcadia:

Milton's Eden is home to "a pleasing alternation of hill and valley, sun and shade, and 'Flocks / Grazing the tender herb' (4.252-53)."⁵⁵ From flowery banks that shade Eve's birth (*PL* 4.451.289) and nestled bowers with "[...] interwoven shade / Laurel and Myrtle, and what higher grew / Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side / *Acanthus*" (*PL* 4.693-696.294), to "Flours of all hue, and without Thorn the Rose" (*PL* 4.256.284) and "umbrageous Grots and Caves / Of cool recess" (*PL* 4.257-258.284), Milton's Garden is a "delight"⁵⁶ (*PL* 9.243.384). It is where "the mantling Vine / Lays forth her purple Grape, and gently creeps / Luxuriant" (*PL* 4.258-260.284) and the murmuring waters that try to ensnare Eve as a "solitary Narcissus"⁵⁷ fall into banks "with Myrtle crown'd" (*PL* 4.262.284). In Milton's account, God's paradisaical creation is flourishing with energy and abundance that "identifies the pristine natural world, in its wild luxuriance, with a lost ideal of bliss associated with innocence,"⁵⁸ a result of tender pastoral care.

⁵⁵ Knott, 69.

⁵⁶ In Raphael's account of creation, he understands the statehood of the Garden (and its required labor) to be an "enormous bliss" (*PL* 5.297.309), a balanced blessing that allows Adam and Eve to enjoy its delight and to "stand fast" (*PL* 8.640.377) in God's security against temptation: Knott, 67.

⁵⁷ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 511.

⁵⁸ Knott, 73.

Eve and Flora, The Conception of Flowers:

Zephyr and his wife the flower-goddess Flora are to produce flowers,⁵⁹ a process understood as the breeze of the spring Zephyr having sex with her to conceive blossoms.⁶⁰ Likewise, in their mythological nexus,⁶¹ Adam and Eve's role as our first parents combined with sexual union in prelapsarian Paradise gives birth to fertility, delight,⁶² and renewing nature: upon having sex, new flowers are conceived in Eden. Newly produced flowers are the literal conceptions—and thereby, offspring—of Eve, elevating her to the more exalted position⁶³ as the “Mother of All Living” (Gen. 3:20). This sexual consummation metamorphosizes Eve from a Daphne figure to *mater florum* [mother of flowers]: although Daphne's mythological transformation into a laurel tree is beautifully “ever-green” and sparing of the sexual encounter she feared, the tree is barren. As Mandy Green recognizes, “Apollo's love for his emblem, the laurel, [which serves as his emblematic crown and decorates his lyre] is *sterilem* [...] *amorem*, a ‘fruitless love’,”⁶⁴ but Eve is not barren.

Like Flora, Eve's story is dominated by motifs of desire resolved in consummation, labored fulfillment, and fruitfulness that inform and empower her role as “mother of all things living” (*PL* 11.159.436): Eve is not defined by her past, but her

⁵⁹ Alastair Fowler, ed. *Paradise Lost*, 257, in Kilgour, 2.

⁶⁰ Roy Flannagan, *The Riverside Milton*, 475, in Kilgour, 2.

⁶¹ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 511.

⁶² Kilgour, 2.

⁶³ Green, “The Virgin in the Garden: Milton's Ovidian Eve,” 914.

⁶⁴ See note 63.

Edenic provision and prospective motherhood of mankind.⁶⁵ This transition recalls Flora's dual names and correlative reputations: first, as Greek Chloris and second, as Roman Flora or *mater florum*. As is the motif with dual names, Eve suffers a split personality and reputation analogous to Flora, whose names echo the traditional contradiction of virgin/whore attributed to Aphrodite, "as both elevating and degrading deity."⁶⁶ Kilgour argues that "Eve's implicit identification with Flora could simultaneously suggest her unfallen nature as an innocent fertility goddess who unites chastity and sexuality, and *also* the degradation of sexuality that occurs with the Fall."⁶⁷ Tied to Flora's own dualistic metamorphosis in Rome as corrupt Harlot yet Saint-like Goddess,⁶⁸ Milton's Eve changes from a stubborn maiden to an experienced wife and mother.

Wanton Growth and Wanton Ringlets, Milton's Nurtured Eden:

Eve is at the center of Eden that in *Paradise Lost* is "no allegorical or emblematic landscape but a garden of earthly delights, a real, physical garden with an abundance of flowers and fruit trees"⁶⁹ mirroring Eve's present state in Ovidian substructure: in the innocent happiness of prelapsarian Eden, Eve is a blended reflection of Daphne and Flora. Green observes that Milton re-works the myth of Daphne's flight from Apollo in Eve's portrayal, subverting her fear and subjugation to Flora's metamorphosis from a

⁶⁵ Green, "The Virgin in the Garden: Milton's Ovidian Eve," 914, 916.

⁶⁶ Kilgour, 6.

⁶⁷ See note 66.

⁶⁸ Kilgour, 6-7.

⁶⁹ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 232-233.

virgin to a bride, and ultimately from a nymph to a goddess:⁷⁰ not unlike the evolution of Proserpina, whose abduction facilitates her swift growth from youth's child-like behaviors to that of a wife and queen,⁷¹ Eve grows from the rape of Sin⁷² into a more exalted position as a more experienced "Harvest Queen" (*PL* 9.842.398), who trades her childish naivety for an identity of growth, shared with her flowers. Eve does not demonstrate a childishness in "girlish simplicity" to the same extent as Proserpina, who competes to gather "flowers *puellari studio* ("with girlish eagerness," *Met.* V.393)."⁷³ Milton's Eve is never depicted as gathering flowers, "where *Proserpin* gath'ring flow'rs / Herself a fairer Flow'r" (*PL* 4.269-270.284). Green argues the significance of this observation, considering both Christopher Ricks and Fowler argue that Milton's Eve is "carefully portrayed as 'the *gatherer* and guardian of flowers' (Ricks, 140, quoted in

⁷⁰ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 233, 236.

⁷¹ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 285.

⁷² Satan and Sin, two forms of the same evil, seek sexual gratification in one another through plural rapes of incest. This sexual violence is expounded upon personified Death's rape of Sin "framed in terms of objectification and male desire as Death violently traps his mother in 'embraces forcible and foul' [*PL* 2.762.250] to satiate the lust with which he is 'inflamed' from birth." Not only does Satan and Sin rape one another in multiple sexual encounters, but Death rapes his mother Sin. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, these sexual encounters extend to Adam and Eve in the Garden. Upon her consummation of sin, Eve is raped by Satan, that is, Satan as Sin rapes Eve to pervert her innocence. With the devil's influence, or as she expresses in the Greek *Lives of Adam and Eve*, with his speaking through her (21:3), Eve allows Sin to rape Adam and pervert his innocence. Once together in postlapsarian sin, Adam and Eve pursue their own self-interest for pleasure in sexuality, "even at the expense of the other." After Eve's sharing of the "forbidden fruit" with her husband, Adam and Eve engage in ravenously lustful, frenzied sex and in pursuit of their own sexual gratification, rape one another: Cole, 194-195.

⁷³ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 287.

Fowler's note to IX.901, emphasis added).⁷⁴ Eve cannot be both a gatherer and guardian of the floral Garden, as the term 'gatherer' suggests a corrupted 'plucking' and cruel 'pruning' that would pervert her virginal role as a maiden. Eve nurtures her flowers, protects them from Sin. She does not pluck them: if she did, Milton's Eve would be introducing death to her amaranth⁷⁵ and roses well before the decisive Fall.

Milton's Eve is both *mater florum* and *frugum genetrix* ["progenitrix of the harvest" as Ceres],⁷⁶ as a result of creation and a conceiver and nurturer in Eden, where she tends to the woodbine and clasping ivy,⁷⁷ roses, and myrtle (*PL* 9.216-19.383-384). She tracks and ranks⁷⁸ her plants, numbering them and sorting them into classifications (*PL* 11.278-79.439). In this nurturing, Eve is not simply counting, but protecting her "Fruits and Flow'rs" (*PL* 8.44.363) from wooded fruit trees (*PL* 5.213.307) and

⁷⁴ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 287-288.

⁷⁵ Milton probably took the idea of an 'amaranth' flower from Clement of Alexandria's Paedagogus, "which Christianizes the symbol in context of floral crowns and garlands," but he may have also remembered Aesop's fable, "The Rose and the Amaranth," which balanced the symbol of a rose with its perfume renewed in youth. Contrasted between the amaranth's immortality and the rose's distinguished briefness of beauty, fragrance, and prestige, the poetic relations have strengthened the richness of Milton's drawing on previous traditions, particularly that of Greece. Milton's audience would have associated the word 'amaranth' in its association with 'roses' as "an imaginary immortal flower" in comparison to an actual garden flower, emphasizing the illustrious form and lost uniqueness of God's Paradise. When death entered the Garden, the amaranth, as an immortal rose, could no longer exist there and was, as Michael Gillum observes, "to Heav'n remov'd, where first it grew' (3.3356)." The amaranth became a thing of the past, an almost imaginary representation of eternal life, and traditional roses became a symbol of death: John Gerald, 1259 in White, 41; Gillum, 28.

⁷⁶ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 254.

⁷⁷ McColley observes that unless otherwise controlled, properly pruned and directed, woodbine and ivy will choke and destroy: McColley, *Milton's Eve*, 147.

⁷⁸ Hiltner, *Milton and Ecology*, 41-42.

overgrown vines wedded to her elm (*PL* 5.215-16.307). Hiltner recognizes that it is not Eve's "words" or "murmurs" that affect her flowers of "these happy Walks and Shades" (*PL* 11.270.439), but the tender work of her hands as "'they at her coming sprung / And toucht by her fair tendance gladier grew' (8.46-47)."⁷⁹ Donald M. Freedman has likewise remarked that "in response to its nurse [Eve] the natural world of growing things grows, fulfills its intrinsic nature, becomes more like itself under her tutelage."⁸⁰ Like Flora, Eve "enjoys a happy marriage"⁸¹ after transitioning from Passion (Zephyr, and Adam) and Chastity (Chloris, and prelapsarian Eve) into Beauty (Flora, and postlapsarian Eve).⁸² Kilgour observes that Milton alludes to this transition in Book V, when he compares Adam's waking of Eve, referred to as "Beauty" (*PL* 5.14.302) to "as when *Zephyrus* on *Flora* breathes" (v. 15).⁸³ Eve is a "young bride with tutelage of flowers,"⁸⁴ whose role as mother of mankind is personified in Eden, where she mothers her flowers, thereby stressing her empowerment and virtuality.⁸⁵

Nurtured Eden responds bountifully to Eve, as a providential figure, blossoming like "wild" (*PL* 9.212.383) as she tilts them towards the sun and waters from the

⁷⁹ See note 85.

⁸⁰ "The Lady of the Garden: On the Literary Genetics of Milton's Eve," 130, in Hiltner, 142.

⁸¹ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 235-236.

⁸² Kilgour, 2-3.

⁸³ See note 91.

⁸⁴ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 247.

⁸⁵ Green, *Milton's Ovidian Eve*, 248.

“ambrosial Fount” (*PL* 11.279.439). The Garden is “wild” (*PL* 9.212.383), not in the sense of the seventeenth-century’s negative connotations of chaos and disorder, but of fertility in “wanton growth” (*PL* 9.211.383). Milton’s Eve is an “Iris archetypal female figure,”⁸⁶ who along with Adam develops the moral action and position “between the animals and the angels”⁸⁷ and seeks her identity apart from Adam in Eden’s flowers. Where she should be finding her identity and fulfillment in God, as an allegorical representation of flowers and fertility, Eve finds her prelapsarian purpose in the Garden’s femininity. By her restraint, Eden grows “Luxurious” (*PL* 9.209.383) and as Milton scholar Donald M. Friedman observes, is given “‘straightness’ to the woods and ‘sweetness’ to the meadows, but unconsciously, as [Eve] ‘leads her studious hours’ among the very ‘fields, springs, bushes, flowers’ (745-46).”⁸⁸ Eve conceives life in Eden “without noticing”⁸⁹ and adores her flowers’ beauty, as she admires her own reflection and Adam admires her. Eve births and reflects the Garden’s adornment: like Pandora, “whom the Gods / Endow’d with all thir Gift’s,” (IV. 714-15),⁹⁰ Eve’s beauty becomes her ensnarement in sin. Eve is enraptured by beauty, particularly that of the Garden’s, because in her narcissistic ambition, it reminds her of her own.

⁸⁶ Donald M. Friedman, “The Lady in the Garden: On the Literary Genetics of Milton’s Eve,” *Milton Studies*, 35 (1997), 114-133, 125.

⁸⁷ See note 86.

⁸⁸ 127.

⁸⁹ See note 86.

⁹⁰ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, in Demetrakopoulos, 100.

Although much of Eve's blessing nature is unconscious, in her first argument with Adam, Eve recognizes her superior compassion for nature in comparison to Adam's and begins to consider herself as a superior figure in the Garden's cultivation. The moment primes her for Satan's temptation, when he will insist on her "high exaltation" (*PL* 5.90.304) as "Mother of Science" (*PL* 9.680.394) and "Queen of the Universe" (*PL* 9.684.394). Satan weaponizes Eve's desire for an identity and pride in her gardening not only to express what she already knows to be true—all nature adores, admires, and responds to her—but to insist that she should be queen. Milton's Eve is already the allegorical goddess of fertility, a lordship that as Satan reasons in his temptation, should position her above death with a "life more perfect have attain'd than Fate" (*PL* 9.689.394). Satan argues eating the "forbidden fruit" would thereby not lead to death, but a rather "happier life" with "knowledge of Good and Evil" (*PL* 9.697.394) as reward for ambition. In this rhetoric, Eve would be taking her natural place in dominion of the universe, in apotheosis much to God's adoration and "praise" (*PL* 9.693.394) of "dauntless virtue" (*PL* 9.694.394), who will overlook "such a petty Trespass" (*PL* 9.693.394) for its result: the end will justify the means.

Eden's "wanton growth" (*PL* 9.211.383) recalls Eve's "wanton ringlets" (*PL* 4.306.285), suggesting both the innocent and "sinister relationship"⁹¹ between them. Demetrakopoulos believes that upon her temptation, Eve "thinks herself ready for any test, but her intelligence is allied to the vegetative, earthly forces that surround her."⁹² Eve petitions for separation because as Milton explains in his *Argument to the Book*, she

⁹¹ Demetrakopoulos, 100.

⁹² See note 91.

“loath to be thought not circumspect or firm enough” and withdraws “from her Husband’s hand her hand” (*PL* 9.385.387) “desirous to make trial of her strength,” naïvely refusing to “fear of harm” (*PL* 9.326.386) in pursuit of her own happiness and identity, arguing that she is ready for the “trial” (*PL* 9.380.387):

but *Delia’s* selt
 In gait surpass’d and Goddess-like deport,
 Though not as shee with Bow and Quiver arm’d,
 But with such Gard’ning Tools as Art yet rude,
 Guiltless of fire had form’d, or Angels brought. (*PL* 9.388-392.387)

Milton’s Eve compares herself to *Delia*, typically recognized as the huntress *Diana*,⁹³ to insist in “native innocence” (*PL* 9.373.387) and *hubris*, that “Goddess-like” (*PL* 9.389.387), she could stand against Satan’s “attempts” (*PL* 9.295.385), but Eve is not *Diana*. She lacks an identity apart from Adam and is subject to Satan’s eroticism and perverted, convincing rhetoric,⁹⁴ where *Diana* remained distinctly virginal. Eve “will learn new ‘tastes,’ those the debauched, decadent East,”⁹⁵ not unfamiliar to the hypnotic influence attributed to the *Circe* tradition.

Where the Garden should serve as Eve’s domestication with Adam, Satan’s eroticism of her “Dishevell’d” tresses (*PL* 4.306.302) and “blushing like the Morn” (*PL* 8.511.374) upon Adam’s leading her to the “Nuptial Bow’r” (*PL* 8.510.374) corrupts her Beauty. Like *Pandora*, Eve’s appearance as “divinely fair, fit Love for Gods” (*PL* 9.489.389) of innocent “Heroic built” (*PL* 9.485.389) strength becomes beastly and as

⁹³ Demetrakopoulos, 100.

⁹⁴ Satan employs language characteristic of *carpe diem* poetry.

⁹⁵ Demetrakopoulos, 101.

with Circe's magic, will be a beast herself.⁹⁶ In an allegorical sexual union with Satan, Eve becomes a "snake," as seen when Adam refers to her as "thou Serpent" (*PL* 10.867.427). He curses Eve as the mother of feminine ensnarement and argues that she "has made all future women into Pandoras."⁹⁷ Milton uses Adam's self-pity in mourning his sin to represent the misogynistic perspectives that have followed Eve and combat their arguments for female temptresses and feminine subjugation. He does this by positioning Adam in his selfish pride and sin, brought forth by Satan, rather than in wisdom: Adam is under the influence so-to-speak and cannot be taken literally. In his rage, he refuses to take ownership for his own idolization of Eve and refuses to repent out of disparity until Eve leads him to God's salvation.

Eden is not "weedy":⁹⁸ Adam is not pulling weeds, as he is cursed to do upon the Fall, but together with Eve, he is pruning its encroaching "Wilderness of sweets" (*PL* 5.294.309) as a symbol of their own physical, mental, and spiritual pruning towards perfection: in Milton's Paradise, perfection is not a state to be reached, but an ever-active pursuit. Eden's profuse, floral fertility leads its growth in "authorized excess,"⁹⁹ as nature tries to "overrun its limits."¹⁰⁰ Wild and virginal, Eden parallels Eve's own autonomy, represented in her "wanton ringlets" (*PL* 4.306.285), as heaven on Earth, independent of human distortion: with tender pruning and preservation, Milton's Garden is not a

⁹⁶ See note 93.

⁹⁷ See note 93.

⁹⁸ Knott, 69.

⁹⁹ Arnold Stein, *Answerable Style*, 67 in Knott, 67.

¹⁰⁰ Knott, 68-69.

stereotypical wilderness, “hideous and desolate,”¹⁰¹ but a place of wonder, implying a sense of the unexpected, imagination and fragrant pleasure, ultimately giving birth to encroaching disorder.¹⁰²

Eve’s Touch, Milton’s Garden in the Hands of Its Goddess:

In Milton’s Christianized, English Arcadia,¹⁰³ Eve is a gardener.¹⁰⁴ She guards the Earth’s sense of being— period of prelapsarian peace, praise, and prosperity “[w]ith Flowers, Garlands, and sweet-smelling Herbs” (*PL* 4.708.294)—and singularly engages in blessing nature as an active participant in the Earth’s Golden Age (*PL* 9.436-37.388). Eve chooses “to wind / The Woodbine round this Arbor, or direct / The clasping Ivy where to climb” (*PL* 9.215-217.383) in “abundant *loci amoeni* of the *Metamorphosis*,” summarized from a couplet in *Ars Amatoria* as Eve’s “sweet reluctant amorous delay.”¹⁰⁵ Woodbine and “clasping ivy” (*PL* 9.216-217.383) with mantling, luxuriant vine (*PL* 4.259-261.284) and “wanton growth” (*PL* 9.211.383) of “violets, crocuses, and hyacinths underfoot creating a ‘rich inlay’ (4.701)”¹⁰⁶—Milton’s floral Paradise is beautiful and, as Milton scholar John Knott asserts, serves to give Eve “a special role as what amounts to a

¹⁰¹ See note 99.

¹⁰² Knott, 68-70.

¹⁰³ Milton’s Eden is more than a physical garden; it is “a state or condition as well as a place [...and] has a dynamic, generative function which highlights and elucidates the action: John R. Knott, *Milton’s Pastoral Vision* in Knott, “Milton’s Wild Garden,” 66; Symes, 94.

¹⁰⁴ McColley, “Subsequent or Precedent? Eve as Milton’s Defense of Poesie,” 133.

¹⁰⁵ James, 125-126.

¹⁰⁶ Knott, 74.

master gardener.”¹⁰⁷ Although both Adam and Eve “prune their trees, prop up flowers, and train vines on trees and arbors,” Knott argues that Eve is more sensitive to the flowers than Adam and presides over them like a goddess, a patron of Eden’s flowers.¹⁰⁸ Eve is, as Satan implores in his temptation, a “Celestial Beauty” (*PL* 9.540.391), “A Goddess among Gods” (*PL* 9.547.391). She is the “sovrán Mistress” (*PL* 9.530.391) of the Earth, whose plants prosper in “Her Nursery” (*PL* 8.46.363), as a child in her womb or gentle arms, growing under her tender care.

McColley argues that Milton’s floral symbolism extends beyond what is evident in the language¹⁰⁹ to suggest an “interconnected consciousness”¹¹⁰ between Eve and Eden. Milton enjoins Eve with Adam in the naming of creation and by so doing, in the “knowing, and so being able to aid, the natures of God’s creation.”¹¹¹ Both Adam and Eve are connected in this way to the Garden, but it is Eve alone, who is given the almost divine role of the Earth’s nurturer. Mother and daughter, Eve blesses the Earth, as “thick-woven Arborets and Flow’rs / Imborder’d on each bank” bloom at “the hand of *Eve*” (*PL*

¹⁰⁷ See note 105.

¹⁰⁸ Hiltner similarly agrees Eve’s guardianship of both “the place *and* human beings” designates that Satan’s temptation is required to uproot her Edenic guardianship and thereby expose the Garden to sin: Hiltner, *Milton and Ecology*, 36, 46, in Rosamund Paice, “‘Domestick Adam’ Versus ‘Adventurous Eve’: Arguments about Gardening in Milton’s Eden,” *Milton Studies*, 63, no. 2 (2021), 265-293, 268; Knott, 74; John R. Knott, *Milton’s Pastoral Vision* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 114.

¹⁰⁹ Diane Kelsey McColley, “Milton’s Environmental Epic,” 57-73, in McIntyre, 145.

¹¹⁰ McIntyre, 145.

¹¹¹ McColley, “Subsequent or Precedent? Eve as Milton’s Defense of Poesie,” 133.

9.436-37.388). Although Adam is given the prerogative of naming animals, Eve is “life-giving in Milton’s formulation”:¹¹² Hiltner connects Eve in Milton’s *genius* to Sabrina, who “would surely have drowned without the saving power of the place.”¹¹³ In his complement to McColley’s *Milton’s Eve* (1983), he believes that like Sabrina, Eve is a *genius loci*, a Christian representation of the pagan spirit guardians of place, whose obsession with her flowers translates as Milton’s realization of what humanity should be, focused on Christian ideals and pleasant dominions of Earth.¹¹⁴ Sabrina becomes the model in her correlation to Eve because both represent a developed identity in cultivating and protecting the Earth from the sin of Satan.

Milton’s Eve is reliant on Eden as Eden is reliant on Eve, but her “interconnected consciousness” cannot be natural, at least not wholly: Eve was not created as a nature and fertility goddess, but adopted the characteristics upon her “early visitation” (*PL* 11.275.439) with “Fruits and Flow’rs” (*PL* 8.44.363). Milton’s Eve was created in the Garden and spent her nascent moments amidst God’s creation, first finding and “with vain desire” (*PL* 4.456.289), admiring her reflection in nature: a newborn placed on her mother’s breasts, Eve to Sabrina—as a budding flower herself,¹¹⁵ Eve suckled on the breasts of the Garden. Eve’s immediate affection for herself is reflected in her nurturing for Nature, where “[t]he garden as a whole reflects Eve’s love for her own beauty.”¹¹⁶

¹¹² Hiltner, 38.

¹¹³ Hiltner, 41.

¹¹⁴ Hiltner, 42.

¹¹⁵ Hiltner, 44-45.

¹¹⁶ Demetrakopoulos, 99.

Rooted and Uprooted, The One Where Milton's Eve Thinks She Is a Flower:

Milton's Eve is "thoroughly *of* the Garden,"¹¹⁷ so much so that she cannot be separated from the Garden at any point prior to the Fall. Swain argues that Milton's floral paradise has "imagery relating flowers to character, place, and theme," ultimately equivalating Eve to Eden and to flowers as a whole—that is, "Eve = Eden = flowers."¹¹⁸ When Milton's Satan tempts Eve, he flatters her as the "O Sacred, Wise, and Wisdom-giving Plant" (*PL* 9.679.394), whose "Power" (*PL* 9.680.394) enables the Garden to grow and flourish. His rhetoric implies that Eve is not simply a "though fairest unsupported Flow'r" (*PL* 9.432.388), beautiful but weak, in her role as "Mother Earth," conceiving and nurturing new flowers, but that "she thinks like one"¹¹⁹ and finds her prelapsarian identity most in relation to them. Like Flora, Milton's Eve *is*¹²⁰ as much as *of* the "Lady of the Garden."

When Eve lies down with Adam, in "nightly ills," she worries about the "wanton growth / Tending to wilde" (*PL* 9.211-12.383) that will disturb her elegant caretaking of the Garden and upon waking in the morning, makes "haste" (*PL* 5.211.307) to check "each plant" (*PL* 4.240.283), "flow'ry lap" (*PL* 4.254.284) with "Flow'rs of all hue" (*PL* 4.256.284), and her "crystal mirror" where "Myrtle crown'd" (*PL* 4.262-263.284). In comparison, Adam's focus is on the paths of their

walk at noon, with branches overgrown
That mock our scant manuring, and require

¹¹⁷ Hiltner, 45.

¹¹⁸ 155-176.

¹¹⁹ Demetrakopoulos, 100.

¹²⁰ Friedman, 128.

More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth:
 Those Blossoms also, and those dropping Gums,
 That lie bestrewn unsightly and unsmooth
 Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease. (*PL* 4.627-633.293)

From first to final thought, Eve idolizes her flowers, while Adam idolizes her. Paice argues that Eve tilts her head down to the “the scale of Nature” (*PL* 5.509.314),¹²¹ giving her floral family precedence, when she should have her eyes tilted up, where she would not only catch sight of God but her marital union. Worrying over their “unsightly” and “unsmooth” roads (*PL* 4.432.293), Adam tediously cleans “to tread with ease” (*PL* 4.623.293) and addresses Eve’s nursed flowers “[f]rom the first op’ning bud” (*PL* 11.277.439) as something irksome to remove. Adam recognizes the intended delight and pleasure of their paradisaic labor more than Eve,¹²² whose rootedness in the Garden, has led her to focus more on her flowers than marital union,¹²³ but succumbs to Eden’s “wild fertility”¹²⁴ by obsessing over the roads and his proximity to his wife. Eve’s first concern is for her flowers, while as Knott asserts, Adam’s first concern is “to keep Eve by his side, where he assumes she belongs.”¹²⁵ The action emphasizes Adam’s idolization of Eve and separation from Eve (mentally, spiritually, and later physically) and the Garden itself, as he is no longer conscious of its beauty and abundance, pleasure and productivity, and potential providential fatherhood.

¹²¹ 2.

¹²² Knott, 76-77.

¹²³ Paice, 266-269.

¹²⁴ Knott, 77.

¹²⁵ See note 127.

Conclusion:

Although both Adam and Eve are guilty of idolatry and thereby causing the Fall, upon the separation scene, Eve chooses to walk away from Adam because she wants to be alone with her flowers. She does not choose to commune with her “helper” (Gen. 2:20), but with nature, as if identifying herself with its blossoms and fruit. This is seen in Satan’s temptation, when Eve prefers to speak to the tree rather to the Satanic serpent and with a consumer’s desire, promises to “bear the fertile burden”¹²⁶ of tending to it. She stands “apart from the place in an external relation, [...] viewing with desire the place as *object*,” ultimately seeking to uproot her floral nature in order to gain an omniscient perspective and power. Anthony Low explains that it is a “fault (though not yet a sin),”¹²⁷ as a mistake, or *himation*, that demonstrates at Satan’s using, Eve’s *hubris* in considering (or, wanting to consider) herself as a goddess and pursuing knowledge beyond the boundaries of Eden. Hiltner argues that Eve’s subsequent temptation and results from her succumbing to her own pride: she forgets that “she too [like her flowers] is rooted in the Earth [and] is the ‘fairest *unsupported* Flour’ [emphasis added] (9.431).”¹²⁸ Not unlike a flower, Eve is rooted in the Earth—as her very body reflects its mountains, valleys, and canyons—and cannot be separated from that which has given her birth without dying. In “an earth-boundness of being,”¹²⁹ Eve desires ascension and pries herself from the

¹²⁶ Hiltner, 46.

¹²⁷ *The Georgic Revolution*, 320, in Paice, 266.

¹²⁸ Hiltner, 45.

¹²⁹ 45.

Earth¹³⁰ to achieve a closer companionship with her sweet flowers—and suffers a flower's fate, when it is pulled from its roots.

¹³⁰ See note 133.

Conclusion:

Milton has long been labeled a misogynist. Prior to the renowned contributions in Milton studies by Diane Kelsey McColley, Barbara K. Lewalski, and Joseph Wittreich, among others, teaching Milton revolved around antifeminism that claimed he portrayed “much deceiv’d, much failing, hapless *Eve*” (*PL* 9.404.388) as “inferior in the mind” (*PL* 8.541.375) to Adam. In these disputes, it was *Eve*’s consumption and lust, “greed” (*GLAE* 11.1.275)¹ and “covetousness”² (*GLAE* 19.3.279), and narcissism and *hubris* that led to the Fall in Genesis 1-3 and in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*: *Eve* is as Shannon Osburn asserts, “a stumbling block for Adam”³ with ensnaring “Beauty” (*PL* 5.14.302) like that of Pandora and Circe’s magic.⁴ A result of the patriarchization of Judaeo-Christian traditions and Western culture, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* has amassed the reputation from Women’s Liberationists⁵ as an explicit attempt “to justify and augment patriarchal oppression of women,”⁶ suggesting male headship and female subordination,

¹ “Life of Adam and Eve,” 249-295, *The Old Testament Pseudepigraph*, translated and edited by James H. Charlesworth and M. D. Johnson, 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 249-253.

² In the Apocalypse, *Eve* refers to covetousness as “the origin of every sin,” including her own in the Garden.

³ “An Analysis of the Feminist Contradictions and Harmonies in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the Biblical ‘Genesis,’” West Texas A&M University, 15-28, 18.

⁴ S. A. Demetrakopoulos, “*Eve* as a Circean and Courtly Fatal Woman,” *Milton Quarterly*, 9, no. 4, (December 1975), 99-107, 100.

⁵ Virginia R. Mollenkott, “Milton and Women’s Liberation: A Note on Teaching Method,” *Milton Quarterly*, 7, no. 4 (1973), 99-103, 99.

⁶ Merry S. Setley, “Milton’s Misogyny” (master’s thesis, The University of Houston Clear Lake, May 1996), vi.

because women are gateways to hell,⁷ monsters,⁸ and vessels of evil⁹ bent on mankind's desolation. Although my reading does not necessarily refute Milton's characterization as a misogynist, I argue that he has significant tendencies towards that of a humanist, advocating for "spiritual companionship," shared responsibility for the Fall, and feminine autonomy in *Paradise Lost*.

Professors and literature students alike have argued for Milton's removal from university curricula "on the basis of *Paradise Lost* X.888-95 that 'Milton considered the creation of woman a mistake'."¹⁰ The feminist attack that has weathered his English epic and has dissuaded students from pursuing its study, but as Milton scholars in the Feminist Movements of the 1960s and 70s understood, Milton was not a misogynist, but rather one of *the* greatest champions for women in seventeenth-century Europe and beyond. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton gives Eve shared lordship of the Garden with Adam and argues that she is "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (*PL* 3.99.260), perversions of which are only found in the "decidedly Satanic."¹¹ Eve's free will redresses allusions to Pandora (and Ovidian temptresses) as expressions of her superiority: Eve is more beautiful, "more adorn'd / More lovely than Pandora, whom the Gods / Endow'd with all

⁷ Amanda W. Benckhuysen, *The Gospel According to Eve: A History of Women's Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 7, 42-43.

⁸ Many of the most notable and dangerous monsters in mythologies are women. In the classical *mythos*, Arachne, Harpies, Medusa, Scylla, and Sirens, among others, are women.

⁹ Vita Daphna Arbel, *Forming Femininity in Antiquity* (New York, NY: Oxford UP, 2012), 3.

¹⁰ *The Natural Superiority of Women*, 21, in Mollenkott, 99.

¹¹ Joseph Wittreich, *Feminist Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1987), 95.

thir gifts” (*PL* 4.713-715.294). She has choice. Milton’s Eve has authority to name the flowers—a role previously only given to Adam in the naming of the animals¹²—and even names her own children after the Fall (Gen. 4).¹³ In seeking to “find herself,” she pursues autonomy and finds a purpose separate from that of a “helpmeet” (Gen. 2:20) for her husband Adam. Milton’s Eve is the “Mother of All Living,” who educates and works within the Garden, opposes Satan, offers comfort and hope to Adam, and conceives and nurtures Eden. Milton consistently petitions for feminine equality—and certainly, equal representation, as Eve has two hundred fifteen lines to Adam’s two hundred twenty-eight in the epic.¹⁴

In redressing Eve in the Pandora tradition, Milton not only positions the classical in conversation with the Christian tradition, but rectifies religious eroticism emphasizing feminine shame as impressed by Pauline theology, symbolizes Eve as a vessel of hope rather than damnation, and personifies her as an Ovidian goddess of nature in benefit of the God’s Paradise. Milton does not seek to redeem Eve in *Paradise Lost*, but to portray her as a dynamic character “growing up” in the most innate experiences of humanity: a desire for an autonomous identity, companionship, and equality in dominion. By focusing on her emotional rationale for eating the “forbidden fruit,” Milton redeems Eve of the religious narratives that have sought her ultimate condemnation and has made her a better

¹² Diane Kelsey McColley, “Subsequent or Precedent? Eve as Milton’s Defense of Poesie,” *Milton Quarterly*, 20, no. 4 (December 1986), 132-136, 135.

¹³ All quotations from Genesis and relevant biblical books are from *The Holy Bible*. King James Version, edited by Rev. C. I. Scofield, D. D., New York, NY: Oxford UP, 1945.

¹⁴ McColley, “Subsequent or Precedent? Eve as Milton’s Defense of Poesie,” 135.

example of womanhood than her classical counterparts as a strong wife, mother, and leader. Eve is a paradox as a *kalon kakon* in Judaeo-Christian traditions, even in the Books of Adam and Eve that informed Milton's writing, but in his portrayal, Eve's journey from transgression to repentance serves not to condemn as another woman of destruction, but to consummate the epidemics of Adam and mankind's hope.

Students cannot be expected to recognize Milton's feminist and humanist purposes unless, as Virginia R. Mollenkott asserts, "their professors are willing gladly to learn them, and gladly to teach."¹⁵ It is thereby our responsibility to learn and teach effectively that Milton both loved and honored women: otherwise, if we as Miltonists—or even so far, as those who are familiar in the stringiest sense of the word with his work—remain silent on what we know to be true, many will come and go from our universities without ever hearing his name, never mind profiting from his perspectives, and will be worse for it.¹⁶

Humanity is taught by stories. Pandora is employed as a motif of disobedience—or, what not to do—alongside Eve's patriarchal tradition of villainy. Their portrayals of greed and vanity and ultimately ignorance and immaturity result in the misery of those around them and illustrate poor behavior in comparison to that of men's. Although the respect of the myth as a believed religion is obsolete in contemporary thought in comparison to Adam and Eve in Judaeo-Christian religion, the stories are still being used to illustrate and teach the standard of behavior through the patriarchal lens. Reading is invaluable for its influence on language, perspective, and individual thought: we learn

¹⁵ 102.

¹⁶ Mollenkott, 99.

from the knowledge and experiences of people with different *ethos* than our own because our knowledge and experience are not enough to sustain our interactions and cultivation in society. Stories illustrate internal being—dreams, desires, hopes perspectives, and thoughts—and “provides a mirror for self-exploration:”¹⁷ when we study stories, fictional or historical, we see ourselves. Milton’s redressing of Eve from Tertullian’s “temptress”¹⁸ to an autonomous woman, who embodies the human struggle from desiring identity, suffering childlessness, and finding self-hood and balance in marriage. In *Paradise Lost*, we are Eve—as she is us. And to those who would disagree with the patriarchal prerogative, I would recall C. S. Lewis’s assertion to his students that “those who cannot face such startling facts should not read old books [and...] to whom this conception is meaningless should not waste their time trying to *enjoy* Milton.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Kenaan, Vered Lev. *Pandora’s Senses: The Feminine Character of the Ancient Text* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010: 7.

¹⁸ Jean M. Higgins, “The Myth of Eve: The Temptress,” *JAAR*, 44, no. 4 (1976), 639-647, 640; Norris, Pamela. *Eve: A Biography* (Washington Square, NY: New York UP, 1999), 196-197.

¹⁹ Italics mine, Mollenkott, 99.

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