

The Eve Function in *Paradise Regained*

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ABSTRACT Eve, named eight times in *Paradise Regained*, is usually assimilated to the so-called triple equation between the temptations failed by Adam and resisted by the “second Adam” Jesus. In this essay, Andrew Kau argues that the androcentric typological “equation” should be replaced with an “Eve function” that generates from within the “inputs” of the poem’s formal and dramatic structures various interpretive “outputs” that challenge its surface values of typological orthodoxy, masculine virtue, and epic triumph. While Satan absorbs the negative role assigned Eve by the mainstream Christian tradition, Jesus gradually becomes identified with the Eve of *Paradise Lost*, a representative of moral autonomy.

KEYWORDS: character of Eve in Milton’s works; typological analogies of Christ; second Adam; interpretations of the Fall; identification of Jesus with Eve

☞ **AFTER THE DEVIL**, the woman gets all the best lines in *Paradise Lost*. In the debate leading to her separation from Adam, and thence to the Fall, Eve endorses an individualist ethic that strongly recalls the moral self-reliance famously advocated by Milton’s own *Areopagitica*:

Let us not then suspect our happy State
Left so imperfect by the Maker wise,
As not secure to single or combin’d.
Frail is our happiness, if this be so,
And *Eden* were no *Eden* thus expos’d.¹

Though of course neither Adam nor Eve returns as a “character” in *Paradise Regained*, in that poem Eve is named eight times—once more than her husband. Her shadowy

1. *Paradise Lost*, in *The Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis, Ind., 2003), 9.337–41. Citations of both *Paradise Lost* (PL) and *Paradise Regained* are from this edition and given in the text; however, sometimes old spelling and punctuation have been silently restored.

but insistent presence might be seen as re-introducing the individualist claims for which she stood in *Paradise Lost*. Yet critics suppress this challenging possibility through two orthodox expedients. The first designates the minor character Mary the “second Eve.”² The second appeals to an androcentric typological account, the so-called triple equation identifying the devil’s three temptations of Jesus with parallel temptations failed by Adam, which posits that Adam “of course” stands in for Eve “in the same way that the term ‘man’ at its broadest comprehends ‘woman.’”³ This essay argues instead that these allusions redistribute the individualism represented by Eve in *Paradise Lost* through an “Eve function” that forms the unsuspected crux of the eristic duel between Satan and Jesus to define the latter’s new kind of spiritual heroism.

Given its restrictive typological assumptions, the triple equation between the temptations of Adam and those of the “second Adam” threatens to impose a “solution” on *Paradise Regained* in advance. The mathematical metaphor of a function better conveys how Eve’s unexpected presence generates from *within* the “inputs” of the poem’s formal and dramatic structures various interpretive “outputs” that challenge the sequel poem’s surface values of typological orthodoxy, masculine virtue, and epic triumph. However, the revisionist reading this essay advances is not explicitly “Socinian,” “feminist,” “republican,” or otherwise shaped by frameworks external to the poem, but one that, through the time-tested techniques of close reading and intertextual echo, reveals the poem’s own dissents from its surface orthodoxy. Though the overt literary and typological heritage of *Paradise Regained* easily distracts the reader from its radical subtext, the later poem reprises its precursor’s insistence on human freedom. Milton does so by gradually identifying Jesus with Eve, not Adam, while casting Satan as a demonic Eve. It is Jesus’s final perception of his role as a second Eve that quietly regains the lost paradise of *Paradise Lost* and perhaps even adumbrates a new phase of literary history.

Beyond Structure

A common and, of course, important critical approach to *Paradise Regained* is literary historical research into forms or principles like “brief epic” that lend the poem intelligibility.⁴ We may loosely refer to these models as “structures,” following Burton Weber, who divides critical accounts into a “schematic school” attending primarily to “the

2. On Mary as a “second Eve,” see Herbert H. Petit, “The Second Eve in *Paradise Regained*,” *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters* 44 (1956): 365–69.

3. Elizabeth Marie Pope, “*Paradise Regained*: The Tradition and the Poem” (Baltimore, Md., 1947), 52. On the triple equation, see Pope, *Tradition*, chap. 5; Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Milton’s Brief Epic: The Genre, Art, and Meaning of “Paradise Regained”* (London, 1966), 222–27; and A. S. P. Woodhouse, “Theme and Pattern in *Paradise Regained*,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 25 (1956): 167–82. An exception to the general neglect is David Quint’s forthcoming *Inside Milton*, kindly shared with the author, examining parallels between the temptation of Eve in *Paradise Lost* and that of Jesus in *Paradise Regained*.

4. Other proposed structures familiar to students of the poem include the four-book georgic, the Socratic dialogue, or the quest of the magnanimous hero. Even those structures that Milton can be seen to parody or criticize obviously depend, like all parodies, on an appreciation of the norm against which deviations occur. See Louis L. Martz, “*Paradise Regained*: The Meditative Combat,” *ELH* 27 (1960): 223–47; Irene Samuel, “The Regaining of Paradise,” in *The Prison and the Pinnacle*, ed. Balachandra Rajan (Toronto, 1973), 111–34; Merritt Y. Hughes, “The Christ of *Paradise Regained* and the

arrangement of conceptual materials” and a “dramatic school” explaining the narrative order of temptations “on the basis of psychology.”⁵ More than any exogenous structure, however, Milton’s own highly idiosyncratic literary and theological achievement in *Paradise Lost* provides the key precursor for understanding its successor poem.⁶ Indeed, the initially plausible dichotomy between “schematic” and “dramatic” structures collapses once we perceive how the conceptual arrangement of temptations in *Paradise Regained* grows out of the extended narrative dispute between Jesus and Satan on the nature of heroism, a debate whose terms parallel *Paradise Lost*’s unstable perspective on Eve’s culpability for the Fall.

“This first Book proposes, first in brief, the whole Subject,” the 1674 argument to book 1 of *Paradise Lost* informs us, “Mans disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise wherein he was plac’t: Then touches the prime cause of his fall, the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent” (underscores added). But that poem’s opening lines create a calculated perplexity by adding a crucial modifier to the casual use of the third-person masculine singular:

Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of *Eden*, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing Heavn’ly Muse[.]

(*PL* 1.1–6, underscore added)

Despite the masculine pronouns used in the argument, the “first” act of disobedience occurred, as the narrator soon explains, when Satan “deceiv’d / The Mother of Mankind” (*PL* 1.33, 35–36).⁷ Is “Man” in the first line therefore really *woman*, with all the items in the paratactic clause (a shorthand Christian history) temporally subsequent to Eve’s primal act of disobedience? Or does “Mans First Disobedience” refer to the

Renaissance Heroic Tradition,” *Studies in Philology* 35 (1938): 254–77; Annabel M. Patterson, “*Paradise Regained*: A Last Chance at True Romance,” *Milton Studies* 17 (1983): 187–208; and Stuart Curran, “*Paradise Regained*: Implications of Epic,” *Milton Studies* 17 (1983): 209–24. For a provocative rereading of the salience of the book of Job, the archetypal “brief epic,” see Victoria Kahn, “Job’s Complaint in *Paradise Regained*,” *ELH* 76 (2009): 625–60. In many ways this essay’s conclusions regarding the ironic modernity of *Paradise Regained* accord with those of Kahn, though where she sees this effect produced by Milton’s imitation of an ironic Jobean tradition, this essay finds Milton’s way of arriving at this outcome *sui generis*.

5. “The Schematic Structure of *Paradise Regained*: A Hypothesis,” *Philological Quarterly* 50 (1971): 553–566 at 553.

6. John Rogers makes this point from a Christological perspective in “*Paradise Regained* and the Memory of *Paradise Lost*,” chap. 33 in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford, 2009).

7. Given the importance this essay attaches to the pun on Eve’s name, it is interesting to note that Milton ensures that the Mother of Mankind is not dis-Eved, as the Pauline tradition would have it, by honoring her with a postlapsarian epithet even in a pre-lapsarian context. See Philip J. Gallagher, *Milton, the Bible, and Misogyny* (Columbia, Mo., 1990), 52.

Genesis story and its consequences generally, with “Man” meaning “Adam and Eve” or “mankind” in its entirety and the following clauses parallel or explanatory of the nature of disobedience, rather than items in a temporal sequence? The ambiguity in “Man” deserves the utmost emphasis because it fundamentally underpins Milton’s theodicy: it is equally necessary that “Man” (as the unit of Adam and Eve) “falls deceiv’d” to be eligible to “find grace” rather than receive eternal damnation, and that “Man” (as the representative man Adam) falls “not deceiv’d,” as 1 Timothy 2:14 has it, so that his freely chosen action incurs the taint of original sin removable by the Son’s freely bestowed grace (*PL* 3.130–31; 9.998).⁸ To put it another way, the central paradox of the poem is that Adam and Eve are simultaneously “individual,” with its primary early modern meaning of indivisible, and “individuals” in the just-developing modern sense of that term.⁹ Despite its sinful outcome, Eve’s sense that individual virtue must always be tested by temptation, while maligned as feminine gullibility in the mainstream Christian tradition, becomes, for Milton, humanity’s escape clause.

Milton’s “grand style” thrives on the philosophical perspectives opened up by verbal ambiguities or shifts in emphasis, with the uncertainty about individual and collective responsibility mediated by the pun on “Man” making it perhaps the most significant.¹⁰ Yet if *Paradise Lost* hardly goes out of its way to advertise the pun’s significance, *Paradise Regained* positively seeks to suppress it (one of the ways in which its so-called logical plain style may be more illogical than the stimulating polyvalence of *Paradise Lost*). The later poem’s first lines, as emphasized by their strict verbal and syntactic parallelism, unambiguously exclude girls from the typological clubhouse:

I, who erewhile the happy Garden sung
 By one mans disobedience lost, now sing
 Recover’d Paradise to all mankind,
 By one mans firm obedience fully tried[.]
 (1.1–4)

Both proems are acts of literary homage to different versions of the opening of the *Aeneid*: “Milton expressly took his place” in the heroic epic tradition, observes Merritt Hughes, “by putting the word *man* in the opening lines of both his epic poems.”¹¹ But

8. William Poole points out how “circularity ensues” in misogynistic accounts of the Fall building on the passage in Timothy because “Eve is stated to be inferior to Adam before the Fall, and is then told afterward that this is one of her punishments, a possible cause of the Fall thereby redefined as an effect”; *Milton and the Idea of the Fall* (Cambridge, 2005), 10. Cf. Aemilia Lanyer, “Eve’s Apology in Defense of Women,” in *Salve Deus Rex Iudaeorum* (1611), sigs. Dr–D2r, and other feminist authors discussed in Shannon Miller, “Serpentine Eve: Milton and the Seventeenth-Century Debate over Women,” *Milton Quarterly* 42 (2008): 44–68. The fullest, most pro-Eve account of Milton’s critical attitude toward Timothy and his careful thinking through of the gendered nature of deceit is Gallagher, *Milton, the Bible, and Misogyny*, chap. 2.

9. This argument draws on John Rogers’s unpublished work on Miltonic individualism.

10. On polyvalent Miltonic puns, see Christopher Ricks, *Milton’s Grand Style* (Oxford, 1963), 66–77; as well as John Leonard, “Self-Contradicting Puns in *Paradise Lost*,” chap. 24 in *Oxford Handbook*.

11. *Complete Poems and Prose*, 476.

they are not homage for its own sake, since in *Paradise Lost*, the multiple temporal perspectives activated by the triple pun on “man” (Eve, Adam and Eve, or all of us) echo those opened up by Virgil’s triple pun on “arma” (weapons, battles, war in general) in the first line of the *Aeneid*, “arma virumque cano.” The relationship in Virgil’s song of his “virum” Aeneas to these different senses of “arma” creates kaleidoscopic moral complexity; Milton trebles this complexity, so to speak, by encouraging reflection on the different relationship between his three senses of “Man” and the equivalent term to “arma,” the “Fruit.”¹² One of the consequences of what John Rogers describes as the equally Virgilian narrator of *Paradise Regained* having bizarrely “forgotten the sublime epic content” of *Paradise Lost*, however, is a suppression of these multiple perspectives on the Fall in favor of a restrictive typological stance.¹³

Other official voices of *Paradise Regained* that comment on the Fall, both heavenly and hellish, further this initial suppression. In his opening speech, which significantly alludes directly to Milton’s earlier epic, Satan seems to endorse the strangely exclusionary talk of “one mans disobedience” when he claims that “Adam and his facile consort Eve / Lost paradise deceiv’d by me,” falsely implying that both Adam and Eve were deceived (1.51–52; cf. 1.102). God comes even closer to prevarication when he reminds the angels of “what the first man lost / By fallacy surprised” (1.154–55). With the definite article, “the first man” must refer to Adam, but since God presumably cannot have forgotten the book of Timothy, the only explanation is that he has so abbreviated the Genesis narrative that the role of Eve’s individualism as humanity’s escape clause becomes invisible. It is hard not to conclude that the official spokesmen of the poem (of which Satan is ironically the most accurate) are straining to have us selectively remember the apportionment of blame in the Fall. In other words, Milton’s sequel epic treats its narrative of lost paradise as a much less interesting structure than the ambiguous narrative of losing paradise in *Paradise Lost*. The equation of Jesus with Adam, with all its restrictive typological implications, imposes itself immediately as the poem’s dominant logic.

Paradise Regained has been dis-Eved—to use its own recurrent pun—but we should not be. The dialectic between freedom and necessity implicit in the first lines of *Paradise Lost* was externalized in Eve’s individualist response to Adam’s authority; *Paradise Regained* internalizes this dialectic in the contradictory attitudes it adopts toward Jesus’s messianic self-discovery: the “God’s eye” or fatherly perspective of absolute inevitability, set out in its proem, and the human perspective of a mother’s son nervous about living up to expectations that occupies the narrative. A “crisis of vocation” apparent throughout Milton’s own career becomes central to his hero’s own mission in the wilderness, a psychologized version of the epic *katabasis* (the wisdom quest to the underworld) in which Jesus “descended” into his own “deep thoughts” that

12. For an anticipation of this argument, see Ralph Waterbury Condee, “The Formalized Openings of Milton’s Epic Poems,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 50 (1951): 507. Condee, however, limits the referent of “Man” to Adam.

13. “The Memory of *Paradise Lost*,” 606.

“swarm” into his mind—a vaguely devilish word—to achieve a newly fashioned personality or self-understanding (2.111, 1.190, 1.197; cf. 4.15).¹⁴ Where and why Eve’s presence is felt during this process is just as important as the fact that it is felt at all. (A similar contextual pressure does not accompany the poem’s other Old Testament models like Elijah or Job.) Although the “Jesus as second Adam” equation ostentatiously dominates from the outset of the poem, Jesus’s self-discovery disrupts the typological analogy through his covert parallels with a second Eve.

∞ Beyond Typology

To understand the radicalism of this identification we may wish to review briefly the way the typological analogy of Christ as a second Adam, already promoted in the New Testament (Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:21), hardened into an unshakeable axiom under the influence of Augustinianism.¹⁵ The Epistles’ misogynistic hints about Eve’s susceptibility to beguilement or “seduction” (“et Adam non est seductus: mulier autem seducta . . . fuit”), on the other hand, soon turned the woman into little more than the serpent’s co-conspirator (1 Tim. 2:14; cf. 2 Cor. 11:3). Whores, as we know, are generally counterbalanced by virgins; and indeed what Philip Gallagher calls Christianity’s “astonishing parturitional soteriology” soon came dubiously to regard Jesus’s mother Mary as a “second Eve.”¹⁶ The splintering of Eve into these polar attributes finds expression in the Middle Ages’ greatest Christian poem, Dante’s *Commedia*, in which Dante chats with Adam man-to-man for half of a canto, while glimpsing Eve briefly in a scant two lines describing her ambiguous beauty (“ch’è tanto bella”) and submissive relationship to Mary (“da’ suoi piedi”).¹⁷ Despite the Reformation, orthodox attitudes had hardly budged by the time of Milton. Eve was effaced by the combined pressure of misogyny and typology.¹⁸

In light of Eve’s almost totally negative presence in Christian history, trapped between virgin and whore, the Eve function in *Paradise Regained* may be said to be significantly “virtual.” Any allusion, of course, is virtual by dint of briefly projecting onto another work the vestige of a different text, event, or person. Roughly speaking, what a

14. James Nohnberg sees the poem as a “crisis of vocation” reprising many of Milton’s earlier selves; “*Paradise Regained* by One Greater Man: Milton’s Wisdom Epic as a ‘Fable of Identity,’” in *Centre and Labyrinth*, ed. Eleanor Cook et al. (Toronto, 1983), 84. On Milton’s replacement of Jesus’s more traditional *katabasis*, the Harrowing of Hell, by the Temptation, see Northrop Frye, “Revolt in the Desert,” in *Five Essays on Milton’s Epics* (London, 1966), 128–29.

15. Elaine Pagels argues forcefully that sexual politics contributed to the triumph of an Augustinian view of the Fall in *Adam, Eve and the Serpent* (New York, 1988), esp. chaps. 5–6. Countless artistic renderings of Golgotha with Adam’s skull beneath the cross testify to the analogy’s hold on the medieval imagination.

16. Gallagher, *Milton, the Bible, and Misogyny*, 52. The coining of the second Eve analogy is attributed to the second-century theologian Irenaeus in the *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2000), s.v. “Eve.”

17. Dante, *Paradiso*, trans. Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander (New York, 2007), 26; 32, line 5.

18. See Philip C. Almond, *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge, 1999), 143–52, 195–96; Thomas Browne collects the puzzling lore in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646), viewed as largely misogynistic by Gallagher, *Milton, the Bible, and Misogyny*, 51.

metaphor's vehicle is to its tenor, namely a second or virtual reality invoked fleetingly for the purpose of illumination, an allusion is to the work in which it appears. As described by Erich Auerbach, the "figural" nature of typology, Christianity's master system of allusion, entails a special kind of virtuality in that the prophetic Old Testament type both is and is not itself, while even the primary New Testament antitype is "provisional and incomplete" because it points to an "eternal and timeless" providential fulfillment at the end of time, or outside of time.¹⁹ But in practice typological interpretation often threatens to ignore this spiritual reality that makes all history virtual; instead, it congeals into a smug complacency of the Old Testament's supersession or inferiority. However, because of the inadequacy of her typological tradition, Eve is a potent figure with whom to register discomfort with a constrictive understanding of typology and insist on its proper virtuality.

Two contrasting uses of the "second Eve" tradition in *Paradise Lost* provide an illustration of the principle of virtuality that will help us to understand its applicability to Eve's appearances in *Paradise Regained*. Approaching the first couple's bower, the angel Raphael greets the "Mother of Mankind" with a hearty "Hail," which, as the narrator punningly comments (Eva = Ave), would be "the holy salutation us'd / Long after to blest *Mary*, second *Eve*" (*PL* 5.386–88; cf. 10.183 and Luke 1:28). Given the immediately preceding comparison of Eve to "the fairest Goddess feign'd / Of three that in Mount *Ida* naked strove" (Venus), a pointed contrast emerges between classical epic history, launched by the pagan apple foolishly bestowed by Paris on the love-goddess in that contest and culminating in the founding of Rome by her grandson, and Christianity's own fruit-tale, begun by Eve (*PL* 5.381–82). For the angelic high-noon visit, the narrator clothes the naked matron in her typological formal wear, as it were, in order to focalize the network of allusions that reveal the spiritual heroism propounded by *Paradise Lost*. However, when postlapsarian Adam echoes the angel's words—"Hail to thee, / *Eve* rightly call'd, Mother of all Mankind," his spouse disagrees that her name constitutes what she twice calls a "title" (*PL* 11.158–59, 163, 170). Though in part the modest demurrer of "much humbl'd *Eve*," the otherwise pejorative associations of "title" in a book devoted to exploding the pretense of "high titles" suggest how typology might become an empty encumbrance (*PL* 11.181, 793; cf. 12.70, 516). Milton increases the unease with typology because the character in Genesis was known until the Fall as "the woman" and receives her name at this point only as a kind of semi-ironic prophetic epithet; Eve is named earlier in *Paradise Lost*, while still in Eden, a deliberate alteration by Milton that vastly increases his character's individuality, which also asserts itself here (book 9) in a subdued way.²⁰ While in her last words "unworthy" Eve now accepts that she is "voutsaf't" the extraordinary "favor" of serving as the messianic

19. "Figura," in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (Minneapolis, 1984), 58–60.

20. On true and false titles, and Eve's name, see John Leonard, *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve* (Oxford, 1990), 35–67. Leonard reads Adam's bestowal of Eve's "title" favorably, concluding that "in reaffirming Eve's name, Adam regains some of his lapsed power of naming" (51). Note, however, that Adam "assures" himself of the propriety of Eve's name (*PL* 11.57). His lines are thus additionally ironic because "assurance" was a technical term in Calvinism for certainty of salvation

mother, her typological title may never supersede the character's previously established identity (*PL* 12.622).

Tellingly, the official second Eve in *Paradise Regained* herself baffles traditional expectations of typological closure. "Motherly cares and fears," the homely motive already somewhat ironizing the cosmic scope of her forthcoming soliloquy, cause Mary to quote the angelic "salute" twice invoked at major moments in *Paradise Lost* in her opening "sighs" (2.64, 67, 65):

O what avails me now that honor high
To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute,
Hail highly favor'd, among women blest.
(2.66–68; cf. 2.130–40)

But as Mary "awaited the fulfilling" in whatever manner of the angelic *ave*, her maternal desire to see the manifestation of her son's "great purpose" converts to "patience" with temporal contingency (2.108, 101, 102; cf. 3.182). Indeed, it is Satan who misperceives the fulfillment of the typological relation between the first and second Eve as "fatal" or "[d]estin'd" and who first refers to Jesus through the prophetic shorthand of "the Woman's seed" who was "late of woman born" (1.53, 65, 64, 65). Jesus presumably holds a more instructive attitude to this relationship. In his first soliloquy, he recounts how after his mother imparted to him the angel Gabriel's prophecy of his "foretold" birth (a word repeated seven more times, generally by Satan), he immediately read the "Law and Prophets, searching what was writ / Concerning the Messiah [. . .] / and soon found of whom they spake / I am" (1.239, 260–63). Insofar as the rest of the poem articulates his "end of being on Earth" (2.114), however, "the use of typology poses as part of Jesus's puzzling intellectual task," as Barbara Lewalski explains; typology only magnifies "the problem of how he ought to relate himself to history, how far the past provides a fit model for his actions and wherein he is to redefine its terms in order to become himself the model for the future."²¹ It is important to add to Lewalski's fine account a recognition that deconstructing the fixity of the second Eve prophesy, a process already visible in *Paradise Lost*, constitutes Milton's "special accomplishment" in making typology "wholly organic . . . to the dramatic movement of the poem."²² Even the traditional second Eve herself, like the first one, comes to understand the prophetic assurances of typology as preliminary or illustrative—that is, virtual—with respect to their very distant fulfillment. Redressing an inadequate typological tradition allows

whose "delusion of escaping the contingency of occasion" David Quint sees Milton criticizing in this poem. See *Epic and Empire* (Princeton, N.J., 1993), 281–301 at 300. The scene of pagan bird-augury interpreted by Adam immediately following the naming, when "Nature first gave Signs," further ironizes Adam's assurance by gesturing to the postlapsarian hermeneutic perils of finding mystical correspondences between world and word (*PL* 11.183).

21. *Brief Epic*, 181–82. Lewalski is here speaking of Christ's "triple office" of prophet, priest, and king.

22. *Ibid.*, 166. Lewalski does not mention Eve among the "earlier heroes" of whom Christ must become "the summation, the compendium, the completion of them all" (167).

for a productive coexistence of orthodox and unorthodox functions for Eve; that is, both those from the mainstream Christian tradition and Milton's own creation in *Paradise Lost*. We may now examine how the former of these comes to be associated with Satan, who takes on mainstream Christianity's negative assessment of Eve's feminine stupidity even as he introduces the memory of the Miltonic Eve into the poem, in the process freeing Jesus to acknowledge her positive role as a figure for moral autonomy.

☞ Satan as a Demonic Eve

Satan's role as a demonic Eve dates from the end of *Paradise Lost*. In an astonishing and unprecedented addition to the myth of the Fall, Milton explains that God every year transforms the devils into snakes and fills them with an uncontrollable desire to eat ashy simulacra of the "fair Fruit, like that / Which grew in Paradise, the bait of *Eve* / Us'd by the Tempter" (*PL* 10.550–52). Satan's *contrapasso*, to adopt Dante's term, is to parody endlessly his own narrative of seduction, as both seducer and seduced.

Fittingly, therefore, Satan disrupts the second Adam analogy for the first time in *Paradise Regained* by naming Eve twice in his opening speech to his followers, beginning anew an intimate chain of associations between the arch-tempter and his ur-victim:

O ancient Powers of Air and this wide World,
 For much more willingly I mention Air,
 This our old conquest, than remember Hell,
 Our hated habitation; well ye know
 How many ages, as the years of men,
 This Universe we have possest, and rul'd
 In manner at our will th' affairs of Earth,
 Since *Adam* and his facil consort *Eve*
 Lost Paradise, deceiv'd by me, though since
 With dread attending when that fatal wound
 Shall be inflicted by the seed of *Eve*
 Upon my head.

(1.44–55)

Satan's first speech in *Paradise Regained* to the "Powers of [. . .] this wide World" picks up where his last speech in *Paradise Lost* left off; just before involuntarily turning into a snake for the first time, he had boasted four times of the devils' new control over the "World" (*PL* 10.460–503). But if this later speech, despite the verbal echo, urges us along with the devils not to "remember Hell," it also misremembers the broader moral of *Paradise Lost*, which had ended on the famously upbeat note of human possibility for the reconciled Adam and Eve, striding into the dawn hand-in-hand with "the World [. . .] all before them" (*PL* 12.646). Of course, the devils' ancient sway over "th' affairs of Earth" is exactly what demands the Incarnation, and Satan endorses the

official second Adam typology by mentioning Eve only as a byword for female credulity (“facil consort”) or prophetic obstetrics (“seed of *Eve*”). Indeed, the cloudy “Council” or “Consistory” of “mighty peers” (1.40, 42), connoting an all-male papal conclave or baronial cabal, seemingly omits the female demon-deities, like Astoreth or Eurynome (also known as “wide-encroaching *Eve*”), said in *Paradise Lost* to be reigning on earth before the coming of Christ (*PL* 1.438, 10.581–82).²³ Up in heaven as well, human history has become totally masculine, with God concluding his parallel speech to the angelic host by predicting salvation for the “Sons of men” (1.167). On a hermeneutic as well as a plot level, in furthering the poem’s suppression of Eve, Satan thus “contrary unweeting [. . .] fulfill’d / The purpos’d Counsel pre-ordain’d and fixt / Of the most High” (1.126–28). But if we read this scene narratively in terms of Satan’s own strategy, an opening appears for Milton’s Eve to enter the poem. To buck up the “aghost and sad” mood of his crew, Satan—as we will soon see quite clearly—purposely exaggerates his former success in what he abbreviates, if not mis-describes, as “the dismal expedition to find out / And ruin *Adam*” (1.43, 101–2; cf. *PL* 2.345–78, 10.485–501). *Lost Paradise*, or *Paradise Lost*, remains dis-Eved—but not for long.

Eve’s presence, and the presence of *Paradise Lost*, begin to be felt in Satan’s initial attempt on Jesus leading up to the banquet temptation, which verbally and thematically reprises his earlier seduction of Eve.²⁴ Following the gospel account, Milton places this encounter after the expiration of Jesus’s fast, but in typical fashion he adds interesting embroidery. With the forty days ended, we hear that Jesus “hunger’d then at last / Among wild Beasts,” but that

they at his sight grew mild,
Nor sleeping him nor waking harm’d; his walk
The fiery Serpent fled, and noxious Worm;
The Lion and fierce Tiger glar’d aloof.
But now an aged man in Rural weeds,
Following, as seem’d, the quest of some stray Ewe,
Or wither’d sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a Winter’s day, when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet returned from field at Eve,
He saw approach; who first with curious eye
Perus’d him[.]

(1.309–20, underscore added)

23. This exclusion is particularly odd in light of the co-ed devilry of other precursor poems: *The Nativity Ode* (nymphs, Ashtaroth, Isis); *Comus* (“a rout of Monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild Beasts, but otherwise like Men and Women”); and even the female personifications like Calumny or Fame of *In Quintum Novembris*; *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Hughes, 48–49, 92, 19.

24. David Quint discusses the banquet temptation in this regard in *Inside Milton*.

We hardly need the pun in line 318 to alert us to the rewriting of the primal temptation scene in book 9 of *Paradise Lost*.²⁵ Having banished his earlier disguise, the serpent or worm, which he donned to seduce Eve, Satan nevertheless reintroduces a suppressed female presence into the poem through his *seemingly* random “quest of some stray Ewe” (note also the typographical pun on the end-stopped “Ewe” and “Eve,” separated by a mere two lines).²⁶ In *Paradise Lost* Satan as the serpent had compared the savor of the fruit to “the Teats / Of Ewe or Goat dropping with Milk at Ev’n” for Eve’s delectation, and the fact that now it is Satan who is in quest of a mother sheep at eve is perhaps one of the subtler ways in which he comes to occupy her place (*PL* 9.581–82). His curiosity to see and hear Jesus, complaint of rural solitude, and desire to “taste” miraculous nourishment, while obviously feints, all further transfer the primal sin from the tempted to the tempter (1.319, 333, 332, 345). In one regard, Satan’s temptations put Jesus in the position not just of a second Adam, but also of a reformed Eve. At the same time, it is as if, having cloaked himself as one “returned from field at Eve,” Satan begins to obey the wild logic of the second Adam equation by which, as Jesus’s seducer, he is cast as a demonic second Eve.

At the second session of the now even gloomier consistory, “the old serpent” explicitly reminds his auditors of the actual two-party circumstances of the Fall—the first time in the poem anyone has done so—in a bid for more time and support (2.147). “Far other labor to be undergone / Than when I dealt with *Adam* first of Men,” Satan assures the potentates, hastily adding a rider that we have long awaited: “Though *Adam* by his Wife’s allurements fell” (2.132–34). “Therefore I am return’d,” he explains defensively, “lest confidence / Of my success with *Eve* in Paradise / Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure / Of like succeeding here” (2.140–43). The devils are not dis-Eved: immediately taking Satan’s cue, Belial reasonably proposes that they tempt Jesus with what worked before and “set women in his eye and in his walk” (2.153). Surprisingly, the heretofore taciturn Satan immediately and angrily (with “quick answer”) shoots down this excellent plan in a sixty-line rant that egregiously recites Belial’s many sex crimes. The heated rejection is especially bizarre because, at least initially, Satan does not actually plan to offer Jesus “manlier objects” (2.225), but an extra-biblical banquet of sense—served by women, no less—resonating with the effeminate romance or court masque tradition.²⁷ Satan begins a pattern of disparaging supposed female inferiority at the very moment he exhibits identical failings himself.

25. Noted by Edward Le Comte, *A Dictionary of Puns in Milton’s English Poetry*, ed. Le Comte (London, 1981), s.v. “Eve.”

26. Heightening the hidden theme of maternal nourishment, the disguise also may allude to a stick-gathering mother who foregoes feeding her son to bake a cake for the hungry prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17), a figure to whom Jesus will soon be compared; Nohrnberg, “*Paradise Regained* by One Greater Man,” 93–94. Of course, the pastoral imagery also casts Satan as a false shepherd encountering the good one.

27. Emilie Babcox, “Physical and Metaphorical Hunger: The Extra-Biblical Temptations of *Paradise Regained*,” *Milton Quarterly* 26 (1992): 36–42. For Milton’s development of the “banquet of sense” topos, see Frank Kermodé, “Milton’s Hero,” *Review of English Studies*, n.s., 4 (1953): 323–25.

The needlessly elaborate banquet temptation continues Satan's own willy-nilly identification with a demonic Eve.²⁸ The second day's unwelcome noontime feast in the shady alleys of a "woody Scene" (2.294) histrionically replicates not just the noontime temptation of Eve, but the midday repast of juicy gourds (vegan and kosher, unlike the diabolic surf-and-turf) Eve herself prepared in her own shady bower, on the second day narrated in Paradise, for the visit of the good angel Raphael (*PL* 5.321–49).²⁹ A less parodic reappearance of the first couple's umbrageous natural bedroom, a "thickest covert" of trees' "inwoven shade" (*PL* 4.693–94), occurs in the "hospitable covert nigh / Of Trees thick interwoven" where Jesus slept the night prior to the banquet temptation and dreamt of "the Ravens with thir horny beaks / Food to Elijah bringing Even and Morn, / Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought" (2.262–63, 267–69). The groan-inducing pun draws attention away from a more subtle one on "Even," as Jesus's chaste dream of birds' abstaining from forbidden food revises the comparable flight- and food-dream Satan implanted in Eve (*PL* 5.28–93). These well-behaved, mothering ravens contrast with the harpy bird-women who snatch away the leftover "cates" from Satan's failed feast, which both he and the narrator have compared to Eve's forbidden fruit (2.403; 2.349, 369).³⁰ Harpies swoop down in classical mythology to befoul the meal of someone, like Phineus in the *Argonautica* or the Trojans in the *Aeneid*, who has usurped the gods' power or trespassed on their property, much as Eve did in *Paradise Lost*. But obviously the temperate Jesus has no interest in eating idolatrous sacrifices from the devil's table (1 Cor. 10:20–21). Instead, the harpies' arrival is a clue that the increasingly unhinged Satan, visibly "malcontent" (2.392), has become identified with a demonic Eve by unsuccessfully re-enacting his original temptation, even as Jesus begins to be identified with a chastened version.³¹

Before the next reference to Eve at the beginning of book 4, three greatly elaborated versions of the biblical temptations of the power and glory of the kingdoms intercede: diabolic offers of wealth, renown, and the patriotic gore of a Parthian alliance. Here are the "manlier objects" earlier promised by Satan, classic worldly goods spurned by the Aristotelian "magnanimous man" but all baits for a politically ambitious up-and-comer who bears a suspicious resemblance to a younger Milton, the

28. There is perhaps a subtle way in which Jesus perceives the analogy: in Jesus's words rejecting the banquet, "with my hunger what hast thou to do?" (2.389), James Nohrnberg detects an allusion to Jesus's rebuff of his mother with the Jewish divorce formula at Cana (John 2:4); "*Paradise Regained* by One Greater Man," 89.

29. There are no neoclassical "alleys" or "walks" (2.293) in the Eden of the Sovereign Planter, and even when Satan, like Eve, turns his hand to gardening the speciousness is apparent: "Nature's own work it seemed (Nature taught art)" (2.295).

30. John Carey also points out that Satan's rhetorical question, "Hast thou not right to all created things?" (2.324) echoes a similar specious line of argument used on Eve. See the second edition of Milton's *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Carey (London, 1997), 455n. Pope believes the entire scene is justified by a schematic need for Jesus to overcome a parallel hunger temptation to Eve's, but that hardly explains its imaginative richness; *Tradition and the Poem*, chap. 6, esp. 77–79.

31. Weber suggests that Satan only loses his temper at this point and in the lead-up to the Athens temptation—the two temptations that most overtly revise those of Eve; "Schematic Structure," 556.

ardent republican whose disappointed older self echoes in Jesus's odd self-comparison to various Roman heroes (2.446). True kings, Jesus asserts in a rather tedious speech on virtue that strongly recalls Milton's *Second Defence of the English People*, need only subdue "lawless passions" and govern the "inner man" (2.472, 477), notions clearly resonating with the Stoic or Platonic goal of mastering an effeminate soul.³² Such imagery of "kingship over the self" finds confirmation in the lengthy discussion of the patient models of Socrates and Job—two men, incidentally, who also have in common notoriously bad wives.³³ The superior, self-sufficient male body that the classically virtuous Jesus opposes to all of Satan's temptations finds its demonic antithesis in feminized images of confusion recalling his earlier swarm of thoughts: an impassioned urban mob of "headstrong multitudes," a fickle, prating "miscellaneous rabble," the "numbers numberless" of prancing Parthians akin to besotted romance knights, and especially the apostate Jews turned worshippers of the Canaanite love-goddess Ashtaroth, quasi-castrati "distinguishable scarce / From gentiles, but by circumcision vain" (2.470, 3.50, 310, 338–44, 424–25). The separation of the Parthian "temptation of the kingdoms" (book 3) from its Roman and Athenian triptych (book 4) has somewhat flummoxed commentators, but one way to perceive its propriety is as the culmination of these images of feminine confusion, to which the devil's temptations of manly distinction always amount.³⁴ Against these undifferentiated demonic swarms, "this perferet man" (1.166)—here most apparently Milton imagining himself perfect—repeatedly stakes his integral identity.³⁵ We recall the Milton of the prose tracts a little too hotly contrasting his own virtue against whoremongering or transvestite playacting; and indeed, the final line of book 3 praising Jesus's unbeatable eristic skill ("so fares it when with truth falsehood contends" [3.443]) evokes the image from *Areopagitica*, not of the female patience Psyche requires to sort infinitely "confused seeds" of good and evil, but of Milton's masculine, martial fantasy of the instant and inevitable disentanglement of truth and falsehood when they "grapple . . . in a free and open encounter."³⁶

As if to make up for the exclusively masculine nature of these three temptations, Eve's name immediately appears three times in the opening lines of book 4. Despite his

32. Cf. *Second Defence of the English People*, in *Complete Poetry and Major Prose*, ed. Hughes, 837 ("know that to be free is the same as to be pious, to be wise, to be temperate and just, to be frugal and abstinent, and lastly to be magnanimous and brave").

33. On the themes of the "magnanimous man" and "kingship over the self," see Lewalski, *BriefEpic*, chap. 9, esp. 243–44. Cf. Lewalski's thematic divisions with Weber, who sees book 3 unified by the master temptation—quintessentially Miltonic—to premature accomplishment of manly "great deeds" in the face of "fleeting time"; "Schematic Structure," 577.

34. Neither of the structures proposed by Pope (traditional theological interpretations of the three temptations) or Lewalski (Christ's private versus public kingly office) respect the book-division (Pope, *Tradition and the Poem*, 67–69; Lewalski, *BriefEpic*, 256). David Quint in personal communication also suggests each kingdom may represent "temptations to the kind of church Jesus is to found."

35. That "perfect" in the early modern period means "of legal majority" (*OED*, def. 3b) and connotes "sexually whole" strengthens a psycho-biographical reading such as that of Nohrnberg (cf. *OED*, def. 3c; Richard Hulot, *Abececlarium Anglico Latinum* [1522], s.v. "semimas": "Halfe a man, halfe a geldinge, beyng no perfect man to generation").

36. *Areopagitica*, in *Complete Poetry and Major Prose*, ed. Hughes, 728, 746.

growing identification with Eve, Satan, by way of free indirect discourse, there subjects our mother to what has to be one of the most withering put-downs in the entire misogynist Judeo-Christian tradition:

Perplex'd and troubl'd at his bad success
 The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
 Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope
 So oft, and the persuasive Rhetoric
 That sleek't his tongue, and won so much on *Eve*,
 So little here, nay lost; but *Eve* was *Eve*,
 This far his over-match, who, self-deceiv'd
 And rash, beforehand had no better weigh'd
 The strength he was to cope with, or his own[.]
 (4.1–9)

With the name of our ancestress become simply a redundant eponym for stupidity (“but *Eve* was *Eve*”), we see clearly how the Eve function provides a subterranean counterplot to the official typological line, for like Satan we would be gravely self-dis-Eved to accept this unquestioning negative assessment. In fact, the snideness of the narrator/Satan, echoing the earlier comparison of the banquet temptation to “that crude apple that diverted *Eve*” (2.349), again disguises the upcoming reintroduction into the poem of the individualism for which Eve stands. Retrospectively, the Eve comparison makes little sense, since, as we have seen, Satan had just offered Jesus “manlier objects [...] honour, glory, and popular praise”; however, Jesus had turned the tables on the tempter, showing the latent effeminate nature of these goods supposedly befitting “greatest men” (2.225–26, 228). Yet once more the seducer Satan is feminized by his own temptations and to compensate vituperates the supposed frailty of woman. Thus, it may surprise us—or perhaps not, if we grant this second Satan more wiliness than most critics—that the climactic three temptations of Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem conclude the poem by casting the second Adam as the ultimate second Eve.

☞ Eve and Eden Regained

Nominally, the cities of book 4 are eroticized temptations appropriate for a second Adam. Like boats, cities are traditionally female, and in book 4 Satan once again covertly adopts Belial’s plan by putting in Jesus’s eye “*Rome*, Queen of the Earth,” Athens, “Mother of Arts / And Eloquence,” and “fair *Jerusalem*, / The holy City, [who] lifted high her Towers, / And higher yet [...] / Her [the Temple’s] pile” (4.45, 240–41, 544–47). At the same time, homosexuality or homosociality are also present in the pederasty on Tiberius’s Capri—“an Island small but strong”—or Socrates’s “low-rooft [...] / [...] Tenement” (4.92, 273–74), the emblematic masculine sanctuaries of the figures whose roles Satan exhorts Jesus to usurp. In many ways enlarged versions of the banquet of sense, where the catamites Gaynmede and Hylas mingled with Diana’s

nymphs, the Mediterranean temptations simultaneously offer a fantasy of heterosexual fulfillment and a world where one can be friends, or more than friends, with just the guys. One doubts, however, that even Satan seriously means to tempt the Son of God with the Sin of Sodom. The graver spiritual crime is an arrogant impatience in achieving worldly ambition, symbolized by Satan's power to insert Jesus into non-procreative, all-male dynasties: the imperial chain of patrilineal adoption echoing in the wicked favorite Sejanus's replacement of Tiberius's true son Drusus; or the discipleship of the schools whereby Milton's most hated philosopher Aristotle "bred" the homosexual world-conqueror Alexander (4.95, 251).³⁷ These parodies of the one true instance of parthenogenesis lead up to the temptation to exhibit even the actual status of favorite sonship on a third emblematic masculine sanctuary, the pinnacle of the real "Father's house" (4.452).³⁸ We may now see how these temptations actually befit not Adam but Eve, whom Satan's temptation had strategically elevated to a position of primary divine approval ("fairest resemblance of thy Maker"), and who immediately after falling flirted with the Amazonian fantasy of a life "more equal" or "superior" to men, or even "Without Copartner" (*PL* 9.538, 823, 825, 821). Catering to the valorization of manly self-mastery by the extremely Miltonic Jesus of books 2 and 3, Satan finally sets out the three ultimate temptations for one who fantasizes about autonomy: absolute power, wisdom, and divine solicitude. Essentially an offer of the "world"—a word that appears sixteen times in book 4, five more times than in the entire rest of the poem—these were the baits that Satan laid before that spokeswoman for *Areopagitica* (in which predictably "world" or "worldly" appear around twenty times), "Empress of this fair world, resplendent *Eve*" (*PL* 9.568).

The one allusion to Eve not spoken by the narrator or Satan shows that one of Jesus's final eristic victories is to make his status as a chastened Eve explicit. In a quieter moment of self-revelation in book 4 that precedes the inscrutable moment on the pinnacle, Jesus responds to Satan's demand that he inherit the "kingdoms of the world" on the condition of devil-worship by accepting the heretofore latent analogy of himself to Eve. "Dar'st thou to the Son of God propound / To worship thee accurst," Jesus disdainfully replies to the tempter, "now more accurst / For this attempt bolder than that on *Eve*, / And more blasphemous?" (4.178–81). Having only filtered into the poem through the activities of the devil, the Eve function finally receives official sanction; "contrary unweeting" Satan, whose identity Milton at this point has Jesus definitively perceive, sees his attempt at a new seduction narrative finally wrested away by his adversary, who has paradoxically identified himself as "Son of God" by detecting his own relationship to Eve (4.194–95, cf. Luke 4:8; 4.190). With both antagonists now revealed to each other, the psychological drama of the poem has effectively ended.

37. Philip Rollinson, "The Homoerotic Aspect of Temptation in *Paradise Regained*," *English Language Notes* 33 (1995): 31–35, points out an allusion to the tyrant Dionysus of Syracuse in the banquet temptation but does not compare it to those of Athens and Rome.

38. Theologians traditionally regarded the pinnacle temptation as Satan daring Jesus to commit a vainglorious miracle on the exposed roof of the Temple before the bedazzled Jerusalem throngs; Pope, *Tradition and the Poem*, 80–81.

Jesus's identification with Eve casts the perennial critical flashpoint of the unprecedented Athens temptation as Satan's doomed attempt at catch-up: "well if you're Eve," he seems to propose, "surely you crave some sapience?" Thus, like the tree, a "mother of Science," Athens is a "mother of arts / And eloquence" (*PL* 9.680; 4.242). Even more directly alluding to the previous epic, Satan praises the city's bucolic "sweet recess" like the "flow'ry Hill Hymettus" (4.242, 247), significantly the exact phrase used for the "sweet recess" of Eden's "Flourie plat" where Satan first spied Eve alone and was struck "stupidly good" (*PL* 9.456, 465), a stupefaction anticipating his final "amazement" (4.562) before his virtuous adversary atop the Temple.³⁹ Right before this final moment, Satan repeats to Jesus the same litany of biography and biblical prophesy that Jesus himself rehearsed forty-three days previously as he undertook his identity quest in the wilderness. Supposedly too angry for reflection, the devil claims he does this for his own benefit:

To understand my Adversary, who
And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent;
By parle or composition, truce or league,
To win him, or win from him what I can.

In short, "to know what more thou art than man" (4.527–30, 538, underscores added). Might all these male pronouns of the strangely redundant biographical synopsis, however, constitute Satan's final gambit to arrest Jesus's process of self-discovery and reimpose the false assurance bequeathed by the second Adam prophecy? Like so much else in this opaque poem, the nature of the pinnacle theophany, if that is what it is, will always remain disputed. But perhaps the answer to this second Sphinx's riddle, solved by Jesus on the pinnacle, is not "man"—but "woman." On Jesus's proleptic third day's victory, the final similes portray as some sort of terrible defeat Satan's own proleptic fall into his "old conquest," air, demonstrated by the epic simile comparing Satan to the wrestler Antaeus, who "in the air expired and fell" (1.46, 4.568). And the feminine imagery common to the Antaeus simile and the second epic simile comparing Satan to the Sphinx suggests that the final meaning of the poem turns on each antagonist's new relationship to whatever the female principle represents. Either this principle no longer provides its demonic power (Antaeus and his mother, Earth), or destruction befalls its demonic version (the Sphinx). Satan undergoes another climactic *contra-passo*, but this time turns not into a serpent but a woman.

Does misogynist Milton thus repudiate whatever this female principle represents by starkly associating it with Satan? For the angelic hymn to the victorious Jesus also reasserts the second Adam analogy along with a patrilineal spiritual lineage:

Now thou has aveng'd
Supplanted *Adam*, and by vanquishing
Temptation, has regain'd lost Paradise,

39. *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Carey, 493n.

.
 A fairer Paradise is founded now
 For *Adam* and his chosen Sons[.]
 (606–8, 613–14)

Feasted with “Fruits fetched from the tree of life,” the character now identified with the Son receives both the Edenic reward of perfect obedience denied Adam and the epic epithet of a conquering hero, “Queller of Satan,” who, like the debeller of yore, will soon harrow the enemy “Legions” from Abaddon’s gates and overrun their “Demonic holds” (4.589, 634, 629, 628).⁴⁰ By also repurposing the hymn to Hercules in the *Aeneid* (8.301–2), a hero whom Virgil casts as the archetypal queller of demonic monsters and the aboriginal founder of the city that would become Rome—prolepses of Jesus’s post-Crucifixion career—the passage further reinforces Jesus’s claim as an imperial dynast who—in contrast to Eve, who craves spurious fame—becomes a deservedly famous object of universal veneration.⁴¹

However, since we do not know how Jesus reacts to this hymn, the final temptation for us may be to rest content with its epic grandeur and typological closure, much like the author of the first critical study, whose dislike of the “flat and low” concluding quatrain caused him to snort that “*Paradise Regained* had ended better at Verse 635.”⁴² The earliest critics set the still-potent agenda of recuperating the sequel to *Paradise Lost* either by discovering “rich Grapes and Fruits” of literary piquancy or theologically profound “instructive Doctrines, and . . . Sentiments of Morality,” but this essay has suggested both procedures to be inadequate for comprehending *Paradise Regained*.⁴³ Milton bewildered his neoclassical contemporaries and their critical heirs, perhaps because he wrote a poem centuries ahead of its time: a radically “internalized epic,” according to Stuart Curran, that anticipates Romantic experiments in which “the struggle between good and evil . . . becomes centered in a single individual representative of man, and from his internal conflict emerges the scope of human life, its triumphs and limitations.”⁴⁴ We may confirm Curran’s insight by examining how the remarkable final lines identify the individualism of the Eve function with this diffusion of religious prescription and classical epic into the “scope of human life.”

40. John Rogers discusses this revelation and further argues that the identification of Jesus with the Son in the angels’ hymn must exalt “*Paradise Lost* . . . to the status of scripture”; “The Memory of *Paradise Lost*,” 608.

41. David Quint notes the allusion to Virgil’s hymn to Hercules in *Inside Milton*, where he discusses how it fulfills Milton’s perennial yearning for fame, which Quint views as the fundamental temptation of Eve in *Paradise Lost*.

42. Richard Meadowcourt, *A Critical Dissertation on . . . “Paradise Regain’d,”* 2nd ed. (London, 1748), 41. Meadowcourt found similar deficiency in the last four lines of *Paradise Lost*.

43. William Lauder, *An Essay upon Milton’s Imitations of the Ancients, in His “Paradise Lost.” With Some Observations on the “Paradise Regain’d”* (London, 1741), 56; Meadowcourt, *Dissertation*, 6.

44. “The Mental Pinnacle: *Paradise Regained* and the Romantic Four-Book Epic,” in *Calm of Mind*, ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr. (Cleveland, Ohio, 1971), 136. Cf. the preface by Samuel Wesley (father of John) to his bombastic sequel, *The Life of Our Blessed Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ* (1693), sig. b recto: “He had not that scope for Fable, was confin’d to a lower Walk, and draws out that in *four Books* which might have been well compriz’d in *one*.”

For when Jesus stands victorious atop the Temple, what has he really accomplished? In the short term (if that is how we see the rest of human history), “it is not clear that Christ’s victory actually alters anything, so far as Satan’s power and scope are concerned,” as John Carey wryly remarks.⁴⁵ Indeed, if we look closely, Satan falls in a peculiar non-downward way, presumably landing him in “mid air” where the levitating meeting of the poem’s third demonic council, like the previous two, “sat consulting” (1.39, 4.577; cf. 2.117). This non-fall thus simply restores the status quo of the profane *saeculum*, when the “Powers of Air” will continue to “rule in the clouds” until the apocalyptic fulfillment of the head-bruising prophesy (1.44, 4.619). Though “joyless”—demons never seem very happy—Satan’s epic “triumphals” are thus not entirely unwarranted (4.578). We are not perfect men but rather gluttons and hypocrites, vain-glorious and greedy, prone to temporize in politics or make idols of our learning; we are all, in short, still secular subjects of the Prince of the Air awaiting an absent Messiah with nothing to oppose the demands of the world but the self-awareness bequeathed by poetry, which Victoria Kahn believes *Paradise Regained* champions as “the proper mode for ordinary human beings . . . to understand their own ambiguous location in secular life.”⁴⁶

If Satan seems bizarrely to fall upward into the epic air, in the “flat and low” conclusion, by contrast, Jesus descends both literally and generically from the top of his Father’s house, via the epic hymn and romance conventions of the “floating couch” and “flow’ry valley,” back to the real world of “his Mother’s house,” a journey “private” and “unobserv’d,” even by the seemingly omniscient narrator (4.585, 586, 638–39). This downward, inward movement into an anonymous, feminized, domestic space symbolizes the “meek” Jesus’s suspicion of all his titles (including godhead itself) (4.636; cf. 3.17, 4.401). The end of *Paradise Lost* suggests Eve’s own misgivings about typology by means of a comparable symbolic pattern, in which Eve takes a peaceful nap filled with unnarrated dreams in a domestic “bower” at the foot of Eden’s “highest” hill, atop which an archangel shows Adam a grandiose panorama of Christian history (*PL* 12.607, 11.378).⁴⁷ In the symbolic pattern at the end of *Paradise Regained*, the Eve function’s freedom from literary convention and suspicion of typological assurance merge into an understanding that Jesus’s freely chosen virtue now makes life itself the arena of human choice, an ethic that it may not be amiss to call “romantic striving,” or “the effort to create order out of experience individually acquired.”⁴⁸ This quiet ending may really regain lost paradise, or *Paradise Lost*, by revising, or at least clarifying, the

45. *Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Carey, 511n.

46. “Job’s Complaint,” 645–46. (Again, Kahn arrives at this conclusion via a quite different avenue.)

47. As an Arian, Milton believed “God” itself was a title sometimes granted to Jesus, perhaps as on the pinnacle. See Pope, *Tradition and the Poem*, 104–7. John Rogers sees in such imagery of ascent and descent in the final scene of *Paradise Lost* Milton’s acknowledgment of the supersession of the providential by naturalistic modes of causation; “Milton and the Mysterious Terms of History,” *ELH* 57 (1990): 281–305, esp. 298.

48. Jacques Barzun, *Classic, Romantic, and Modern*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1961), 94.

narrator's initial disparagement of his prior accomplishment in the opening allusion to Virgil. While on the third day Satan falls into a gloomy epic council, the closest thing the poem has to an underworld, where his crew forever sits "consulting" like the Homeric deities and celebrating pompous "triumphals," the meek Jesus's third day's victory inaugurates a reality, and therefore a new mode of literature, shorn of the need to affirm life and death by means of such classical paraphernalia.⁴⁹ "A generic mode distilled to its quintessence," Milton's second religious epic paradoxically supersedes both the divine and epic perspectives as the victorious second Adam—or is it the second Eve?—descends from the Temple of typology into real life, the wilderness on which an Eden of consciousness must perpetually be raised.⁵⁰

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49. Noting that Milton's "most radical revision" to the epic tradition is his exclusion of an underworld from *Paradise Regained*, Curran states that "what the poem lacks is not encyclopedic scope, but the immense sadness of the traditional epic, even of *Paradise Lost*. Spare, compressed, restrained—paradoxically, *Paradise Regained* celebrates the simple, absolute value of life"; "Mental Pinnacle," 220. On Milton's predictable loathing for actual Stuart triumphs, see Rob Browning, "Immota Triumphans': *Paradise Lost* and Caroline Corruptions of the Roman Triumph," *Milton Studies* 51 (2010): 101–36.

50. Curran, "Implications of Epic," 222.