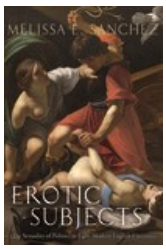

Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern English Literature

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CHAPTER

8 "My self / Before Me": The Erotics of Republicanism in *Paradise Lost*

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Abstract

Chapter Eight argues that Milton's conception of republican virtue looks very different in light of his self-described debt to Spenser. Milton inherits Spenser's doubt in the human ability to recognize, much less control, self-destructive and perverse impulses. As Milton's divorce tracts acknowledge, and as *Paradise Lost* illustrates, the need for others may really express a narcissistic wish for mastery and coherence that threatens not only conjugal harmony, but also the formation of any state grounded on ideals of public service, debate, and compromise. In making Eve's submission the model by which Adam regains his proper relation to God, Milton situates such feminine humility as a model for political subjects who wish to restore godly rule. This Christian ideal of submission modulates the classical republican ideal of hard masculinity into a more androgynous *imitatio Christi*, which for Milton is the truest form of human authority.

Keywords: John Milton, religion and politics, Civil War, Restoration, Oliver Cromwell, Charles II, marriage, gender, sexuality

Subject: Literary Studies (Civil War and Restoration), Shakespeare Studies and Criticism, Literary Theory and Cultural Studies, Literary Studies (Early Modern)

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Milton's *Paradise Lost* provides a fitting end to this study, for it offers perhaps the most explicit argument of all of the texts that I have discussed that private fantasies and desires invariably shape public decisions. Accordingly, for Milton, the best form of government will not attempt to ignore or abolish the passions. It will make them part of the formula for building a godly state. In the texts that I have discussed thus far, the perversity of erotic relations has registered a lack of faith in rationalist political narratives. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton's conception of godly rule rests on a nuanced view of the place of sexual desire and cross-gendered identification in legal and political structures. *Paradise Lost* attests to the dangers of treating human reason and perception as though they are separate from human desire and fantasy and therefore infallibly stable

and objective.[1] A central concern for Milton is the ease with which the idealization of individual virtue can lead to the destruction of the republican order such virtue is supposed to support. While Milton had initially seen individual rectitude as a source of public justice, his experience of its failure during the Protectorate and Restoration encouraged a skepticism that colors his prose and poetry in the 1650s and 1660s. In these writings, Milton suggests that the perverse pride and ambition he had earlier identified as the hallmarks of tyranny are ineradicable aspects of the human condition as such.

Consequently, the political theory of Milton's later years—including *Paradise Lost*—bases its arguments for
p. 208 republican rule on the conviction of human ↳ imperfection. Since behavior is often driven by perverse and ambivalent impulses that one is unable to recognize as such, even the wisest and best-meaning public servants are subject to delusions that threaten both self and state. Political subjects must therefore submit to a wider arena of conflict and debate that constrains their inevitably corrupt private wills. In *Paradise Lost*, scenes of erotic addiction and confusion indicate that republican rule must be based on the recognition of human frailty. And as in Milton's earlier work, the self-control and humility that republican government demand are represented as the feminine virtues of chastity and submission. Since republicanism has long been associated with the exclusion of women from the public sphere, the prominence of female humility as a model for political behavior in Milton's work encourages us to rethink our ideas of republican theory and the gender identities it is said to embrace.[2] By extension, reconsidering the erotics of republicanism compels us further to complicate our views of the place of eros in early modern politics more largely.

It is no surprise that *Paradise Lost* gives such a central role to the perverse intimacy of pleasures and pain, ascendancy and abjection, for Milton was almost certainly composing his epic during the same years that saw his republican ideals collapse in the face of Cromwell's increasingly autocratic rule, Charles Stuart's return to England, the brutal punishment of the regicides, and his own arrest and imprisonment.[3] In his contemporaneous prose tracts of the Protectorate and the Restoration, Milton modulates the optimistic rhetoric of the early Commonwealth years. In those earlier writings, he confidently divides the English majority, who "with a besotted and degenerate baseness of spirit" condemn Charles I's execution, from "some few, who yet retain in them the old English fortitude and love of freedom."[4] Milton's optimism had
p. 209 waned by the time he published the *Second Defense of the English* ↳ *People* in May 1654, a tract that scholars have almost unanimously seen as a subtle rebuke to Cromwell, who had been inaugurated as Lord Protector five months earlier.[5] Here, Milton acknowledges that even the exceptional few are vulnerable to the same internal corruption as the besotted many. The inevitable yearning for pleasure and power, he warns, means that the real battle for liberty is as much against the self as against the Stuarts:

> Many men has war made great whom peace makes small.... Unless you expel avarice, ambition, and luxury from your minds, yes, and extravagance from your families as well, you will find at home and within that tyrant who, you believed, was to be sought abroad and in the field—now even more stubborn. In fact, many tyrants, impossible to endure, will from day to day hatch out from your very vitals. Conquer them first.[6]

This passage suggests the inevitability of human corruption, casting as it does avarice, ambition, and luxury as internal tyrants constantly threatening to explode, like Sin's Cerberean brood, from the "very vitals" of even the most exemplary republicans.[7] Because they are part of us, these psychic enemies are more difficult to discern—and thus to defeat—than the tyrant "abroad and in the field." And because they will relentlessly appear "from day to day," the conquest that Milton advises is never single or complete, but rather an ongoing struggle with an ever-evolving enemy.[8]

p. 210 As Milton would argue six years later in *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660), it was the failure to recognize and therefore to resist the innate human desire for pleasure and power that assured the breakdown of government in the 1650s and thus the return of monarchy.[9] Here, Milton incredulously casts the imminent Restoration as a sadomasochistic scenario in which bondage and abjection

have become sources of pleasure: "Is it such an unspeakable joy to serve, such felicitie to wear a yoke? to clink our shackles, lockt on by pretended law of subjection more intolerable and hopeless to be ever shaken off, then those which are knockt on by illegal injurie and violence?"[10] The prevalence of this "uspeakable joy" in the "pretended law of subjection" evinces the need for republican rule, which will prevent the indulgence permitted a single ruler and his sycophants. Such a vision of mutuality, compromise, and debate appears in domestic terms in the divorce tracts, and in public terms in *Areopagitica*. In the latter, Milton imagines a commonwealth in which all work together to gather the scattered and seemingly contradictory fragments of Truth, which is unavailable in its entirety to any single mortal. Such mutual cooperation and restraint characterizes the Grand Council that Milton envisions in the second edition of the *Readie and Easie Way*, where he insists that "The happiness of a nation must needs be firmest and certaintest in a full and free Councel of thir own electing, where no single person, but reason only swaies."[11] Milton's rejection of rule by a "single person," which may censure Cromwell as much as Charles, rests on the principle that even a good monarch, or "single person," will be "far easier corruptible by the excess of his singular power and exaltation, or at best, not comparably sufficient to beare the weight of government."[12] A single sovereign may not be uncommonly evil himself, but his singular power allows him unusual opportunity to indulge the avarice and abjection that tempt us all.[13] Good government, accordingly, is built on the assumption of innate human imperfection.

For Milton, so tantalizing is the fantasy of human mastery that the unrelenting need for mutual aid and
p. 211 compromise must be registered in the very name of ↳ England's governing institution. Although the Grand Council will ultimately act as a parliament "call'd, not as heretofore, by the summons of a king, but by the voice of libertie," the name of parliament itself should be abolished "as originally signifying but the *parlie* of our Lords and Commons with their *Norman* king when he pleasd to call them."[14] England's government must therefore take "the name of a Grand or Generall Councel" to register the absence of any single or permanent sovereign at its head. This name change will affirm that sovereignty is a structure rather than a person and that the Council is "chosen by the people to consult of public affairs from time to time for the common good. In this Grand Councel must the soverantie, not transferrd, but delegated only, and as it were deposited, reside."[15] The emphasis here on consultation and delegation underscores the provisional, cooperative nature of this form of government, one that insists on the inability of any single member of the body politic to ensure that "reason only swaies." All men are subject to the private ambition that characterizes the monarch, and recognition of this inevitable imperfection leads to the need for the selfless, communal rule of a Commonwealth, "wherein they who are greatest, are perpetual servants and drudges to the public at thir own cost and charges, neglect thir own affairs; yet are not elevated above thir brethren, live soberly in their families, walk the streets as other men, may be spoken to freely, familiarly, friendly, without adoration."[16] Those who rule are like everyone else in their creaturely limitations, and they must be constantly reminded of this by being treated like everyone else. They must live with restraint, inhabit the same public spaces as others, and converse with others "freely, familiarly, friendly"—accepting the candor due an equal, not the reverence due a superior.[17] Such humility requires precisely the painful recognition of individual imperfection that the tyrant, surrounded by self-serving flatterers, repudiates.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton's analysis of the desires that undermine republican liberty finds its fullest articulation not in Satanic machinations, but in Edenic marriage.[18] Despite the narrator's idealizing claim to
p. 212 the contrary, our first parents' love ↳ has much in common with the emotions expressed in the courtly "Serenate, which the starv'd Lover sings / To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain" (4.769–770).[19] As we have seen, since the Elizabethan era, Petrarchan courtship had offered an idiom for exploring the conflicting impulses of both private and political allegiance. In elaborately sketching the mutual ambivalence and aggression that characterize Adam and Eve's relationship, Milton acknowledges that this Petrarchan dynamic is latent in the vision of reciprocal love that his divorce tracts had taken as an analogy for political liberty. In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton argues that the original purpose of marriage was to "comfort and refresh [man] against the evil of solitary life," assuaging "God-forbidden

loneliness" with "meet and happy conversation."[20] And, as Milton insists in *Tetrachordon*, such fulfillment is possible only in the heterosexual relation. "God," he argues, "could have created [for Adam] out of the same mould a thousand friends and brother *Adams* to have bin his consorts, yet for all this till *Eve* was given him, God reckn'd him to be alone" for "there is a peculiar comfort in the maried state besides the genial bed, which no other society affords."[21] This "peculiar comfort," as Milton understands it, is possible only with one who is entirely distinct from the imperfect self, an otherness that for him is most legible in sexual difference. Because man cannot experience "joy and harmles pastime ... without company, so in no company so well as where the different sexe in most resembling unlikenes, and most unlike resemblance cannot but please best and be pleas'd in the aptitude of that variety."[22]

But this need for specifically female company signifies something lacking in both the individual man and in masculinity more generally. It thus places the desiring male subject at the mercy of a mate whose role as supplement conflicts with her role as subordinate.[23] Her singular ability to solace man's loneliness imbues woman with a potentially emasculating authority that Milton associates with tyranny in the *Defense*. Here, he denounces Salmacius' wife as "a barking bitch who rules your wretched wolf-mastership."[24] Female deference to male desire can disguise this treacherous erotic influence, but such submission is meaningful only insofar as it is voluntary. Accordingly, the "true consent of mind" that defines marriage necessarily
p. 213 implies the possibility of the female refusal that will reveal women ↳ to be "neither fit helps, nor tolerable society."[25] And because such female autonomy threatens the dream of male perfection and mastery, heterosexual desire always seems to teeter between erotic enslavement and "*Hate*, not that Hate that sins, but that which onely is naturall dissatisfaction and the turning aside from a mistaken object."[26] A wife becomes a "mistaken object" when she refuses to enact the subjection that will conceal her husband's deficiency and so causes mutuality—"the golden dependence of headship and subjection"—to give way to rivalry, "counterplotting, and secret wishing one anothers dissolution."[27]

Critics have long noticed the conflicted relationship between desire and dependence in *Paradise Lost*, where Eve's very existence threatens Adam's identity as God's preeminent creation.[28] Such analyses of Edenic marriage have tended to focus exclusively on determining Milton's conception of women, but a feminist attention to the problem of gender relations can also make available a more complex view of Milton's political theory.[29] As a number of scholars have argued, Milton explores the psychology of religious faith and political allegiance through Adam and Eve's marriage, which many seventeenth-century thinkers saw as the origin of all society and governance.[30] What I would like to add to these discussions of political psychology is a more thorough analysis of the ways in which this union reveals that human action and
p. 214 allegiance are shaped as much by perverse fantasies and ↳ ambivalent desires as by sober calculations of self-interest or public duty.[31] As Milton's divorce tracts intimate, and as the interactions of Adam and Eve illustrate, the need for others may really express a narcissistic desire for mastery and coherence, so that any expression of difference or autonomy on the part of the beloved also inspires aggression and hate. This need for dominance threatens to dissolve not only marital bonds but also republican ideals of public service, debate, and compromise.

However, Milton's recognition of the universality of human imperfection does not lead to an argument against self-rule. Instead, it proves the necessity of a republican system in which all members accept that they need aid and opposition if they are to keep their inner tyrants at bay. In the *First Defense*, Milton had attacked Salmacius' claim that scripture sanctioned absolute monarchy by contending that such unlimited power was contrary to Christian values of humility and self-sacrifice. "Amongst Christians," Milton insists, "there will either be no king at all, or else one who is the servant of all; for clearly one cannot wish to dominate and remain a Christian."[32] This Christian ideal of humility reshaped the classical republican ideal of masculine *virtus* into the more androgynous *imitatio Christi*. The very same analogical argument that Milton had used in *Tetrachordon* to defend male domestic rule depended on male recognition of his own effeminacy before Christ, who was himself both masculine in relation to humanity and feminine in relation

to God: "as God is the head of Christ, and Christ the head of man, so man is the head of woman."[33] In other words, man justifies his expectation of female obedience by asserting not only his own power but also his own submission as bride of Christ, who himself occupies a feminine position of subjection to God.[34]

According to Milton, the feminized submission common to Christ, man, and woman is a product of love, not reason. These analogous religious, political, and conjugal bonds were charged with the erotic ecstasy imagined in the Song of Songs, an overwhelming *jouissance*, which Milton evokes as the only true sign of love and consent in the *Doctrine*: "but this pure and more inbred desire of joyning to it self in conjugall fellowship a fit conversing soul (which desire is properly call'd love) *is stronger then death*, as the Spouse of Christ thought, *many waters cannot quench it, neither* can *the flouds drown it*."[35] Because these analogical
p. 215 relations of authority are ↳ understood in sexual terms, hierarchy itself becomes erotic, and thus brings with it all of the predatory and abject potential of eros, which is ultimately directed not at an external object, but at the narcissistic self. Such a wish for ecstatic union also signifies, in Julia Kristeva's analysis, the draw of the abjection that exists "at the fragile limits of the speaking being."[36] Such transgression is as attractive as it is terrifying—it is the possibility of *jouissance* that causes the abject to exist.[37] The promise of such rapture threatens the line between self and other, pleasure and pain, life and death, a collapse of meaning represented above all in the feminine. Woman, in this erotic context, is an object of both desire and repulsion, a sign of the ecstatic engulfment—the death—that will end the frustrations of individuality, difference, and limitation.[38] As Adam and Eve's relationship in *Paradise Lost* attests, the "joyning ... in conjugall fellowship" that Milton celebrates thus threatens the compromise, counsel, and debate that upholds republican rule—for the tyrant's wish to dominate and devour is but the flip side of the yearning for ecstatic dissolution into an other. Indeed, much as Milton's defense of divorce emerged from his acknowledgment that he was himself subject to the same affective delusion and misplaced allegiance as the "common lump of men," so *Paradise Lost* acknowledges that even our unfallen parents, and therefore the most virtuous of postlapsarian political actors, are vulnerable to the pathologies that haunt eros.[39]

The republicanism that Milton championed has long been associated with the exclusion of women from the masculine, rational, public sphere, so it may seem strange to assert that Eve registers the dilemmas of male political subjects much as Adam does. But Milton himself had explicitly likened marriage to political allegiance in his divorce tracts. The most oft-cited equation occurs in the Preface to the *Doctrine*, where Milton equates his call for legalized divorce with the parliamentary rebellion, asserting that "He who marries, intends as little to conspire his own ruin as he that swears allegiance: and as a whole people is in
p. 216 proportion to an ill ↳ government, so is one man to an ill marriage."[40] Like the authors I have discussed in previous chapters, Milton and his republican compatriots consistently drew on the idioms of gender and romance to discuss relations of authority, agency, and consent.[41] These models were particularly useful given that the model of a government founded on the rational, open debate that Milton had idealized in *Areopagitica* had little to do with the reality of England, where the governments of the Interregnum were all, in Christopher Hill's words, "sitting on bayonets."[42] In order to validate this use of force, apologists for the governments of the 1650s contended that some—perhaps most—men are irrational, indulgent, and weak, and so must be ruled like women. But rather than imagine this hierarchy in terms of raw strength, republican polemics often described it in terms that transformed force into seduction. Milton's compatriot Henry Vane, for instance, argued that because the English populace was incapable of acting in its own best interest, "he would have some few refined spirits (and those of his own nomination) sit at the helm of state ... til the people be made familiar with a Republique and in love with it."[43] In conflating physical coercion with passionate surrender, Vane acknowledges that the rational, public rule he defends demands the same affective engagement as the indulgent, private monarchalism it would replace. Milton repeats this sentiment in the *Readie and Easie Way*, where he hypothesizes that if a true Commonwealth had been formed immediately after Charles' execution, even those who initially opposed it "might have soon bin satisfi'd and delighted with the decent order, ease and benefit thereof."[44] The notion that a government established by force will eventually secure not only outward compliance but also reciprocal desire imagines the founding

act of republican governance as something between seduction and rape. The use of such erotic analogies recognizes that the dream of a commonwealth in which private desire, aggression, and complexity have
p. 217 been magically dissolved into an unambivalent, altruistic ↳ conviction of public duty is as false as the dream of royal beneficence depicted in the "Masking Scene[s]" Milton derided in *Eikonoklastes* (*CP*, 3:342).

Rather than cling to an impossible ideal of a passionless state, Milton acknowledges that these psychic pathologies cannot be conclusively cured. More specifically, by analyzing the tensions in Adam and Eve's love in *Paradise Lost*, he shows that the claim that governance can be founded on a purely rational calculation of public good is itself a dangerous fantasy.[45] Such rationalist theories fail to come to terms with the erotic vicissitudes that both drive and threaten political engagement. But this does not make *Paradise Lost* a poem of defeat.[46] To the contrary, we can see Milton's publication of his epic as a call for renewed struggle against the unacknowledged forces that had allowed the return of a corrupt monarchal government. Particularly in light of Charles II's blatant corruption and indulgence, the argument that human imperfection made communal rule necessary took on increased urgency. The first edition of *Paradise Lost* appeared in 1667, when the disillusionment of the early 1660s had evolved into widespread distrust for Charles II and his government after England's humiliation in the Second Dutch War and Clarendon's fall from power. This first edition was thus part of what N. H. Keeble has described as an atmosphere of renewed political protest.[47] The revised edition appeared in 1674 amidst debates over the monarchal ability to dispense with law. These debates had been sparked by Charles' attempt to impose a Declaration of Indulgence relaxing penalties against Catholics and nonconformists, a claim to absolutist prerogative that the parliament would crush in 1673.[48] Charles' withdrawal of the Declaration and acceptance of the Test Act implicitly acknowledged monarchal limitations. But the Test Act, which made public office contingent on professed allegiance to the Anglican Church, also revealed the threat to English Protestantism and liberty posed by Charles' brother, James, Duke of York. The future James II confirmed suspicions of his Catholicism by refusing to swear allegiance to the Anglican Church as the Test prescribed; made it clear that he saw the
p. 218 Test Act as a parliamentary assault ↳ on royal prerogative; seriously contemplated staging a military coup as a means of restoring sovereign authority; and married the Catholic Marie of Modena in 1673, ensuring that any male heir to the throne would be Catholic.[49]

We can understand the reappearance of *Paradise Lost* as a response to this renewed threat of tyranny.[50] In replacing his claims of exceptional individual virtue with an analysis of inevitable human pathology, Milton insists on the need for the painful confrontation with otherness. Debate, frustration, and compromise distinguish communal republican rule from the dynamic of ambition and abuse that characterizes tyranny —and Milton's recognition of inevitable human failure makes such self-examination all the more urgent. For Milton, the refusal to acknowledge the limits of human reason encourages the delusions of infallibility —whether of oneself or of others—on which ambition and tyranny thrive. An optimistic view of individual virtue thereby imperils commonwealth ideals. In making Eve's submission the model by which Adam regains his proper relation to God, Milton also suggests that such feminine humility offers a model for political subjects who wish to restore godly rule, which requires chaste leaders who act as servants and, accordingly, acknowledge their need for aid and counsel.

In *Paradise Lost*, Eve embodies not only the imperfection that characterizes men, as well as women, but the resentment and aggression so often aroused by the awareness of one's consequent dependence and need. Eve's birth narrative has been widely discussed by humanist, feminist, and psychoanalytic critics who see it as, alternately, a rape that wrenches her into a heterosexual universe that demands her subjugation, a divine rapture that extracts her from a superficial obsession with worldly pleasure, and a case study of Freudian narcissism.[51] But Eve's ambiguous submission to Adam, situated as it is between coercion and consent, also suggests the difficulty of accepting godly republican ideals of humility and service. Like the subjects
p. 219 imagined by Vane or Milton, Eve is unwilling to relinquish her fantasies of ↳ perfection and coherence. These fantasies appear in *Paradise Lost* as a narcissistic attachment to her reflection's "answering looks / Of

sympathy and love" 4.464–465). Eve's enthrallment with her own image emblematizes the reluctance to acknowledge a reality beyond the self that had long been associated with tyranny. It thereby pictures in gendered terms what the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* had described as the "boundless and exorbitant" will of the tyrant.[52] Such devotion to the self is "not freedom, but licence; which never hath more scope or indulgence then under Tyrants," who promote a culture in which servility and ambition are indistinguishable, "the falsifi'd names of *Loyalty*, and *Obedience*" deployed "to colour over ... base compliances."[53] In *The Readie and Easie Way*, Milton sees this corruption exemplified by the "*French* court" in which Charles Stuart has spent his exile, "where enticements and preferments daily draw away and pervert the Protestant Nobilitie.[54] In this parasitic relation, favor is both lure and payment. The tyrant's generosity exposes his dependence on followers whose hopes of promotion lead them to collaborate in royal fictions of omnipotence.

If Eve is to avoid the self-destructive pursuit of pleasure and power to which she is instinctively drawn, she must conform to the godly republican values of sacrifice and compromise. Such a choice requires that she admit the insufficiency of her solitary self. Eve signifies her reluctant acceptance of the need for relation with an other in her marriage to Adam, with whom she shares her creaturely status. Adam's imperfection figures her own. Eve has to recognize as her true image one that is "less fair / Less winning soft, less amiably mild / than that smooth wat'ry image" with which she was initially smitten (4.478–480).[55] Before she actually sees Adam, Eve has been told that, in contrast to the image in the pool, Adam is "hee / Whose image thou art," an other whom Eve "shalt enjoy / Inseparably thine" (4.471–473). Eve's acceptance of Adam as her image is also her acceptance of the humility on which republican government depends and which royal absolutism denies. But her ambivalent feelings for Adam register the difficulty of sustaining this modesty, which always threatens to give into resentment, abjection, or egoistic delusion. Tellingly, Eve initially rejects Adam because his apparent inferiority threatens her own sense of perfection: if it is true that she is both image and part of Adam, then she is also "less" than the idealized vision in the water. Her initial flight from Adam, then, may be a flight from her own creaturely imperfection and mortality. If left to her own devices, Eve would choose the delusions of power and perfection that find political expression in the
p. 220 all-devouring ↳ monarchal will, rather than the humble recognition of mutual need expressed in godly republicanism.

Cromwell was confident that "[g]overnment is for the people's good, not what pleases them," and Milton similarly defends force by appealing to the distinction between pleasure and interest.[56] Accordingly, like the feminized populace imagined by Milton, Vane, and Cromwell, Eve must be compelled to exchange love of self for duty to others. It is Adam's difference that persuades her of the disparity between herself and the outside world. As Eve acknowledges, she would have remained dangerously obsessed with her own reflection if God and Adam had not intervened. There, she would have "fixt / Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire" in an impossible pursuit of self-completion that anticipates Satan's complaint that he is "Still unfulfill'd with pain of longing pines" (4:465–466, 511). But this recognition that she needs Adam also instills in Eve a degree of resentment that is registered in her emphasis on the compulsory origins of their union. As she reminds Adam, she did not want to abandon the pool. But in the shadow of divine command, she asks, "what could I do, / But follow straight, invisibly thus led?" (4.475–476).[57] Even in retrospect, Eve stresses the reluctance with which she surrendered to her "other half" (4.488):

> thy gentle hand
> Seiz'd mine, I yielded, and from that time see
> How beauty is excell'd by manly grace
> And wisdome, which alone is truly fair. (4.488–491)

In Eve's memory, Adam's use of physical force—however "gentle"—succeeded in persuading her after his rhetorical pleas had failed. The breathless enjambment of "hand" and "Seiz'd" accentuates the latent

violence of this moment, poetically mirroring Adam's physical breach of the boundary between them. Moreover, the line break between "grace" and "wisdome" makes even the "manly grace" of her husband inferior to "wisdome, which alone is truly fair." And while we can certainly read "manly" as modifying "wisdom," this does not make wisdom an essentially masculine attribute. Indeed, in Book 8 Raphael will admonish Adam to "be not diffident / Of Wisdom, *she* deserts thee not, if thou / Dismiss not *her*" (8.562–564; my emphasis). Evidently, wisdom can be at once feminine and "manly," like the androgynous angels. Wisdom's androgyny accentuates Adam's own distance from the "truly fair"—his very identity as a man limits his access to the full range of human virtues. Eve thereby reminds him that they are both mere images
p. 221 of deity: ↳ even if Adam is structurally analogous to God with regard to Eve, he is not identical to him. By qualifying her submission to Adam, Eve suggests a latent hostility at the heart of their "conjugal attraction" (4.493). This hostility, as Milton well knew, could disrupt political as well as nuptial harmony.

Eve is not the only one who is ambivalent and resentful. Adam's conversation with Raphael in Book 8 makes even more explicit the distance between the idealized relationship of husband and wife as "one Flesh, one Heart, one Soul" and the threat that such union poses to his own sense of mastery and coherence (8.499). For Milton, erotic desire registers both an acknowledgment of imperfection and a longing to be perfected. Because the desire for another is also the desire for completion, it is, paradoxically, the desire not to need companionship—the wish either to be complete on one's own or to be absorbed into another. Consequently, mutual need and compromise threaten to give way to the dynamic of abjection and arrogance that characterizes tyranny. As Adam's feelings show, erotic desire reveals the strange affinity between divine aspiration and bestial desire. And for Milton, it is in claiming the powers of a god, in striving to erase all difference between his will and his world, that the tyrant becomes a beast, mired in the appetites and desires that drive him and his kingdom to destruction. In the *Tenure* Milton rehearses this classical definition of a tyrant as "he who regarding neither Law nor the common good, reigns only for himself and his faction.... And because his power is great, his will boundless and exorbitant, the fulfilling whereof is for the most part accompanied with innumerable wrongs and oppressions of the people, murders, massachers, rapes, adulteries, desolation, and subversion of Citties and whole Provinces."[58] The "boundless and exorbitant" will that the tyrant seeks to fulfill can best be sated with the destruction of alterity. The imposition of private desire on the public world turns others to pliant instruments of self-gratification and thereby obscures the ruler's own imperfection.

Such a will to emulate divine wholeness is not limited to the tyrant. Those who follow such rulers do so in order to indulge their own desires and ambitions, like the "chief ... adherents" of Charles I, who, Milton claims in *Eikonoklastes*, may be "ready to fall flatt and give adoration to the Image and Memory of this Man," but in truth "never lov'd him, never honour'd either him or his cause, but as they took him to set a face upon thir own malignant designes; nor bemoan his loss at all, but the loss of thir own aspiring hopes: Like those captive women whom the Poet notes in his *Iliad*, to have bewaild the death of *Patroclus* in outward show, but indeed thir own condition."[59] The "love" that a tyrant and his effeminate followers feel for one another is based on the same aspiration to divine completion as the desire for companionship that figures
p. 222 godly republicanism. But under tyranny this aspiration ↳ threatens to transform mutual need into mutual exploitation. And the more that the tyrant and his followers imagine themselves as limitless immortals, the more they resemble animals—a state that Milton himself had illustrated in Comus' dissolute rout, whose "human count'nance / Th' express resemblance of the gods, is chang'd / Into some brutish form" but who are "so perfect in their misery" that they "Not once perceive their foul disfigurement, / But boast themselves more comely than before" (68–70, 73–75). To forget one's imperfect, human status in an ecstatic pursuit of divine pleasure or power is to mire oneself in the creaturely being that desire seeks to transcend. Satan remarks this irony when he enters the serpent's body, noting that to contend "With Gods to sit the highest" is to find oneself "constrain'd / Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime" (9.164–165). The aspiration to equal deity denies creaturely limitations. As Milton repeatedly insists, to so forget one's mortal flaws is to sink to the unthinking level of a beast.

For Milton, the way to limit such brutalization is to understand that the approximation of divine immortality or wisdom is possible only through relation with others. And sexual difference plays a crucial role in imposing a recognition of human imperfection. So while scholars are right to detect in Milton's work a longing for a homosocial universe that excludes women and the threatening difference that they represent, *Paradise Lost* suggests that this longing it itself the problem, since it indicates a dangerous avoidance of alterity little different from Eve's initial enthrallment with her own reflection.[60] For Milton, confrontation with sexual otherness forces man to recognize his own needs and limitations, and this confrontation takes archetypal form in the heteroerotic relation. But, as Adam's feelings about Eve demonstrate, the humility that acknowledges individual need is never entirely stable. It may always veer into either a servile subjugation of oneself to an other or an arrogant treatment of others as mere instruments of one's own pleasure.

We see this danger in Adam's account of his request for a helpmeet. This request arises from his simultaneous recognition of his superiority to the beasts and his inferiority to God. Adam's dual impulses of humility and aspiration inspire his wish for a relationship and make that wish a painful sign that he is incomplete in himself. As Adam Phillips succinctly puts it, "no amount of redescription will alter the fact that if people can satisfy each other they can frustrate each other."[61] Desire all too easily becomes a source of resentment.

This tension will manifest itself in Adam's ambivalence toward Eve, for whom he feels both adoration and hostility. There is quite a distance between Adam's dream of mutual support between equals and the actual dynamic of subservience and hostility that he and Eve enact. And this distance registers the complexity of
p. 223 the private desire in which political commitment and allegiance begins. David Quint describes ↳ Book 8 as an exploration of how Adam's consciousness of being God's creature produces in him a sense of inferiority that Eve's initial indifference exacerbates. This insecurity, for Quint, leads to both the fall and the English Restoration, for it compels humanity to seek a secure, stable condition that is the opposite of the contingent and provisional condition that Milton associated with Christian faith and republican liberty.[62] What I would like to add to Quint's analysis is that the acceptance of contingency and imperfection that Quint sees Milton advocating is acknowledged by *Paradise Lost* itself to be infinitely difficult and unstable. As a result, an optimistic affirmation of the uncertainties of both Arminianism and republicanism must itself waver in order to produce the humility necessary to both salvation and liberty. As Martin Luther argued, weakness and failure are central to salvation. The Ten Commandments offer a salient example of the spiritual purpose of the gap between human ideals and abilities, for as Luther explains, they

> show us what we ought to do but do not give us the power to do it. They are intended to teach man to know himself, that through them he may recognize his inability to do good and may despair of his own ability.... For example, the commandment, "you shall not covet" [Exod. 20:17] is a command which proves us all to be sinners, for no one can avoid coveting no matter how much he may struggle against it. Therefore, in order not to covet and to fulfill the commandment, a man is compelled to despair of himself, to seek the help which he does not find in himself elsewhere and from someone else.[63]

In other words, failure is necessary to salvation. One must learn to despair of one's own virtue in order to turn to God. And republican government, no less than Christian faith, depends on the individual's choice "to seek the help which he does not find in himself elsewhere and from someone else."

Adam's request for a helpmeet acknowledges the unsatisfactory nature of his initial position of absolute mastery over the beasts that surround him. Such solitude is a sign of unqualified power, as God points out: "is not the Earth / With various living creatures, and the Air / Replenisht, and all these at thy command / To come and play before thee?" (8.369–372). But although all worldly creatures are ready to entertain Adam on command, his power over inferiors brings him no satisfaction. Despite God's advice, Adam cannot "Find

pastime and bear rule" with the animals (8.375). Rather than enjoy his absolute dominion, Adam sadly wonders

> Among unequals what society
> Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
> Which must be mutual in proportion due
> Given and received. (8.383–386)

p. 224 The "harmony or true delight" that Adam wants is expressly different from the "pastime" or "rule" possible with his animal inferiors. Unlike the pleasure or power that Adam would find with these nonhuman companions, "true delight" consists in mutuality. Relations with inferiors can only "prove / Tedious alike," breeding boredom, disgust, even pain (8.388–389).

It is, Adam quickly reveals, the wish to be more like God that grounds his desire for others. Adam's request is equally a confession of his own inferiority to God, and thus of the deficiencies he shares with the beasts. Desire, in Adam's formulation, is not only the yearning for an equal but also a sign of lack. As he explains to God,

> Thou in thyself art perfet, and in thee
> Is no deficience found; not so is Man
> But in degree, the cause of his desire
> By conversation with his like to help,
> Or solace his defects. (8.415–420)

As Adam recognizes, humanity is characterized by awareness of its own "deficience." This awareness of lack constitutes, perhaps, the "rational" orientation that distinguishes humanity both from the creatures who are blissfully ignorant of their deficiencies and from the tyrant who willfully ignores his own flaws. But because Adam is also like god "in degree"—that is, in the analogical chain that links him to both divinity and brutality—he aspires to be as "perfet" as his maker. His desire, then, at once acknowledges his creaturely status and seeks to escape it.

So even as his peculiarly human awareness of difference from God leads Adam to aspire to be more like God, it also means that love defeats its own ends. Yearning for divine plenitude inevitably produces pain and frustration. The presence of a helpmeet continuously forces Adam to recognize his failed aspirations to deity. This humiliation is necessary to both Christian faith and republican rule, but it may also inspire resentment that threatens them. The anxiety aroused by the erotic relation is exacerbated by the sexual, physical component of desire, the satisfaction of which simultaneously mimics divine ecstasy and mires humanity in bodily sensation. As Thomas Luxon has shown, the ambiguous status of Adam's desire emerges in the very word he uses to describe what he wants: "conversation." In the seventeenth century, this could mean engagement with society, discussion and debate, or sexual intercourse.[64] The latter, in particular, is for Adam a means of imitating God's infinity and immortality through procreation, the multiplication of the self promised to Eve as consolation for accepting her singular insufficiency. As Adam recognizes, God is "already infinite" and so has no need to reproduce. In contrast to this divine oneness,

p. 225

> Man by number is to manifest
> His single imperfection, and beget
> Like of his like, his Image multipli'd,
> In unity defective, which requires
> Collateral love, and dearest amity. (8.422–426)

Adam's wish to mimic divine infinitude and eternity through continuous self-duplication inevitably displays the impossibility of the end he seeks. Neither is the individual perfect in his single state, nor does relation with or creation of others—which can only be an imperfect union of persons "defective" in themselves—do anything but acknowledge this imperfection.

It is in this gap between love for others and love for the self that we see the limitations of the fantasy of union expressed in Adam's request for an equal and his initial view of Eve as "my Self / Before me" (8.495–496). In describing his feelings to Raphael, Adam oscillates between idealization and belittlement of Eve. His words evoke a Petrarchan discourse of ravishment, in which beauty arouses unruly passion in its male beholders and, by seducing them from their higher natures, becomes responsible for its own violation. For Adam, Eve is at once idol and inferior, helpmeet and rival, comforting reflection of self and alarming evidence of alterity. But, in Adam's own account, none of these roles have much relation to what Eve actually does. Rather, they are a product of Adam's own fantasies of mastery and coherence—and of their inevitable frustration.[65] In detailing the vicissitudes of Adam's love for Eve, Milton reveals that the society of "Collateral love and dearest amity" is never a simple, stable one, since it is easily disturbed by precisely the desire for wholeness that led to its creation. This speech demonstrates the power of the "enemy within" of which Milton warned in the *Second Defense*. This inner tyrant is the true enemy of the humility, compromise, and self-control on which godly republican government rests.

In his complaint to Raphael, Adam enacts the internal battle described in Milton's political works. Like the Presbyterians who, Milton charges in the *Tenure*, worship not Charles I himself but only "the useless bulk of his person," Adam's response to Eve's appearance—what Raphael will term her "outside" (8.568)—has little to do with objective reality.[66] For however much he might lament his susceptibility to "the charm of Beauty's powerful glance" (8.533), it is the narcissistic component of Adam's desire that makes it so intense.[67] Insofar as it is unquestionably other and inferior, the purely sensual delight offered by "Taste, Sight, Smell, Herbs, Fruits, and Flow'rs, / Walks, and the melody of Birds" is such that "us'd or not, works
p. 226 in the ↳ mind no change, / Nor vehement desire" (8.527–528, 525–526). Adam had already rejected these physical pleasures as inferior, so they cannot arouse "vehement desire." By contrast, Eve, in God's own account, is Adam's "likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, / Thy wish, exactly to thy heart's desire" (8.450–451). And because Adam himself recognizes Eve as "my Self / Before me" his desire for her is of a different order than that aroused by the five senses: Eve distinguishes Adam from the animals precisely because her existence is evidence of his desire for divine perfection. But such arousal also attests to an insufficiency of which the beasts remain happily ignorant.

As his complaint reveals, what Adam wants is not the fulfillment of desire but its absence. For he experiences the presence of desire as a humiliation that encourages both aggression (the desire to restore a sense of superiority or mastery) and servility (the desire to be incorporated into the fantasy of perfection he has projected onto Eve). Consequently, Adam understands the relationship between the two of them as a contest of wills, his attraction to Eve as an invasive ache that may reveal that God "left some part / Not proof enough such Object to sustain" (8.534–535). Eve becomes not a partner to be enjoyed but a test to be endured. Her existence opens a "wide … wound" that vitiates Adam's very self (8.467). Eve is a creation for which God "took perhaps / More than enough" of Adam (8.536–537).[68]

Adam responds to his sense that Eve is the cause of his defects by attempting to invert the hierarchy his obsession has created. In a description that contradicts his earlier desires for an equal with whom he can share "all rational delight," Adam assures Raphael that "well I understand in the prime end / Of Nature her th' inferior, in the mind / And inward Faculties, which most excel" (8.540–542). Moreover, in addition to deeming Eve inferior where it really matters, Adam insists that even the physical charms he earlier extolled signal her subordinate relation to deity. Eve is

> In outward also resembling less

> His Image who made both, and less expressing
> The character of that Dominion giv'n
> O'er other Creatures. (8.543–546)

Adam's critique of the appearance that arouses him echoes Eve's description of him in Book 4 as "less fair, / Less winning soft / less amiably mild." She is not only "in outward show / Elaborate, of inward less exact"
p. 227 but also reflects "less" of God's image, and thus has "less" of the analogical authority with which divine ↳ resemblance endows humanity.[69] Like Eve's response to Adam's appearance, however, this criticism is not without a narcissistic component. For if in seeing Eve, Adam also sees "My self / Before me," then her distance from "His Image who made both" must likewise remind Adam of his own difference from God. Both are only an image. Adam's need to rank them suggests an uneasiness with this knowledge, a fear that Eve may really be "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best" (8.550). Yet as Adam's clumsy superlatives indicate, this anxiety that Eve may possess the very divine perfection he himself craves is not a product of calm reasoning. Rather, it stems from the same unseemly desire for earthly perfection and assurance that, as Quint has argued, Milton sees as the source of republicanism's failure in England.[70]

Raphael's response is inadequate to Adam's dilemma because it denies the force of the human affect that Adam has just described. Raphael thus expresses the same naïve idealization of the human reason that Milton rejects in *Paradise Lost*. Raphael assumes a clear division between outside and inside, sensual and spiritual desire, in his contemptuous question, "what admir'st thou, what transports thee so, / An outside?" He reiterates this assumption in his advice that "What higher in her society thou find'st / Attractive, human, rational, love still; / In loving thou dost well, in passion not" (8.567–568, 586–588). This condemnation of the bodily passions ignores the duality of human nature that Adam's narrative has established. Raphael therefore exhorts an angelic eros that is impossible in the creaturely sphere. Adam hastens to retract his earlier confession to assure Raphael that what really delights him in Eve is "Neither her out-side form'd so fair, nor aught / In procreation common to all kinds," but rather the "Union of Mind" he experiences with her (8.595–596, 604). But however much Adam may emphasize intellectual and spiritual oneness, he recognizes, as Raphael does not, the importance of sexual desire to conjugal union. His notorious query about sex in heaven points to the limits of the archangel's counsel:

> To Love thou blam'st me not, for Love thou say'st
> Leads up to Heav'n, is both the way and guide;
> Bear with me then, if lawful what I ask;
> Love not the heav'nly Spirits, and how their Love
> Express they, by looks only, or do they mix
> Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch? (8.612–617)

What we see here is less Adam's prurient curiosity than a genuine conceptual problem. If love is, as Raphael
p. 228 has claimed, "the scale / By which to heav'nly Love thou ↳ may'st ascend," then angels must love (8.591–592). But the earthly expression of love involves physical contact and desire that distinguish it from the "heav'nly Love" it approximates. This mixed nature of love is central to the Platonic definition of eros on which Raphael's description of love as a ladder draws.

So how do angels, lacking bodies and the physical passions they produce, express love? Raphael's answer further underscores the disparity between ideals of love and its reality, one caused by the same body that Adam imagines as the sole vehicle of love's expression. The ideal of rational affection that Raphael describes is possible only in absence of a body, which signifies human limits:

> Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
> (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
> In eminence, and obstacle find none

> Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars:
> Easier than Air with Air, if Spirits embrace,
> Total they mix, Union of Pure with Pure
> Desiring; nor restrained conveyance need
> As Flesh to mix with Flesh, or Soul with Soul. (8.622–629)

The body parts—"membrane, joint, or limb"—that make possible human intercourse are obstacles to angelic pleasure, as Raphael's redundant term "exclusive bars" suggests. In contrast to angelic embraces, the "restrained conveyance" that is available to human beings only reminds them of their division from one another. The difference between the ideal and the actuality of sexual union is what makes it an expression of subjection and brutality, rather than of the spiritual intercourse it should allegorize. So when Raphael concludes their conversation by warning Adam to "take heed lest Passion sway / Thy Judgment to do aught, which else free Will / Would not admit," he anticipates the consequences of the fall, in which doing whatever one wants—license—is in fact the opposite of freedom and liberty (8.635–637).

Adam and Eve rarely talk to one another before the fall. Their entire relationship appears to be, as William Kerrigan and Gordon Braden have observed, more of the order of distant Petrarchan courtship than intimate companionate marriage. In this light, the argument that Adam and Eve have at the opening of Book 9 is hardly a rupture of perfect unity, but only one of many expressions of its failure, a continuation of the dynamic of reproach, critique, and resentment that we have already witnessed.[71] The rejection of mutual
p. 229 need becomes most explicit in the argument that ↳ opens Book 9. Here, our first parents reenact the rivalry we have already witnessed, with Eve striving to assert her self-sufficiency and Adam veering between adoring Eve and belittling her.[72] It is only after their fall forces them to recognize their mutual imperfection and need that Adam and Eve learn the compromise and humility necessary for real mutuality.

Adam's responses to Eve's desire to work apart express the same conflicted desires for mutuality and superiority as his request for and response to Eve's creation. Initially, he attempts to dissuade Eve from leaving by insisting that their united strength makes Satan "Hopeless to circumvent us join'd, where each / To other speedy aid might lend at need" (9.259–260). But, as in his earlier conversation with Raphael, Adam oscillates between an ideal of mutual support and a dream of his own superiority. We see this ambivalence when he begs Eve to stay with him on the grounds that his "faithful side / That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects" and he "guards her, or with her the worst endures" (9.265–266, 269).[73] Echoing Raphael's portrayal of humanity as creatures who are "Perfet within, no outward aid require," Adam argues that God has made man "Secure from outward force; within himself / The danger lies, yet lies within his power: / Against his will he can receive no harm" (9.348–350). But this internal danger, it seems, may not lie entirely within individual power. In Adam's account, Eve's wish to separate signifies a rejection of the "tender love" which "enjoins, / That I should mind thee oft, and mind thou me" (9.357–358). Accepting the care of another means accepting one's limited perspicacity and strength and therefore submitting to external judgment. Adam and Eve may be "Perfet within" and thus capable of resisting temptation, but they are more likely to remain virtuous if they recognize their human frailty and rely on one another.

After the fall, Eve's own desire to be "as Gods" appears in her new consciousness of competition with Adam (9.708). Eve considers whether she should "give [Adam] to partake / Full happiness with mee, or rather not, / But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power / Without Copartner?" (9.818–821). Here, she states more baldly the conflicted desires that we have seen in Adam all along: the wish for companionship and the wish for dominance. And, as in the Petrarchan structures that provide the subtext for Milton's meditation on human society, Eve understands love and desire as a means of subjugating others. If she does keep "the odds of Knowledge" to herself, it will be "so to add what wants / In Female Sex, the more to draw his Love" (9.821–822). Here, the love Eve has in mind is expressed not by mutual service, but by Adam's unilateral

submission. The enhancement that the fruit offers will not only inspire love but also "render me more
p. 230 equal, and ↳ perhaps, / A thing not undesirable, sometime / Superior: for inferior who is free?" (9.823–825). Desire and domination are hopelessly intertwined. The mark of Eve's superiority will be her ability to arouse desire while remaining immune to it herself.

Even when Eve recognizes her need for Adam, this need is expressed not as a generous desire for his good, but as a selfish wish to protect her own erotic power over him. Eve realizes that she is mortal and therefore fungible, and that upon her death Adam, "wedded to another *Eve*, / Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct" (9.828–829). It is this possibility that leads Eve to acknowledge her need for Adam. Rather than allow this, she resolves that "*Adam* shall share with me in bliss or woe: / So dear I love him, that with him all deaths / I could endure, without him live no life" (9.831–833). And Adam's decision to join in Eve's fall is as selfish as her decision to share the fruit: he does not want "To live again in these wild Woods forlorn" (9.910). We see in his claim that "to lose thee were to lose myself" (9.959). As Victoria Kahn has observed, Adam's absolute identification with Eve expresses a dangerous confusion between humble service to another and obsessive servitude to his own passions.[74]

After the fall, Adam's resentment of his creaturely imperfection—now conclusively established by his choice of Eve over God—takes explicitly misogynistic form. Adam's projection of his weakness onto Eve was already implicit in his conversation with Raphael. But like Eve's wish for superiority, it achieves conscious articulation only in the postlapsarian state. Once fallen, Eve learns the lesson of humility and compromise more readily than Adam. She therefore becomes an example for Adam to follow. Just as Eve's recognition of her imperfection compels her to submit to Adam, Adam must acknowledge his own human frailty so that he can learn to manage it. Eve's subordination becomes more official and extreme after the fall, with the Son's pronouncement that "to thy Husband's will / Thine shall submit, hee over thee shall rule" (10.195–196). But in order to deserve the rule that has been formally conferred on him, Adam will need to imitate Eve's newfound meekness, even as she imitates the humility of Christ. In the final books of *Paradise Lost*, the analogical chain linking God, Christ, man, and woman means that the feminine submission that the Son demands of Eve is not the opposite of masculine government. Rather, it exemplifies the humility required of the men who show their fitness to rule by acting as "perpetual servants and drudges to the public."

We see the first instance of Adam's emulation of humility in his reconciliation with Eve, which also provides the model for Adam's reconciliation to God. In contrast to Adam's furious despair at his own lack of mastery, Eve stresses her weakness in order to set things right with both Adam and God. Eve is "Not … repulst" by Adam's diatribe, but instead "at his feet / Fell humble, and imbracing them, besought / His
p. 231 peace" (10.910–913). In admitting her need for Adam's "gentle ↳ looks, thy aid, / Thy counsel," Eve also realizes that they can only overcome their misery by uniting. She demonstrates her willingness to sacrifice herself for Adam as a token of her sincerity, promising that she

> to the place of judgment will return
> There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
> The sentence from thy head remov'd may light
> On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
> Mee mee only just object of his ire. (10.932–936)

Eve's offer of self-sacrifice differs from Adam's death wish at the end of Book 9, for it is unselfishly directed at his good rather than her own. As critics have noted, Eve here echoes the Son's plea in Book 3 that the God "Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life, / I offer, on mee let thine anger fall" (3.236–237).[75] Eve differs from the Son, however, in her recognition that she is "sole cause" of humanity's woe and "only just object" of God's ire. Such awareness of guilt is important because, as in Luther's formulation, it leads her back to her proper relationship with God. Eve's confession and appeal echo Milton's rhetorical stress on his own imperfection in the divorce tracts. There, the argument for divorce—and for the ability to divorce as a figure

for the right to depose an ineffective ruler—depends on "the spur of self-concernment," the recognition of human misprision and folly of which no one is free. It is Eve's acknowledgment of her weakness that leads Adam to recognize her again as "my Self / Before me" and so to imitate her humble posture. And his "commiseration" with Eve's "lowly plight" allows Adam to make a similar appeal to God (9.940, 937).[76]

This recognition of shared suffering turns rivalry to cooperation. Rather than compete for dominance, Adam suggests, they should "strive / In offices of Love, how we may light'n / Each other's burden in our share of woe" (10.959–961). This new quest for humility is expressed in Adam's imitation of Eve's own promise that she "to the place of judgment will return" in order to "importune Heaven" as well as her own prostrate weeping. Drawing an analogy between his own position and that of God, Adam asks

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> What better can we do, than to the place
> Repairing where he judg'd us, prostrate fall
> Before him reverent, and there confess
> Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
> Watering the ground, and with our sighs the Air
> Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
> Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek. (10.1086–1092)

Adam reconciles himself to God's will by replicating Eve's own posture of supplication. His imitation suggests that the female submission commanded by the Son is the model on which men must pattern their own behavior. The poem itself manifests this mimetic logic by replicating Adam's own words almost exactly in its description of their repentance. But here, the changed pronouns signify the move from private repentance to communal action:

> they forthwith to the place
> Repairing where he judg'd them prostrate fell
> Before him reverent, and both confess'd
> Humbly thir faults, and pardon begg'd, with tears
> Watering the ground, and with thir sighs the Air
> Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
> Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek. (10.1098–1104)

Emphasizing the exemplary role Eve takes in the final books of *Paradise Lost*, Quilligan has noted that the repetition of prostrate postures "insists upon the centrality of her submission to the whole series of relations that are clearer after the fall than before."[77] I would extend this argument to add that such an emphasis on feminine humility also challenges characterizations of republican thought as purely masculine or militaristic. Rather, Milton situates Eve's painful recognition of her own guilt and imperfection as the basis of godly government.

Such constant awareness of one's human fallibility checks the pride and ambition that led to the fall and that, in the political realm, enables tyranny. This stance of humility, however, can be surprisingly strenuous. That is the lesson of the last two books of *Paradise Lost*. As we see in Adam's responses to the vision of biblical history with which Michael attempts to educate him, the stance of humility that permits faith in God is under constant assault by the desire for pleasure and power. Accordingly, Michael's narrative is less concerned with external events than with the irrepressible inner tyrants that endanger true—spiritual—liberty. In Michael's representation of the future of the human race, the grisly sights of Cain's
p. 233 murder of ↳ Abel and the lazar-house are followed by the vision of "A Bevy of fair Women, richly gay / In Gems and wanton dress" (11.582–583). Rather than resist these temptresses, the initially righteous sons of Seth "though grave, ey'd them, and let thir eyes / Rove without rein, till in the amorous Net / Fast caught, they like'd, and each his liking chose" (11.585–587). This blurring of agency and objectification suggests

how easily one's own desires can be experienced as external forces rather than internal choices—the men vacillate from an active staring ("ey'd") to a passive loss of control ("let thir eyes / Rove without rein") to becoming objects of the women's seduction ("in the amorous Net / Fast caught") and back to active liking and choosing.

Given Adam's own predilection to value desire and beauty above all, it is unsurprising that he mistakes this scene of debauchery for a good thing. Confusing the beautiful with the good, he fails to realize that moral laxity is just as bad as the physical suffering of the lazar-house. In his misprision, Adam reveals his similarity to the "grave men" whose nuptials he has witnessed:

> Such happy interview and fair event
> Of love and youth not lost, songs, Garlands, Flow'rs,
> And charming Symphonies attach'd the heart
> Of *Adam*, soon inclin'd to admit delight
> The bent of Nature. (11.593–597)

Adam's reading of this "fair event / Of love and youth not lost" suggests the same choice of earthly pleasure over eternal salvation, body over soul, urged by a carpe diem lyric. It is because he already has an affinity with these men that Adam's heart becomes "attach'd" to this sight.

Adam's interpretation of this vision registers how difficult it is to remember that, as Raphael had warned him, "great / Or bright infers not excellence" (8.90–91). Addressing Michael as the "True opener of mine eyes," Adam naively enthuses that

> Much better seems this Vision, and more hope
> Of peaceful days portends, than those two past;
> Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse,
> Here Nature seems fulfill'd in all her ends. (11.599–603)

Adam's inability to distinguish between pleasure and pain, true and false harmony, indicates that he is still confused as to the true image of God. For, as Eve's supplication evinced, true godliness is the acceptance of "hate and death, or pain much worse." The bevy of ladies and the pleasures they offer are a long way from "the better fortitude / Of patience and heroic martyrdom / Unsung" that Milton urges (9.31–33). Yet Adam fails to learn the correct lesson when Michael informs him that "The world erelong a world of tears must weep" as a result of the men's thralldom to these "fair Atheists" (11.627, 625). The point here is to guard
p. 234 oneself against ↳ the tendency to mistake pleasure and power for virtue and truth, to confuse one's own desires with those of God. But Adam does not blame the men themselves for their abandonment of the virtuous ways "to tread / Paths indirect, or in the midway faint!" Instead, he exclaims that "still I see the tenor of Man's woe / Holds on the same, from Woman to begin" (11.630–633). Michael, however, quickly rebukes Adam, assuring him that "From Man's effeminate slackness it begins" (11.634). Because this "effeminate slackness," as Milton's *Second Defense* and *The Readie and Easie Way* made clear, haunts all of humanity, consciousness of weakness becomes the foundation of strength.

The desire to deny imperfection and mutual need has political, as well as theological, consequences. Further on, Adam is appalled by Michael's description of Nimrod's tyrannous rule. In response to this tale of tyranny, he insists that while God may have given humanity dominion over the animals, "Man over men / He made not Lord; such title to himself / Reserving, human left from human free" (12.69–71). Adam's repetitive nouns (Man/men, human/human) and structure underscores the "fair equality, fraternal state" that Nimrod's "proud ambitious heart"—like that of Satan—led him to reject and destroy in order to "arrogate Dominion undeserv'd / Over his brethren" (12.24,–27). *Paradise Lost* calls Nimrod a "mighty Hunter" (12.33), an epithet borrowed from Fortescue, whom Milton quotes in his *First Defense*. Fortescue

explains that Nimrod earned his epitaph because "as a hunter compels beasts enjoying their liberty to obey him, so did he compel men."[78] But, as Fortescue had demonstrated in the previous paragraph, this compulsion itself could not be clearly separated from consent. For while greedy rulers "subjugated neighboring peoples to themselves, often by force," the people responded with the same choice of security over liberty that Hobbes would recommend. "As long as they were protected by their subjection against the injuries of others," Fortescue recounts, they "consented to the domination of their subduers, thinking it better to be under the government of one, whereby they were protected from others, than to be exposed to the oppressions of all those who wished to attack them." As a result, "certain kingdoms, and the subduers of them ruling the subject people in this way, usurped to themselves the name of king, from the word 'ruling' [*rex a regendo*], and their dominion is described as only royal."[79] For Fortescue, as for many legal historians, Nimrod is an example of the absolute rule that runs contrary to the English ancient constitution. Milton's inclusion of Nimrod in Michael's history lesson stresses that such usurpation perpetuates itself not through mere external force, but through the internal weakness of its subjects. Nimrod is not acting alone. His destruction of "fair equality, fraternal state" is supported by "a crew, whom like Ambition joins, / With
p. 235 him or ↳ under him to tyrannize" (12.38–39). The "like Ambition" of Nimrod's crew entails a mimetic loyalty in which they may be both victims and oppressors: they endure tyranny because it gives them the power to abuse their own inferiors. Michael describes this situation as a "Rebellion" against Heaven, an ambition epitomized in the tower of Babel. This refusal of humility, expressed in the worship of human prince rather than divine creator, is the theological corollary of the rejection of equality and compromise that permit republican liberty.[80]

As Michael informs Adam, Nimrod is only an external manifestation of the subjection of reason to passion that is both cause and effect of Adam's own fall. "Since thy original lapse," the archangel warns, "true Liberty / Is lost" (12.83–84). In this view,

> Reason in man obscur'd, or not obey'd,
> Immediately inordinate desires
> And upstart Passions catch the Government
> From Reason, and to servitude reduce
> Man till then free. Therefore since hee permits
> Within himself unworthy Powers to reign
> Over free Reason, God in Judgment just
> Subjects him from without to violent Lords;
> Who oft as undeservedly enthral
> His outward freedom: Tyranny must be,
> Though to the Tyrant thereby no excuse. (12.86–96)

Here, external servitude is understood as an allegory for loss of self-control, the tyrant an allegory for the "upstart Passions" that govern in place of reason. The distortion of this valuation is illustrated in the three words that stretch out into ten syllables: "Immediately inordinate desires." Michael's rebuke expresses in erotic terms the same ambivalent relation to bondage that Milton described in the *Second Defense*: "by the customary judgment and, so to speak, just retaliation of God, it happens that a nation which cannot rule and govern itself, but has delivered itself into slavery to its own lusts, is enslaved also to other masters whom it does not choose, and serves not only voluntarily but also against its will."[81] Self-indulgence is, paradoxically, the greatest sign of servitude, one that can be avoided by only recognizing the innate corruption of the will and instituting a government that limits its exercise. In the 1660s, such limitation appeared especially urgent, for the desire for pleasure and power that Milton condemned found expression
p. 236 in the bestial libertinism and tyrannous secrecy associated with Charles' government. The ↳ Whitehall that Pepys called a "great bawdy-house" was also the seat of Charles' secret negotiations to secure a French

alliance, a plot aimed at diminishing Charles' dependence on parliament and therefore his subjects' part in government.[82]

The crux of Adam's lesson is that he must submit to God's commands rather than to his own will and appetite. Adam has "attain'd the sum / Of wisdom" (12.575–576) only when he recognizes that

> to obey is best,
> And love with fear the only God, to walk
> As in his presence, ever to observe
> His providence, and on him sole depend. (12.561–564)

This obedience means a subordination of private will and desire, yet the ability "to walk / As in his presence" also means to acknowledge desire as the mark of human difference from God. And because this difference is a sign of inferiority and imperfection, obedience also entails constant mindfulness of one's imperfect knowledge and control of the world.[83] This is the "debt immense of endless gratitude / So burdonsome, still paying, still to owe" that Satan cannot stomach (4.52–53). As Stuart Curran observes, this perpetual burden of humble thanksgiving is the economy of God's universe after the fall.[84] The only way to serve God is to recognize that one is not God and therefore not self-sufficient or infallible. So Adam must learn to imitate not the omnipotent Father but the human Christ, who is

> Merciful over all his works, with good
> Still overcoming evil, and by small
> Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak
> Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
> By simply meek; that suffering for Truth's sake
> Is fortitude to highest victory. (12.565–570)

Such a valorization of feminine suffering, of the weak and the meek, is striking in light of the consistent misogyny of so many of Milton's characters in *Paradise Lost* and in republican rhetoric more widely. But the ability to imitate Christ's mercy requires the same "commiseration" that Eve's earlier confession of
p. 237 weakness elicited from Adam. In spiritual terms man must occupy this feminine position, which ↳ means accepting his own inferior reason and need for the same "aid" and "counsel" for which Eve implores Adam after the fall. To fail to acknowledge such feminine need is, paradoxically, to express the "effeminate slackness" of the tyrant and his followers, who refuse to accept the pain of self-knowledge that makes self-control—what Milton elsewhere calls chastity—possible. In the context of the long tradition of monarchomach theory and Protestant martyrdom within which Milton writes, "suffering for Truth's sake" becomes the highest form of heroism.

While Adam may recite this lesson in its abstract form, it is Eve who actually performs it in *Paradise Lost*. Her wifely obedience offers a model of the proper human submission to God. Moreover, as Michael C. Schoenfeldt has observed, although Michael sends Adam to awaken Eve, Adam finds her already up, and it is she who utters the final words in the poem as Adam listens.[85] Initially, Eve had reacted with despair and resistance to the news that they must "wander down / Into a lower World, to this obscure / And wild" (11.282–284). But having been advised by God in her dreams, Eve expresses a new readiness to submit to divine will: "but now lead on; / In mee is no delay … Thou to mee / Art all things under Heav'n, all places thou" (12.614–615, 618–619). Her obedience emphasizes that the attitude of patience and humility that grounds true faith and good government is not easy or automatic, but a product of education and self-discipline. Here, the submission to divine decree is expressed in conjugal terms. In her assertion that Adam's presence makes the difference between heaven and hell, Eve rejects the solipsism of Satan's famous insistence that "The mind is its own place and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (1.254–255). Relation—the society and conversation that for thinkers at least from Sidney to Milton have

their emblem and root in love—replaces egoism.[86] Virtue does not signify a banishment of desire, but its subordination to a greater good. We see this in Adam and Eve's obedience, which is painful rather than pleasant: "Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wip'd them soon" (12.645). Nor is this obedience complete, for as Michael's narrative has warned, it will fail time and again throughout human history.

In thus anatomizing the inevitable pulls of passion, Milton does not give up on the possibility of worldly reform. Rather, he redefines it. Like the serenity that so frequently eludes the human psyche, true restoration must be constantly pursued even if it cannot be conclusively obtained. Accordingly, a just and godly order will not require an ecstatic annihilation of desire that is as impossible as a return to Eden. It will demand a patient, if painful, struggle in which the darker forces of self and world remain forever before us
p. 238 —and in which godly rule is as conflicted and elusive as eros itself. ↳

Notes

1. As Fish argues, Milton's work is deeply concerned with the difficulty of accurately evaluating the motives of oneself or others, since base and selfish actions may often appear noble and altruistic, even to one's own self (*How Milton Works*, 3–7, 85–87).
2. Many scholars have noted that republican thought of the 1650s was often misogynistic, aligning femininity with the corrupt indulgence of private appetite and masculinity with noble service to the public good. See, for instance, Stallybrass, "Inversion, Gender, and the State"; Norbrook, "Women, the Republic of Letters, and the Public Sphere" 10.1353/crt.2004.0045 ; Hilda Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes*; Pateman, *Sexual Contract*, 1–38, 77–115; Magro, "Milton's Sexualized Women" 10.1111/1094-348X.00013 ; and Purkiss, *Literature, Gender, and Politics*, 52–97 10.1017/CBO9780511483905 .
3. Norbrook cites Milton's nephew Edward Phillips and his friend Cyriack Skinner to argue that Milton began work in earnest on *Paradise Lost* sometime in the late 1650s and completed it sometime around 1663 (*Writing*, 433–434). Hill describes a similar dating, which he sees borne out by the poem's style (*Milton*, 402).
4. *Eikonoklastes*, *CP*, 3:344. On the evolution of Milton's political thought from support of the limited monarchy of the ancient constitution to the republican rejection of any government that included a single sovereign, see Mendle, *Dangerous Positions*, 38–122, 599–601; and Dzelzainis, "Milton's Classical Republicanism." 10.1017/CBO9780511598456 Corns argues that Milton's writings do not express a consistent or univocal radicalism but a provisional and conflicted view of the diverse pressures and anxieties of the period, pressures which led many educated, propertied, English Protestants to "slip" into an oppositionalism that ended in war and regicide ("Milton before 'Lycidas'," 35–36).
5. See Hill, who sets this disillusionment earlier (*Milton*, 162–165, 193–194); Dzelzainis, "Milton and the Protectorate in 1658" 10.1017/CBO9780511598456 ; Armitage, "Poet Against Empire" 10.1017/CBO9780511598456.012 ; Worden, "John Milton and Oliver Cromwell" 10.1017/CBO9780511522550 ; and Keeble, "Milton's Later Vernacular Republican Tracts." Norbrook argues that for some republicans, Cromwell's 1653 coup signaled as crucial a political change as the regicide (*Writing*, 3). Loewenstein sees Milton's opposition to the increasing dominance of Cromwell and the army as a wider trend of disillusionment shared by radical groups like the Levellers and the Diggers (*Representing Revolution*, 33, 38–43, 47). Raymond locates Milton's praise of Cromwell in the genre of advice to princes ("The King is a Thing"). Robert Fallon, to the contrary, has seen the *Second Defense* as an expression of Milton's continued admiration of Cromwell ("Milton's Critique of Cromwell?").
6. *CP*, 4:180–181.
7. As Loewenstein shows, Milton's depiction of the internal origin of tyranny through gendered analogies aligns him with such thinkers as Gerard Winstanley, who likened one's own delusions to Circe's power, and Abeizer Croppe, who described charity as the conquest of the "harlot" within (64–78, 107–109). Sawday has demonstrated the prevalence of the language of psychic division during the civil wars, as exemplified by Richard Lovelace's Lucasta poems and Joseph Beaumont's *Psyche* ("Civil War, Madness, and the Divided Self").
8. The passage anticipates Satan's description of himself as the victim of his own desires, happy "Till Pride and worse Ambition threw me down" (4.40). It suggests his affinity with erstwhile republican leaders like Cromwell, who, as Norbrook has argued, embodied for contemporaries the general principle of that rule by a single person gives reign to corruption (*Writing*, 442).
9. For discussions of the events between Cromwell's death in 1658 and the restoration of monarchy, see Woolrich, "A Military

Dictatorship?" 86–88 10.1002/9780470774205 .

10. *CP*, 7:447. For the relation of Milton's language of slavery to Roman law and history, see Skinner, "John Milton and the Politics of Slavery," 19–21.
11. *CP*, 7:425.
12. *CP*, 7:448–449.
13. As Milton's prose attests, while he considered virtue difficult under a monarchical system, he did not deem it impossible. He praises Queen Christina of Sweden as "the most heavenly guardian of that course which prefers truth to the heat of partisans" and denies to her that "my attacks on tyrants in any way applied to you" in the *Second Defense* (*CP*, 4:603–604), and in 1674 he translated the celebratory announcement of Jan Sobieski's election as King of Poland ("Letters Patents of the Election of the Most Serene King of Poland," *CP*, 8:445–453). See also Worden's argument that Milton's unambiguous opposition to monarchy as such in 1659 represented only a brief interruption to his general equivocation on the subject ("Milton's Republicanism," 228).
14. *CP*, 7:444. Herman has argued that this shift in name registered Milton's rejection of ancient constitutionalism, which by definition included a monarch, to a more radical republicanism (*Destabilizing Milton*, 61–81, esp. 78–80).
15. *CP*, 7:431.
16. *CP*, 7:425.
17. Both Schoenfeldt ("Gender and Conduct," 335–336) and Ng (*Literature and the Politics of the Family*, 144–160) 10.1017/CBO9780511483837 see continuity between Milton's consistent replacement of birth order with merit, his rejection of hereditary rule, and his depiction of gender roles as contingent and fluid.
18. See Turner's detailed analysis of the assumptions about sex, gender, and marriage in which Milton intervened (*One Flesh*, 1–55). Luxon discusses Milton's efforts to articulate marriage in terms of classical doctrines of friendship, an effort that, Luxon argues, ultimately fails because of Milton's inability to imagine true equality between husband and wife (2). As Norbrook shows, the language of restoring "pristine beginnings," always central to English republican rhetoric, reached a height in 1658–1660, with writers like Thomas Scot comparing the Commons with Adam and the Lords with Eve (*Writing*, 474).
19. Kerrigan and Braden describe *Paradise Lost* as a "consummate expression" of the courtly love tradition ("Milton's Coy Eve").
20. *CP*, 2:247, 235, 246.
21. *CP*, 2:595, 596.
22. *CP*, 2:597. Halley argues that Milton's vision of marriage as the means of achieving wholeness depends on the ideology that woman freely chooses not only heterosexuality but the subordination that marriage demands of her ("Female Autonomy," 231–236, 243–244).
23. I am thinking here of Jacques Derrida's notion of the supplement as an external addition that enhances that which is whole and complete in itself, and a prosthetic that makes up for an intrinsic lack (see "White Mythology," in *Margins of Philosophy*). Shoaf offers a detailed analysis of this Derridean concept in Milton's work (*Milton, Poet of Duality*, 135–137).
24. *CP*, 4:380.
25. *CP*, 2:445, 621.
26. *CP*, 2:253.
27. *CP*, 2:591, 607.
28. See, for instance, Stein, *Answerable Style*, 78; Grossman, "Milton and the Question of Woman"; and Stone, "Androgyny and the Divided Unity of Adam and Eve." 10.1111/j.1094-348X.1997.tb00491.x Silver understands Adam and Eve's relation in terms of Lutheran theology in which Adam's understanding of himself as the image of God depends on an awareness of his difference from both God and Eve (*Imperfect Sense*, 283–345).
29. Milton's readers have long debated his views on women. Critics who have made seminal arguments for a consistently antifeminist, even misogynist, strain in Milton's work include Halley; Nyquist, "Gynesis, Genesis, Exegesis" and "Genesis of Gendered Subjectivity"; and Gilbert, "Reflections on Milton's Bogey" 10.2307/461860 . By contrast, Lewalski ("Milton on Women") and McColley (*Milton's Eve* and "Eve as Milton's Defense of Poesie") see in Milton a protofeminist defender of female virtue. There has also been considerable debate about Milton's reception among women of his own time. Wittrich has stressed Milton's early reputation as an advocate for women (*Feminist Milton*, 44–82). Norbrook notes that early feminists like Mary Astell found Milton was hostile to women (*Writing*, 482–483). Shannon Miller traces the mutual influence between Milton and women writers throughout the seventeenth century (*Engendering the Fall*).
30. Hill notes that in discussing Adam and Eve we must remember that contemporaries would have understood this relation as an analogy for that between ruler and subjects or Christ and his Church; accordingly, the moral defects of the original couple illuminate the failure of the English people (*Milton*, 375, 342–344). See also Quint, *Epic and Empire*, 268, 281–307; Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution*, 99, 218–235; Silver, *Imperfect Sense*, 311–316; Victoria Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 196–222; and Achinstein, "Contextualizing Milton's Divorce Tracts."

31. Corns cautions that the unified thought that many critics attribute to Milton is alien to most people at most times, since fantasy, pragmatism, and idealism all coexist and create conflicting polemical imperatives ("Plurality of Miltonic Ideology," 110–114).
32. *CP*, 4:379.
33. *CP*, 2:591. As Hill shows, early modern Protestants understood the simultaneously equal and unequal relation between the Father and the Son as a figure for that between the husband and wife (*Milton*, 285).
34. Shannon Miller persuasively argues that in *Paradise Lost* Milton's poetic voice takes the passive, instrumental position of seventeenth-century female prophecy in order to justify the epic's political and religious polemics (79–95).
35. *CP*, 2:251; Milton's emphasis. Milton quotes from the Geneva translation of the Song of Solomon 8:6–7.
36. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 18.
37. Kristeva, 7.
38. Kristeva, 56–89, esp. 58–59, 82. Fish has called the death drive a perfect description of Milton's theology (2–4).
39. In the *Doctrine*, Milton argues that it is the awareness of one's own weakness and propensity to misjudgment that prevents the tyranny of forced marriage: "it is incredible, how cold, how dull, and farre from all fellow feeling we are, without the spurre of self-concernment" (*CP*, 2:226). He goes on to suggest that humans are destined to self-destruction, "for though it were granted us by divine indulgence to be exempt from all that can be harmfull to us from without, yet the perversness of our folly is so bent, that we should never lin hammering out of our own hearts, as it were out of a flint, the seeds and sparkes of new misery to our selves, till all were in a blaze again" (*CP*, 2:234). Such mistakes are not limited to the foolish, either: "for all the wariness that can be us'd, it may yet befall a discreet man to be mistak'n in his choice: and we have plenty of examples. The soberest and best govern'd men are lest practiz'd in these affairs" (*CP*, 2:249). For a discussion of Milton's anxious recognition of his own fallibility in the divorce tracts, see Barker, *Milton and the Puritan Dilemma*; Sirluck, "Milton's Idle Right Hand"; Stephen Fallon, "Milton in His Divorce Tracts"; and Patterson, *Milton's Words*, 34–39 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199573462.001.0001 .
40. *CP*, 2:229. As Patterson argues, Milton's Commonplace Book shows that his thoughts on marriage and divorce were originally political in nature, and his views changed very little in his discussion of these topics in *De Doctrina Christiana* (*Milton's Words*, 32–33, 51). Hatten describes the shifts in uses of conjugal analogies to describe political allegiance during the civil wars ("Politics of Marital Reform," 95–113); Victoria Kahn analyzes Henry Parker's inversion of this analogy to place the king in the position of wifely subordination (*Wayward Contracts*, 95–104).
41. As early as *Comus* (1634) Milton had imagined the Caroline political subject as a Spenserian virgin assaulted by appetites and defended by reason, an analogy that he extended in the 1642 *Apology for Smectymnuus* (*CP*, 1:891).
42. *Century of Revolution*, 116. Resistance to the regimes of the 1650s was not limited to those who fought for Charles I; the tensions between what historians have designated the "peace party," the "war party," and the "middle group" of the parliamentary side became explicit in the Putney debates of 1647 and in the withdrawal of such men as Fairfax and Vane from Cromwell's government in the 1650s. See Hirst, *Authority*, 268, 273–278, 293; Kenyon, *Stuart England*, 167–180; Peacey, *Regicides*, 18, 29 10.1057/9781403932815 ; and Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney*, 92–142.
43. George Warner, ed., *Nicholas Papers*, 4:161.
44. *CP*, 7:430.
45. Schoenfeldt argues that Milton locates passion at the center of human experience both before and after the fall ("Passion in *Paradise Lost*"). In this chapter, I stress the political implications of this centrality.
46. Numerous critics have rejected Parker's claim that *Paradise Lost* represents a retreat from political engagement (cited in Corns, "Plurality of Miltonic Ideology," 111). They emphasize instead the public consequences and implications of the domestic and psychological dynamics of Milton's epic; see Hill, *Milton*, 213–221; Quint, 281–283; Corns, "Plurality of Miltonic Ideology," 111–113; and Norbrook, *Writing*, 434–437.
47. Keeble argues that the crises of Charles II's reign came to a head in 1667 and 1672, and that by the late 1670s the throne was almost as much at risk as it had been in the 1640s (*Restoration*, 85, 167–171).
48. See Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II*, 1:203–204; Mueller argues that the key issue was Charles' claim to the power to dispense with laws mandating Anglican conformity, which parliament saw as a claim to arbitrary power ("Samson as a Hero of London Nonconformity," 148). For the struggles over the dispensing power claimed by the Declaration of Indulgence, see Westin and Greenberg, *Subjects and Sovereigns*, 164–177 10.1017/CBO9780511558658 .
49. James Stuart's first marriage to the Protestant Anne Hyde, the daughter of the Earl of Clarendon, produced only daughters (his Protestant eldest daughter Mary would rule after his forced abdication in 1688). For the international and political context, see Kenyon, ed., *Stuart Constitution*, 375–376, and *Stuart England*, 222–225; and Keeble, *Restoration*, 170–171 10.1002/9780470758311 .
50. Several critics have observed Milton's strategic choice of publication dates. Hill notes that *Paradise Lost* first appeared just when Clarendon's fall demonstrated the instability of the Restoration settlement (*Milton*, 402). Norbrook argues that

Marvell's introductory poem engages the second edition in the controversies of the 1670s and links these controversies back to mid-century (*Writing*, 34, 491–493).

51. Feminist critics have been divided on this scene: Gilbert; Halley, and Froula argue that it depicts Eve's forcible induction into a heterosexual, patriarchal economy (see Gilbert; Halley, 247–249, and Froula, "Undoing the Canonical Economy" 10.1086/448249). By contrast, McColley understands it as Eve's escape from a paralyzing narcissism (*Milton's Eve*). Kerrigan reads Adam and Eve's marriage as a textbook case of Freud's argument that sexual overvaluation is derived from a primary narcissism transferred to a sexual object (*Sacred Complex*, 70–71).
52. *CP*, 3:212.
53. *CP*, 3:190.
54. *CP*, 7:425.
55. Silver argues that in Eve, Milton evokes love for what is different, outside the self (*Imperfect Sense*, 317). I would add that Adam is both like and unlike Eve: they do not literally look alike, and they each have qualities that the other lacks, but each reflects the other's imperfection and consequent need for an other.
56. Quoted by Morrill, "Introduction," 13.
57. Victoria Kahn has seen Eve's "drama of duress" as part of Milton's self-conscious explanation of the relation between coercion and consent in contractual obligation and of his recognition of the potential difficulty of distinguishing voluntary subjection from voluntary servitude (*Wayward Contracts*, 207–211).
58. *CP*, 3:212.
59. *CP*, 3:344–345.
60. For discussions of the homosocial program that haunts Milton's work, see Halley, 239–260; Victoria Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 206–207; and Herman, *Destabilizing Milton*, 142.
61. Bersani and Phillips, *Intimacies*, 109 10.7208/chicago/9780226043562.001.0001 .
62. Quint, 288–302.
63. *The Freedom of a Christian*, in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, 57.
64. Luxon, 58–61. Le Compt (*Milton and Sex*) and Patterson (*Milton's Words*, 47–48) both argue that Milton found sex distasteful, if not disgusting.
65. As McColley argues, Adam learns that his other half is not merely an image but also a being that can enlarge and change him ("Eve as Milton's Defense of Poesie").
66. *CP*, 3:197.
67. Kerrigan, *Sacred Complex*, 69–71.
68. For further discussions of Adam's reaction to Eve's beauty, see Silver (*Imperfect Sense*, 287) and Victoria Kahn, both of whom have noted what Kahn describes as Adam's "scarcity economy of desire" (*Wayward Contracts*, 212–213). Dolan similarly describes marriage as an "economy of scarcity in which there is only room for one full person" (*Marriage and Violence*, 3).
69. As Silver has argued, to suppose that Milton makes likeness to God contingent on masculinity is to define that image as an exclusive appearance that corresponds to some attribute in deity itself and thus misunderstand it as something finite and divisible (*Imperfect Sense*, 283).
70. Quint, 299–307.
71. Kerrigan and Braden, 38–48. In addition to the conversations I have just discussed, we might compare Adam's response to Eve's inquiry as to why the stars shine even when living creatures are asleep (4.657–688) with his own repetition of this question (8.13–38). Both Herman and Luxon assume that Eve overhears Adam's conversation with Raphael (Herman, *Destabilizing Milton*, 140–141; and Luxon, 153–155).
72. Victoria Kahn argues that Adam's distrust and insecurity lead him to reject the testing that Milton endorses in *Areopagitica*, while Eve's desire to prove herself turns the search for truth into Hobbesian vainglory (*Wayward Contracts*, 214–215).
73. Nyquist has identified this move from mutuality to hierarchy as a larger principle of Milton's work ("Genesis of Gendered Subjectivity," 111–112).
74. *Wayward Contracts*, 219–220.
75. Quilligan argues that Book 10 insists upon the centrality of Eve's submission to Milton's theological argument; because Eve is the first character to choose the prostration that Satan, and initially Adam, refuse, she is the embodiment of the "heroic martyrdom" that Milton takes as the subject of his epic in place of masculine heroism (*Milton's Spenser*, 237–242). See also Silver, *Imperfect Sense*, 342–344; and Schoenfeldt, "Passion in *Paradise Lost*," 65–67.
76. Schoenfeldt reads Eve's submission in the context of the courtly practice of *sprezzatura* and therefore sees it as an instance of the "simultaneously redemptive and manipulative powers of submission" ("Gender and Conduct," 318–333). I would argue that Eve is less artful than that here, however, for the very quality that gives force to her submission is its sincerity and lack of concern with reward.
77. *Milton's Spenser*, 238.

78. Fortescue, “In Praise of the Laws of England,” 19 10.1017/CBO9781139170512 .
79. Fortescue, “In Praise of the Laws of England,” 19 10.1017/CBO9781139170512 . See Herman’s analysis of Nimrod within the ancient constitutionalist that Milton eventually abandoned (*Destabilizing Milton*, 63–67).
80. As Keeble shows, writers from Foxe to Bunyan identified the Reformation world with Babel and Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon, aligning persecution of dissenters with Babylonian, Median, and Roman tyrants (*Restoration*, 137).
81. *CP*, 7:684.
82. Pepys, *Diary*, 7:377. For descriptions of Charles’ political duplicity, particularly in his secret dealings with France, see Ogg, 1:322–354; Kenyon, *Stuart England*, 220–221; and Keeble, *Restoration*, 168–171 10.1002/9780470758311 . For a survey of the association of Charles’ political corruption with the sexual license of his court, see Keeble, *Restoration*, 171–176 10.1002/9780470758311 .
83. As Norbrook argues, Adam has a tendency to premature optimism; Michael’s aim is to teach him to face the world rather than seek to escape it (*Writing*, 466).
84. “God,” 531.
85. “Gender and Conduct,” 334–335.
86. As Haskin has argued, the feminine and the domestic becomes even more prominent a paradigm for Christian virtue in *Paradise Regained*, where Milton takes Mary’s humility as a model for all disciples (“Milton’s Portrait of Mary,” 176–181).