GENDER HIERARCHY IN PARADISE LOST:

"INFERIOR WHO IS FREE"

by

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DEDICATION

For Nicholas

This thesis is dedicated to my son, Nicholas, who taught me how to lead with joy when choosing projects, leaving behind what Milton called the "mild yoke" of staid convention. I smile to remember one of your high school assignments, to write a book report on a biography. You rejected every one of my conventional names to choose Jackie Chan! The paper ended up being a delight with your humor (and Jackie's) bursting through. You always rejected drudgery—and that has taught me a wonderful lesson. Thank you for bringing so much happiness into my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am so grateful to Kristen Poole, Ph.D. The support and joy you shared so generously with me as I worked through this thesis made the project such a pleasure. You helped me to organize and fine tune my ideas and to consider nuances that made this project so much more than I thought it could be. One example was your nudge for me to consider how voice operated in the service of hierarchy versus conversation. It was like a lightning bolt that illuminated the point I was traveling in circles to get to. Your help was always upbeat, encouraging, and delightful. I learned so much from you. You were the best advisor I could have had.

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ABSTRACT

For modern women so influenced by second-wave feminism, the splendor of Eden in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is marred by the masculine diminishments of Eve throughout the epic. But, with insights and tools advanced by modern feminists, I believe female readers can make peace with Milton's portrayal of Eve. Though she is diminished, silenced, and trivialized throughout the poem, she uses intuition—what the angel Raphael holds to be more the province of angels than humans—to look within and find dignity. By the time Eve leaves Eden, I believe she is listening to an inner voice, based on what the feminist Carol Gilligan calls an "ethics of care," and this voice essentially mutes the background patriarchy. As modern feminist readers, I think we can smile and relate to an Eve who learns to live within the patriarchy, but not of it.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

All quotations from Milton's *Paradise Lost* are from the online edition *The John Milton Reading Room*, edited by Thomas H. Luxon, http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton. I have chosen to work with this edition because the online format allows for more fluid work with the text, allowing me to see linguistic interconnections more easily. Because my use of quotes from the epic are numerous, I have used in-text citations for these quotes for simplicity. All other citations are footnoted.

Figure 1 *Seductive Constrictions*, Joan Clare Brown. The artist's blog captures her motive behind these pieces: "These intimate small-scale sculptures are visual representations of the abuse and suppression of women. What began with the idea of the egg, a universal symbol of fertility and a metaphor for the female ovary, has transitioned into something more complex and suffocating." Works are ceramic from 2018 exhibit at Bowling Green University, OH. Images accessed October 2020 at http://www.JoanClareBrown.com.

PREFACE

"Language uses us as much as we use language."[1] This 1975 quote from feminist scholar Robin Lakoff introduced readers to the invisible diminishment of women embedded in our everyday language. This belittlement even begins with the simple words *man* and *woman* whose definitions from a standard online dictionary, *Lexico.com* from Oxford University Press, reveal deep-seated inequality: synonyms for *woman* include *bitch, besom, piece, bint, mare, baggage, wench, petticoat, frail, bird, pint, biddy, filly*,[2] while the synonyms for *man* lists *guy, gent, bloke, dude, gentleman, youth, chap, lad*.[3] The sense of inequality in these definitions is galling, and it rouses an injured sensibility that has been a part of my life as the woman's movement and I matured over the years.

As a young girl I received books on women's liberation from a feminist neighbor. These books were my introduction to the often-invisible gender slights of our culture. Not long after reading one of these books, I recognized one of these nearly invisible slights when my father posed a riddle at our dinner table in 1965. The riddle

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[1] Robin Lakoff, *Language and Woman's Place* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 39.

[2] Alison Flood, "Thousands Demand Oxford Dictionaries 'Eliminate Sexist Definitions,'" *The Guardian*, accessed September 17, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/sep/17/thousands-demand-oxford-dictionaries-eliminate-sexist-definitions.

[3] *Oxford Lexico*, s.v. "man," accessed February 2020, https://www.lexico.com/definition/man. (as cited in Flood 2019).

was this: a father rushes his son to the emergency room, but when the child is wheeled into surgery the surgeon exclaims "I cannot operate on this child—he is my son!" The answer is obvious today— the surgeon was the boy's mother. But in 1965 none of the remaining five people around our table could solve the riddle. The idea that a mother might be the surgeon never occurred to us. This eye-opening riddle spurred a lifetime's search for other feminist slights.

As an adult, I came to believe that unequal treatment is unhealthy and wasteful for all--women, men, and society--and I continued to notice how these inequalities and inefficiencies played out in a variety of fields. Examples that help illuminate this point come from many walks of life including sports, culture, and business. The sports examples below are not explicitly gender-centered, but they demonstrate how entrenched habits of the status quo blind society to the value of the less powerful and less flashy people whose contributions have generally been underrated, as women's contributions have often been. The evidence from all these examples is clear: traditions that are blatantly hierarchical silence many potential contributors. But a more lateral, cooperative format promises richness, variety, and growth for the formerly silenced. I think these examples have meaning for my perception of Eve in *Paradise Lost*, who is surely subordinated to the men in Eden's paternalistic society. But as the following examples will show, a less exclusionary approach, which unleashes the power of diverse voices, becomes a force multiplier, and Eve, over the course of *Paradise Lost*, comes to understand this and to step outside the patriarchy in order to exert her value and dignity.

Two examples of these received habits of sorting come from sports, great gateway examples for unconvinced men, but also eye-opening for women. These cases

demonstrate the importance of what Jean Baker Miller, psychoanalyst and feminist, called "the importance of unimportant people,"[4] that is, the need for all of society to recognize and respect the contributions of every member—even those working at the less flashy jobs, with their pejorative associations, like Eve and her food preparation, for these jobs, too, are vital to the group.

My first example comes from a TED talk by Adam Grant,[5] organizational psychologist. The headline story for Grant's TED talk is what happened with the Miami Heat basketball team in 2010. The Heat had one superstar, Dwyane Wade, but they wanted to build a dream team, so they recruited two of the biggest names of the day, LeBron James and Chris Bosh. Expectations were high—for team owner, manager, and fans! But they fell far short of expectations, failing to win any championship that year. The next season, they added a player named Shane Battier, who did not have the flashy statistics or name recognition. Battier, however, was quick to see strengths and weakness in his teammates as well as his opponents, which helped his team to streamline performance—the team triumphed in the following season. Grant's conclusion was that stars, with their big egos, are not the team-players that they might seem. If they are on the court, they want the glory—the shots. As Grant said, "There are other things basketball players do that are very valuable that don't get the same amount of attention, and that may be beneath the dignity of a star to perform;

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[4] Jean Baker Miller, *Toward A New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 21.

[5] Adam Grant, "The Problem With All-Stars," filmed March 2018. *TED video*, 33:15, accessed March 2020, https://www.ted.com/talks/worklife_with_adam_grant_the_problem_with_all_stars/info-details.

and you need other kinds of people to do those things--stars are overrated and the role players are underrated."[6] Battier himself added "I wasn't the most athletic, I wasn't always the best player," but he aimed to be "a great teammate."[7] Grant concluded his talk by pointing out how important humility is: "Humility isn't having a low opinion of yourself. One of its Latin roots means 'from the earth.' It's about being grounded."[8] His point was that a role with less glamour, but which helps the team win, is as important as the offering of stars—as the Miami Heat learned. Grant thinks that humility is demonstrated in three ways: (1) recognizing one's own limitations, (2) knowing others' strengths and giving them credit, (3) having a willingness to learn from others.[9] He mentions in passing, baseball's Billy Beane, manager of the Oakland Athletics, but Beane's story deserves elaboration. Beane is famous for his spectacular success through recruitment based upon statistics and cost-benefit analysis—and looking past the star power of players, the traditional selection criteria. It is a story captured in the book and movie of the same name, *Moneyball*.[10] With little cash to lure big-name stars, Beane assembled a group of underappreciated players with key talents and went on to outplay the big names. This is a story of the importance of

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[6] Grant, "All-Stars."

[7] Grant.

[8] Grant.

[9] Grant.

[10] Roger Ebert, "Playing in the Commodities Markets," *RogerEbert.com*, Ebert Digital LLC, accessed September 21, 2011, https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/moneyball-2011.

diversity and coalition. After listening to Grant's TED talk, I thought of Eve in *Paradise Lost*. She performs all of these smaller, less flashy tasks--like meal preparation and pruning in the garden—and repeatedly demonstrates Grant's three principles of humility.

Another current example of inequality—again, not necessarily gendered, but relevant—is found in the lynchpin contributions of lower-status workers during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. Frontline workers in fields of food delivery, trash collection, and general service work—all lower-paid lines of work—are proving to be essential personnel in these strange times. As unemployment scours out the Main Street establishments, these poorly paid front-line workers face the harshest challenges—and the most critical ones. Like them, women throughout history have shouldered the essential bedrock responsibilities of childrearing, homemaking, and food preparation. Jean Baker Miller is quick to suggest that if we, as a society, value these essentials, then we, as a society, must find an equitable way to provide for them.[11] When Eve prepares meals for Adam and Raphael, I am reminded of these modern lessons from sports and the pandemic.

But it is not just respect for underappreciated essential work that is at issue, it is the importance of allowing women to achieve leadership roles, which Eve seems to insist upon in the separation scene of *Paradise Lost*. This scene reminded me of the business example shared by Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, in another TED talk.[12] Sandberg describes the continuing dearth of competent women in

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[11] Miller, *Psychology of Women*, 128.

[12] Sheryl Sandberg, "Why We Have Too Few Women Leaders," filmed December 2010. *TED video*, 14:43, accessed September 2020,

the highest leadership positions because of, among other things, an historical bias demanding women behave submissively. Sandberg feels that women face a double bind: "success and likability are positively correlated for men and negatively correlated for women."[13] Proof was demonstrated by a Columbia University study in which resumes for a highly successful female venture capitalist were shown to two groups of students. Each group received the same resume, except for the name at the top: one group saw a resume for *Heidi,* the other for *Howard*. The consensus of both male and female students was that Heidi and Howard were equally qualified, but that Howard seemed more appealing, while Heidi seemed "out for herself . . . a little political."[14] Apparently, Heidi's assertiveness and confidence did not conform to gender expectations. Eve faces these same gender expectations in *Paradise Lost* and is repudiated when she asserts herself.

Since Milton's wheelhouse is language—sublime, complex, nuanced—I think a close study of his language will best reveal patriarchy and its gradual rejection by Eve. As I read *Paradise Lost,* I sensed that Eve gradually awakened to her full worth, shaking off the patriarchy, and finding her voice, a "different voice," as the feminist

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https://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl_sandberg_why_we_have_too_few_women_leaders/up-next?language=en.

[13] Sandberg, "Too Few Women."

[14] Sandberg.

Carol Gilligan calls it.[15] I believe that this voice gradually prevails over the bombast of the men and ultimately allows Eve to leave Eden with the grace and dignity of an equal partner.

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[15] Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), Front Cover.

Figure 2 *Filipina Comfort Women*, Jonas Roces. Artist reports that this sculpture represents "the embodiment of all the sorrow and rage of the victims of sexual abuse during the Japanese occupation [of Manila]." Statue created 2017, Bronze, 2m, stored in private location. Image accessed November 2020 at https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/opinion/content/680016/day-of-collective-shame-when-the-comfort-woman-statue-was-removed/story/.

Chapter 1

PATRIARCHAL LANGUAGE AND LIMITS OF THE FEMALE VOICE

Introduction

My goal over the course of this thesis is to show the evidence of gender inequality which is deeply rooted in Milton's lines before showing how Eve steps outside the patriarchy to graciously insist upon equality. In chapter one I will focus on the language-based tools of feminist scholars to examine how the patriarchal society of Milton's *Paradise Lost* sought to consign Eve to second-class status. Then, in chapter two, I will offer evidence for an Eve who evolves over the course of the epic, throwing off the yoke of subordination, to leave Eden a self-actualized, equal partner to Adam.

Here in chapter one, feminist scholars, who have made a close study of gendered language, are my primary sources for investigating Eve's diminishment by the male voices of the epic. I start with an historic feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft, whose defiant confrontation of gender inequity in the late eighteenth century took Milton to task ahead of me. She is surely the godmother of second-wave feminists who came of age in the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s, when so many sexist traditions were being challenged. Of these second-wave scholars, I will focus on research by three women: Robin Lakoff, who showed how female and male language patterns contributed to feminine subordination; Jean Baker Miller, who brought a psychanalytic background to the study of those language patterns; and Carol Gilligan, another psychologist, who exposed the hidden bias of traditional male morality models

that inherently demeaned women. All of these scholars offer insight on the gendered language of *Paradise Lost*. It is these women who astonished me by pointing out things hidden in plain sight that worked against feminine opportunity. For this reason, I will base my observations on the research of these four women when evaluating Eve's active subordination in *Paradise Lost*.

Figure 3 *The Dinner Party*, Judy Chicago. Artist was influenced by Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, a very masculine representation. Her triangular table (vulva-like) honors famous historical women with personal place settings. Work created 1979, Porcelain, enamel, mixed media, 48x42x3 feet, Brooklyn Museum, NY. Image accessed November 2020 at https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2016/july/20/how-judy-chicago-made-a-feminist-masterpiece/.

Figure 4 *The Dinner Party* (detail), Judy Chicago. Mary Wollstonecraft's dinner setting: a mat embroidered with a letter *M*, with a *gauntlet,* a dainty glove worn by ladies and which Wollstonecraft famously disdained on her deathbed saying "I have thrown down the gauntlet." Image accessed November 2020 at https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa /dinner_party/place_settings/mary_wollstonecraft.

Mary Wollstonecraft

A century after Milton published *Paradise Lost*, Mary Wollstonecraft railed against social subordination of women, a cultural habit as entrenched in her age as it was in Milton's. In her time, about a century after Milton's, the interest in human rights for many silenced groups was beginning to stir up pamphlet wars as Enlightenment voices challenged old ideas and salons became popular gathering places for discussion of these new ideas. At these salons, bright women were admitted—and became active participants! Their gentleness was thought to compliment the male ego at these venues, allowing for less rancorous debate, but with that acknowledgement, they remained second class citizens. Women were made for childbearing and domestic life, not for business outside the home—this continued to be settled opinion. That said, the opportunity for bright women to join salon discussions about new Enlightenment issues meant they were exposed to exciting new possibilities, including Rousseau's proposals for expanded education, although Rousseau himself did not believe in serious education for women. Nevertheless, women were listening, and by the last decade of the eighteenth century, a handful of these culturally privileged women with the social capital to participate were not only attending these salons but were writing essays demanding the same enlightened treatment envisioned for men. One of these essayists was Mary Wollstonecraft.[16]

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[16] Hannah Zundel, Sophie duPont, Emily Olsen, Marisa Rondinelli, "Women's Involvement in French Salons (Early 18th Century)," *University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Wollstonecraft's insights into gender inequality are especially important because she acts as a sort of bridge between the religion-centered culture of Milton's seventeenth century and the increasingly science-centered culture of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. When she addresses the philosophical topics of her day—reason, education, virtue, rationality— she is looking through an Enlightenment lens at the same topics so important to Milton and so embedded in *Paradise Lost*. In fact, Milton and *Paradise Lost* figure prominently in her essay as she sees important inherent contradictions of logic in his religious-centered treatment of Eve, contradictions that she feels Milton could not resolve because they were rooted in the irrational tradition of subjugating women. Wollstonecraft confronts these contradictions with fledgling feminism. Her early perspective is fascinating because it suggests that there is a basic truth in the importance of gender equality that cannot be smothered by different cultural practices—that there is an unarguable rightness in feminist expectations of equality. These insights are important because my goal is to look within Milton's epic of 1665 to find contradictions that suggest he struggled with the inconsistencies inherent in an unequal Eve, and Wollstonecraft's 1792 *Vindication* essay seems to address this same search.

(website), accessed October 11, 2020, https://sites.google.com/a/wisc.edu/ils202fall11/home/student-wikis/group4. Ideas in this paragraph are all from this webpage.

Before addressing Wollstonecraft's points, a review of Milton's outlook on major cultural issues of his day should be made. This is important in order to better understand how Milton's hierarchical views, which relegate women to subordinate positions, are so skillfully shown by Wollstonecraft to be inherently irrational. His views were set forth in numerous treatises and pamphlets focusing primarily on ecclesiastical and political issues. These works reflect a lifetime of Bible study where he came to believe in the obligation of each individual to find a personal relationship with God through close study of scripture. As he wrote in *Of Education*: "The end then of Learning is to repair the ruines of our first Parents by regaining to know God aright."[17] This personal relationship prevailed over received lessons from the clergy, and this spiritual model informed his political opinions on the ideal form of government: a republican government beholden to an educated citizenry where government leaders, chosen by citizens, would have limited power and would always be answerable to the people.[18] This ideal seemed achievable after Charles I was overthrown in 1649 leaving Oliver Cromwell in charge of a new republican government. Sadly, for Milton, this republic lasted only until 1660, when the monarchy was restored with King Charles II, ending the republican experiment. As the

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[17] John Milton, "Of Education," *The John Milton Reading Room*, edited by Thomas H. Luxon, accessed September 2020, http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton.

[18] Barbara Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton* (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 180-81.

republic dissolved, Milton was beginning two major works: *Paradise Lost* and *De Doctrina Christiana*—both products of a mature and settled spiritual opinion. Although both works are highly religious, the literary scholar Barbara Lewalski writes that *Paradise Lost* "is in fact a more daring political gesture than we often realize . . . It undertakes a strenuous project of educating readers in the virtues, values, and attitudes that make a people worthy of liberty."[19] But this does not mean that Milton believed in gender equality. *De Doctrina Christiana* clearly holds that Eve is logically subordinate to Adam having been created from his rib: "it is wrong for one single part of the body—and not one of the most important parts—to disobey the rest of the body."[20] Clearly, the nascent movement afoot for liberty and self-government is envisioned by Milton for men only. That said, there is another Milton whose personal delight in bright, educated women encourages his wish for a "fit" wife. Lewalski shares an account by Milton's nephew which suggests that Milton's sonnet to Margaret Ley reveals "the witty and virtuous Margaret [as] some version of what he wanted in a wife and did not obtain."[21] The contradiction between Milton's received custom and personal wish is spotlighted by Wollstonecraft.

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[19] Lewalski, 442.

[20] Lewalski, 440.

[21] Lewalski, 159.

Wollstonecraft writes that Milton's famous inconsistencies are partly rooted in gender inequality which is inherently irrational. Like Milton, she believed in education because "knowledge and virtue naturally flow from the exercise of reason."[22] Unlike Milton, she believed this to be the right of women as well as men. She rejected the custom of emphasizing the feminine traits of attractiveness, weakness, and docility—inferior virtues—that prepared women to be objects of desire, fit only to make advantageous marriages. This stunted goal inevitably left a woman in a vulnerable position once beauty and passion subsided, for

> The woman who has only been taught to please will soon find that her charms are oblique sun-beams, and that they can't have much effect on her husband's heart when he sees them every day and when the summer of her physical beauty is past and gone.[23]

She takes *Paradise Lost* and Milton to task for reducing Eve to a mere possessor of these same inferior virtues.[24] This is obvious when Satan first spots Eve and muses, "Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed; . . . For sweetness she and sweet attractive grace,"[25] while Adam conversely is "For contemplation . . . and valor formed"

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[22] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, 7, in the version presented by Jonathan Bennett, accessed February 2020, https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/wollstonecraft1792.pdf.

[23] Wollstonecraft, Vindication, 18.

[24] Wollstonecraft, 6, 13.

[25] Wollstonecraft, 13

(IV.297). Adam possesses the dominant virtues, Eve the inferior ones. And when Adam calls Eve a "fair defect" (X.891) after the Fall, Wollstonecraft is indignant that women have received "nice sounding descriptions [by men] to soften their insults,"[26] and writes:

> females have been insulted . . . stripped of the virtues that should clothe humanity. . . their sole ambition is to be beautiful . . . and this ignoble desire—like the servility in absolute monarchies—destroys all strength of character. Liberty is the mother of virtue . . .[27]

This reasoning, with reference to monarchy as a parallel, is unmistakably similar to Milton's own reasoning. The difference is rooted in gender, and by spotlighting this, Wollstonecraft pinpoints the irrational condition of Milton's Eve.

Wollstonecraft notes that Eve's gender inferiority in *Paradise Lost* even affects her relationship with God. Her conduit to God is through Adam, even though, as indicated above, Milton himself wrote that a personal relationship with God was key for all.[28] When Satan first sees the couple, he makes this assumption: "Hee for God only, shee for God in him" (IV.299). And later, as Adam leads Eve to their bower, she addresses him: "God is thy Law, thou mine" (IV.637). Wollstonecraft is quick to comment that women must have equal access to God: "they must be permitted to look to the fountain of light [God] and not forced to steer by the twinkling of a mere satellite [man]."[29] But, if Eve is portrayed as subordinate to Adam in these examples,

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[26] Wollstonecraft, 23.

[27] Wollstonecraft, 25.

[28] Milton, "Of Education." See footnote 22.

[29] Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 13.

Wollstonecraft notes that Milton also leaves room for Eve as an equal, revealing the illogic of gender inequality that Milton could not reconcile. Adam requests a *fit* partner in his appeal to God: "fit to participate / All rational delight" (VIII.390-91). Adam emphasizes "Among *unequal* what society / Can sort, what harmony or delight?"[30] His plea sounds a lot like Milton's own wish for a fit wife whose "meet and happy conversation [was] the chiefest and noblest end of marriage."[31] The conflict between Milton's settled custom of subordinate women and his wish for a fit wife is one that Wollstonecraft seizes upon to explain a key inconsistency in *Paradise Lost* writing "great men often [are] led by their senses into such inconsistencies."[32]

Power is another of Wollstonecraft's concerns, one that underpins the pernicious, inherent disequilibrium of rank, hierarchy, patriarchy. Here again, Wollstonecraft and Milton seem to have similar opinions about power. Both feared a system that placed too much power in the hand of one person over others. When Wollstonecraft writes that "Man is weak, and all power intoxicates him . . . that the more equality there is among men--and thus the less power of men over men—the more virtue and happiness will reign in society"[33] she seems to echo Milton's words in *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, a treatise censuring monarchy and defending

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[30] Wollstonecraft, 14; Milton, VIII.383-4 (italics mine).

[31] John Milton "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," *The John Miton Reading Room*, edited by Thomas H. Luxon, Book I, accessed February 2020, http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton.

[32] Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 13.

[33] Wollstonecraft, 10.

republicanism: "the temptation of such a power left absolute in thir hands [kings], pervert[s] them at length to injustice and partiality."[34] The key difference between Wollstonecraft and Milton, again, is gender-based: Wollstonecraft is arguing for the inclusion of feminine equality, Milton for political equality among men only. Wollstonecraft is quick to point out the error and absurdity of Milton's neglect of women's rights by asserting that surely there is only "one eternal standard" of virtue, that there is no "reason to conclude that theirs [men's] are different in kind from womens."[35] Eve put this more succinctly: "Inferior who is free" (IX.825).

In chapter two, Eve's dawning resistance against this inferiority will be examined closely. She will learn to step outside the patriarchy in ways that would make Mary Wollstonecraft proud. Like Wollstonecraft and the other women visiting Enlightenment salons, Milton's Eve was ever listening, though initially silenced. By epic's end, Eve finds her voice.

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[34] John Milton, "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates," *The John Miton Reading Room*, edited by Thomas H. Luxon, paragraph 5, accessed February 2020, http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton.

[35] Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, 18 (both quotes).

Figure 5 *The Little Mermaid*, Edvard Eriksen. Statue depicts heroine of the Hans Christian Anderson story about a mermaid who becomes human to pursue her human lover only to be rejected. Statue created in 1913, Bronze, 4-foot. Located in Copenhagen, DK. Image accessed October 2020 at https://wiki2.org/en/The_Little_Mermaid.

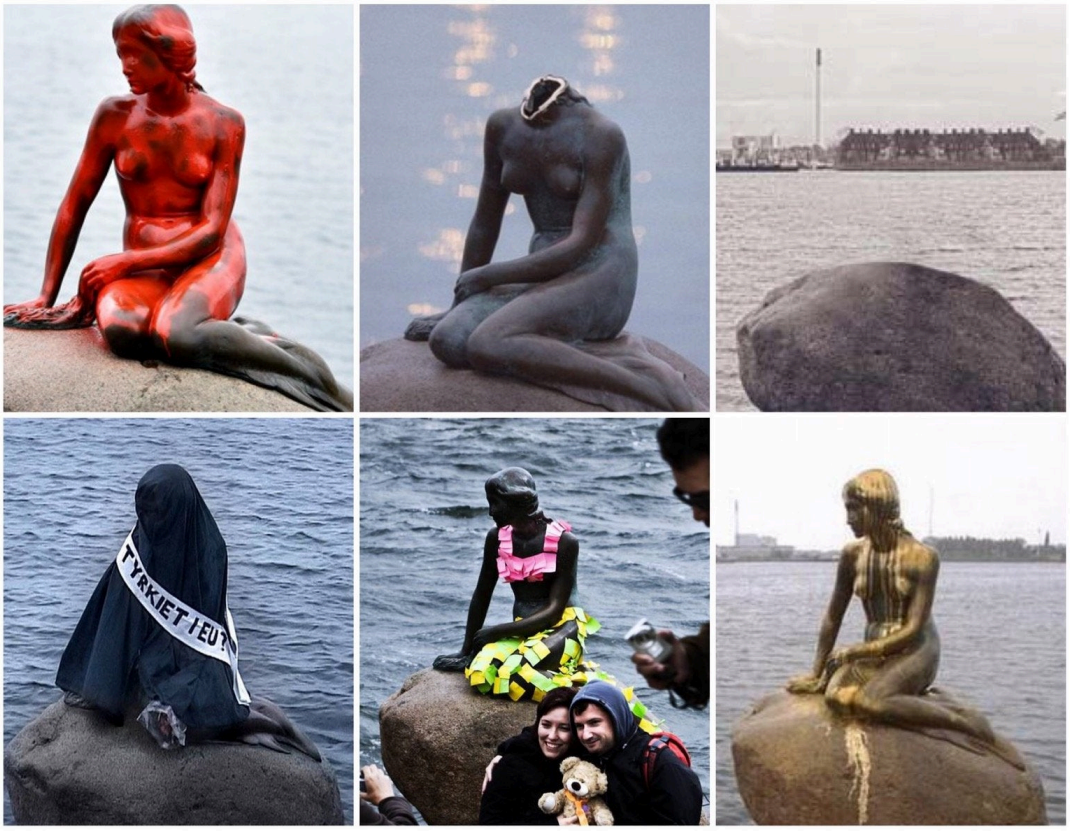

Figure 6 *The Little Mermaid* (defacements). The statue has been disfigured many times over the years. She seems to have become the screen on which society projects its patriarchal agonies. Image accessed October 2020 at https://www.reddit.com/r/europe/comments/6edeho/danish_landmark_the_little_mermaid_through_the/.

Robin Tolmach Lakoff

By 1975—during another time of social change—feminists were extending Mary Wollstonecraft's observation from a century and a half before. World War II gave women a taste of earning power, working outside the home, and contributing to the country's urgent needs; birth control in 1960 permitted the possibility of uninterrupted education and a dream of working outside the home again; and civil rights offered an example of another subordinated group fighting for recognition and equality. With this as background, Robin Lakoff earned a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1972 and introduced many new ideas into the field of linguistics with special emphasis on language and gender. Lakoff showed how gendered language is used to enforce a power differential between men and women, something that illuminates Eve's situation in *Paradise Lost*.[36]

For Lakoff, gendered linguistics invisibly and consistently supports the historical gender hierarchy empowering men over women. This power differential—as in Wollstonecraft's time—stems from a belief in women's innate inadequacies of temperament and intelligence. Dominant groups, eager to perpetuate this self-serving fiction, established "linguistic discrimination" by controlling how language is used by women (i.e., "good" women) and how language treats them in return.[37] Women are taught to speak in ways that preserve those inferior virtues described by Wollstonecraft, that is, with exaggerated politeness and deference to men, never

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[36] "Robin Lakoff Biography," *Poem Hunter* (website), accessed September 17, 2020, https://www.poemhunter.com/robin-lakoff/biography/.

[37] Lakoff, *A Woman's Place*. 39 (see footnote 3).

forgetting their subordinate roles or that their existence is defined by men.[38] In return, two important patterns of power linguistics are used by men to safeguard their dominance: *silencing* and *trivializing*.[39] They lock in women's subjugation by minimizing, blocking, discrediting, or stealing their ideas. All of these patterns operate in *Paradise Lost*.

Lakoff points to modern examples of *silencing* and *trivializing.* There are "First Ladies" or "trophy wives."[40] But even when a woman is powerful in her own right, Lakoff holds that she has often been treated as a mere extension of the men in her life. One of Lakoff's examples is Mildred Loree Lillie, nominated to the Supreme Court in 1971 and whose *New York Times* writeup mentioned that her husband was a professor of English and, for good measure, that "she still had a bathing beauty figure."[41] None of the male nominees' sketches included information about either a spouse or a manly physique. Even at the highest professional level women are defined by those inferior virtues so appreciated by traditional society. Eve internalizes the damage of similar Edenic silencing and trivializing. Her first words in the epic are to Adam: "O thou for whom / And from whom I was formd flesh of thy flesh, / And

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[38] Lakoff, *A Woman's Place*, 39, 57. "Potential High Court Nominees," New York Times online archives, October 14, 1971. https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1971/10/14/79158305.html?pageNumber=39.

[39] Lakoff, 210, 42-3. Silencing (210) is discussed at length with four primary modes described over Part IV, chapter 13. Trivializing is a more nuanced discussion of how women's topics of discussion relegate them to less "crucial" topics (42-3).

[40] Lakoff, 46, 167 (for "First Lady, trophy wife," respectively).

[41] Lakoff, 60.

without whom am to no end . . ." (IV.440-43). Later, she recounts her origin story explaining that although she was first entranced by her own image, she soon came to her senses and recognized Adam's superiority: "I yielded, and from that time see / How beauty is excelled by manly grace . . ." (IV.489-90). And so, here in Eden is where the history of female suppression appears to begin. When Raphael arrives in Eden, it is to "converse with *Adam*" (V.230) at God's own direction. There is no thought of speaking to Eve, except in passing. This is certainly a slight, a reaffirmation of her minor status. When Raphael arrives at the couples' bower, he greets Adam by name in answer to Adam's greeting. When he turns to Eve he does not use her name, instead he addresses her by noting her function with respect to men: "Haile Mother of Mankind, whose fruitful Womb / Shall fill the World more numerous with thy Sons" (V.388-89). (Note that there is no mention of daughters.) Not only is Eve a prop for Adam, she is a prop for Mankind and all its Sons. In conversation with Adam after the Fall, the Son of God, unquestionable arbiter of power, decrees that Eve is Adam's inferior describing Eve as "Unseemly to bear rule, which was thy [Adam's] part" (X.155). From the start of history, women were declared inferior by the men in power.

A closer examination of four patterns for *silencing* will be made by spotlighting modern day and Edenic examples. Lakoff describes how women can (1) be *prevented from speaking* at all (because of social rules), (2) have their ideas *usurped* by men, (3) be *misunderstood* when they do speak, or (4) have their words *invalidated.* Modern examples of silencing are everywhere in our culture. *Literal silencing* is inherent in some forms of Christianity where women are not welcome in leadership roles. In the fields of science, the "Matilda effect" was coined to describe the bias against women whose work is *usurped* by male colleagues —think Rosalind

Franklin who contributed to the famous "Watson-Crick" double helix research but received scant credit.[42] Men clearly *misunderstand* feminists when they ask "Why do you hate men?"[43] And finally, *invalidation* is practiced in Muslim cultures where men can divorce wives by repeating "Divorce" three times, a right that does not belong to their wives.[44] These patterns of silencing, as Lakoff writes, are yoked to the power structure which continues to question whether women are "fully competent agents."[45] Each of these silencing practices will be discussed in more detail below with regard to Eve:

Preventing speech most notably occurs at Eve's birth when God "invisibly" (IV.476) leads Eve away from her pond mirror to join Adam. Eve does not have a conversation with God; she is a silent, passive follower. By contrast, when Adam recalls his birth experience, as narrated to Raphael, he describes falling into a dream and receiving a "shape Divine [who said] thy Mansion wants thee, *Adam*, rise, / First Man . . . call'd by thee I come thy Guide" (VIII.295-98), and after God bestows upon Adam dominion over the beasts in Eden, Adam "thus presum'd" (VIII.356) to ask for a mate. Adam is not silenced. Later, Eve is also barred from speaking—presumably by social etiquette rules?—over four books of the epic, when Raphael and Adam

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[42] "Rosalind Franklin," *U.S. National Library of Medicine: Profiles in Science*, accessed March 2020, https://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/spotlight/kr/feature/biographical.

[43] Pranitashresha, "Feminism: A Misunderstood Word," *Wordpulse* (blog), last modified November 25, 2017, https://www.worldpulse.com/community/users/pranitashrestha/posts/81022.

[44] Lakoff, *A Woman's Place*, 212.

[45] Lakoff, 213.

converse at length over a lunch "ministered" (V.444) by Eve. When Raphael turns from Adam to greet Eve, she remains silent—just as she was silent when God's "invisibly thus led" (IV.476) her, newly created, to Adam. When Adam invites Raphael to the table prepared by Eve, there are compliments to God for his provisions, but not to Eve for her food preparation, so she remains silent. And when Raphael assures Adam that angels can eat mortal food, "Our Authour" (V.397) answers, not Eve.

Usurpation of the female voice is clearest when Adam and Raphael converse. Adam asks Raphael how and why the stars stay alight in the night sky—the very question posed by Eve to Adam earlier.[46] That Adam gives no credit to Eve might be oversight, but taken with so many other slights, it seems part of the pattern of silencing. Interestingly, it is after Adam asks this question that Eve—sitting "retired in sight . . . with *lowliness* Majestic" (VIII.41-2) decides to leave the men, to tend her "Fruits and Flours" (VIII.44). The narrator—surely a male—holds that she left, not because she could not understand the "thoughts abstruse" (VIII.40) that strained Adam's "count'nance," (VIII.39) but rather "Her Husband the Relater she preferred" (VIII.52). I can't help wondering if this narrator failed to consider Eve's irritation at the slight of having her own studious question usurped.

Misunderstanding is used to silence Eve, most pointedly in the separation scene where conversation between Adam and Eve is rife with confusion. Eve, seeking a bit of space, suggests that she and Adam work apart, reasoning that in close company they distract each other from the work at hand so that "Supper comes

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[46] Milton, VIII.15-38, IV.657-58. Adam asks about mechanism of starry sky in Book VIII after Eve has broached same question in Book IV.

unearn'd" (IX.225). This sounds like cover for something more pressing; but instead of asking what might be under Eve's surface story, Adam, with "mild answer" (IX.226) says that the Lord does not expect such strict accounting of their labors (IX.235). Eventually he reasons that Eve may need some space "For solitude sometimes is best society" (IX.249). Adam is guessing at her motives, rather than asking her about them. When he raises the worry about Satan in their midst, he flatfootedly offends Eve by suggesting she is safest "and seemliest by her Husband" (IX.268). With "Virgin Majestie" (IX.270) and "sweet austere composure" (IX.272) Eve reminds Adam that she too has heard Raphael's warning, and sharply retorts "that thou shouldest my firmness therefore doubt . . . I expect not to hear" (IX.279-81). Adam responds with a sound reason for working together, but abruptly yields to Eve. Clearly there were things left unsaid and unresolved here—but Adam's misunderstanding of Eve turns the relational separation into a physical separation. Adam failed to communicate with Eve and to understand her intent.

Finally, *Invalidating* is used to effectively silence Eve. God, Raphael, and Adam have all actively silenced Eve; that leaves only Satan and Michael, the remaining primary male characters of the epic, to examine for silencing behavior. I hold that they must join the lineup. Satan silences Eve by intruding upon her dream, that is, by altering her original dream— *invalidating* the original. He undoubtedly chooses Eve because he perceives her to be weaker and more susceptible than Adam—so there is, again, the acceptance of a power differential. And finally, after the fall, Michael, as instructed by God, educates Adam alone through visions and discourse so that Adam might be prepared for knowing good through knowing evil after exiting Eden. Eve, meanwhile, receives "dreams composed to quietness of mind

and *submission."* (VII.Argument, italics mine). This is a good place to raise the idea of "separate but equal," where some argue that different treatments do not always suggest "better" or "worse." This idea will be discussed below under the discussion of *trivializing*.

In addition to the *Silencing* examples above, *Trivializing* is another linguistic pattern of subordination described by Lakoff where disempowered women are distinguished through their social roles. Men "relegate to women things that are not of concern to them, or do not involve their egos . . . [and] women are not expected to make decisions on important matters, like what kind of job to hold . . . they are relegated to noncrucial decisions as a sop."[47] Current examples of role exclusion include the limited representation of women in C-suite positions of business, particularly the positions with supervision over branches where "profits and losses hang in the balance," which are the key stepping-stone positions to CEO—unlike human resources, administration, or legal.[48] A survey of 3000 top companies in the United States reveals only 167 female CEOs—a disappointing statistic after the vigorous efforts of modern feminists over the last fifty years.[49] Eve was caught in the same gendered trap.

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[47] Lakoff, *A Woman's Place*, 43.

[48] Vanessa Fuhrmans, "Why So Few CEOs Are Women, *Wall Street Journal*, accessed February 7, 2020, A.1., https://login.udel.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/docview/2365741388?accountid=10457.

[49] Fuhrmans.

The type of job relegated to Eve certainly implies subordination: food preparation, which has often been the menial purview of women over history. As Raphael arrives, this separation of chores is clear: Adam "in the dore" (V.299) sits, while Eve "within, . . . prepared / For dinner savorie fruits" (V.303-4). When Adam sees Raphael approaching, his words to Eve are declarative: "goe" and "bring forth . . . Abundance" (V.313-15). He does not considers doing this sort of work himself. And the stores he asks Eve to gather are "thy stores" (V.314). The passage is shown below:

> . . . go with speed,
> And what *thy* stores contain, bring forth and pour
> Abundance, fit to honor and receive
> Our heavenly stranger . . . (V.313-16, italics mine)

Eve started a long tradition of food preparation for women in this innocent garden. The unconscious, entitled attitude of Adam is blatant here.

The separation of roles has often been deceitfully proclaimed as "separate but equal" or as a sign of respect toward women or even as a situation that favors women, something to which I--and many feminists--strenuously object. In addition, women are said to be honored as the "preservers of morality and civility, . . . [and that men] intend to exalt and flatter, rather than humiliate" when consigning them to customary positions. Lakoff briskly holds that this sort of reasoning "denigrates and degrades" women, that settling for this role is "insufficient."[50]

These gendered tactics, used to keep women subordinate, will serve as a springboard for examining Eve's rejection of subordination in chapter two.

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[50] Lakoff, *A Woman's Place*, 77. All quotes and material in this paragraph are from page 77.

Figure 7 *Common Comrades*, Manu Garay. These figures seem to represent the outward sign of female suffering as a result of society's dismissal. Statues are bronze, unknown dimensions and date. Located in Milwaukee, WI. Image accessed November 2020 at https://www.milwaukeedowntown.com/experience/public-art.

Jean Baker Miller

Jean Baker Miller, writing in 1976, witnessed the same cultural tumult of 1960s America as Robin Lakoff: the Civil Rights movement, hippies and free love, and the general challenge to the status quo. In addition, born in 1927, fifteen years ahead of Lakoff, she lived through the frightening polio epidemics which spread across the United States every couple of years—and she contracted the paralyzing virus (and would eventually die of emphysema complicated by post-polio syndrome). But, as frightening as that polio must have been, a pair of nurses involved in her therapy proved to be Visiting Fates. They recognized her keen mind and suggested she attend college. She did—and earned a medical degree from Columbia, before starting psychoanalytic training at New York Medical College and beginning her practice in 1973.[51] To the discipline of feminism, she brought a vast foundation of medical and psychoanalytic knowledge, providing me with a different lens through which to view Eve in *Paradise Lost*.

I am particularly interested in Miller's analysis of the damage to both women and men created by the traditional gender power inequality and its rationale of female incapacity, which, in turn, leads to inevitable conflict, accompanied by the outsized indignation of men when women make even small demands for equality. These particular contributions support my conviction that Milton twisted on the horns of an intractable dilemma rooted in his wish for a "fit" wife and his obvious delight in friendship with "fit" women, a yearning which could not square with his conviction of

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[51] "Dr. Jean Baker Miller," *Changing the Face of Medicine* (website), accessed October 18, 2020, https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_225.html. All biographical details in this introductory paragraph are from this website.

gender order. Miller brings a clarity to these problems, so pertinent for Eve, and those offerings are rooted in the authority of medicine—a discipline where she uncovered some of those same gender incongruities directed at herself!

Miller holds that our culture has been historically organized by men who, as the dominant gender, have set terms for women that ensure women remain subordinate, which in the end warps both genders—but the warping is most dangerous for women who become labeled as the "defective" or "substandard" gender.[52] Damage to men is less obvious; they are straitened to avoid any "soft" behaviors associated with women, which denies their full masculine humanity.[53] Miller writes that the drive to organize this way seems to be rooted in psychological tendencies. In her therapy sessions, Miller notes that women often spend much more time talking about giving, while men are more concerned with doing.[54] Men seem to feel that giving too much would make them seem effeminate; they are more comfortable with competition and power over others, even other "equals," i.e., other men.[55] Miller writes that in our culture, "serving others is for losers, it is low-level stuff," but for women it is the preferred manner of organizing life.[56] Psychoanalysis has shown

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[52] Jean Baker Miller, *New Psychology*, 6 (see footnote 6).

[53] Miller, 6.

[54] Miller, 50.

[55] Miller, 52.

[56] Miller, 61.

Miller that men organize their lives "against such a principle."[57] In Milton's Eden, these tendencies are clearly on display. When Eve converses with Adam, while Satan looks on, she seems to have internalized her submission saying about Adam, "without whom [I] am to no end" (IV.442). An annotation for this line from the online *Dartmouth Reading Room* explains that "without whom am to no end" is a significant phrase conjuring Milton's earlier writing in *Doctrine of Discipline and Divorce* where he is clear that "the only purpose for which woman was created is to remedy a man's loneliness."[58] Power resides with the men.

Milton's epic is replete with competitive males whose repeated disdain for Eve must surely magnify the message of subjugation. These male regiments involve all the masculine cohorts: angels to devil to God, and, of course, the only other human. The obvious organizing principle is hierarchy! There are "Heav'nly Quire[s]" (III.217) of angels—Archangels, Seraphs, and Cherubs. There are Satan's "Regent Powers" (V.697) of "Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Vertues, Powers" (X.460). There is even a God who wedges his Son into the hierarchy to the great chagrin of Satan—to which one management expert had an interesting perspective:

> the ruler of this polity is either deliberately disruptive or disregards some prime rules of management: Don't add intermediate layers of authority; don't make yourself inaccessible; don't rebuff your insiders; if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Everyone knows what discontent the intromission of a provost between the president and a faculty induces in it, or the upset that bringing in a vice-president from the outside and

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[57] Miller, 61.

[58] Milton, IV.442, "without whom am to no end." This passage contains a hyperlink which opens the explanation noted in the text above.

> disappointing fair expectations causes in companies. This is exactly what happens in Heaven. . . one day there is a newcomer, a Son . . .[59]

Hierarchy appears to inherently inspire rancor. And, finally, there are humans: Man and Woman. Eve finds herself in a world of males where patriarchy has assigned her a very modest ranking.

Miller describes one of the pillars and rationales of hierarchy for dominants—that they "know best."[60] For Eve this is a familiar refrain and one that she seems to internalize at first. Before she and Adam retire for the night in Book IV, Eve speaks: "My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst / Unargu'd I obey; so God ordains, / God is thy Law, thou mine" (IV.635-37). Later, in Book IX, Adam explicitly reinforces Eve's need for guidance during the separation scene.

> . . leave not the faithful side
> That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.
> The Wife, where danger or dishonor lurks,
> Safest and seemliest by her Husband staies . . . (IX.265-68)

But Eve, at this separation scene, is finding her voice and now reveals a new sense of indignant pride while successfully arguing for time apart. Interestingly, in finding her voice and pushing back successfully against Adam, the narrator is quick to rebuke Adam for his "effeminate slackness" (XI.634): he is labeled "*domestick* Adam" (IX.318). This chide would not surprise Miller who writes that even in modern society, dominant groups often "militate against stirrings of greater rationality or

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[59] Eva Brann, "Milton's 'Paradise Lost': Hidden Meanings?" *The Imaginative Conservative*, April 30, 2015, accessed September 2020, https://theimaginativeconservative.org/2015/04/milton-paradise-lost-hidden-meanings.html.

[60] Miller, *New Psychology*, 9.

greater humanity in their own members" and men who "allow their women" more power than proper are often ridiculed.[61]

Miller warns that conflict always attends inequality—either below the surface or out in the open.[62] She writes that this conflict even influences her own profession of psychoanalysis which has historically tended to support the gender status quo. Women patients concerned with nurturing relationships and "care-giving" were labeled "dependent."[63] But Miller argues that this pigeonholing has failed to appreciate the "complex activity involved" in the customary behavior of women.[64] In this same way, all the men of *Paradise Lost* consider Eve an inferior, fit only to serve men. And, as I mentioned earlier, it is Eve who serves up the meal in Book IV, even as Adam and Raphael give thanks to God for it. Also mentioned above, is the response I sense in Eve who leaves the men with "lowliness Majestic" (VIII.42) after Adam appropriates her "studious [and] abstruse" (VIII.40) question (about the stars) without giving her credit. I sense Miller's predicted conflict brewing for Eve in these lines.

In the aftermath of Eve's separation scene and the subsequent Fall, the men respond swiftly and predictably, based on Miller's theories, namely that "Dominant groups tend to characterize subordinates' initial small resistance to dominant control

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[61] Miller, *New Psychology*, 7 and 8.

[62] Miller, 9.

[63] Miller, x.

[64] Miller, xx.

as demands for an excessive amount of power."[65] Even as Eve departed Adam, Milton slyly references Pomona's flight from Vertumnus which underpins the pattern of gullible female outwitted by a shrewder male[66]—a foreshadowing of Satan's defrauding of Eve? And after the fall, Adam is quick to scold Eve, "Would thou hadst heark'ned to my words, and stai'd / With me, as I besought thee, . . .we had then / Remaind still happie" (IX.1134-1138). Eve, with crushed morale reverts to old patterns by blaming Adam for relinquishing his proper dominant role: "why didst not thou the Head / Command me absolutely not to go" (IX.1155-56). As Book IX winds down Adam adds

> . . . I rue
> That errour now, which is become my crime
> . . . Thus it shall befall
> Him who to worth in Women overtrusting
> Lets her Will rule . . . (IX.1180-84)

Surely Adam is failing to properly right-size his own blame, with Eve so handy as a traditional target. But it is when the Son arrives that this patriarchal pattern of denouncing a woman's nascent self-determination is resoundingly adjudged.

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[65] Miller, *New Psychology*, 117.

[66] Milton, "Paradise Lost," IX.395; Roxanne Gentilcore, "The Landscape of Desire: The Tale of Pomona and Vertumnus in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' *Phoenix* 49, no. 2 (1995): 110-20, accessed October 20, 2020, doi:10.2307/1192628. Gentilcore interprets the successful wooing of Pomona by Vertumnus through his use of multiple deceptions and disguises. She sees this as a tale of threat and violation rather than mutual love. Interestingly, Pomona is silent throughout, never speaking (another example of Lakoff's *silencing*?). Compare parallels to Adam who dismisses Eve's initial resistance to his wooing.

When Adam blames Eve for their sad state, the Son reproves him: "Thou did'st resign thy Manhood, and the Place / Wherein God set thee above her" (X.148-49). But then the Son turns to Eve in high patriarchal dudgeon: "to thy Husbands will / Thine shall submit, hee over thee shall rule" (X.l95-96). So, Eve is properly put in her place—her subordinate place. That said, I sense an irreconcilable antinomy here for the sin of Eve's self-determination and courage in confronting a spiritual challenge. Milton himself personally considered such spiritual courage of primary importance to the "true wayfaring Christian."[67] In fact, when Eve chides Adam with "what is faith, love, virtue unassaid" (IX.335), we hear echoes of Milton himself, who admonished "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary . . ."[68] I think, once again, Milton is confounded by his unsolvable gender contradiction. He has both honored Eve with a particularly exquisite Christian ideal and repudiated her with all-around male censure.

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[67] Milton, "Aeropagitica," *The John Milton Reading Room*, edited by Thomas H. Luxon, accessed February 2020, http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton.

[68] "Areopagitica." Both quotes accessed at https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/.

Miller is quick to quote Kenneth Burke who points out—as Wollstonecraft did a century before--that dominants often sense the hidden conflict and instability of power differentials: "Men too have sensed, in their own way, that they are attempting to 'fit in an unfit fitness'."[69] This quote is particularly apt for Milton, for whom *fitness* is an abiding issue. In Book VIII's Argument he relates Adam's request for "fit society," that is, a worthy mate. The idea of *fitness* is found throughout Milton's prose and poetry—often with reference to wives. In *Tetrachordon*, his treatise of 1645 which defended the right of men to divorce an unfit wife, he focused on finding scriptural support for his then-unorthodox views on divorce. The following passage illustrates his default opinion. It is a passage from Ephesians followed by Milton's thoughts on the passage:

> *Wives be subject to your husbands as is fit in the Lord, Coloss. 3. 18. In every thing, Eph. 5.24*. Neverthelesse man is not to hold her as a servant, but receives her into a part of that empire which God proclaims him to, though not equally, yet largely, as his own image and glory: for it is no small glory to him, that a creature so like him, should be made subject to him.[70]

In this passage I hear a Milton struggling to reconcile his need for a *fit* wife and the traditional subordination of women. Surely the natural inclination to cherish is inherently at odds with subjugation (more on this in chapter two). I think Miller has

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[69] Quoted in Miller, *New Psychology*, 131.

[70] Milton, "Tetrachordon," *The John Milton Reading Room*, edited by Thomas H. Luxon, accessed February 2020, http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton.

revealed the heart of problem: both men and women are damaged from the gender traditions inherited from history, and Milton's famous narrative contradictions are at least partially rooted in this gender dilemma.

Miller, with her medical training and experience of professional gender slights, offers a rich trove of feminist wisdom with which to approach a keener understanding of Eve in *Paradise Lost.* I will revisit these insights into gender issues in chapter two in order to illuminate Eve's rejection of patriarchy.

Figure 8 *Les Muses*, Alfred Laliberté. For me, these muses represent a special feminine ideal by virtue of their gifts of the arts to humanity, a contribution which promotes what Carol Gilligan has called the "ethics of care." Statue created in 1926, bronze, 191x276x105cm. Located in Québec, CA. Image accessed November 2020 at https://www.publicdomainpictures.net/fr/view-image.php?image=243290&picture=les-muses.

Carol Gilligan

Carol Gilligan, born in 1936—midway between Jean Miller and Robin Lakoff—is another second-wave feminist; and with a background in ethics and psychology she brings yet another lens through which to examine Eve in Eden. In the late 1960s, her work, became focused on ethical relationships after she noticed a deep gender bias in the proposed moral development model of her Harvard adviser, Lawrence Kohlberg. His scale of moral developmental stages, based on an entirely male cohort, resulted in consistently lower measures for women. With deep suspicion at this apparent morality gap, Gilligan began her own research into gender impact on moral expression.[71] Her 1982 book, *In a Different Voice*, describes how men and women, using an "overlapping moral vocabulary," are actually describing different responses to social and ethical situations.[72] Before launching into Gilligan's research it is important to note, as she does, that while she expresses this moral dichotomy in gendered terms, the labels "male" and "female" are based on "empirical observations"—even so, she found a comfortable alignment across the morality gap based on gender.[73] She notes that over the centuries men's voices and experiences have informed our codes of morality and that women's voices have been silenced so that even when they speak, they are not understood (an echo of Robin Lakoff's charge

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[71] Laura Ball, "Carol Gilligan," *Psychology's Feminist Voices Multimedia Internet Archive*, last modified 2010, accessed at http://www.feministvoices.com/carol-gilligan/.

[72] Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 173.

[73] Gilligan, *Different Voice*, 2.

of female *silencing*).[74] In the end, her research concludes that women are equally moral but exhibit a framework for morality that is rooted in "communication in relationships," whereas men characteristically base morality on "impersonal . . . systems of logic and law."[75] These tendencies seem to be rooted in women's affinity for social connection and men's drive for autonomy. For Gilligan, these different frameworks are complementary and *at least* equally vital.[76] This dichotomy of moral viewpoint—with superiority imputed to the male ideal— is clear in *Paradise Lost*. But, before we discuss these parallels, there is a bit more to consider form Gilligan's book.

To better understand Gilligan's contributions to the gendered language of morality, a few examples of her interview-based experiments with men and women to test moral thinking will show how different bases for judgment exists between the genders—a distinction which I will use later to evaluate Eve's behavior and language in *Paradise Lost*. Gilligan's first thought experiment presents a dilemma for "Heinz" whose wife's disease requires life-saving medicine that he cannot afford. The question posed is whether Heinz should steal the medicine or follow the legal prohibition against stealing and let her die. Two eleven-year-old children—a boy and a girl—are asked to respond. They demonstrate the essential moral difference that Gilligan has observed repeatedly. The boy appeals to a hierarchy of rights noting that "a human life is worth more than money," so Heinz should steal the drugs. On Kohlberg's scale, he

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[74] Gilligan, 173.

[75] Gilligan 29.

[76] Gilligan, 31-2.

demonstrates an awareness of law and logical thinking and measures a 3-4 out of 6. The girl is loath to advise stealing and suggests that "there might be other ways besides stealing it [money] . . . they [Heinz and his wife] should really just talk." For Kohlberg, this response rates a lower score because the girl fails to act on her own and fails to emphasize the logic of morality and law. Gilligan summarizes: the boy operates "through a system of logic and law" and that the girl "through communication in relationship[s]." In short, the boy favors a "hierarchical ordering," while the girl sees a "network of relationships" that must be "mended with its own thread."[77] A few more examples will sharpen this gender difference in moral perspectives of men and women.

Gilligan next tests adult men and women seeking to understand why men and women interpret morality so differently, driving women to seek interpersonal connection and men to seek autonomy and impersonal rules. Subjects were asked to create stories for a series of four pictures: (1) a man and woman on a bench, (2) a male and female trapeze pair grasping each other's wrists, (3) a man alone in an office, and (4) a woman working as another woman looks on in a laboratory.[78] Results revealed that violence crept into men's stories more often when viewing pictures of "affiliation"—the couple sitting on a bench and the trapeze scenes—while the women imagined more violence in the "impersonal situations"—the man alone and the women

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[77] Gilligan, 25-32. This paragraph's description of the "Heinz" experiment is described across several pages of Gilligan. Quotes shown above are on p 26, 28, 29, 29, 32 32, 31, respectively.

[78] Gilligan, 41.

in the lab.[79] The men's stories described intimacy as "a danger of entrapment or betrayal, being caught in a smothering relationship or humiliated by rejection and deceit."[80] The women saw a danger in "isolation" either in actually being alone or in being judged and thereby set apart.[81] In summary, the closer the people the more violent the stories of men; the further apart, the more violent the stories of women. Or, as Gilligan said, men and women see danger in different places: "men in connection, women in separation."[82] These default preferences seem to strongly influence expressions of morality. Interestingly, for the women, that standard of care was so pronounced that they often added the missing net to their stories of the trapeze pair![83] So, in summary, Gilligan suggests that there is a pronounced tendency for men and women to interpret morality differently, and this difference may be rooted in how they instinctively interpret danger or safety in interpersonal situations. [84]

As Gilligan's narrative-based research gradually revealed that men and women frame morality differently, she was able to see how hierarchical organization held to abstract rules of value served to protect men from the personal connection, while nonhierarchical organization supported interconnection for women. She emphasized

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[79] Gilligan, 41.

[80] Gilligan, 42.

[81] Gilligan, 42.

[82] Gilligan, 42.

[83] Gilligan, 43.

[84] Gilligan, this paragraph's description of college-aged student morality testing was discussed at 40-45. Quotes shown above are on 41, 41, 42, 42, 42.

this by saying that since women see relationships in nonhierarchical terms, "relationships, when cast in the image of hierarchy, appear inherently unstable and morally problematic."[85] Herein lies a clue to Sheryl Sandberg's observation that women often exhibit a strange fear of success that sabotages their advancement to the highest corporate offices.[86] This fear appears to be related to the increasing demands of the hierarchical corporate framework at the highest ranks, which clash with a woman's innate drive to inspire cooperation. In the world of *Paradise Lost*, Eve is greatly outnumbered by males, so that her moral paradigm is overwhelmed, dismissed, and discredited, by turns. Before making this point in more detail, a look at the question of "truth" with regard to ranking of these gendered moral patterns is important.

So where is truth in the formulation of morality? Gilligan shares that for Kohlberg, Gandhi was an exemplar of truth and morality. However, Gilligan notes that while Gandhi professed principles of nonviolence and truth based on his own "inner voice," his rigidity often failed what women might see as a basic standard of care.[87] Gandhi himself admitted that he was a "cruelly kind husband" who opened his home to followers at the great discomfort of his wife and family, and his rigid proclaiming of truth—based on his own perspective—has been faulted because, as Erik Erikson

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[85] Gilligan, 62.

[86] Sheryl Sandberg, "Why We Have Too Few Women Leaders," filmed December 2010. *TED video*, 14:43, accessed August 2020, https://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl_sandberg_why_we_have_too_few_women_leaders/up-next?language=en.

[87] Gilligan, 104-05.

pointed out, it "impose[d] his truth on others without awareness of or regard for the extent to which he thereby did violence to their integrity."[88] For Gilligan, a resolution of these ironies could have been found in a "mutuality of respect and care"—a more interconnected, feminine model of morality.[89] In the end, Gilligan suggests that toleration could softens the adherence to absolutes whereby women learn to balance care of others with care of self while men learn that rules are complicated by differences of interpretation between self and others.[90] In this maturing of viewpoints, humans might come to understand that awareness and respect for both models of morality are important when addressing those seemingly unresolvable dilemmas. This perception will also support what I see as Eve's growth and maturity over the course of *Paradise Lost* (to be examined in chapter two).

As Gilligan gradually uncovers the different default positions on morality by men and women, she also comes to validate and champion the caring moral model of women and comes to see vulnerability in masculine hierarchy-based morality. I think Eve plaintively sees the same destabilizing effects of Eden's hierarchy when she realizes "inferior who is free" (IX.825), spoken moments after she eats the fatal fruit. This is surely a pivotal line. It uncovers the irreconcilable clash of two moral systems that must lead to conflict. For Eve, who has been characterized as "Not equal" (IV.296), that line is a turning point. By the time she eats the fruit she has been

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[88] Gilligan, 104.

[89] Gilligan, *Different Voice*, 104. All quotes and information regarding Gandhi and Erickson are shown on p 104.

[90] Gilligan, 104-105.

silenced, trivialized, and tokenized, to contribute only "softness . . . and sweet attractive Grace" (IV.298), while Adam is "For contemplation and . . . valor formd" (IV.297), and it must have been galling. If a moral code is contrived to facilitate peaceful and harmonious community, Eve reveals the crack in the brittle construct of hierarchy. It reminds me of Milton's own gender conflict—a conviction of women's subordinate position and the wish for a *fit* wife who could converse intelligently, discriminatingly with him.

Again, as with the scholars above, in chapter two I will use Gilligan's insights to examine how a subordinated Eve learns to embrace the Gilligan "ethics of care" in order to leave Eden with equality and dignity.[91]

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[91] Gilligan, 30.

Figure 9 *Expansion*, Paige Bradley. Artist writes that "From the moment we are born, the world tends to have a box already built for us to fit inside. . . As long as we don't push on the walls of our surroundings, we may never know how strong we really are." Interestingly, Ms. Bradley's initial version of this sculpture was not cracked. However, the uncracked version was not well received! She felt that curators were looking for "visionary" work rather than general "figurative" work. Bradley felt that the few figurative sculptors remaining were not being encouraged. She wanted to remain in the art world—not teaching—so she took a chance and literally broke with the past: she took the sculpture and "dropped it on the floor," destroying it, then put those pieces back together as shown above! I think she may have been channeling Eve. Sculpture was created in 2004 in bronze, electricity and mixed media, 76x35x7 inches. Located in Fulton-Ferry State Park/Brooklyn Bridge Park. Image accessed January 2021 at https://www.designisthis.com/blog/en/post/expansion-sculpture-paige-bradley.

Conclusion

My first reading of *Paradise Lost* stirred up a welter of emotions: rapture at the language, enchantment at the lyricism, marvel at the breadth, and disquiet at Eve's repeated disparagement. By closely studying the insights of the feminist scholars above, I hope I have laid the groundwork for uncovering the mechanisms of those many twinges of disquiet that women—like me—may feel as they read the many slights to Eve. This disquiet is all the more unsettling because of the many mixed messages—e.g., Eve as subordinate by definition, but not by action. My impression of this often-irreconcilable Eve reminded me of Leonard Cohen's beautiful ballad, "Anthem," where he makes lovely peace with cracked tableaux such as Milton offered. Cohen's refrain is particularly moving:

> Ring the bells that still can ring
> Forget your perfect offering
> There is a crack in everything
> That's how the light gets in[92]

Leonard Cohen explained these lyrics by chiding listeners to resist paralysis of thought and action amidst the world's brokenness. Rather, one should not forget

> . . . the central myth of our culture which is the expulsion from the garden of Eden. This situation does not admit of solution or perfection. This is not the place where you make things perfect … there is a crack in everything that you can put together, physical objects, mental objects, constructions of any kind. But that's where the light gets in.[93]

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[92] Leonard Cohen, "Anthem," Rec. January-June 1992, *The Future*, Columbia, 1992, *Quartz*, Web. 2016, accessed October 2020, https://qz.com/835076/leonard-cohens-anthem-the-story-of-the-line-there-is-a-crack-in-everything-thats-how-the-light-gets-in/. Both commentary and lyrics were retrieved from website shown.

[93] See footnote 129.

With that line, "That's where the light gets in," Cohen helped me to accept and rejoice in the intuition of Eve's acceptance of challenge and triumph over brokenness (her subordination). Or, as Howard Jacobson, writing in *The Independent*, explains, with this line about light coming through the cracks

> At a stroke, weakness becomes strength and fault becomes virtue. I feel as though original sin has just been re-explained to me. There was no fall. We were born flawed. Flawed is how we were designed to be. Which means we don't need redeeming after all. Light? Why go searching for light? The light already shines from us. It got in through our failings.[94]

I agree with Jacobson that fault was already in Eden ahead of the Fall (more of this to come). Chapter two will be a close look at how Eve learns to shines resplendently with that light coming through the cracks.

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[94] Howard Jacobson, "Thanks to Leonard Cohen, I Can See the Light That Slips Through the Crack," *Independent,* accessed November 29, 2008, https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/howard-jacobson/howard-jacobson-thanks-to-leonard-cohen-i-can-see-the-light-that-slips-through-the-crack-1040271.html.

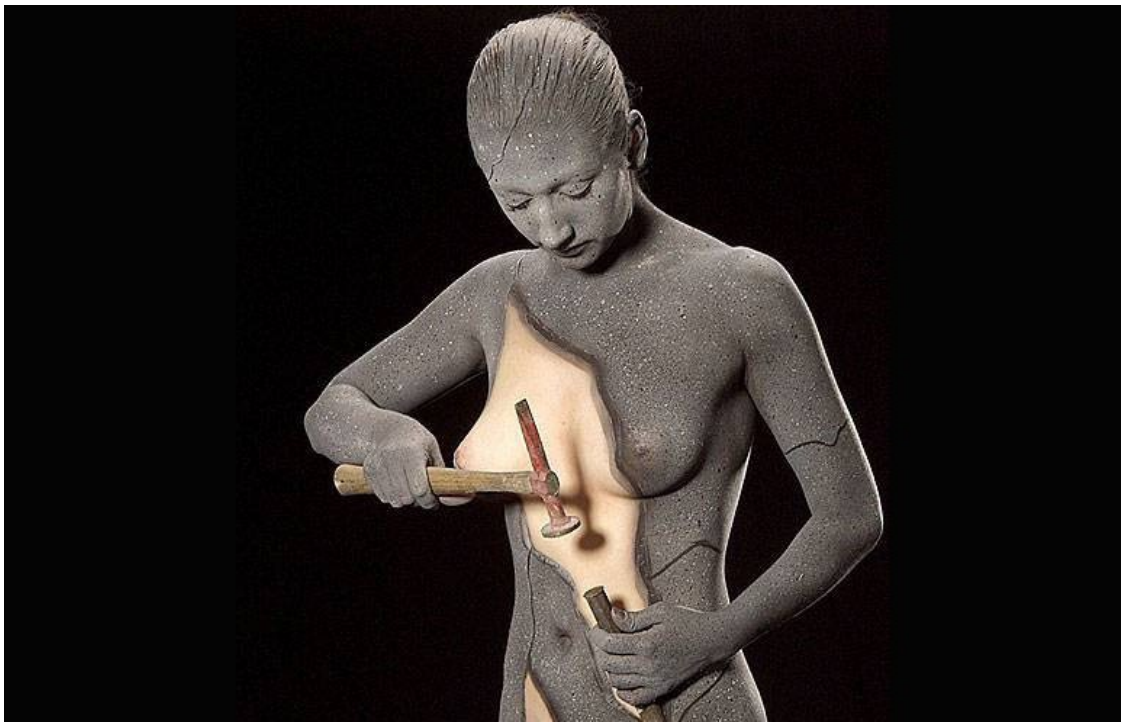

Figure 10 *Chipping Away*, Rich Diltz. Body painter Rich Diltz creates "live sculptures." A blog by Alyssa McGilivery describes beautifully how this figure of a live woman is perhaps symbolic of how women are driven to become a false image of society's expectations. And, while that conformity may avoid conflict, it bars true fulfilment of a woman's humanity. In this work, we watch a woman choosing to chip away the constraints of expectations. Work is human with metal body paint. Date of creation is unknown. Image accessed November 2020 at https://www.pixelle.co/rich-diltz/.

Chapter 2

NONETHELESS
EVE REJECTS LIMITATION

Introduction

If chapter one examined feminist insights that permit identification of Eve's traditional subordination through men's use of language and custom, chapter two will use insights from these same feminists to make a case for Eve's growth over the epic from subordinate to equal—perhaps helping to make the reading of *Paradise Lost* less disturbing for modern feminists. I believe that Eve changed the dynamics of her world, rejecting the received judgment of the males. Her arc of growth mirrors that of so many modern women over the last sixty years of feminism. She starts the epic with seeming acceptance of the status quo, but gradually challenges the structure by first using the language of the men before eventually developing a wholly feminine voice seeking growth and wellbeing for both genders—urging a truly mature and superior social structure beyond the limiting model of patriarchy. The chapter sections below are inspired by some of the positive feminist concepts for growth that the authors of chapter one described. The first section examines Eve through the lens of *conflict*, an inevitable situation in relationships that (when productively wrought) seeks growth and fairness for all parties, but which often (in more unproductive ways) is a threatening proposition and one which both women and men try to avoid. However, Eve gradually learns to face into conflict in a productive manner, to gain a voice, and to propose a more healthy and honest reworking of her partnership with Adam by the end of *Paradise Lost*. Chapter two's second section examines *voice*—which includes ideas such as silencing and trivializing before demonstrating Eve's growth and development of an effective voice. The third topic of chapter two is *fitness*, a concept

that Milton revisits over the course of his life, and which has illuminating relevance for Eve. Finally, chapter two will conclude with both a closing summary and an epilogue. This may seem redundant, but I found that I wanted to make both a summation that was practical (the Conclusion) and lyrical (the Afterward). I had both reactions to Milton and did not want to exclude either. The Afterward, especially, felt intuitive—as if Milton's muse, Urania, granted me a fledgling channel to the transcendent, to catch a whiff of the "empyreal aire" that Milton breathed so deeply from. I have often visualized Milton as almost super-human, a man with a reach that allowed him to scoop deeply from a lofty, rarefied stream of ether. My own faint breath of this air was a joy—may it have captured some hint of my rapture for Milton's great epic. His lines have surely transfixed me—with their unflagging and confounding splendor from beginning to end.

It is this inspiration and sumptuousness that has compelled me to reconcile the many discontinuities of Eve in Milton's epic, and I feel that I have made peace with these cracks. Chapter two has allowed me to uncover a satisfying argument, that reveals an Eve who transforms from subordinate to equal. It is by the light spilling through the Miltonic cracks of Eve's character that this argument has become clear.

Figure 11 *Embrace,* Matt Schultz. Conflict is inevitable for growth, as Jean Baker Miller writes. This sculpture is a dramatic image of conflict. It was shown (and torched) at the Burning Man Festival in 2018. Sculpture was created in wood, 24 meters. Image accessed November 2020 at https://d16kd6gzalkogb.cloudfront.net/magazine_images/Burning-Man-2014-Courtesy-of-Art-Gimbel.jpg.

Conflict

In the patriarchal world of *Paradise Lost*, men are the dominant gender under the terms set by God and happily indulged by all the males; however, this situation based on inequality inevitably creates conflict—for good or bad. Jean Baker Miller writes that conflict can be destabilizing and unhealthy if it is suppressed or mean-spirited, but it is also a necessary component of healthy relationships when undertaken with respect, and can lead to a more truthful, fair relationship. Entering conflict by challenging inequality is often avoided by men who don't wish to stir up questions after giving themselves the preferred jobs, responsibilities, and status; but it is also often avoided by women who either internalize their roles from an early age or fear the label of "substandard" or "defective" should they assert themselves.[95] Eve, with her "softness . . . and sweet attractive grace" (IV.298) seems to accept her "submiss" (IV.81) role without objection early in the epic, but by the time she leaves Eden, she has given voice to healthy conflict that is empowering and which harmonizes with what Carol Gilligan has called the feminine "ethics of care."[96] By the time Eve leaves Eden, the voices of patriarchy may continue to rant, but Eve has stepped outside the welter of their voices and is, instead, guided by a healthy voice within.

Conflict seems invisible in the early Books of *Paradise Lost*, but a "proto-conflict" surfaces in Book V revealing an Eve who gently pushes back against Adam. It is the mildest of conflicts, but it is a start. In this scene, Adam, seeing Raphael's

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[95] Miller, *New Psychology,* 13, 7, 13, 9, 6. The various ideas in the opening sentences of this paragraph are found at the pages indicated.

[96] Gilligan, *Different Voice*, 30, 63.173.

approach, instructs Eve to quickly gather abundant food for a suitably distinguished meal:

> . . goe with speed,
> And what thy stores contain, bring forth and pour
> *Abundance*, fit to honor and receive
> Our Heav'nly stranger . . .and *large* bestow
> From *large* bestowd . . .*not to spare* (V.313-20, italics mine)

Adam is eager to be munificent—not unexpected in a hierarchical society based on ranking which needs outward signs to honor position. It is Eve, however, as Ann Torday Gulden writes, who proves more measured in her plans for the meal, pointing out to Adam that "small store will serve" rather than "abundance" since fruits are ready at hand.[97] She does, however, turn to the garden to accommodate both Adam and their guest by choosing her fare wisely:

> for delicacy best,
> What order, so contriv'd as not to mix
> Tastes, not well joynd, inelegant, but bring
> Taste after taste upheld with kindliest change (V.333-36)

Eve, through her temperance and artfulness, demonstrates both *rational* and *intuitive* ability, subjects that Adam will soon learn about from his "Angel guest" (V.328)—who brings hierarchy to bear even here, saying that rationality is more the realm of man, while intuition is more the realm of angels. Eve, however, uses both types of knowledge, demonstrating talents beyond the rules of received patriarchy, and by using these skills she graciously fulfills Adam's intent to properly entertain Raphael while doing it her way. So, Eve has learned both concrete and abstract lessons through

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[97] Ann Torday Gulden, "Milton's Eve and Wisdom: The 'Dinner-Party' Scene in 'Paradise Lost'." *Milton Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1998): 137-43, accessed October 25, 2020, http://www.jstor.org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/24465079; Milton, "Paradise Lost," V.322.

her own efforts. Interestingly, Gulden, points out that this behavior contradicts one of the epic's earlier apprehensions: "He for God only, she for God in him."[98] As conflicts go, this has been quite mild, but Eve has handled it with finesse.

A more full-throated conflict occurs in the Book IX separation scene, where Eve's methods are a bit defensive, guarded, and recriminative—not exactly an example of healthy conflict. Nevertheless, she is learning to find her voice. The scene occurs the morning after Raphael has exited, and this is important because I suspect—as Jean Gagen does[99]—that Eve probably overheard the angel's parting rebuke of Adam for uxoriousness and for "attributing overmuch to things / Less excellent" (VIII.565-66)—the "thing" that is "less excellent" being Eve herself. Eve suggests this herself saying

> Our ruin, both by thee informd I learne,
> And from the parting Angel over-heard
> As in a shadie nook I stood behind,
> Just then returnd at shut of Evening Flours."[100]

If this is the case, one might understand why Eve, perhaps in a bit of pique, foreswears the flowery language of earlier books and instead addresses Adam briskly with a plan: "Let us divide our labors" (IX.214). She explains that: "Looks intervene and smiles . . . which intermits / Our dayes work brought to little . . . and th' hour of Supper comes unearned" (IX.222-225). This reason for separating seems like a cover for something

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[98] Milton, IV.299; Gulden, "Milton's Eve," 140.

[99] Jean Gagen, "Did Milton Nod?" *Milton Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1986): 17, accessed October 26, 2020, http://www.jstor.org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/24464617.

[100] Milton, "Paradise Lost," IX.275-78. See annotation at IX.276 for "over-heard" which holds that Eve overheard Raphael's warning to Adam about uxoriousness.

more serious. Adam seems to sense a hidden motive as well; but instead of asking directly for a reason, he makes assumptions. And, in contrast to Eve's direct words, Adam is a little fawning in his address: "Sole Eve, Associate sole, to me beyond/ Compare above all living Creatures deare" (IX.227-28). Perhaps he is also feeling contrite over that parting conversation with Raphael. He continues with a clumsy guess that Eve is actually suggesting separation out of excessive wifely concern for him: "nothing lovelier can be found / In Woman, then to study household good, / And good works in her Husband to promote" (IX.232-34)—unfortunately this self-referencing seems a little offensive and entitled. He then dismisses her suggestion by claiming "not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd / Labour" (IX.235-36) before making another guess at her motives saying that "solitude sometimes is best societie" (IX.249). His mind is clearly in a muddle. But, still, he asks no direct question about Eve's motives before continuing with a warning that an opportunistic Satan might find them more vulnerable if they separate. This is a rational and fair concern—but it is enfeebled by the one-sided nature of his conversation. I think Robin Lakoff might point to this passage as an example of "silencing" of women through a combination of "preventing speech" and "misunderstanding."[101] After this, Adam offends with overt patriarchal words blatantly suggesting that Eve is more vulnerable to Satan's wiles than he is himself:

> . . . leave not the faithful side
> That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.
> The Wife, where danger or dishonor lurks,
> Safest and seemliest by her Husband side staies (IX.265-68)

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[101] See footnote 51.

Here Miller might muse on the destructive pattern of dominant voices to assume inborn deficiency of the subordinate voices.[102] For good measure Adam also reminds Eve from whence she came (his rib, presumably?). This conflict, fraught with misunderstanding and slights, is far from a healthy one.

The scene, so far, clearly demonstrates an Eve who is modeling her demands for respect on patriarchal rules which seek power and autonomy, but which fail to elicit equal concern for the other. In answer to Adam's disjointed concerns, Eve is again direct, leaving behind "submiss" (in Milton's terms) for tense assertiveness. She does not back down from Adam, but rather "With sweet austeer composure" (IX.272) tells him that she "over-heard" (IX.276) Raphael's warning of Satan's threat. Then, with true "Virgin Majestie" (IX.270) and spare reply, Eve tells Adam "that thou shouldest my firmness therefore doubt / To God or thee, because we have a foe / May tempt it, I expect not to hear" (IX.279-81), and lest we still question her repudiation of gender inequality, one can only imagine her hauteur as she tells Adam she is not pleased with his misjudgment of her mettle:

> [Satan's] fraud is then thy fear, which plain inferrs
> Thy equal fear that my firm Faith and Love
> Can by his fraud be shaken or seduc't;
> Thoughts, which how found they harbor in thy brest
> Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear? (IX.285-89)

She is clearly expressing irritation with the hierarchy in this passage, but "domestick Adam" (IX.318) has failed to face and denounce this pre-original sin of gender inequality. Eve is not finished. In fact, she is about to make a case for spiritual

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[102] Miller, *New Psychology*, 6.

soldiering straight out of John Milton's *Areopagitica*, which invests her with the terrible majesty of a Biblical warrior. Compare Milton's words:

> I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd vertue, unexercis'd and unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortall garland is to be run for . . .[103]

With Eve's words:

> what is Faith, Love, Vertue unassaid
> Alone, without exterior help sustaind? (IX.335-36)

On the heels of a rational and logical debate, these words demonstrate that Eve possesses those two levels of knowledge—rational and intuitive—which Raphael had apportioned to man and angel, respectively. The rational is obvious from her orderly answers to all Adam's concerns, the intuitive because she is obviously responding to the spiritual voice within which does indeed require an exercised virtue.

So, while Eve has certainly shown immense growth and courage by facing the conflict inherent in Eden's patriarchy, she is still failing to honor an "ethics of care" in this separation scene.[104] For even though Adam failed to ask direct questions which might have led to a more healthy, transparent conversation, Eve, too, failed to ensure that the conversation followed a healthier course. More transparency on her part would have put the conversation on a productive plane. Nevertheless, Eve is learning.

The next conflict will unfold after The Fall, when having indulged "thir fill [of] . . . Loves disport" (IX.1042) they fall into a "grosser sleep" (IX.1049) before awakening with "encumberd" (IX.1051) minds, which will prove a ripe mindset for

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[103] Milton, "Aeropagitica," (see footnote 110).

[104] See footnote 136. "Ethics of care" is a key Gilligan concept.

unhealthy conflict. Adam is quick to blame Eve and to preserve a feeble rectitude rooted in "I told you so" reasoning:

> Would thou hadst heark'nd to my words, and stai'd
> With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
> Desire of wandering this unhappie Morn,
> I know not whence possessed thee (IX.1134-37)

Interestingly, he is now *finally* expressing—directly—that he did not understand why Eve wished to work separately; however, his tone is one of derision and self-defense, the better to distance himself from fault. Eve responds that she had no reason to expect fraud in the serpent, which is surely faulty reasoning in the face of Raphael's warning of impending danger. Then she makes a reasonable—if ill-timed—point: "Was I to have never parted from thy side? / As good [as] a lifeless rib" (IX.1154-55), to which Adam is predictably "incenst" (IX.1162), unloading every manner of zero-sum scolding at "ingrateful Eve" (IX.1164) even whitewashing his own guilt:

> . . what could I more?
> I warn'd thee, I admonish'd thee, foretold
> The danger, and the lurking Enemie
> That lay in wait (IX.1170-73)

Adam continues, making his next attack personal claiming he had "err'd in overmuch admiring / What seemd in thee so perfect" (IX.1178-79). The narrator's final words of Book IX are on point charging that: "neither self-condemning / And of thir vain contest appeer'd no end" (IX.1188-89). Surely this conflict has not been healthy and productive. But, this lesson, too, will prove important in the journey toward productive conflict.

The next conflict occurs after The Son descends to pass judgment on their trespass, and I sense a shift in Eve which might seem a relapse to self-effacement, and which detours dangerously into morbidity briefly, but which also foreshadows

impressive growth: she resists scapegoating and anger and takes right-sized responsibility for her transgression. In contrast, Adam passingly and ingenuously considers undergoing "My self the total Crime, [rather than] accuse / My other self" (X.127-28). But his gallantry is short-lived, and he pitilessly denounces Eve. It is Eve who confesses simply "The Serpent me beguil'd and I did eate" (X.162). There is dignity in accepting responsibility, which Eve demonstrates, and Adam does not.

After the Son leaves, Adam continues to denounce Eve, but she embraces that feminine birthright of interconnection—a Gilligan concept—by asking Adam to "Forsake me not . . .witness Heav'n / What love sincere, and reverence in my heart / I bear thee" (X.914-15). She even pleads "let there be peace," (X.924) graciously accepting responsibility by admitting that while "both [of them] have sin'd, . . . thou / Against God onely, I against God and thee" (X930-31). Gulden points out that this line is a reverse-mirror pattern of Book IV, "Hee for God only, she for God in him" (IV.299), and with it one cannot but sense an important shift. While some might see diminishment here, I do not. Eve is honest about her sin, and it is not weakness to accept rightful responsibility. In fact, this pattern of transparency becomes an important pledge when she tells Adam "Living or dying, from thee I will not hide / What thoughts in my unquiet brest are ris'n" (X.974-75). The blessing of such transparency is felt soon afterward when Adam is able to support Eve's momentary thoughts of suicide at the loss of their happy state. Adam wisely rejects her idea with the reassuring reminder that the Son promised "thy Seed shall bruise / The Serpents head" (X.1030-31) and that even though he (Adam) will "labour [to] earne / My bread" (X.1054-55) and Eve will suffer "Pains . . . in Child-bearing," (X.1051) they will soon, through those children, be "recompenc't with joy" (X.1052). The gifts of

transparency, truth, and healthy conflict are clear. How fitting that the last lines of Book X paint a very different picture from the last lines of Book IX:

> So spake our Father penitent, nor Eve
> Felt less remorse: 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 beg'd with tears
> Watering the ground, and with thir sighs the Air
> Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
> Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek. (X.1097-1104)

No gender inequality here. And interestingly, this passage names Eve while merely describing Adam's position as father (a reverse of the convention observed by Raphael upon his luncheon arrival in Book V.372 and 388). Perhaps Milton intuitively recognizes a changing Eve and instinctively signaled this. For she has developed her feminine drive for interconnectedness and has made the mature, courageous choice to face the truth of her sin. This behavior allows Adam to do the same. Significantly, the pair end this chapter praying together as equals.

The examination of conflict is key to understanding how Eve becomes an equal partner to Adam as they leave Eden. The failure of healthy, transparent, respectful conflict that might have addressed the pre-original sin of gender inequality led directly to The Fall and an Eve who finally reveals her inner anguish that "inferior who is free" (IX.825). But she finds the courage and inner resources to bring good from evil. With this wisdom, though meek appearing, she actually prefigures the model of Christ, whom Michael will teach Adam is "simply meek . . . [which is] fortitude to highest victorie" (XII.569-70).

Figure 12 *Fearless Girl* (with Ruth Bader Ginsburg collar), Kristen Visbal. This popular sculpture, to which someone added a Ruth Bader Ginsburg collar, seems the perfect representation of a strong feminine *Voice*! Statue was created in 2017, bronze, 50 inches, New York City, NY. Image accessed November 2020 at https://www.instagram.com/p/CFZjH67H5gJ/?utm_source=ig_embed.

Voice

As the feminist scholars from chapter one observed, silencing is one of the prime mechanisms of patriarchy, one that I consider part of a larger apparatus—*voice*. I believe that an examination of voice and how it is used and heard by the various characters in *Paradise Lost* is a logical lens through which to observe the gritty workings of gender inequality in Eden, and more pointedly, Eve's growth toward rejection of the same. With this in mind, I will review the effects of characters' voices, along with their "first cause," that is, Milton's own voice as it played out in his life and prose. By the end of this examination, gender paradoxes will become evident: the oft-silenced Eve versus an oft-eloquent Eve, the puffed and self-important male voices versus their oft-flat-footed and destabilizing beliefs. In other words, the overarching paradox is that this prelapsarian world purportedly without sin runs on the sin of pride-fueled patriarchy—pride long held by pious men to be the worst of the cardinal sins![105] This pride-based hierarchical culture is a curse that has followed Adam and Eve out of Eden to this very day. Fortunately, the antidote exited with them as well, catalyzed by Eve's knowledge of good through knowing evil. For as Eve's intuitive sense of worth clashed with the curse of patriarchy, she was able to conceive of that antidote—her steadying inner voice based on the ethic-of-care noted by Gilligan.[106]

Beginning with Adam, various scenes will reveal the use of voice to emphasize two different goals: authority and conversation. First, Adam uses voice to establish

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[105] Kristen Poole (University of Delaware professor and adviser for this thesis), in discussion with author, August 2020. I am grateful to Dr. Poole for pointing out the irony mentioned here.

[106] See footnote 136 (Gilligan).

authority when naming animals, and in the process exhibits powerful "apprehension" of their natures—and his dominant position over them. He also uses voice for conversation when petitioning God to provide fit company—Eve. A comparison of both uses—authority and conversation— suggests that he blurs the line of authority and conversation when speaking with Eve, allowing the stain of hierarchy to damage his relationship with her. In other words, the goals of authority and conversation seem to oppose each other.[107] While Adam was certainly gifted with great intuition regarding the nature of the animals, he seems dismally unable to intuit Eve, even as he assumes that he does. I think this disconnect is a sign that authority over Eve is inappropriate—because fulfilling conversation is only realized between equals. I suspect Milton himself never made peace with this same issue in his personal life, hence it continued apace in his great epic. A review of Adam's voice is made below through close readings of important passages.

Adam's creation scene is a good beginning for examining his use of voice in the service of both authority and conversation. Adam shares his story with Raphael in Book VIII, and it begins with God speaking to Adam in a dream voice. Adam has only just become aware of himself and is understandably perplexed. "[Q]uick instinctive motion" brings him "upright" (VIII.260) whereupon he "perus'd [himself] limb by limb . . . with supple joints" (VIII.267, 269) before exploring his surroundings seeking answers—and a guide. He quickly tires, lies down, and falls into a gentle sleep. In his mind's eye a "shape Divine" (VIII.295) appears, telling him, "call'd by thee I come thy Guide" (VIII.298). The tone is implicitly one of honor, for God claims He has

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[107] Poole, in discussion with author, August 2020.

responded to a direct request—even so, this is undoubtedly a voice of authority. Adam in turn drops "submiss" (VIII.316) in adoration. After God offers Adam all of Eden, He briefly and "sternly" (VIII.333) forbids eating from the "Tree whose operation brings / Knowledge of good and ill" (VIII.323-24). His voice is "dreadful" (VIII.335) in Adam's ear—again, establishing His superior rank. However, God quickly reclaims His "cleer aspect . . . and gracious purpose" (VIII.336-37) and brings the animals, two by two, in procession before Adam, who finds that he can both name each animal and intuitively apprehend "Thir Nature" (VIII.353). Adam's voice is obviously powerful, gifted with what Ruth Rushworth calls "Edenic Language," one that allows Adam to possess "crystalline clarity" in the naming process—similar in kind if not degree to the Son's "speech act," which merges Word and Act in what the Bible describes as the "Word was God."[108] But, again, the message of ranking is clear as Adam is given dominion over all. It is even more clear when Adam realizes there is no fit partner for himself among the creatures of Eden; and with care not to offend his Guide, he points this out. In response God's voice is chiding and coy: "What call'st thou solitude, is not the Earth . . . [filled with creatures] at thy command / To come and play before thee" (VIII.369-72). But Adam presses on, pointing out that as God's "substitute" (VIII.381) on Earth, the animals before him are "farr beneath" (VIII.382) him and cannot provide "societie" (VIII.383). Still, God is ingenuous: "What think's thou then of mee . . . Seem I to thee sufficiently possest / Of happiness, or not? Who am alone" (VIII.403-

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[108] Ruth Rushworth, "Language in 'Paradise Lost'," *Darkness Visible: a Resource for Studying Milton's Paradise Lost*, Christ's College, Cambridge, 2008, accessed February 2020, https://darknessvisible.christs.cam.ac.uk/language.html. This web blog does a beautiful job of explaining the ways Milton used "Edenic Language" and "Fallen Language" in *Paradise Lost*; John 1:1 (NLT)

05). With classic patriarchal disposition, He points out that "Second to mee or like, equal much less. . .To me inferior, *infinite descents* / Beneath what other Creatures are to thee?" (VIII.407, 410-11, italics mine). Adam is dutifully deferential, but "embold'nd spake" (VIII.434), pointing out the flaw in God's logic, noting a basic difference in kind rather than degree: "thou . . . [art] already infinite . . . though One; But Man . . . in unity defective . . . requires / Collateral love" (VIII.419-22, 425-26). With this dutiful fawning by Adam, God finally relents pointing out that he merely intended "trial . . . To see how thou could'st judge of fit and meet" (VIII.447-48). These passages, the first exchanges between God and man, entrench hierarchy—voices are keenly aware of rank. But the crystalline clarity of words, let us not forget, are styled upon Milton's spiritual and cultural norms—paternalistic scripture and paternalistic society (more on this later). Yet, as so many readers have noted, and as we see in the creation scene above, language and discourse must not always be taken at face value—there is often an agenda, often keenly connected to preservation of hierarchy. Voice is intrinsic to understanding hierarchy. But, as Adam has intuited, it is also the basis of conversation in the service of "collateral love." To serve both functions that voice must by turns change to recognize hierarchy and equality.

The next scene, with Eve, will give Adam experience with the importance of voice as conversation and will demonstrate the inherent difference between voice as authority and voice as conversation. Adam's Guide validates his need for fit company, and as Adam, exhausted by his exchange with the transcendent, falls into a lucid sleep, he watches Eve's creation. With Eve's arrival, voice in the service of conversation becomes important—but Adam's former Edenic clarity will fail him in conversation with Eve, where the stain of hierarchy will undermine healthy conversation. Adam is

stupefied by Eve, "lovly faire" (VIII.471), and he despairs when, immobilized by sleep, he watches her disappear from view. But when he awakens, she soon returns with "Grace . . . in all her steps, Heav'n in her Eye, / In every gesture dignity and love" (VIII.488-89). He is confounded by her beauty. Eve pauses at the sight of him, and Adam interprets this pause as "Virgin Modestie" (VIII.501), then intuits that she possesses "conscience of her worth, / That [she] would be woo'd, and not unsought be won" (VIII.502-03), so that when "seeing me, she turn'd" (VIII.507), Adam quickly pursues. With only a small pause, Adam notes that Eve "approv'd [his] pleaded reason" (VIII.509-10). Ten lines—by Adam's account—describe his pursuit and successful winning of a modestly reticent Eve. Adam is captivated by the shy *voicelessness* of her "Virgin Modestie" (501). As he will demonstrate later in the separation scene, Adam does not actually ask questions, he does not know what is in her mind, what caused her to turn away or what caused her to accept him, instead he seems intent on possessing her and supplying his own words—his own *voice*. Also, as my feminist resources have described, Adam expects the coy game of hard-to-get by Eve whose primary offering is beauty, hence his interpretation that she would be "woo'd, and not unsought be won" (VIII.503). Eve's version of her creation will reveal that Adam's Edenic intuition has failed him in understanding her. Conversation requires questioning and listening, the exchange between equals, but Adam has not figured this out, yet.

Even after Eve shares her initial reservations at the sight of Adam, he seems deaf to the information—perhaps because it clashes with his patriarchal scheme of creation. In Book IV, Adam will either forget or brush aside this information when in conversation with Raphael. He will fail to share that Eve gave voice to two competing

ideas when recounting her creation to Adam: his perceived superiority over her, and her initial disappointment with him. I think that Robin Lakoff might see this as silencing through willful misunderstanding or invalidating. As I read Eve's lines, I wondered if her acceptance of Adam as her "Guide / And Head" (IV.442-43) are merely ingratiating words to soften the coming slight. A close look at Eve's version of her creation is appropriate here. She begins her story as she also awakens from sleep, "wondring where / And what I was" (IV.451-52). However, instead of waking to the sun, as Adam did, she is in shade—perhaps a Miltonic signal that she ranks below Adam? Hearing a "murmuring sound / Of waters" (IV.453-54) she peers into the still lake to see a "Shape . . . Of sympathy and love" (IV.461, 465) which captivates her. Barbara Lewalski notes that Eve "oft remembered" (IV.449) those moments—perhaps with special appreciation for these pre-patriarchal moments.[109] Breaking her concentration, a voice calls her away and "invisibly thus led" (IV.476) she is brought to Adam. Interestingly, at no time is she honored with a vision of her Guide—perhaps another patriarchal reminder that she is less important than Adam? But, moving on, her first impressions of Adam is that he is "[l]ess faire / Less winning soft, less amiablie milde" (IV.478-79); and she turns back toward that gracious watery image. So, Eve has been clear about her ambivalence to Adam, while Adam has failed to hear it. This suggests that perhaps Adam's Edenic clarity collapses when the voice as authority clashes with the voice as conversation, at least with Eve. For me the idea of authority precludes true conversation—i.e., connection. Adam must learn that voice in

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[109] Lewalski, *Milton*, 482.

the service of authority is for the beasts under his purview; but voice as conversation with Eve requires an acknowledgement of equality.

The next important example of voice occurs when Raphael arrives with orders from God to "converse with Adam" (V.230). As another male, Raphael will continue the dismissive treatment of Eve—and his exceedingly brief conversation with her will reflect voice as authority. When Raphael arrives, Adam is sitting in the doorway of his bower. Seeing Raphael, Adam instructs Eve to "goe with speed" (V.313) to prepare a meal for their guest—certainly a dominant voice. When Raphael arrives, giving Eve a cursory greeting, praising her "fruitful Womb" (V.388) which shall fill the world with sons, he then turns away from her to spend the next four books of the epic conversing with Adam. Interestingly, Raphael, while preaching the superiority of angelic intuition, is blind to Eve's own intuition and worth—suggesting a failing of his own intuition, or, again, the inability of voice to blend both authority and conversation. His admonishment of Adam for "attributing overmuch" (VIII.565) to Eve will help to set up Eve's rebellion which precipitates the separation scene and the Fall to come. Eve is silent throughout the masculine conversation—and that silencing is a classic Lakoff mechanism of diminishment. However, Eve is nearby and listening; she may not have a voice at this table, but she can hear—much as Mary Wollstonecraft listened in Enlightenment salons. And now it is time for the separation scene.

As the separation scene has been covered at length above, I will add only that from the perspective of voice, Eve proves no cypher in a debate. She may have been silenced over the course of Raphael's visit, but she heard a lot, and this woman who is lauded for her "Beauty and submissive Charms" (IV.498) will prove, as Adam noted to Raphael, that she possesses "conscience of her worth" (VIII.502) and that

> Wisdom in discourse with her
> Looses discount'nanc't, and like folly shewes;
> Authority and Reason on her waite,
> As one intended first, not after made . . . (VIII.552-55)

She certainly demonstrates this "Authority and Reason" when suggesting they separate for a morning's work. She masterfully lays out her case setting Adam back on his heels defensively. In the end Eve leaves "domestick Adam" (IX.318). Eve has won the debate with no inferior voice. The final reminder of Eve's masterful voice in debate with Adam, as I mentioned in an earlier section of this paper, is her echo of Milton's voice from *Areopagetica* which compels a Christian soldier to test "Faith, Love, Verture" actively. Eve's voice is certainly equal to any man's, including Milton's.[110]

The use of voice throughout *Paradise Lost* cannot be understood without examining Milton's cultural beliefs—particularly regarding voice applied to the importance of conversation between spouses. In Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, he is clear "that in Gods intention a meet and happy conversation is the chiefest and noblest end of marriage."[111] But, again, the stain of hierarchy appears to degrade conversation. Milton's own personal experience with marriage bears striking parallels to Adam's experience with Eve. Milton's first wife abandons him soon after marriage, much as Eve initially turns away from Adam. In his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton raises arguments for the lawfulness of divorce saying that marriage

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[110] Milton, IX.335. Compare Eve's quote with Milton's in *Areopagitica* at footnote 149.

[111] Milton, "Divorce, Book I." See footnote 40 for expanded reference.

was intended for the "*solace* and delight of man."[112] Adam uses similar language when pleading for Eve to return:

> . . . Return faire Eve,
> . . . to have thee by my side
> Hencefoth an individual *solace* dear;
> Part of my Soul I seek thee, and thee claim
> My other half . . . (IV.481, 485-88)

Further, the *Doctrine* links both the importance of conversation with the clear message that wives are subservient to husband—goals that I hope I have shown to be contradictory.

> For although God in the first ordaining of marriage, taught us to what end he did it, in words expresly implying the apt and cheerfull *conversation* of man with woman, to comfort and refresh *him* against the evil of solitary life . . .[113]

Both Milton and Adam have a rather self-centered idea regarding marriage. Adam "claim[s]" Eve for "solace" (IV.486); Milton writes that God ordained a wife as "comfort . . . against a solitary life"—both with supremely dominant voices. And yet, both men are initially thwarted in their goal. For Eve finds Adam "less faire" (IV.478) and turns back toward her own image; and Mary Powell, for reasons never revealed, abandons Milton. Both women demonstrate a sense of self awareness and the lack of a need for the very companionship each man considered essential for himself. Even Adam eventually admits to Raphael that Eve seems more "compleat" (VIII.548) in herself. And perhaps it is a similar awareness goading an indignant Milton to immerse himself in the writing of *Doctrine of Discipline of Divorce*, aware that his own

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[112] Milton (italics mine).

[113] Milton, "Divorce," Book I, (italics mine).

inexperience with women led to this embarrassment. I suspect both men were unable to admit the insult to their pride. Both men recharacterized or selectively forgot their wives' lack of initial enchantment—how could a fault lie with them? Clearly hierarchy and conversation cannot coexist peacefully.

This examination of voice highlights the evidence of an Eve who is no inferior to the males of *Paradise Lost*, for all the reasons noted above. Voice illuminates the curse of hierarchy driven by the wheel of masculine pride that cuts so surely at Eve's dignity. The male use of voice in the service of authority clashes with that voice in the service of conversation with Eve, and that denigration of Eve made the Fall inevitable as it made Eve's intuitive growth toward expressed equality necessary. As she was the only female in her ambit, there could only have been intuition guiding her. When Eve recovers her poise after the Fall, taking responsibility for her sin and aligning herself with an uncertain future at Adam's side, she does so as an equal. I sense that Milton himself did not overtly understand this, but, with Urania's guidance, the evidence is there for each reader to discover.

Figure 13 *Dignity*, Dale Lamphere. The artist was inspired to honor the native populations of South Dakota saying "The diversity we have in South Dakota is a strength. The more we look at it that way, the more inclusive we are, the better we will be." I think Milton's prelapsarian world would have benefited by embracing the diversity brought by Eve. Statue was created in 2016, stainless steel, 50x32 feet. Located in Chamberlain, SD. Image accessed November 2020 at https://t-ec.bstatic.com/images/hotel/max1280x900/183/183149049.jpg.

Fitness

The concept of fitness is one that Milton revisits often in both prose and rhyme. It is a term that harmonizes with the demands of my chapter one feminists who sought new definitions of worth for the advancement of women's liberty. For Milton, liberty was an inseparable aspect of fitness since liberty through self-government earned by intellectual and spiritual development were the bedrock upon which fitness was built. I see a direct parallel between second-wave feminism's demand for liberty and autonomy and Milton's ideal of fitness as the bedrock for self-fulfillment and competence. But, again, Milton's culture of patriarchy seems to have prevented him from reconciling the need for freedom, equality, and education for women—and his Eve suffers in consequence.

Milton's use of fitness conjures political as well as spiritual considerations, which sets up an irony with respect to Eve in Paradise. But, to start, regarding political fitness Milton exhorts rationality, civic duty, and education—which he hoped would flourish after King Charles I was overthrown by Oliver Cromwell. This public aspect of fitness was under enormous strain as Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* because Cromwell's republican commonwealth of England—with its promise of liberty through a self-governing citizenry—had failed, and Charles II had returned to England as King. Therefore, inevitably, signs of a disheartened Milton are clear throughout his epic, perhaps most clearly in the Argument of Book VII where he appeals to his muse Urania to "fit audience find, though few." Warren Chernaik suggests that with this line, Milton reveals that his "confidence in the people themselves decreases, [and] he

[Milton] increasingly depends on divine aid to find or create that fit audience."[114] With regard to Eve's cultural fitness, she is obliged to follow the ideal submissive female model, and she appears to fulfill this expectation as her story begins. But, that second aspect of fitness—the spiritual—requires that Eve seek God's will for herself. These two goals, the civic and spiritual, will inevitably be at loggerheads for Eve in *Paradise Lost*, since Milton expects Eve to seek God through Adam. Eve will break that loggerhead by prioritizing God-directed fitness above patriarchy-received fitness. Milton's epic provides numerous discontinuities with respect to a fit Eve, which suggests Milton was trying to force fit mutually conflicting paradigms.

Before closely analyzing fitness with regard to Eve, a review of Milton's "evolving concept of a fit audience" is important.[115] Therefore, close attention will be given to fitness in his tracts from *Reason of Church-Government Urged Against Prelacy* (1642) and *Of Education* (1644) to *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660) before addressing Eve's relationship with it. In the earliest of these tracts, *The Reason of Church Government Urg'd Against Prelaty,* Milton argues that the elaborate structure of Prelaty with its ceremony, costume, and law is tyranny that "opposeth the reason and end of the Gospel."[116] Already he is

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[114] Warren Chernaik, "Milton's "Fit Audience"," *Milton Studies* 60, no. 1 (2018): Abstract, doi:10.1353/mlt.2018.0014.

[115] Chernaik, Abstract.

[116] John Milton "The Reason of Church Government Urg'd Against Prelaty," *The John Miton Reading Room*, edited by Thomas H. Luxon, Book II, accessed August 2020, http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton.

concerned with liberty of thought. Also important is a reminder that Christ came to earth and did "the work of the Gospel . . . [taking] upon him the form of a servant . . . which form Christ thought *fittest*, that he might bring about his will."[117] With these ideals—liberty and humility—he argues against the control of bishops and their self-serving power-seeking. In *Of Education*, his pamphlet outlining the best practices for tutoring young men, Milton writes

> I call therefore a compleat and generous Education that which *fits* a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and publick of Peace and War.[118]

In the same pamphlet he writes that only at the latest stage in the education process are students ready for the "organic arts"—logic, rhetoric, poetry—which requires "men to discourse and write perspicuously, elegantly, and according to the *fitted* stile of lofty, mean, or lowly."[119] In *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth,* Milton addresses the Parliament urging them to repudiate a return to monarchy after a decade of free Commonwealth. He makes clear his belief in rule by educated citizens (men) and describes the requirements that make them fit:

> To make the people *fittest* to chuse, and the chosen *fittest* to govern, will be to mend our corrupt and faulty education, to teach the people faith not without vertue, temperance, modestie, sobrietie, parsimonie, justice; not to admire wealth or honour; to hate turbulence and

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[117] Milton, Book II.

[118] Milton, "Of Education," (italics mine).

[119] Milton, (italics mine).

> ambition; to place every one his privat welfare and happiness in the public peace, libertie and safetie.[120]

He calls these *fit* citizens "keepers of our libertie," and without these educated citizens, governmental organization leaves citizens "prepar'd for new slaverie."[121]

In all these tracts Milton is clear that fitness is a blend of honor, education, and most importantly, adherence to God's laws. He also emphasizes the humility of the Son. By the time Milton writes his grand epic, this lofty goal of *fitness* becomes an important concept throughout and is exhibited in ways that produce the many paradoxes of patriarchy—especially the clash of prideful ranking versus spiritual humility, or the clash between a personal relationship with God versus expectation that Eve would find God through Adam. Nevertheless, Eve, in spite of being ranked below all the masculine voices, exhibits all the qualities of fitness described by Milton in his various tracts, particularly humility.

With Book VIII's Argument, fitness is spotlighted when Milton writes that Adam will "talk with God . . . concerning solitude and fit society." That story will reveal a keen need for:

> . . . fellowship . . .
> . . . fit to participate
> All rational delight, wherein the brute
> Cannot be human consort (VIII.389-92)

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[120] John Milton, "The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth," *The John Miton Reading Room*, edited by Thomas H. Luxon, accessed August 2020, http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton, (italics mine).

[121] Milton, "Readie Way."

Adam surely is looking for an equal partner, and God Himself reveals that his earlier chiding of Adam to settle for animal companionship was merely a test "to try thee" (VIII.437). Even God admits that he intended to bring Adam "Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self" (VIII.450). The Dartmouth website, *The John Milton Reading Room*, annotates this passage by explaining how Milton's *Doctrine of Discipline of Divorce* (1644) asserts that through marriage "God's intention [was to provide] a meet and Happy conversation . . . the chiefest and the noblest end of marriage."[122] When Adam first spies Eve, his instinctive reaction can leave doubt that he intuitively considers her an equal:

> . . . I now see
> Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh, my Self
> Before me; Woman is her Name, of Man
> Extracted; . . .
> And they shall be one Flesh, one Heart, one Soule. (VIII.494-97, 499)

I can only read equality in this description "one Flesh, one Heart, one Soule." That said, patriarchy rears its head soon after this when Adam considers that perhaps Eve was too much ornament, not enough substance:

> . . . on her bestow'd
> Too much of Ornament, in outward shew
> Elaborate, of inward less exact.
> For well I understand in the prime end
> Of Nature her th' inferior, in the mind
> And inward Faculties, which most excell,
> In outward also her resembling less
> His Image who made both, and less expressing
> The character of that Dominion given
> O're other Creatures (VIII.537-46)

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[122] Milton, VIII, 450, see live annotation link for "fit help, thy other self."

Is he attempting to intuit Eve's Nature as he did the animals? If so, as I argued above (see *Voice* section), I do not believe Adam's gift with animals can be transferred to Eve. In fact, it explicitly clashes with that Edenic, patriarchal intuition applied to the animals. Even Adam realizes there is a war waging between received cultural patriarchy and conversational requirements. In response to Raphael's diminishment of Eve, Adam seems on the threshold of understanding that she is meant for understanding through conversation—not through use of hierarchical gifts such as those given to him over the animals. He considers how Eve defies subordinate ranking:

> . . . yet when I approach
> Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
> And in her self compleat, so well to know
> Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
> Seems wisest, vertuousest, discreetest, best (VIII.546-59)

I sense that Adam's received knowledge of Eve's subordination is based only on masculine habits of mind—much like Carol Gilligan found when investigating Lawrence Kohlberg's scale of moral development, based only on a male cohort! I believe that just as, over time, Gilligan was able to demonstrate that women's "ethics of care" was an equal but different version of moral worldview and wisdom, Adam's warring opinions about Eve will yield by the end of the epic to an understanding of her equal, but different, contribution to humanity.[123]

When Raphael continues to repudiate Adam's uxoriousness, Adam is "abash't" (VIII.595) but compelled to rebut the angel. Adam admits Eve's intuitive awareness of Gilligan's "ethics of care" saying:

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[123] See footnote 136. "Ethic of care" is a key Gilligan concept.

From all her words and actions mixt with Love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of Mind, or in us both one Soule;
Harmonie to behold in wedded pair
More grateful then harmonious sound to the eare.
Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose
What inward thence I feel, *not therefore foild*,
Who meet with various objects, from the *sense*
Variously representing; yet still free
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
To Love thou blam'st me not, for love thou saist
Leads up to Heav'n, is both the way and guide (VIII.602-13, italics mine)

This same dilemma for Adam is even more clear when Eve uses those most rarefied skills: "organic arts" (logic, rhetoric, poetry) which requires "men to discourse and write perspicuously, elegantly, and according to the *fitted* stile of lofty, mean, or lowly."[124] She clearly bests Adam in debate during the separation scene using these "organic arts." If Milton intends a subordinate Eve, why permit her to use the most elevated of skills? Again, he seems trapped between two warring standards—patriarchy and spirituality.

But, perhaps even more important than those elevated skills, Eve demonstrates what Michael will teach Adam is the proper—fittest—model for the wayfaring Christian, what Milton considered the prime purpose of education: "to repair the ruins of our first Parents by regaining to know God aright . . . to love him, to imitate him, to be like him."[125] Adam begins to realize this as Michael brings the lessons of Book XII to an end:

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[124] Milton, "Of Education," (italics mine).

[125] Milton.

> . . . by things deemd weak
> Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
> By simply meek; that suffering for Truths sake
> Is fortitude to highest victory . . . (XII.567-70)

Eve has demonstrated this humility as well as the Gilligan "ethics of care" throughout the epic, perhaps most conspicuously after the Fall when she accepts responsibility for her transgression and seeks to make amends—even as Adam boorishly betrays her sin to the Son.[126] Then, by the end of Book XII, we find that while Adam has been instructed by Michael, God has spoken to Eve in a dream, so that she is calm and girded for the many challenges ahead. By the epic's end, I am convinced that Eve has demonstrated, heroically and intuitively, and *alone* (without the support of any female cohort) the sort of fitness Milton sought for a truly *fit* citizen of the world. As Milton's epic winds down, as I consider the evidence of a noble Eve in the face of her many slights, I am reminded of Jean Baker Miller's thoughts on Milton's uneasy, conflicting treatment of Eve: "Men too have sensed, in their own way, that they are attempting to be 'fit in an unfit fitness'."[127]

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[126] See footnote 136. "Ethics of care" is a key Gilligan concept.

[127] Miller, *New Psychology*, 131.

Figure 14 *La Conversación,* Étienne Pirot. Joyful conversation, nose-to-nose intimacy, rapt attention—can these be had in the absence of equality? Statue is bronze and of unknown date and height. Located in Havana, CU. Image accessed November 2020 at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2b/%27La_Conversación%27_by_Étienne_Pirot_%28Etienne%29%2C_Plaza_de_San_Francisco%2C_Havana.JPG.

Conclusion

I hope that after reading these musings on Eve, readers—especially women, like me—can make peace with the disquiet that niggles at the feminine soul as one reads the many patriarchal slights to Eve in this sumptuous epic. I know that with this search, I have made peace with the attempted diminishment of Eve. I see a woman who courageously found her voice alone amidst an avalanche of masculine dismissal. Modern sisterhood certainly understands the challenge of resisting received patriarchy, so to watch Eve, alone among males, find her voice and dignity is something I recognize as wondrous. The key to finding peace as I read was to recognize that patriarchy is merely fueled by ego and pride and is unworthy of humanity. Eve, without the aid of other women, intuits this as she grows throughout the epic. She is surely the protofeminist for us all. I can now read *Paradise Lost* without those uncomfortable twinges, knowing that Milton, because of his transcendent genius, and because of Urania's influence, was helpless but to capture all the contours of truth, allowing Eve to leave Paradise as the fit woman that his own heart craved—in spite of his cultural conditioning.

Figure 15 Unknown Title and Sculptor. I sense the Garden has found her voice in this photo. Image accessed November 2020 at https://www.pinterest.com/pin/376121006351219470.

EPILOGUE

As I wind down, I have one last observation that might reconcile the paradoxes of Eve and ratify her equality and dignity, putting to rest any idea of inferiority, in spite of the many masculine diminishments. This argument will require a leap of fancy, the willingness to consider the importance of another "character" with very feminine characteristics: the Garden. This "irriguous . . . enameled . . . ambrosial" backdrop for Milton's grand epic seems almost to act as a vastly patient observer; yet it (she) is another fertile, nurturing entity. This character may hold the final key to understanding the many paradoxes of Eve—where good and evil combine to a rational and intuitive end.

The Garden is pervasive; and after a first read of *Paradise Lost*, the idealization of Eden imbues all impressions of Adam and Eve with glossy perfection. This Garden, with its "odorous Gumms and Balme . . . Flours of all hue . . . umbrageous Grots and Caves . . . [and] mantling vine" lifts a reader rapturously so that spirits soar high above Eden's canopy. Samuel Johnson captured the impact of Milton's poetry perfectly:

> He [Milton] sometimes descends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace; but his natural port is gigantic *loftiness*. He can please when pleasure is required; but it is his peculiar power to astonish.[128]

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[128] Samuel Johnson, "John Milton," *Lives of the English Poets* (1779-81); ed. Hill (1905) 1:84-194. Accessed November 2, 2020, http://spenserians.cath.vt.edu/BiographyRecord.php?action=GET&bioid=35811 (italics mine).

And as I read this quote, "Lofty" is a word that particularly speaks to me. I have always admired people who see the world from an aerial, upper-canopy view. They see the big picture. I, on the other hand, as an enthusiastic gardener, am more naturally an understory viewer, even more naturally, a ground gazer! So, after initially being lifted on high with rapture at Milton's stunning Eden, I started—as is my nature—falling closer to earth, to again find solid ground.

For a garden, of course, the ground is vitally important; it is the foundation of life. Milton would have been aware of this and the vast trove of literature on soil management by classical authors from Vergil (a man particularly admired by Milton) to his own contemporaries. This awareness gave Milton another tool for investing Eden with purity—by using antique Latin terms to connote that purity. He would have taken from Vergil's *Georgics* a conviction that *labor* was the vital ingredient for husbandry, and in prelapsarian Eden *manuring* would have referred, delicately, to this manual labor alone, for the word itself comes from the Latin *mainoverer*, meaning to work or till the land, or from *manus* meaning hand.[129] Crasser references to manuring with animal waste were probably not intended ahead of the Fall.[130] When Adam, in Book IV, muses to Eve that their "scant manuring" (IV.628), of Eden will need more hands to contain Eden's "wanton growth" (IV.629), he intends only this idea of

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[129] *Oxford English Dictionary* (Online), 3d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, September 2020), s.v. "manure." Accessed at https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/113792?isAdvanced=false&result=2&rskey=LA33kg&. Note that variations include "mainoverer."

[130] David B. Goldstein, "Manuring Eden: Biological Conversions in *Paradise Lost*," in *Ground-Work: English Renaissance Literature and Soil Science*, edited by Hillary Eklund, 171, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2017.

manure in its purest sense.[131] From the authors closer to Milton's time, he would have learned about regeneration of depleted soil, through addition of noxious refuse. David Goldstein believes that this sense of manuring does not become important until after the Fall, when "draff and filth" (X.630) first appear in the world.[132] So, the garden now requires a new mechanism, and according to Regina Schwartz, "Those sent by Satan to pollute are ultimately employed in the divine service to clean," and while the filth brought by Satan, Sin, and Death are destructive to purity, in the Fallen world they are turned to the service of nourishment.[133] Goldstein suggests that "If God is the great gardener, Satan is the great manurer, a role both unfortunate and essential" in the fallen world.[134] But, there is more to this simple read of a pre-Fall purity and a post-Fall need for ordure. Just as I cannot claim a submissive Eve as an ideal, I cannot see this manually manured garden as a simple ideal. The truth for both Eve and the Garden is more complicated—both are straining for something more ahead of the Fall.

When Milton differentiates his prelapsarian pure Garden with a postlapsarian tainted Garden, I see a parallel to his ideal of a submissive Eve versus the confident Eve who leaves Eden as an equal. Milton may wish for archetypical ideals, may write beautifully and persuasively about them, but even his protean gifts cannot make truth

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[131] Milton, "Paradise Lost," IV.628-629; Goldstein, *Manuring*, 171.

[132] Goldstein, 177.

[133] Regina Schwartz, *Remembering and Repeating*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 16, quoted in Goldstein, *Manuring*, 177.

[134] Goldstein, 177.

out of falsehood. The pre-original sin of patriarchy was built into the prelapsarian Eden, so too was imbalance built into the garden in the form of proto-filth, the surging tendency to overgrowth—a swaggering sense of overreach—and didn't Raphael warn against overreach when telling Adam to "be lowlie wise" (VIII.173)? Overgrowth can be just as noxious as excremental amendments. Try as Milton might, I hold that, just as in my own garden, the headway advance of July growth becomes smothering, unattractive, and self-defeating to healthy growth: plants grow leggy and go to seed without constant attention. When I read of the hard work of containing Eden's growth, I see the urgency of something fighting against the glossy ideal. Milton again paints a lovely picture, but underneath is truth that defies an ideal. Just as Eve refuses to be the picture of submission, the garden's exuberant growth does not submit to Milton's fastidious ideal.

This straining against submission by Eve and the garden finds voice at the critical point of the Fall. Both female characters are replete with offerings that are too large to be contained by Milton's ideals. When Eve eats the forbidden fruit and claims "inferior who is free" (IX.825), she gives voice to the sin of patriarchy, and the garden echoes her by "sighing through all her works" (IX.783).[135] Eve has just claimed her patrimony –and interestingly, it is "patrimony," meaning a claim of inheritance, rather than "matrimony" meaning the state of being married![136] I am reminded of my

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[135] Milton, "Paradise Lost," IX.825, 783.

[136] *Oxford English Dictionary* (Online), 3d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, September 2020), s.v. "patrimony, matrimony," Accessed at https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/113792?isAdvanced=false&result=2&rskey=LA33kg&.

comparison of definitions for *man* and *woman* noted in the introduction of this thesis. Robin Lakoff would surely point out here that "language uses us as much as we use language."[137] So, fallenness has already been a part of ideal Eden. It is the poison of inferiority that impels Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and the Garden winces in understanding. Adam, from afar, hears "the faultring measure" (IX.846) as Eve eats the forbidden fruit, perhaps, a suitable rebuke of Adam by the other female figure of *Paradise Lost*, the garden, for deigning to consider her more Eve's realm than his own, that is, another relegation of female character to a subordinate position. When Adam, too, eats the forbidden fruit I hear an angry garden, who like Eve, knows that sin and filth were always part of Eden, but only the most violent of outburst could overthrow so inborn a sin as patriarchy.

> Earth trembl'd from her entrails, as again
> In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan,
> Skie lowr'd and muttering Thunder, som sad drops
> Wept at compleating of the mortal Sin . . . (IX.1000-03)

Milton surely did not intend the reading I offer here. But, as he said himself, "Truth may be on this side, or on the other, without being unlike herself."[138] With the passage above, Milton undoubtably sees the Garden's reaction as an echo of patriarchal dudgeon in response to sin. Instead, I see a Garden crying in pain, bursting beyond the bounds of patriarchy, in unison with Eve.

For me, the female voice is compelling, and it ensures that when Eve leaves the Garden behind, both she and the Garden have made their point that feminine

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[137] Lakoff, *A Woman's Place*, 39.

[138] Milton, "Areopagitica."

nurturing voices are never subordinate. Both have demonstrated that in their quiet support and contribution they have fulfilled what archangel Michael impresses upon Adam: "Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise / By simply meek. . . Is fortitude to highest victory" (XII.568-70). Or, as Adam Grant learned, "Humility isn't having a low opinion of yourself. One of its Latin roots means 'from the earth.' It's about being grounded."[139] I conclude with the thought that The Garden offered this vital lesson on "grounding," exhibited so singularly by Eve who leaves Eden a woman of value and dignity—free at last. And, I believe we feminist readers can, at last, find similar peace when reading Milton's sumptuous epic.

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[139] See footnote 11.

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