Paradise Lost Study Guide

Paradise Lost by John Milton

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BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Paradise Lost, one of the greatest poems in the English language, was first published in 1667. Milton had long cherished the ambition to write the definitive English epic, to do for the English language what Homer and Virgil had done for Greek and Latin, and what Dante had done for Italian. He had originally planned to base his epic on the Arthurian legends, which were the foundational myths for English nationalism, but later turned his attention to more universal questions. He decided to focus on the foundational myth of humanity itself, the Genesis account of creation and fall. It was an ambitious project, for Milton was determined to attempt "things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme," and his success is indicated by the esteem in which the poem is held to this day.

Milton's epic poem received mixed reactions in the seventeenth century, and, over the years, has continued to arouse both praise and blame. Yet, its admirers have always been more numerous that its detractors. The poem has influenced many authors and artists, from John Dryden to William Blake, Mary Shelley to Philip K. Dick, C. S. Lewis to Gene Roddenberry. Aside from the sheer beauty of its language and the power of its characterization, the subject matter of the poem has continued to absorb readers of every generation. Milton does not hesitate to ask the most difficult of questions: If the world was created by a good, just, and loving God, why is there little evidence of goodness and justice in the world? What does it mean for humankind to be created in the image of that God, and how does humanity endure in a fallen world? It is this aspect of the poem which will continue to enthral readers, as they continue to ask the same difficult questions and turn for answers to Milton's exploration of one of the foundational myths of Western culture.

Author Biography

The first stage of Milton's literary career began in 1625, when he entered Christ's College, Cambridge, where he studied until 1632. He seems not to have been very popular with his fellow students or his professors, and on one occasion he was "sent down" for a fight with a tutor, but was allowed to return. Milton seems to have spent the years between 1632 (when he completed his Master's degree) and 1637 in private study at his father's country home near Windsor. Following this, he travelled in France and Italy (1638-1639), and many of the descriptions in *Paradise Lost* (such as the description of Hell) reflect things which he saw on these travels. Poems from this period include "Prolusions," "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" (1629), "Comus" (1634), and "Lycidas" (1639), a poem based on the death of a fellow student, Edward King.

The second stage of Milton's career began in 1640, when he returned to England to teach his nephews. This stage of Milton's life was marked by controversy and civil unrest in England. In 1642 civil war broke out between the Puritan Roundheads and the Royalist supporters of Charles I. Milton was involved in many of the religious and political controversies of his day, and many of his prose works (both in English and Latin) date from the years between 1641 and 1660. His devotion to the principles of Oliver Cromwell's Commonwealth (as well as many of the themes and motifs which would later dominate *Paradise Lost)* are evident in the many pamphlets he penned during this period.

In 1642 Milton married Mary Powell, but the marriage was a failure and she seems to have left him within months of the wedding, not to return until 1645. His two daughters, Anne and Mary, were born after their reconciliation.

In 1649 Charles I was executed and Cromwell's Commonwealth seemed secure. In March of that year, Milton was appointed Secretary in Foreign Tongues to the Council of State (a kind of foreign-affairs minister). Charles I's death was highly controversial both in England and Europe, and in October Milton published *Eikonoklastes,* in which he defended Cromwell's actions. In 1651, responding to further European criticism of Cromwell's regime, he published his first *Defensio pro populo Anglicano (The Defence of the People of England).* The year 1651 also saw the birth of his only son, John.

The following year was one of tragedy for Milton. Within days of the birth of his third daughter, Deborah, his wife died, and a month later his son John also died. To compound the tragedy, his eyesight, weak since 1644, failed completely and he became totally blind. One can only imagine how devastating this must have been for a poet whose work is as dominated by vivid visual imagery as is Milton's.

In 1656, Milton married his second wife, Kathe-nne Woodcock, who died less than two years later. Over the next few years, Milton published a number of tracts which reflect his deep concern for church government and the abuses therein.

Following the Restoration in 1660, Milton was placed for a time under house arrest, but was released within six months. This begins the third and final stage of Milton's literary career. Retired from public life, in 1663 he married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshul, and in 1667, he published the first edition of*Paradise Lost'm* ten books. Although much of the material subsequent to the fall is missing from this edition, the concern to "justify the ways of God to man" is evident, as is Milton's conviction that, despite the fall of the Commonwealth and the Restoration of the monarchy, political justice can be achieved in this world. Between 1670 and 1673 he published several of his greatest works, including *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes.* Only months before his death, he published *Paradise Lost, A Poem in Twelve Books,* the complete edition of his epic. He died on November 8, 1674, and was buried in St. Giles, Cripplegate, London.

Plot Summary

Book I

Book I introduces the main subject matter of the poem: the creation, fall, and redemption of the world and humankind. Milton invokes the aid of the muse and the Holy Spirit as he sets out to perform "Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme," and, through the medium of the epic, to "justify the ways of God to men." In true epic style, Milton begins his story in mid-action *(in medias res),* after the great battle in Heaven and the fall of the rebel angels. The poem thus introduces its readers first to Satan, the cause of the fall of humankind, at the moment following his own first fall into Hell. Satan and his angels are described lying on a lake of fire in a place where flames cast no light, but only "darkness visible." Satan is the first to rise and, using his great spear as a walking stick, limps to the shore. He then awakens his legions, addressing them in a stirring speech and rousing them to action. He informs them of his hope of regaining Heaven and of the rumor of a new world to be created which they might yet make their own, if heaven be closed to them. He determines to call a full council and sets his host to work to build a suitable palace from which to rule Hell. The result of their efforts is Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, and there the angels of Hell enter to begin their council.

Book II

Book II recounts the council of the demons and their deliberations concerning whether to attempt further battle in order to regain Heaven. Satan invites his minions to speak freely, and Moloch opens the debate, urging open war, Belial, who represents sloth, responds, arguing that battle against a foe who has so decisively defeated them is futile, and proposing that the demons take their ease in Hell and make the best of it. Mammon follows, counselling that they build a new kingdom in Hell and there rule supreme. Beelzebub, Satan's right-hand man, concludes, returning to the suggestion made by Satan in Book I, that they seek out the truth of a rumor about a new world and another creature to be created by God. If the rumor is true, he submits, they should then attempt to seduce God's new creature, Man, and rule on earth if they cannot regain Heaven. The demons applaud this suggestion and Satan undertakes the dangerous task of searching out this new world. While the rest of the devils (in true epic style) play epic games to vent their grief and occupy themselves in the absence of their leader, Satan sets out alone. He travels to the gates of Hell, which he finds closed and guarded by Sin (his daughter) and Death (the son of their incestuous union). Satan persuades them to open the gates by offering the world to Sin to rule with him, and humankind to Death. He then makes the arduous journey through Chaos to the new world which he seeks.

Book III

Book III moves the action to Heaven, where God, sitting on his throne, sees Satan flying towards the world. God tells his Son of Satan's diabolical plan to seduce humankind, foretelling Satan's success and simultaneously clearing himself of blame. He contends that humankind was created free and able to withstand temptation, yet outlines his purpose of allowing humankind grace, since they will fall, not out of malice, as Satan did, but deceived. This grace, however, cannot be achieved unless divine justice is satisfied, and the Son freely offers himself as a ransom for this purpose. God then ordains the Incarnation, and all the hosts of heavenly angels praise and adore the Son. Meanwhile, Satan has reached the world's outermost sphere, where he finds a place called the Limbo of Vanity. He moves up to the Gate of Heaven and passes from there to the Orb of the Sun, where he encounters Uriel, the regent of that orb. He changes himself into the shape of a lesser angel and approaches Uriel, professing a great desire to behold the new creation and the human creature placed therein. Uriel, deceived by his disguise, directs him to the newly created world.

Book IV

Book IV returns to the quest of Satan who, as he approaches the Paradise of Eden, is beset by doubt, fear, envy, and despair. His confidence soon returns however, and, confirmed in his evil purpose, he journeys on to Paradise. The reader's first view of Paradise is thus seen through Satan's eyes. The Garden and Satan's first sight of its inhabitants are described as he sits in the shape of a cormorant on the Tree of Life (the highest tree in the Garden) and looks around him. Overhearing a conversation between Adam and Eve, Satan learns that they are forbidden to eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, on pain of death. This provides Satan with a plan for their destruction. Meanwhile Uriel, observing Satan's earlier struggle with himself, has seen through his disguise. He warns Gabriel, the guardian of the Gate of Paradise, that trouble is afoot, and Gabriel promises to find Satan by morning. Evening descends, and Adam and Eve retire to their rest after performing their evening worship, Gabriel appoints two angels to watch over Adam and Eve's bower, where they discover Satan (in the form of a toad) whispering into Eve's ear and tempting her in a dream. They bring him to Gabriel, who questions him. Satan answers scornfully and seems ready to resist, but at a sign from Heaven he decides to flee instead.

Book V

Morning arrives and Eve tells Adam of her troubling dream. Disturbed, he comforts her, and they proceed to their morning worship. In order to deprive them of any excuse for transgression, God sends Raphael to remind Adam of his freedom and the necessity for obedience, and to warn him of Satan's plan. As Adam and Raphael enjoy a meal of choice fruits prepared by Eve, Raphael tells Adam of Satan's rebellion and how he incited all the angel Legions of the North to join him, with the sole exception of Abdiel, a seraph who had tried to dissuade him and, failing, had forsaken him.

Book VI

In Book VI Raphael continues the story of Satan's revolt in Heaven, which was prompted by his envy of the Son. Raphael relates how Michael and Gabriel fought against Satan for two days. On the first day, Satan is routed, but under the cover of night convenes a council and invents some "devilish Engines," including gunpowder, which his armies introduce on the second day. These cause considerable disorder amongst Michael and his angels, but they manage to overwhelm the forces of Satan by pulling up mountains. The battle is not yet won, however, and on the third day God sends his Son (the Messiah) into the fray. The Son drives into the midst of the enemy force with his chariot and thunder, pursuing them to the wall of Heaven, through which they leap down with horror and confusion into the Deep (a place which has been prepared for their punishment). The Messiah then returns in triumph to his Father.

Book VII

At Adam's request, Raphael continues his tale with the story of the creation of the world. He explains that, after the expulsion of Satan and his angels from Heaven, God wishes to repopulate Heaven. Rather than create more angels, God decides to create another world and other creatures to dwell in it. He therefore sends his Son with attendant angels to perform the work of Creation, which the Son accomplishes in six days. The angels celebrate creation with hymns, and return with the Son to Heaven.

Book VIII

Raphael's tale being ended, Adam seeks to satisfy his thirst for knowledge and inquires about the movements of the heavenly bodies. Raphael, while conceding that Heaven is a veritable book in which Adam can read the wondrous works of God, admonishes Adam concerning the limitations of knowledge and advises him to seek out knowledge which is more worthwhile. Adam agrees, and, in his turn, tells Raphael all that he can remember since his own creation: his being placed in Paradise, his talk with God, his first meeting and marriage with Eve. After a discussion of Adam's relationship with Eve, Raphael departs with a final warning.

Book IX

Satan returns to Eden by night as a mist, and enters into the sleeping serpent. In the morning Adam and Eve go out to their labor in the garden. Eve suggests that they would work more efficiently apart, but Adam expresses concern that the enemy of which they have been warned might harm her if he found her alone. Eve does not wish to be thought weak, and insists on working apart, and Adam gives in to her. Satan, in the form of the serpent, finding her alone, is momentarily struck dumb by her beauty. He proceeds to flatter her, praising her beauty and charm. Eve wonders at his ability to speak, and he explains that he attained both speech and reason by eating the fruit of a

certain tree. Eve asks to be shown the tree, but when she finds that it is the Tree of Knowledge she asserts that eating of its fruit is forbidden. The serpent, after many arguments, persuades her to eat. Pleased with the taste, she debates whether or not to take the fruit to Adam, but eventually decides to do so and repeats the arguments by which she was persuaded to eat. Adam is not deceived, but seeing that she is lost, resolves to perish with her because he loves her too much to live without her. He eats the fruit, and the consequences are dire. Their first response is lust, followed by shame. After covering themselves, they begin to argue and to blame each other.

Book X

The angels who are guarding Paradise return to Heaven, to be absolved by God of any responsibility for the fall of Adam and Eve, which they could not have prevented. God then sends the Son to judge Adam and Eve. Sin and Death, who have been waiting by the gates of Hell, are aware of Satan's success and decide to follow Satan up to the world. In order to make the journey easier, they pave a bridge over Chaos, from Hell to the world. Satan, meanwhile, returns to Hell and boasts of his success to the assembly of his angels in Pandemonium. Instead of applause, however, his tale is received with a "universal hiss," as he and his angels are transformed into serpents, according to the judgement pronounced upon him in Paradise by the Son. Deluded by a mirage of the forbidden tree, they devour the fruit, only to find themselves chewing on dust and ashes. Sin and Death having arrived in the world, God foretells their final defeat at the hands of the Son, but in the meantime commands certain alterations to take place in the heavens. Adam and Eve lament their fallen condition and Eve tries to comfort Adam. He at first refuses her consolation, but eventually he is appeased and they reconcile. She suggests several violent ways of evading the Curse pronounced upon them and their offspring, but he resists and counsels hope, reminding her of the promise that revenge against the serpent would be given through her offspring. They seek peace with God through repentance and supplication.

Book XI

Hearing the prayers of Adam and Eve, the Son intercedes with God on their behalf. God accepts their prayers, but decrees that they can no longer live in Paradise and sends Michael with a band of cherubim to cast them out. Adam sees Michael coming and goes out to greet him. Upon hearing that they must leave, Eve laments and Adam pleads, but eventually they submit. Before removing them from Eden, however, Michael takes Adam up to a high hill and reveals to him in a vision all that will happen until the Flood of Noah's age.

Book XII

Michael continues his story of things to come, moving from the Flood to Abraham and then to Christ. He explains that Christ will be the Seed of the Woman who was promised

to Adam and Eve at their fall, and that his Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension will inaugurate the salvation of humankind. Michael then describes the Age of the Church until the Second Coming of Christ. Adam is comforted by these revelations and returns to Eve, who has been sleeping. She wakes from gentle dreams, refreshed and composed. Michael takes them by the hand and leads them out of Paradise, setting a fiery sword and cherubim to guard the gates. Adam and Eve pause for a moment, looking back and shedding some "natural tears" at the loss of Paradise. The reader's last view of Adam and Eve is, however, a hopeful one as they dry their tears and walk away, hand in hand, the whole world before them and Providence as their guide.

Book 1

Book 1 Summary

The narrator invokes the Heavenly Muse to assist him in telling the story of the fall of man. The story is meant to explain God's will to men. Satan was cast out of Heaven for stirring up rebel angels to make war on God. Having lost the war, he was hurled down from Heaven and imprisoned. The prison was, Hell, a place of fire that gave no light, and the farthest place from Heaven. Satan's second in command, Beelzebub, languished by his side in a sea of fire. After nine days passed, Satan broke the silence and spoke to him.

Satan reminds Beelzebub of how they were once the brightest angels in Heaven, and now they are equal in misery. Although God has defeated them, Satan says that he will not repent or change, because he was able to threaten God's might. Satan has not lost hope of revenge and still refuses to bow to God. He thinks that they may successfully use guile, rather than outright war, against Heaven.

Beelzebub replies that he too regrets having lost the war with Heaven and being imprisoned in torment. Although he is suffering, his vigor and spirit have returned. He wonders why God has fated this to be. He suggests that either the Almighty wishes them to have the strength to endure more suffering, or perhaps wants them to serve Him again in war. For now, however, their strength is useless.

Satan assures Beelzebub that, although they are weak and miserable, they can still thwart God by doing evil. Whatever God may plan for them, they will see to it that nothing but evil comes from it. Seeing that God has drawn off his angels, Satan suggests that they head for the shore. Either hope or despair will drive them in their purpose.

Having been left by Heaven to his own evil designs, Satan raises his monstrous form from the lake of fire and flies to the shore. Beelzebub follows him. Now on land, the pair glory in their accomplishment, having escaped by their own force rather than with God's help.

Satan compares Heaven and Hell, but decides that he will rule in Hell, saying "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n." In Hell, he and Beelzebub will be free to do as they wish. Satan considers their friends who are still trapped in the lake of fire, and considers that they might free them to share in Hell or perhaps to make war on God, once again. Beelzebub answers that they will surely gain courage to escape their bonds, when they hear their master again.

Satan, with his shield and spear, goes to the bank and calls to his legions. The fallen angels lay lost and defeated, like floating corpses. Satan calls to them to awaken and

rise, saying that if they continue to lay there, Heaven will press its advantage and tread them down further.

The fallen angels spring up in an innumerable multitude, in obedience to Satan's orders. These devils array themselves into companies, and are known by many names. The chief demons are named, including Moloch, Chemos, Baalim, Ashtaroth, Astoreth, Thammuz, Dagon, Osiris, Isis, Orus and Belial. All of these were worshipped as gods and goddesses in different lands. Satan's word give them courage and hope.

Azazel claims the right to carry Satan's standard. Ten thousand banners, along with numberless spears are raised. They advance as a phalanx, assembling before Satan and waiting for his commands. Satan is touched by remorse that his followers, now damned for his sake, remain faithful. Three times he tries to speak, but is stopped by his tears.

Satan reminds his followers of the conflict with Heaven, but suggests that rather than going to war, they may use guile against the Almighty. Force is not the best way to overcome a foe. It was prophesied in Heaven that God would create a world which would be populated with people who would have equal favor with the angels. Satan suggests that this should be their first interest. Satan decides that they must take counsel and declare war, either openly or covertly.

Led by Mammon, the fallen angels build Pandemonium on top of a hill. Trumpets announce a counsel, and the spirits swarm about the halls. Satan goes into a conclave with his highest Sephamin and Cherubim lords. The summons is read, and they begin their discussions.

Book 1 Analysis

Milton describes Paradise Lost, as the story of the fall of man. However, it is also the story of the fall of Satan. Satan is the first character introduced by Milton, and the most carefully developed. His story fleshes out the thematic elements of the story, sometimes both as a parallel example and a contrasting example. However, Satan is not a heroic figure, but an antihero whose charm is based on deception.

The story begins in Hell, where Satan is suffering in a burning lake, having been cast from Heaven. Although defeated, Satan is fueled by defiance and hope, which give him the strength to escape from the burning lake, in order to build a new kingdom in Hell for himself. This hope comes from pride, an important thematic element throughout the book. Satan believes himself to have challenged God, and therefore still imagines himself equal with the Almighty and capable of taking revenge on Creation.

Book 1 includes the first reference to the theme of freedom and free will. Satan claims that he prefers to rule in Hell, where he will be "free." The promise of freedom and desire for freedom are the lures that Satan has used to gain his followers. In fact, Satan, himself, is not free at all, but is confined to Hell. His followers are also not free, because Satan tells Beelzebub that he intends to be their ruler.

Book 2

Book 2 Summary

Satan sits exalted on his high throne. He is not ready to give up regaining Heaven as a lost cause. In Hell, they have the advantage of unity, because the most powerful leaders also suffer the most. Therefore, they are not envied. He opens the debate between open and covert war.

Moloch advises open war. They have an army of millions, so why continue to accept imprisonment? They are already damned, so even complete destruction cannot be worse than what they already suffer. Their power is enough to gain them victory, or at least revenge.

Belial says that he would support open war, if the argument in favor of it wasn't based on despair. He uses reason to argue for laziness and doing nothing. They may all be forgiven eventually. If not, and the Almighty is contented with their punishment, it might make it worse if they made war of any kind.

Mammon retorts that even if they are forgiven, they could not bear to grovel in Heaven. He suggests that in time they will make their torments into their elements, and in this way, they will have peace. The horde responds with cheers, because they fear going to war and being once again defeated.

At last, Beelzebub stands and speaks. He reminds them about a prophecy in Heaven about a new creation, and a race called "man." This may be able to slip into the new world to torment the Creator by doing evil to his new creation. The powers of Hell are delighted with this idea and resolve that this will be their plan, but they do not know who they will send to search out this new world. At last, Satan himself volunteers, putting himself in danger for the sake of all of his followers. He is praised.

While Satan is away, the spirits of Hell amuse themselves in various ways until his return. Some of them fight battles in the clouds causing whirlwinds, destruction and uproar. Another group goes away to sing sad songs about their fate. Another group explores Hell, finding extremes of fire and ice, but no place to rest.

Meanwhile, Satan swiftly goes to the gates of Hell. The gates are guarded by a female monster and a male monster. The male monster refuses to allow Satan to pass, and rushes at him. The female monster calls out and stops the fight, before it can begin. She introduces herself as Satan's daughter, Sin, who sprang from Satan's head fully formed. The male creature is her child by Satan, Death. Sin has the head and torso of a beautiful woman and a lower half that is covered in scales and constantly surrounded and gnawed by the hounds of Hell. These are more of her monstrous children and part of her punishment.

The Almighty has placed the keys to the gates of Hell in Sin's keeping and has ordered her not to let Satan out. Satan explains his plan to her and convinces her to betray the Almighty who has punished her, for the sake of Satan who loves her. She decides to betray her task and opens the gates. Although she has the strength to open the gates, she is unable to close them again.

Satan goes through the gates and stands on the brink of Hell, which is chaos. He calls out to the Anarch that he wishes to pass through this realm. The Anarch recognizes him and allows him to pass, because the destruction that Satan will cause stands to benefit chaos. Satan goes forward, with Sin and Death following behind him. At last, he sees the newly created world ahead of him.

Book 2 Analysis

The theme of freedom and free will is expanded in Book 2. Although Satan portrays himself as a democratic figure, offering freedom and an open society to his followers, he is actually a tyrant who has set himself on a throne. During the counsel, Satan's leading followers will act as the mouthpieces of Satan himself, allowing Satan to maintain the illusion of free will for his followers. Beelzebub puts forth the very plan that Satan has suggested to him earlier. Satan can offer an illusion of free will, but only God can actually provide free will.

Satan takes on the role of a redeemer of Hell. Later chapters will explain how Satan's rebellion was caused by his jealousy of the Son of God. Now, Satan plays that role in Hell, promising to risk his own safety in order to redeem his followers' torments by taking revenge on Heaven. Satan's envy goes hand-in-hand with his pride. By taking on the role of hero, he expects to gain the exalted place that he was unable to attain by making war on Heaven.

Sin and Death are symbolic characters. Sin is personified as a beautiful female, who has literally sprung from the mind of Satan. Her first action is to seduce Satan, paralleling Eve's original sin. Just as the result of Eve's sin will be death, so Death is born of Sin's dalliance with Satan. Thus, Satan becomes both a literal and figurative cause of sin and death. Throughout *Paradise Lost*, sin will be carried and personified in female shape. Even Satan himself is unable to resist his own daughter, Sin, when she chooses to seduce him.

Sin is also a representation of Eve. God will punish Eve with pains in childbirth. Similarly, Sin has been punished through her offspring, which appear as hounds, who gnaw on her body.

Book 3

Book 3 Summary

As he is flying to the newly created world, Satan hails God. God is seated on his throne, with his son beside Him in joyous Heaven. They see Satan on his way, and God begins to talk about the future. He has foreseen Satan's purpose of revenge. God prophesies that Satan will pervert mankind with his lies. It will be the fault of man, because man has been given free will to resist or yield to temptation. Predestination does not override man's ability to choose. God cannot prevent mankind's fall without entirely changing the nature of man. However, since Satan fell through his own will, and man will fall through Satan's temptation, man can be saved, while Satan cannot.

The Son of God is struck by the idea that man can still find God's grace. He thinks that man should not be destroyed by Satan's tricks, which would only serve to make Satan's revenge come to pass. God replies that man will be saved by a chosen one, who because of special grace, will sacrifice himself for the sake of mankind.

The Son of God volunteers to be the sacrifice that will give grace to mankind. He asks to be made man, so that he can be conquered by death, only to rise victorious. Death will be ruined, and Hell will be defeated.

God agrees and proclaims that his son will be made flesh through the seed of a virgin. He will be the head of mankind, although, also a son of man. Through his death, Heaven's love will redeem Hell's hate, and the Son will reign with the Father as both God and Man forever. The angels respond with praises to God, directed first to the Father and then to the Son.

Meanwhile, Satan is on his way to find the newly created world. He sees that the Archangel Uriel is standing guard and decides to approach him. Satan changes himself into the shape of a Cherub, knowing that the ruse will not be discovered because only God can detect hypocrisy, the invisible evil. He approaches Uriel, claiming that he wishes to find the new creation so that he may praise it. Uriel is fooled and directs him on his way to Paradise, where Adam lives. Satan can now continue on his way.

Book 3 Analysis

God states that predestination does not interfere with free will. Although Adam is destined to fall, he must fall through his own free choice. Although Satan has the appearance of freedom and free will, Satan is actually entirely under the control of God and is being used as an instrument of temptation for Adam. Although Adam may choose not to yield to temptation, Satan is not free to choose not to be the tempter.

Paralleling Adam's temptation and fall, Satan himself has fallen and has done so of his own free choice. Adam's fall can be redeemed, because although Adam chooses to

yield to temptation, he does not choose to fall. Satan, on the other hand, has been the instrument of his own fall, and thus be cannot be redeemed.

The Son of God's offer of self-sacrifice introduces a new thematic element: the transformation of evil into good. The fall of man will ultimately lead to redemption for all mankind. The fall brings death into the world but will lead to death's defeat through the Son.

On his way to Earth, Satan encounters Uriel. Satan takes on a pleasing shape and is able to fool the angel. This is foreshadowing of the fall of man when both Adam and Eve will be unable to detect deceit when it takes on a pleasing aspect, in Eve's case the flattering serpent, and in Adam's case, his beloved Eve.

Book 4

Book 4 Summary

Satan comes down from the sky, but is troubled by misery and doubts. He cannot escape from Hell, because Hell is always a part of him and is with him wherever he goes. The sight of Eden reminds him of what once was.

Sighing, Satan speaks of his hatred of the sun, because it reminds him of what he has lost through his pride and ambition. He wonders if God's good became evil in him, and thinks that had he not been so high, he would not have fallen. He wonders if there is no chance for repentance or pardon left for him. However, there can be no reconciliation. At last, Satan reaffirms his commitments to evil.

As Satan speaks, his face contorts with evil. Uriel watches him from a distance and seeing the change, recognizes it as a sign of an evil spirit. Satan, thinking himself unseen, continues on to Eden, a paradise of flowers, fruits and plants. He enters the garden by leaping over the boundaries, like a thief, and flies into the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is next to the Tree of Knowledge, a tree which will cause death with the temptation of knowledge for good gained by knowing ill.

Satan looks out at Eden and eventually sees Adam and Eve, made in the image of the Creator. They are perfectly made, naked and innocent. Seeing them, Satan muses that soon all of their delights will be changed into sorrows. Satan plans that Adam and Eve will find themselves in Hell, which will be God's fault for making Satan his enemy.

Satan overhears Adam and Eve talking. Adam reminds Eve that God requires only one thing from them, that they never eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Eve affirms her role as Adam's helpmeet and her obedience to him. Satan is struck by envy, but notes that he now has the key to Adam and Eve's undoing. He wonders why God should forbid them knowledge that has the potential to make them equal to gods.

Gabriel is guarding the gates of Eden. Uriel approaches and warns him about the evil spirit he has seen earlier. Gabriel assures Uriel that by morning, they will know where the spirit hides and in what shape.

Night is falling, and Adam and Eve go to their bower, which God has created for them to sleep in. Before they go to sleep, they turn and adore God with pure adoration. This is the praise that God loves best, according to the author. In a happy state of wedded bliss, they go to sleep.

Meanwhile, Gabriel instructs the Cherubim to find the evil spirit, an escapee from Hell, which has infiltrated Eden. At last, they find Satan in a toad-like form, whispering in Eve's ear as she sleeps. At the touch of an angel's spear, he is restored to his true shape and recognized. One of the Cherubs rebukes the Devil, who is abashed by the sight of virtue. However, Satan remains full of pride and rage.

Satan is brought before Gabriel, who questions Satan about his actions in Eden. Satan is scornful and unrepentant. Satan is preparing to battle the angels, but is interrupted when Gabriel points out a sign in the sky. Satan knows from the sign that he is defeated. He flees.

Book 4 Analysis

Satan's doubts and questions introduce a new twist on the theme of good sprung from evil in a manner that directly contrasts to the eventual fulfillment of them in the end of the book. Satan wonders what has made good turn to evil in him. The answer is his pride, which turned to envy and ultimately drove him to choose of his own free will to defy God. Satan has unknowingly made his desire for Hell's good (revenge on Heaven) into the instrument of Hell's destruction (the coming of Christ.)

The morality of knowledge represents a new thematic element. Adam and Eve have been forbidden to eat from fruit that would give them knowledge of good and evil. They are described as being perfect innocent beings without this knowledge. Satan himself wonders why God has chosen knowledge as the one fruit that man must be forbidden. It suggests that one cannot do evil, unless one first understands the nature of right and wrong. Adam and Eve are perfectly innocent, and their actions are innocent, as long as they have no understanding of morality, of good or evil. Eve is female, and therefore tied to the representation of sin. Satan immediately chooses her as his easiest victim and will eventually use her as an agent of temptation.

Book 5

Book 5 Summary

The next morning, Adam awakes and finds Eve sleeping restlessly. When Adam wakes her, Eve tells him of the bad dreams she has had. She dreamed that a voice called to her, leading her to the Tree of Knowledge. An angel stood beside the Tree of Knowledge, tempting her to eat the fruit. Adam is also upset by the dream, but tells Eve that evil can come in dreams without causing any blame to the dreamer. What Eve did in her dream, she would never do when awake. They begin the day by praising God.

God looks down on Adam and Eve doing their daily tasks and feels pity for them. He calls upon Raphael. He tells Raphael that Satan has escaped and is plotting the destruction of man. God sends Raphael to find Adam and remind him of his good fortune in Eden, and of the free will he possesses. Raphael is also to warn Adam of Satan's plotting, so that if Adam sins, he must do so willfully, rather through Satan's deceit.

Raphael speeds through Heaven towards Eden. He arrives in Eden, taking his natural shape of a six-winged seraph. Adam sees Raphael coming and calls Eve. They meet Raphael at their bower, where Eve prepares the choicest fruits in Eden for their meal. They treat the angel with great reverence.

Raphael dines with Adam and Eve, who are honored by his presence. Raphael reminds the pair of the honor God has done to them and that they will dwell in Heaven or Paradise as long as they are obedient. Adam is confused by this choice of words and asks for an explanation.

Raphael continues that Adam and Eve owe their present happiness to God, but whether or not they will continue to enjoy happiness is entirely up to them. They have free will to choose whether or not to obey God. Others have already fallen from obedience and been cast into Hell.

Adam promises never to forget his love and obedience to God and asks Raphael to elaborate the story of the fall from Heaven. Raphael tells Adam how God created His Son and set Him at his right side in Heaven. Satan was filled with jealousy and decided to rebel. Satan tricked many other angels into following him, and they set up their own kingdom in the north, where Satan pretended to be equal with God.

Satan cleverly argues to his followers that God has no right to set His Son above them. Satan preaches freedom and equality. Only Abdiel disagrees, calling Satan proud and blasphemous. Abdiel warns Satan and his followers of the consequences of their disobedience, and then he leaves them to their own destruction.

Book 5 Analysis

The theme of free will is re-introduced when Raphael is sent to Adam and Eve as a reminder of their free will. Although the fall has already been prophesied, Adam and Eve must be able to choose their fate, rather than stumbling into it blindly. Although they are innocent, they cannot be left helpless. Although on the surface, it seems that God is setting up his creations for a harsher punishment, he is actually laying the foundations of knowledge.

Although the knowledge of good and evil is presented as a negative idea, knowledge itself is not evil, nor is the desire for knowledge. Adam is eager to learn from Raphael and asks questions, which Raphael freely answers. This knowledge of information is different from the knowledge of experience which could be gained by eating from the forbidden tree.

Raphael expands on the conflict between God and Satan, explaining how Satan became jealous of the Son of God. Satan has already tried to set himself up in a similar role in Hell, acting both as ruler and intercessor for his followers. The theme of Satan's envy is important. Envy has caused Satan's fall, and envy spurs him on to orchestrate the fall of Adam and Eve.

Book 6

Book 6 Summary

Raphael continues the story of Satan's rebellion. Abdiel leaves Satan's followers and arrives at the Mount of God. He is received with joy by the heavenly host, and praised by God for his faithfulness. Abdiel has withstood Satan's reproach and derision, which is more difficult to bear than violence. Abdiel can now join with God's army to fight the rebels.

Michael and Gabriel are sent to lead an army, which will be equal in size to the armies led by Satan. Satan and his followers are to be driven out of Heaven. The trumpet of wrath sounds, and God's army flies out to meet with Satan's army, which approaches from the North in hopes of winning the Mount of God.

Abdiel addresses Satan, reproaching him for his pride and folly. Satan argues that he is fighting for freedom from servility to which Abdiel replies that servitude is acceptable when the ruler is the worthiest one, who has been chosen by God or nature.

The armies begin to battle. They cause tremendous disturbance but not complete destruction, because God has wisely limited their power and numbers. Michael warns Satan that he is to be cast out of Heaven, along with his followers. Satan replies that he means to win the war and dwell freely in Heaven, even if it means turning Heaven into Hell.

Michael and Satan fight. Michael wounds Satan, causing Satan to experience pain for the first time. Satan's pride is stung, because he had imagined himself equal in power to God, and therefore matchless among the angels. Elsewhere, Satan's followers are losing the battle. Satan and his armies are routed and flee.

Night falls, and Satan addresses his followers, telling them that God's armies have failed to subdue them. This means that God is fallible, and they still have hope of victory. They only need better weapons. Nisroch, a powerful demon, agrees and suggests that they increase their power by using machines. Satan replies that these machines may easily be invented, because they possess the oil and mineral resources necessary to build them, while Heaven has only plants and flowers.

Morning comes and Zophiel, one of the Cherubim, warns the Heavenly army that Satan's army is approaching with improved armies. Satan can be heard commanding his forces. Satan's armies begin to win, and become ever more prideful at the seemingly easy victory. However, God's angels destroy them by plucking the mountains and throwing them down on the enemy's machines.

God has foreseen the war, but has saved the victory for his Son, Messiah. God tells his son that two days of fighting have occurred, and on the third day, the Son will join the battle and be victorious. God instructs Messiah to cast Satan and his forces into Hell.

The Son praises God, and the next joins the battle, driving the Father's chariot. He addresses God's army, telling them that they have fought valiantly, but Satan's punishment must be inflicted by God or God's appointed. Since Satan rebelled because of envy directed at the Son of God, the Son of God will cast him out. The Son's face becomes terrifying, as He routs Satan and his followers, driving them all into Hell. The army of Heaven is triumphant, and the Son is received into glory beside the Father.

Raphael finishes the story with an admonishment to Adam. Satan now envies Adam, and may try to tempt him. Raphael's story should serve as a warning of the terrible price of disobedience to God.

Book 6 Analysis

Satan's battle with God is a metaphor for the conflict between technology and nature, industry and agriculture. On the first day of battle, Satan's army is overmatched by God's army, despite their equal numbers. Satan's solution is to contrast the natural resources he commands, with the resources available in Paradise. God's domain is filled with flowers, trees and plants. It is natural and agrarian. Satan's domain is filled with rocks, minerals and chemicals- resources suited to heavy industry and technology. Satan creates weapons and machines, which are destroyed by the natural weapons of mountains, hurled by the angels. Ultimately, technology is destroyed by nature.

Book 7

Book 7 Summary

The author invokes Urania to bring his thoughts down from Heaven back to Earth. He asks the goddess's aid in continuing the story.

Raphael has finished the story and carried out his instructions by warning Adam with the example of Satan's punishment. Adam has been attentive to the story, but desires to know more. He asks Raphael to tell him how Creation began. Raphael answers that he will tell Adam all that is acceptable for Adam to know.

After Lucifer's fall, Heaven's population was reduced by the loss of his followers. God decided to repopulate the world by creating another world and a new race of men. God sends his Spirit, and his Son, who is the Word, out to mark the boundaries of Heaven and Earth and then to fill them with Creation. There was much joy in Heaven at the thought of such good created out of evil.

The Son appears, radiant in glory, and goes forth with the Word and Spirit to create more worlds. He rides into Chaos and uses a golden compass to draw the circumference of Heaven and Earth. Heaven and Earth are created out of the void.

On the first day, God says, "Let there be light" and an ethereal light appears. This is not the sun, but a light that divides night from day. Then, God divides the waters, creating air and sky. On the third day, God makes dry land appear. He causes the land to be covered with plants, flowers and fruits. The Earth now resembles Heaven. On the fourth day, God created the moon, stars and sun. The light will divide night from day. On the fifth day, God creates fish, birds and reptiles to populate the world.

On the sixth day, God creates the beasts that roam on land. His final creation is His masterpiece, man, who will walk upright and possess reason. God suggests to His Son that man be created in God's image. He creates man and woman so that they can be fruitful and populate the earth. Earth is given to man with instructions that he must not eat from the tree that gives knowledge of good and evil, or he will be cursed with sin and death.

When the creations of the sixth day were finished, there was rejoicing in Heaven. The Son returns to sit with the Father. On the seventh day, they rest as the angels sing of Creation's greatness. God's greatness is shown in the defeat of evil and the use of evil to bring about goodness in the creation of man. Adam's request for knowledge is now fulfilled.

Book 7 Analysis

Adam continues to thirst for more knowledge and asks about Creation. Raphael agrees to tell him the story, with a caveat that he will tell Adam all that is acceptable for him to know. This suggests that knowledge in its pure form has the ability to be positive or negative. Raphael intends to shield Adam from knowledge that contains harm. It adds a new idea that knowledge not freely given may be withheld, because it is harmful in and of itself.

The Creation story illustrates the theme of good that issues from evil. If not for the fall of Satan and his followers, God would not have undertaken Creation. Thusly, something great and wonderful has arisen from the Devil's attempts at destruction. It foreshadows that Satan's efforts to destroy Adam and Eve will result in good, as well.

Book 8

Book 8 Summary

Raphael has finished his story, and Adam thanks him. Despite all he has heard, Adam still feels doubt, and thirsts for more knowledge. He has been comparing the Earth and sky, and wonders why it is that the vast sky rotates around the smaller Earth. Eve leaves to tend the plants outside. She prefers to learn from Adam, rather than from the angel.

Raphael tells Adam that God's works are meant to be admired rather than questioned. Just because the skies are brighter and vaster than Earth does not mean that they hold more good. Man has his own place, and the rest is planned for purposes known only to God. It is better not to probe into matters that God has hidden.

Adam's doubts have been cleared, and he thanks Raphael for simplifying his complex thoughts. Now, Adam wishes to tell his own story. Raphael agrees to stay and listen, having been absent when Adam was created, because God had sent him to make certain that no one had escaped from Hell to interfere.

Adam remembers how he first awoke amidst soft plants and then gazed up at the sky. He looked around him and could immediately name all the things he saw. He asked the animals who his Maker was, that he might praise him. Wandering astray, Adam grew tired and slept.

In a dream, Adam is addressed by God, who has come to guide him to Eden. When he woke, his dream had become real, and he was in the garden. God appeared again, telling Adam that Paradise was to be his, so long as Adam did not taste of the tree that brings knowledge of good and ill. If Adam eats of the tree, he will inevitably die for his transgression.

God gives Adam dominion over the Earth and its creatures, which approach in twos to be named by Adam. Even so, Adam feels that something is lacking and asks God if he is meant to live in solitude. God responds that Adam has the animals for company. Adam replies respectfully that the animals are inferior to man, and there cannot be society among those that are unequal.

God reminds Adam that God himself is above all things, and therefore has no equals. He asks Adam if He is not happy. Adam responds that God is perfect, but man is imperfect and has need of a helpmeet. God is pleased with Adam's request, for God knows that it is not good for man to be alone. God promises to bring a companion.

Adam sleeps, and dreams that God came to him and took a rib from Adam's left side. Then, God fashioned the rib into a woman. Adam falls in love with her beauty. When Adam wakes, Eve is brought by God to become Adam's wife. God has fashioned man in His own image, and Eve in the image of man, so that she is the inferior, bearing less

resemblance to the Maker. The angel agrees that nature has fashioned woman inferior, and she should be loved by man, but never allowed to rule him. The angel praises Adam for loving Eve, but warns him against passion.

Adam replies that he values Eve for her companionship and help, rather than for the sake of passion. Then, he asks if the Heavenly Spirits also express love physically. Raphael answers that the angels are happy, and since there cannot be happiness without love, they are indeed capable of any pure love. Raphael sees that it is time for him to leave. As he leaves, he reminds Adam once more to obey God's command and not to allow passion to sway him.

Book 8 Analysis

Having been created to repopulate Paradise after the fall, Adam is now established as conversing as an equal with the angels and even with God. Adam relates the narrative of his own creation to Raphael, and describes his conversations with God. The only other being besides Adam who questions God is the Son of God, who can be described as an aspect of God's own divinity. Hence, Adam is enjoying the place that Satan has desired for himself.

In his conversations with God, Adam introduces the theme of companionship among equals. Adam is alone until the creation of Eve, because the beasts cannot approach him as his equals. Interestingly, Eve herself is not yet Adam's true equal. Raphael states that she is inferior, because she is less like God. Eve will not be a true companion for Adam until they both taste from the tree of knowledge, making them alike in experience.

Eve is re-established as a vessel for Sin. Although Adam claims that he values her companionship above all, his passionate description of her beauty suggests otherwise. Having only seen her briefly as God was creating her, he is so taken with her that he cannot bear the thought of life without her. Since Eve is created from Adam's flesh, she is not merely a representation of sin in general, but of Adam's sin in particular. Eve is fashioned from Adam's flesh, so if she is sin, then she must be Adam's sin.

Book 9

Book 9 Summary

The poet warns the reader that the story is now to become a tragedy. While sleeping, he has been inspired by the goddess. His skills are not great, but she gives him the abilities that he needs.

Satan has been traveling around the world, as he flees from the angels. On the eighth day, he finds a way to sneak back into Eden, hiding in the rising mist of the Tigris. Having considered every creature, Satan chooses the serpent as best suited to his purpose.

Satan is envious of man, and thinks that Eden is much like Heaven, if not better. Unfortunately, pleasures only cause Satan more torment, and he has not come to live in Eden. He plans to destroy in one day what took the Almighty six nights and days to create. This will be his revenge against God for replacing the fallen angels with man formed from Earth.

Satan finds the serpent asleep and enters into it. His possession gives the serpent intelligent abilities, but does not disturb its sleep.

In the morning, Adam and Eve are preparing to do their work. Eve suggests that they may accomplish more if they work separately. Adam praises Eve for the idea, but is concerned for her safety if they are not together. Satan may try to do them harm, and together they may aid one another.

Eve wonders if Adam thinks that her love and faith can be ruined by Satan's fraud. Adam reassures her of his trust, but suggests that merely being tempted would mean dishonor. Together, the enemy would not dare to attack them at all. Eve thinks that they can hardly be happy, if they are so in fear of harm, and that virtue untried doesn't mean very much.

Adam reminds Eve that God has given them free will and therefore, they may be tempted or tricked into disobeying God's will by tasting the forbidden fruit. He reluctantly agrees to let her work alone. Eve goes assuring Adam, that Satan's pride would surely prevent him from choosing the weaker adversary, so she should be safe. They agree to meet again at noon.

Meanwhile, Satan is looking for Adam and Eve, hoping that he will find Eve alone. At last he sees her, and for a moment, his hatred is disarmed by her beauty. Satan remembers that he no longer knows pleasure and that Eve belongs to another, which renews his jealousy and desire for revenge.

Satan, as the serpent, raises himself up until Eve notices him. Then, he begins to speak, praising her above all others. Eve is amazed to hear human speech coming from

a beast, but the serpent explains that he has gained speech by eating the fruit from one of the trees in the garden. Eve asks him to show her the tree.

The serpent leads Eve to the Tree of Knowledge. Eve insists that they must not touch the fruit under penalty of death, but the serpent assures her that he has tasted the fruit and did not die. Furthermore, the serpent has gained great knowledge from the tree's fruit, which has raised him to man's level. Satan suggests that God is denying Adam and Eve the fruit, because it would make them like gods and no longer ignorant worshippers.

Tempted by the promise of wisdom and by her hunger, Eve eats the fruit. Finding that death is not immediate, Eve continues to eat without any restraint. Eve wonders if she should keep her new knowledge to herself, so that she will be equal to Adam, but ultimately decides that she loves Adam too much not to share with him.

Eve returns to Adam and tells him about the serpent and the fruit. Adam is horrified. Eve has destroyed them both, since he cannot bear to live if Eve must die. Since the past cannot be undone, Adam rationalizes that God surely won't give Satan victory by destroying them both. Eve gives Adam the fruit, which he freely tastes so that they may share in the crime.

Adam enjoys the fruit and wonders over the pleasures they have missed by not tasting it sooner. Adam feels passion for Eve, and the pair decides to enjoy one another. Afterwards, they sleep. When they rise again, they are stricken with shame. Realizing their loss of innocence and their nakedness, they begin to regret what they have done. They use fig leaves to cover themselves.

Adam blames Eve, because had she not wanted to work alone, they would not have been tempted. Eve argues that Adam should not have let her go. They continue to argue and accuse one another.

Book 9 Analysis

The theme that companionship must be among equals is the driving element of Book 9. Eve wishes to work alone, establishing herself as an equal contributor in the work. Adam is extremely reluctant to allow her to work on her own. He believes her to be weak and at risk from temptation. Eve argues persuasively that she should be given the chance to withstand Satan on her own, and Adam at last allows her to go.

Having recognized Eve as a vessel for Adam's sin, Satan is pleased to find her alone. He is struck by her beauty and desires her, just as he has desired his daughter, Sin. His revenge, however, remains foremost in his mind. He uses Eve's vanity to lure her into temptation. Satan's own vanity has already brought about his fall. However, it is not vanity alone that drives Eve to taste from the tree. Eve has been inferior to Adam and tasting the fruit will make her superior in experience to her husband.

Having tasted the fruit, Eve muses over whether to share it with Adam. Her love for him persuades her to do so. She does not wish to be his superior, only to be his true companion. Adam agrees to taste the fruit, knowing that it is forbidden, because Eve has tasted it. He wishes to share equally with her. Once they have both eaten of the fruit, they know greater joy in each other's company, because they are now more fully matched in understanding and experience.

Book 10

Book 10 Summary

Heaven already knows about what transpired in Eden, because God is all-knowing. God did not hinder Satan, because man was given free-will and should have obeyed God's commands. The angels who were left to guard Paradise return to Heaven. God absolves them of any blame, since Satan's entry into Paradise was foretold and could not have been prevented. Man has fallen and must be judged. To this end, God will send the Son, who will be both judge and Redeemer.

The Son of God agrees to go, but says that He will temper justice with mercy. He has agreed to redeem man by sharing his fate, so whatever is judged He must also suffer. Satan has already been judged and condemned. The Son of God descends to Eden and calls to Adam. Adam hides himself at first, and then approaches with Eve, clearly filled with guilt, anger, despair and guile. Adam tells God that he hid because his nakedness made him afraid.

God wonders how Adam has learned of his nakedness and asks if Adam has eaten from the forbidden tree. Adam cannot conceal the truth, but blames Eve for giving him the fruit. God replies that Eve was not created to give orders to Adam. God asks Eve what she has done, and she admits that the serpent tricked her, and she ate the fruit.

God punishes the serpent by making it the lowest of beasts, groveling on its belly in the dirt. God then prophesies that Eve's descendents will bruise the serpents head, but the serpent will bruise his heel. Eve's punishment will be sorrow and pains in the birth of children, and from now on, her husband will rule her. Adam's punishment is to eat bread made through his own labor. Both will eventually die. Having judged Adam and Eve, the Son of God is moved by pity for them. He covers their nakedness with skins, and clothes their minds with his righteousness. The Son of God returns to Heaven.

Sin and Death have been sitting at the gates of Hell. Sin feels that her strength has increased, and she wishes to follow Satan into the world. Death must come with her, as sin and death cannot be separated. Death agrees, having sensed a smell of coming carnage on the earth. Together, Sin and Death build a bridge over Chaos, following in Satan's path.

Sin and Death meet with Satan, who is on his way back to Hell. Satan has fled from Paradise, fearing the Son of God. Sin praises Satan, having guessed that his revenge has been successful. Satan is pleased and bids Sin and Death to continue on their journey to the new world, while Satan goes into Hell. Satan flies down into Pandemonium, where his followers are waiting. They approach to congratulate him. Satan tells them how he found the new world and corrupted God's creation by seducing man with an apple. Now, God has given up the world to Sin and Death, as punishment.

Satan's announcement is not met with cheers, but with hissing. As punishment for Satan's guile in the form of the serpent, he and all his followers are transformed into serpents. As they change, a grove springs up nearby, and all are cursed with hunger and thirst. When they try to eat the fruit from the trees, it becomes bitter dust in their mouths.

Sin and Death arrive in Paradise. Sin bids Death to go and feed on God's Creation, eating everything that "the Scythe of time mows down," while Sin infects man. God looks down from above and reveals that He was the one who called Sin and Death to Earth, but they both will be defeated and cast back to Hell.

God calls his angels and orders them to move the sun, so that seasons will be created. He brings forth wind and weather, so that the world will no longer always be in spring. Sin's daughter, Discord, is brought into the world, causing the beasts to war and devour one another.

Adam bemoans his fate, saying that the order to "increase and multiply" will now only increase his misery. Although he did not ask to be created, he submits to God's punishment and admits that it was just. Adam wonders why death has not yet come, and what will become of him when death takes his body. His conscience torments him.

Adam stills blames Eve for the fall. She pleads that she was deceived and has sinned doubly, since she sinned against both God and Adam. Adam relents and says that they will no longer quarrel and blame one another. Eve suggests that they should die childless.

Adam is more hopeful. He remembers the prophecy that "thy seed shall bruise the serpent's head" which cannot come true if they die childless. Their punishment is not so terrible. Childbirth brings joy, as well as pain. Adam's labor will spare him from idleness. God has already been merciful and may offer more help. Adam decides that they will go to the place where they were judged, and beg for pardon.

Book 10 Analysis

The similarities between Adam and the Son of God are highlighted again, when the Son is sent to punish Adam. The Son says that He will be a lenient judge, because He will eventually share Adam's experience. Adam and the Son are both the human creations of God, therefore their fate is the same. The Son of God addresses Adam directly, just as God directly spoke to the Son. However, Adam's transgression will alter his role. This is the last time that he will speak directly with God. Adam, like Satan, has been expelled from Paradise. Both may address God, but they are not answered.

Satan and his followers in Hell experience a punishment that mocks the fate of Adam and Eve. They are turned into serpents, taking on the literal form of their figurative identity. Then, a tree filled with fruit tempts them, but the fruit fills them with bitterness rather than sating their desires. For the creatures of Hell, who have already willfully chosen evil, the understanding of good and ill is a bitter fruit to taste.

Sin and Death have sensed the fall and are entering the world. Now that Sin's personification has entered Paradise, Eve's role as a carrier of a sin begins to change. Rather than harboring sin, Eve harbor's the guilt and blame for the fall of man. Rather than be punished in her offspring, as Sin has been, she suggests that she and Adam should either remain barren or kill themselves. Adam hints at Eve's new role by suggesting that they not give up hope, as joy will come with childbirth.

Book 11

Book 11 Summary

The Son of God sees Adam and Eve humbly praying. He brings their prayers to the Father and intercedes for them. God accepts the prayers, but cannot allow man to continue to live in Paradise. God summons Michael and orders him to take a band of Cherubim to drive man out of Paradise. If Adam and Eve accept their banishment, Michael is to mitigate the punishment by revealing the future to them. Afterwards, Michael is to guard Paradise with his flaming sword.

Adam has found solace in prayer, and believes that his prayers have been heard. Eve also feels that she has been given some pardon, for although her fault brought death, her womb is the source of life. She suggests that they begin their labors, but they are stopped by an omen in the sky- a bird of prey driving two brightly colored birds before it. Adam takes this as a sign of another change to come.

Michael appears with his sword and spear. He tells Adam and Eve that God has heard their prayers. They will have time before Death takes them to repent their error and mitigate it with good deeds. However, they are no longer permitted to stay in Paradise. Eve laments that to leave Paradise will be worse than Death.

Michael counsels Eve to resign herself. Adam now addresses Michael, sorrowing that must leave Paradise and the sight of God, but accepting the Almighty's decree. The angels comfort Adam by saying that, although they have been thrown down from Paradise, God's sight is everywhere, and His presence can still be felt. Michael brings Adam to the top of a hill, leaving Eve behind, sleeping.

Michael clears Adam's sight. Adam opens his eyes and sees a field, where a reaper and a shepherd are making sacrifices. The shepherd's sacrifice is more sincere, and therefore better received by God. Jealous, the reaper takes up a stone and beats the shepherd to death. The men are brothers, and Adam's own children.

Adam asks if he has now seen death. Michael replies that death has many shapes. He shows Adam a lazar-house where people are dying of terrible diseases. This horrible end can be avoided only by practicing temperance, so that man can live many years until he dies from old age.

Now, Michael shows Adam a plain, where good men are building tools and worshipping God rightly. A group of beautiful women appear in gems and wanton dresses, singing and dancing. The men are entranced and weddings are celebrated. These women are wicked, being only made for pleasure and will be the ruin of the men's virtue. Adam comments that men's woe springs from woman, but Michael says no, men's woe comes from men's own weakness.

Adam now sees cities and a terrible war. One man alone counsels against the slaughter, and is attacked by the others for it. He would have been killed had not a cloud descended from above to rescue him. Salvation awaits the good and the rest as to be punished.

The men who achieved fame in war are now given over to luxury and vice. One man alone preaches repentance, but to no effect. The good man goes far off and builds a great ark which he fills with every kind of beast, before finally boarding it himself with his wife, his sons and their wives. It begins to rain, and the world is flooded. Adam is saddened to see his children destroyed and fears that even those on the ark will not survive.

Michael explains that the men who fought the war had gained fame from their deeds, but were devoid of virtue. They turned to luxury, wantonness and pride, which led to hostility and wars of conquest. One man, who was full of peace, was commanded by God to build an ark, just as Adam saw.

The flood abates, and a dove sent forth as messenger brings back an olive branch, the sign of peace. A bow of three colors appears in the sky. Adam is cheered by the sight. The rainbow represents God's covenant never again to destroy the world with flood.

Book 11 Analysis

In Book 11, knowledge is transformed from a sinful desire to a positive gift. Due to his thirst for forbidden knowledge, Adam has fallen. Now, as solace, Michael offers a different kind of knowledge. Unlike the knowledge gained through deceit, this is knowledge freely given and not forbidden.

The desire for knowledge has brought death into the world, but it has not given Adam an understanding of death. Michael helps Adam come to an understanding of death. Now, knowledge will assuage fear, rather than cause it. Adam sees various kinds of death and is taught how to find death peacefully.

Sin again appears in the shape of woman. This time, good men of the plains are tempted by evil women, who entice them with song and dance. The children of the good men and the evil women are men who fight and conquer. Just as Sin has given birth to Death, the children of these sinful women will be bringers of death.

Book 12

Book 12 Summary

Michael continues telling Adam of events to come. Adam has now seen one world end and another begin. The second race of men will dwell in peace, worshipping God and making sacrifices until a tyrant rises. The tyrant and his followers will build a tower up to the sky, in order to earn lasting fame among men. Angered, God curses their tongues, so that their power of language is lost and all speech is heard as meaningless babble. The tower is abandoned.

Adam vilifies the tyrant. Michael explains that when men subject themselves to unworthy passions and ignore reason, God punishes them with subjection to tyrants. The world goes from bad to worse, until God withdraws from all but one chosen nation. This nation will spring from Abraham, and God promises them a gift of land. The Redeemer will be a child of this race.

A grandson of Abraham departs for Egypt, where one of his sons will earn great honors from Pharaoh. Their race grows into a nation. Feeling threatened, Egypt makes them into slaves and kills their male infants. Two brothers, Moses and Aaron, are sent from God to free their nation and lead them back to the promised land. Egypt is cursed with ten plagues, until at last, Abraham's seed are allowed to depart. The sea parts to allow them to pass, then closes up over their Egyptian pursuers, killing them.

Safe in Canaan, Moses, Aaron and their people found their nation. They found their laws based on civil justice and religious rites, asking that Moses discover and report God's will to them. Moses does so, having been instructed that God must be approached through a mediator. Moses foretells the coming of the Messiah. God is pleased, and his covenant is enshrined in an ark.

Sin, inherited through Adam, is still among men. A sacrifice must be made in order to create a new covenant with God, a covenant based on works of faith, rather than strict laws. To this end, Jesus will come to lead men as king of kings.

The Messiah will be born of a virgin, and a star will proclaim his coming. The Savior will fulfill where Adam failed in obedience to God. He will become flesh and die on the cross. On the third day, He will rise again, death having no power over Him. This sacrifice will be the act that "bruises the head of Satan" and defeats both Sin and Death. The Saviour's disciples will teach all nations what they have learned, bringing the message not only to the seed of Abraham, but to all who share in the faith. Jesus will ascend in glory to Heaven.

Adam joyfully praises all the good which shall be made from evil, but he wonders how man will fare when the Deliverer does not remain on earth to guide them. Michael says that the nations will be evangelized and great numbers will join the faith, but eventually

the church will be corrupted by power and turn to persecution of the faithful until the Messiah comes again.

These prophecies bring peace to Adam's mind. He has learned that to obey God is best, and suffering for truth's sake is the highest victory. He knows all that he needs to know. Michael tells Adam that he has attained "the sum of all wisdom" and to hope for no more. By adding good deeds, virtues and faith to his knowledge, Adam can create paradise within himself.

It is time for Adam and Eve to leave Paradise. Adam and Michael descend from the mountain. Michael has sent comforting dreams to Eve, and she wakes feeling consoled. The Cherubim descend to take their stations as guards. Michael brandishes his flaming sword, then leads Adam and Eve out of Paradise through the eastern gate. Hand in hand, Adam and Eve walk into the world.

Book 12 Analysis

Book 12 is the culmination of the lesson Milton has been trying to teach his reader. The quest for the wrong kind of knowledge has led to the fall from Paradise. Now, Adam has learned the right kind of knowledge, knowledge that comes directly from the Bible. Adam affirms that this is the only knowledge he needs. Just as Satan has carried Hell within him wherever he goes, now Adam carries paradise within him in the form of this knowledge, and the virtue that will come from it.

Much of the thematic material in Paradise Lost is concerned with the moral implications of the quest for knowledge. Adam has been both praised and punished for seeking answers. Knowledge gained by guile and disobedience is ill knowledge, but knowledge freely given is good. Just as Christ's redemption will bring good from the evil of the fall, Adam's quest for ill knowledge has led to his acquisition of the good knowledge that he needs.

The character of Eve is now altered from a symbol of sin, to one of hope. Eve carries within her the ability to bring about the end of sin and death through the children she will have. Her offspring will no longer be a burden, as are the offspring of Sin herself, but a joy. Her role has altered from sin's carrier to its ultimate destroyer. Thus, Eve is now calmed and contented and follows Adam willingly out of Paradise.

Satan, previously an important character, has now been reduced to near non-existence. With the fall of man having been accomplished, his purpose in the scheme is finished. For all of Satan's alluring talk of free will, he has none for himself and ceases to play a role in events when God no longer needs him to provide the catalyst for the gaining of wisdom.

Characters

Abdiel

Abdiel is a seraph who, though originally one of Lucifer's legions in Heaven, remains faithful to God. He attempts to persuade Satan and his rebel angels to abandon their revolt and, failing, abandons them. He symbolizes true fidelity.

Adam

Adam is the first created human being and the true "hero" of *Paradise Lost.* The reader's first view of Adam is, significantly, seen through the eyes of Satan as he perches like a cormorant on the Tree of Life (ironically planning Adam's death). The distinction between Adam and Eve, the only humans in the garden, and the other living creatures, the animals, heightens our perception of their uniqueness as beings created in the image of God. They are "of far nobler shape erect and tall, / Godlike erect, with native Honor clad" and "In naked Majesty seem'd Lords of all" (IV.287-290). The image of God in humankind is associated with wisdom, truth, holiness, freedom, and authority. These things characterize *both* Adam and Eve in their unfallen state.

The reader is not left to assume, however, that Adam and Eve are equal. In fact, Milton hastens to assure us that they are "Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd" (TV.296). Adam is formed for contemplation and valour; Eve for softness and grace. It is Adam who is truly the image of God; Eve is the image of Adam, from whose side she is created. They are created, "He for God only, she for God in him" (IV.299), and it is this distinction which is both their strength and their downfall. Adam is characterized by reason and free will, created for absolute rule and authority; he must not only obey God, but must inspire obedience in Eve. If Eve's fall

results from a failure to obey God's commandment, it is equally a failure to heed Adam. Adam's fault lies in the failure to use his superior reason to convince Eve to stay by his side and in his failure to exercise his inborn authority, to enforce obedience when she will not offer it freely.

If Adam's fall is in large part due to a failure in reason and authority, however, it is also due to an excess of another characteristic to which the reader is introduced early: love. Adam and Eve are presented as a couple, a "happy pair" living in perfect conjugal bliss. Their mutual love and respect are obvious, and fan Satan's already-active jealousy. Once again, their strength becomes their downfall. Adam, being superior in reason and wisdom, is not deceived by the serpent, as Eve is. However, he eats of the fruit because he loves Eve, and would rather die with her than live without her. While commendable in itself, his action indicates a further failure of authority: Eve falls because Adam has failed to rule *her;* Adam falls because he fails to rule *himself.*

The Arch-Enemy

See Satan

Beelzebub

Beelzebub is the chief of the devils, Satan's "second-in-command." He is the first devil to awaken from his stupor on the fiery lake and is thus the audience for Satan's opening speech (1.84-124). Beelzebub, like Satan/Lucifer, is associated with light—or rather, lost light, for Satan's address to Beelzebub is the first indication of how far indeed they have fallen, and how much they have changed. It is thus appropriate that Beelzebub, the first to join in Satan's plans for rebellion in Heaven, is the first to respond to his exhortations in Hell. Beelzebub's name, in Hebrew, means "lord of the flies," and he is an appropriate commander of the demons who, like flies, swarm into Pandemonium for the council.

At the council of devils (Book II), Beelzebub, like Satan, is content to wait until the others have had their say. (See also Moloch, Belial, and Mammon.) As the final (and strongest) speaker, when he does speak, his grave manner, majestic face, and stately words present an effective contrast to Moloch's reckless despair, Belial's hollow and slothful vice, and Mammon's greed. A true statesman and loyal second-in-command, he presents not his own strategy, but Satan's, promoting the subtle plan of taking revenge against God by seducing or destroying humankind.

Belial

Belial is the fallen angel who speaks second at the council of devils in Book II. In keeping with his faint-hearted counsel of "ignoble ease and peaceful sloth" (11.226), he is the last to rise from the burning lake. Because Belial is not the name of a pagan god, but an abstract noun meaning "wickedness," he represents vice in general and is associated with atheism. In Book II, he is described as outwardly dignified, but false and hollow, speaking persuasive words which disguise his inner weakness and vice. He argues that it is useless to pursue a war they cannot win, and admonishes that Hell is not the worst fate that could befall them. In essence, his is a counsel of craven fear: he wishes to avoid war in order to avoid worse punishment, and clings to the hope that if they do not give God further cause for alarm, in time God's anger may abate and the fires of hell will lessen.

Death

Death, Satan's son, is literally conceived in Sin, as he is born of Satan's incestuous union with his daughter, Sin. True to his parentage, Death becomes the father of all sins, as he rapes his mother, Sin, almost at the moment of his birth. Guilty of rape and incest, he would also be guilty of matricide, but for the fact that Sin's demise would also be his own. As it is, he and Sin continue in an uneasy co-existence, characterized by

hatred and pain. Death is described as a crowned but shapeless terror, before whom even Hell trembles, and who dares to threaten even Satan with his fatal dart.

Eve

Eve, the mother of humankind, is presented as an ambiguous character. On the one hand, she is, like Adam, created in the image of God, noble, virtuous, and above all, beautiful. On the other hand, she is the first to fall because from the beginning it is obvious that she is not equal to Adam. Outwardly, she is less obviously the image of God; even her beauty is "dishevelled" and "wanton," indicating the natural wildness which she will be unable to tame. In character, too, she is inferior, weaker in reason and authority, uninterested in Adam and Raphael's intellectual conversation. Eve is characterised by the sensual, by wilfulness, and by appetite.

Being weaker in reason, Eve is easier prey for Satan. Satan uses Eve's innate characteristics, playing upon her desire while appealing to her pride, which has been wounded by Adam's suggestion that alone she will be unable to resist their adversary. Determined not to seem weaker, Eve leaves herself open to Satan, who preys upon her weaknesses. He flatters her, suggesting that *she* is the true ruler, not only "Queen" of all, but a "goddess among gods." He arouses her curiosity (not a desire for knowledge, which she does not have) by extolling the virtues of the fruit which has given him the power of speech, and finally convinces her by the use of persuasive arguments which *sound* reasonable to her inferior reason. Deceived, she eats and falls.

In many ways, though she is presented in a condescending manner before the fall, Eve's true strength is seen only after the fall. Unlike Adam, she sins because she is deceived, and once she faces the truth of her folly she is able to move on. Adam, fully aware of both the nature and the consequences of his action, sins for love, and repudiates that love immediately. Their conjugal bliss deteriorates first into lustful sexuality, and then into vicious recrimination. If Eve initiates the fall, however, she also initiates redemption. The first to sin, she is also the first to attempt reconciliation, going to Adam with soft words in an effort to mend their quarrel. While her first suggestion (self-destruction) is neither rational nor practical, she does rouse Adam out of his bitterness, and inspires him to formulate the more appropriate plan of prayer and repentance, and to take that crucial first step towards reconciliation with God through reconciliation with Eve.

Fittingly, the final speech in the poem is spoken by Eve, and is a message of consolation and hope. As the temptation which led to her fall was begun in an evil dream whispered in her ear by Satan, the hope for the redemption of humankind comes to her in a dream. Knowing that she will bear the Promised Seed who will restore humankind, she is willing to leave Eden and take her place in the world at Adam's side. The love which prompted Adam to prefer death with Eve to life without her now becomes the source of Eve's strength, as Adam becomes her paradise on earth: "In me is no delay; with thee to go, / Is to stay here; without thee here to stay / Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me / Art all things under Heav'n, all places thou..." (XH.615-168).

Gabriel

Gabriel is the angel who is second in rank only to Michael, and who, with Michael, leads the faithful angels in their first two days of battle against Satan and his rebels. After the creation of the world, Gabriel is given the task of guarding the gate of Paradise. It is Gabriel whom Uriel warns of the danger which threatens Adam and Eve, Gabriel who sets two angels to watch over Adam and Eve as they sleep, and Gabriel to whom those angels bring Satan when they discover him at Eve's ear, tempting her in a dream.

God

God is the Creator and Ruler of all, including Heaven, Hell, the angels (fallen and unfallen), earth, and humankind. He is all-knowing and all-powerful, and nothing occurs without his foreknowledge and consent. Although he is the causal force behind the poem and the events described in it, he takes remarkably little action in the poem, relegating most action either to the Son or to his angels. His primary function is to create, and to explain his purposes to the Son, who then acts on them. Opposite to Satan in every way, he is good, true, and, above all, just. However, neither God nor His Son are as compelling as the character of Satan as presented by Milton, appearing bland by comparison.

The Infernal Serpent

See Satan

Lucifer

See Satan

Mammon

Mammon is the third devil to speak at the council in Book H. In Book I, Mammon is described as the least of the fallen angels. Like Belial, he is not a god, but the personification of an abstract concept, covetous wealth or greed. His mind is always on gold and riches: it is he who leads the ransacking of Hell for material to gild Pandemonium, and it is he who inspires men to "rifle the bowels of their mother earth / For treasures better hid" (1.687-88). True to his name and character, he suggests that they seek out the hidden gems and gold which lurk beneath the desert soil of Hell, and build a new realm there. He, too, argues against war, on the grounds that unless they overpower God altogether (which he concedes is impossible), they will simply return to servitude in Heaven, an eternity spent in worshipping one whom they hate (which he argues is unacceptable). Rather, he suggests that they prefer the "hard liberty" of Hell to

the "easy yoke of servile pomp" which will be their lot in Heaven, and make the most of what Hell can offer.

blood / Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears" (1.391-2), Moloch was a sun god to whom children were offered as burnt sacrifices. It is fitting, then, that as "the strongest and fiercest spirit / That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair" (11.44-45), Moloch fears neither God nor Hell, arid counsels open war. He argues that nothing could be worse than the "pain of unextinguishable fire" (11.88) to which they have been condemned. Being, therefore, without hope, they have nothing to lose. If they cannot attain victory, he implies, at least they can have revenge.

Mulciber

Mulciber is the fallen angel who designs Pandemonium, Satan's palace and the setting for the council of devils. Milton relates in Book I that Mulciber also designed many of the beautifurpal-aces in heaven, merging him with the mythical figure Vulcan, who, according to Homer, was tossed out of heaven by Jove amidst much laughter *{Iliad* I). Milton "corrects" Homer's "error" as a corrupt version of the true story of the fall of the angels, which he here recounts.

Messiah

See The Son

Michael

Michael is the chief of the angels in Heaven and leads the army of loyal angels against Satan and his minions in the War in Heaven. Michael wields a mighty sword, with which he strikes Lucifer, shearing his right side and causing him to feel pain for the first time. It is Michael who is sent to cast Adam and Eve out of Paradise and seal the gates with a fiery sword after the Fall; but in spite of his seeming austerity, he is also kind as he fulfills his commission to reveal the future of humankind to Adam, thus offering hope and consolation.

Moloch

Moloch, the fallen angel who speaks first at the council of devils in Book II, is also the fallen angel described first in the list of Satan's legions in Book I, as they rise from the burning lake and stand before their leader and his second-in-command, Beelzebub. Milton identifies the fallen angels with the idols and pagan deities of the ancient world, and thus gives them the "new names" by which they are known to the "sons of Eve," whom they corrupt. Described in Book I as "Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with

Raphael

Raphael is the angel who acts as God's messenger to Adam, warning him of the danger which threatens him and reminding him of his duty of obedience. Raphael also fills in the gaps created by the epic style, which begins the poem *in medias res,* or in the middle. He tells Adam of the revolt of Satan and the War in Heaven, and of the Creation of the World. In turn, he is the audience for Adam's recounting of his memories since his first awakening, and of the creation of Eve. Raphael ends his long discussion with Adam by reminding Adam that he was created with both the freedom to choose and the ability to choose wisely, and by repeating his warning about the danger presented by Satan.

Satan

Satan, whose name means "enemy" or "adversary" in Hebrew, is the first character to whom the reader is introduced, and the most complex. The leader of the fallen angels, Satan was known as "Lucifer" (Latin, "hghtbearer") before he initiated a rebellion against God and was cast out of Heaven. It has been suggested that Satan is the true "epic hero" of the piece, largely because of his epic language and heroic energy. However, as Robert M. Adams and George M. Logan point out in their introduction to the poem in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* it is "energy in a bad cause," even if it is heroically exercised. Satan is characterized in Book I by pride, by the refusal to accept defeat, and by the conviction that it is "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n" (1.263). Even here, of course, the careful reader will discern his envy, his false ambition and his self-deception, as he characterizes God as a tyrant and plots his revenge. Yet his speech is stirring, and the reader can see the valiant leader who was able to draw one third of heaven with him in rebellion as he rouses his troops to action and embraces his new home, declaring that "the mind is its own place, and in itself/ can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven" (1254-5).

Milton's portrayal of Satan is honest and reflects an important truth: evil is powerful because it is attractive, and this is part of its danger. It is this attraction which will ultimately cause the downfall of Eve, as well as of Satan and his minions. This surface attraction, however, hides a deeper weakness, based on flawed character and self-deception. Satan maintains that, as an angel, however fallen, he cannot change or fail, yet from the beginning of the poem, it is obvious that he *has* changed and, ultimately, he *will* fail. As the poem progresses, Satan appears less compelling, shifting from the heroic warrior to a vulture, a cormorant, a toad, and finally a snake. As his form shifts, so too does his character, and the reader sees his ambition tainted by envy and haired. His speech to Eve is characterised by sibilant "s" sounds, simulating the hissing of the serpent into whose form he has voluntarily entered and into which he will be involuntarily transformed in Book X as, returning in "triumph" to Hell, he is defeated by the curse pronounced upon him as judgement for his sins.

Sin

Sin is Satan's daughter who, along with Death (the product of her incestuous union with Satan), guards the gates of Hell. Satan, Sin, and Death together thus form an unholy parody of the Trinity. In a curious combination of Edmund Spenser's Duessa (from *The Fairie Queene)* and the Questing Beast (frbfir Arthurian myth), Sin is described as a woman to the waist, and a serpent from the waist down, with hellhounds about her middle who bark and howl from within her womb. (These hellhounds represent her other "children," sins, which are conceived when her son, Death, rapes her.) Paralleled to Athena, who sprang full grown from the head of Zeus, Sin literally sprang from Satan's head when he first conceived the idea of rebellion against God, and thus is the realization or personification of his "original" sin. Like Duessa (and like Satan), she combines beauty with grotesque ugliness, illustrating both the attraction and the repulsiveness of sin and evil. Satan is attracted to her in a parody of Adam's love for Eve, becoming enamoured with his "perfect image" which he perceives in her. Ironically, however, when he encounters her at the gates of Hell, he recognizes neither her nor the son he has never seen (but whom he should know), indicating how far they both have fallen.

The Son

The Son of God is the character closest to God, in whom God confides. It is the Son's exaltation as king of the angels which arouses Lucifer's envy and provokes his revolt. The Son leads the final battle in which the rebellion is ended, and as a result of which the rebel angels are cast out of Heaven. He volunteers to die for the sin of Adam and Eve (Book in) and intercedes with God on their behalf, before being sent to pronounce God's final judgement upon them (Book X). He is not yet named Jesus, which is the name he takes during his earthly existence when he sets out to fulfil the vow taken in heaven to repair the harm done in Eden by Satan, and to redeem Adam, Eve, and their descendants.

Uriel

The faithful and radiant archangel of the sun, Uriel is one of the seven spirits who stand in the sight of God's throne. Deceived by Satan, who disguises himself as a young cherub, Uriel directs him to Paradise, thus both enabling and foreshadowing the deception of Eve, though on a higher plane. Unlike Eve, however, Uriel's deception is not associated with either disobedience or fall, and Milton makes it clear that Uriel's failure to discern Satan's hypocrisy is not only sanctioned but willed by God. Later, Uriel recognizes Satan as the latter debates with himself on the borders of Paradise. Uriel immediately glides to Gabriel on a sunbeam and warns him of the danger that threatens God's newest creatures.

Vulcan

See Mulciber

Themes

Justice

Milton's stated purpose is "to justify the ways of God to man," and he does so by placing responsibility for the fall squarely on the shoulders of the first human pair. They are cast out of Eden because their banishment is necessary to fulfil the demands of divine justice. Their punishment is just, because God placed only one condition upon them and they failed to fulfil it, in spite of the fact that God gave them the means to do so. As Adam warns Eve, God's "creating hand / Nothing imperfect or deficient left/ Of all that he Created, much less Man..." (IX.344-346). By providing them with reason and free will, God gives humankind both the choke to obey or disobey, and the means by which to exercise that choice wisely, for "within himself/ The danger lies, yet lies within his power: / Against his will he can receive no harm" (IX.347-348).

Having created man free to fall, yet able to resist, God goes one step further. He sends Raphael to warn Adam of the danger which threatens him, and to remind him of his duty of obedience. Adam is thus completely without excuse, and God himself reinforces Adam and Eve's responsibility for their own fall: "whose fault? / Whose but his own? ... I made him just and right, / Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (111.95-98).

Once the Fall has occurred, the consequences are fixed. God set the rules when he pronounced his one prohibition: Adam and Eve are not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, or they will die. Having made the rules, God is now bound by them, and once Adam has eaten, he *must* die: "Die he or Justice must; unless for him / Some other able, and as willing, pay / The rigid satisfaction, death for death" (m.210-212). The Son's death, then, is freely offered out of mercy, to satisfy the demands of justice and offer grace. In the Incarnate Son, Jesus, "Man, as is most just, / Shall satisfy for Man" (UI.295-6).

Freedom

It is important that, while God made Adam and Eve "sufficient to have stood," he also created them "free to fall." This freedom is rooted in then-very nature, for God "formed them free, and free they must remain" (III. 124). For Milton, humankind's obedience is proof of their love and service to God, and obedience therefore *must* be free, for obedience which is not free is not obedience but slavery. It is for this reason that Adam is free to fall, and for this reason that he must leave Eve free to make her own choices, even if that choice be to leave him and work alone and vulnerable, "for thy stay, not free, absents thee more" (IX.372). But in this very freedom lies the possibility of disobedience, for in the freedom of will lies the possibility of choice.

Choice and Consequences

The freedom of the will is associated with freedom of choice; yet freedom implies responsibility, and the freedom to choose brings with it the responsibility to choose correctly. It is reason which gives humans the ability to choose between obedience and disobedience and, after the fall, between good and evil. Thus, "Against his will he can receive no harm. But God left free the Will, for what obeys / Reason is free..." (IX.350-52). The Fall, then, is the *consequence* of failing to choose wisely. The events which follow are the logical consequences of the choice which Adam and Eve make when they choose "knowledge" over obedience. The full consequences of the Fall are made clear in the final vision of the future which Michael shows to Adam: the political upheaval, strife, toil, and anguish which result from being cast out of Eden, but also the redemption of humankind, which only the Fall makes possible.

Obedience

The only condition placed on Adam and Eve is a simple prohibition: not to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. It is important, however, to recognize that it is not *knowledge* which causes the fall, it is disobedience. The commandment is not meant to *prevent* knowledge, but to provide the *opportunity* for obedience. As Adam reminds Eve, God "requires / From us no other service than to keep / This one, this easy charge,... The only sign of our obedience.. ."(TV.419-21, 428). Ironically, this "one easy prohibition" is bom so easily kept and so easily broken, and man will "... easily transgress the sole Command, sole pledge of his obedience" (IH.94-95) That the Fall must be understood as a failure of obedience, not the acquisition of forbidden knowledge, is made clear in the first lines of the poem, where Milton states his theme as being "OfMan's First Disobedience" (1.1).

Obedience is also an integral part of the maintenance of the natural hierarchy, which depends on the proper exercise of authority: God rules over Adam, and Adam must rule over both Eve and himself. The theme of obedience is thus tied to the question of authority, which is exercised through reason.

Knowledge and Ignorance

The Fall, then, is not the acquisition of knowledge, but the failure of obedience, which is caused by the failure to exercise reason. The belief that it is knowledge itself which is forbidden is a misunderstanding of both the nature and purpose of the prohibition, and Milton emphasizes this by putting all his statements about forbidden knowledge into Ihe mouth of Satan before the Fall, and into the mouths of Adam and Eve only after the Fall. In fact, it is *knowledge* which should prevent the Fall, and knowledge which Raphael imparts in his warning to Adam. Satan's deception lies not in his claims that knowledge is a good thing and therefore to be desired, but in the idea that the knowledge of good and evil is enclosed within the tree and its fruit. Adam clearly knew of evil prior the Fall, and was well aware of the dangers of evil. The knowledge of good and evil which

comes with the Fall, then, is not simply a new knowledge of evil, where before there was only the knowledge of good. What is gained is rather the "Knowledge of Good bought dear by knowing ill" (IV.220), or "knowledge of good lost, evil got." The consequence of eating the fruit is that the knowledge of good and of evil has become inseparable, and humankind can now know good only by knowing evil as well. This is consistent with Milton's conviction, expressed elsewhere, that *all* knowledge is valuable, and even necessary. After the Fall, the free choice with which humankind is endowed is exercised in the choice between good and evil, and that choice can only be established and maintained through the knowledge of both.

The Human Condition

The human condition is thus the condition of fallen humanity, knowing not just "good and evil," but the inseparable nature of the two in a fallen world. Yet, humankind was created in the image of God, and still retains this innate characteristic. It is reason which is most fully the image of God in humankind, reason which enables humankind to choose between good and evil, reason which both establishes and preserves free will. Fallen humanity is thus characterized still by reason, but it is an impaired reason, for although God created humankind perfect, they are not immutable and the most obvious consequence of the Fall is indeed change. Even reason impaired, however, is still reason which need not fail, and Milton's final word is one of hope. Michael's revelation of God's redemptive purpose brings Adam to a new understanding of the proper role of obedience and virtue in a fallen world, reconciling him to his expulsion from Paradise and enabling him to possess "a paradise within, ... happier far" (XII.587).

Style

Subject Matter

The standard definition of an epic, or heroic poem, is that it is a "noble story told in noble verse" (Hutson and McCoy, *Epics of the Western World,* p. 7), a continuous narrative concerning a heroic person from history or tradition. The epic uses historical and mythological material to exemplify a truth which is greater than both. The subject of an epic poem is to be a story which both delights and instructs, embodying the cultural and moral ideals of its time but with universal implications.

Milton chooses an unusual subject for his great epic poem, ostensibly shunning "Wars, hitherto the only Argument / Heroic deem'd" (IX.28-9), in favor of the sad task of relating an "argument / Not less but more Heroic than the wrath / Of Stern Achilles on his Foe pursu'd / Thrice Fugitive about Troy Wall" (DC. 13-15). The "higher argument" which Milton chooses is the story of the Creation, Fall, and Redemption of humankind, combining the epic conventions of high moral purpose with the conviction that in presenting a Biblical theme, he is also representing a higher truth. The fate of humankind thus becomes the unifying force of the poem, as Milton presents the ideals of private virtue and public rectitude by exploring both the nobility and weakness of fallen humanity.

Poetic Style and Techniques

Milton's dramatic and magnificent manipulation of language in *Paradise Lost* has aroused the admiration of generations of readers. His choice of blank verse goes against the spirit of the times, which saw rhyme as the highest evidence of disciplined mastery of language, as well as a means of restraining an overactive fancy. This is typical of Milton's use of the classical poetic techniques associated with the epic form. The poem contains many formal parallels widi classical forms: the beginning of the poem *in medias res;* the repetition of the formula "what cause?"; the epic games pursued by the rebel angels; the alternation of setting between earth and Heaven or Hell; lists of armies and the description of councils (both heavenly and demonic); wars and their descriptions; and the alternation of dialogue with description and narration. Yet, Milton consistently adapts these classical forms to his own purposes and style. For example, in his statement of theme and purpose, he follows the pattern of Homer and Virgil. However, he replaces the assertion of Fate with an assertion of Providence, and though he begins his poem with the standard invocation to the Muse, he alters that invocation. He appeals, not to Calliope, the traditional Muse of the epic poet, but to Urania, the Muse of astrology and the heavens, who, he asserts, inspired Moses. However, above Urania, he invokes the Holy Spirit (associated with heavenly light) as the true inspiration for his Christian epic.

Character

The problem of the "epic hero" has plagued the analysis of *Paradise Lost.* The epic hero is generally defined as a hero of extraordinary magnitude, who is identified with a national or cult hero and exemplifies heroic and moral values. But there is no "real" hero of this world in Milton's poem. This has led to a debate as to who the "hero" of the piece really is. On the surface, it is humankind, represented by Adam and Eve. Yet it is Satan who displays the typical qualities of the classical hero, while Adam never really attains epic stature. To assume, however, that Satan is the "hero" is to misread Milton's assessment of both humanity and evil. Satan's character exposes the true danger of evil, which lies in the very fact that it is attractive. Through Satan, Milton exposes the false view of heroism as "egotistical magnificence" and the equally false idea that heroic energy is admirable, even when exercised in a bad cause (Daiches, *Milton*).

Adam and Eve, on the other hand, reveal the central paradoxes of the human condition; capable of standing, yet free to fall. Humankind as a moral being is both noble and weak. Yet, this tragic ambiguity is balanced by the conclusion of the poem, which reveals humanity's capacity to derive hope from an exile which includes companionship and purpose. The story of fallen humankind may be a lament for a lost Eden, but it is also a challenge to triumph over despair and to explore an infinitely engaging new world.

Setting

Like the classical epic, *Paradise Lost* alternates its setting between the world of men and the worlds of God and the angels (fallen and unfallen). The activities of God and the angels, both fallen and unfallen, project both the ideals and the realities of human behavior. The council of devils, for example, parallels the abuses of public "reason" and civil responsibility in the royalist parliament, as well as the secrecy and other sinister features which Milton attributes to the papacy. Eden is a real world, yet is described using classical imagery. It is the setting for the highest human ideals, such as perfect conjugal bliss, as well as extreme human weakness, such as recrimination and malice. Both heaven and earth are battlegrounds where virtue and vice, good and evil, fight for dominance.

Epic Motifs

As well as the typical epic forms described above, a number of epic motifs are incorporated by Milton into the poem. For example, he incorporates mythology, though it is Biblical, not classical, myth which dominates *Paradise Lost.* Although he claims that war, the traditional subject matter of the epic, is not to be his theme, he does incorporate the motif of battle into the poem. The war in Heaven and Satan's subsequent fall and exile both prefigure and precipitate the central conflict of the poem, which takes place on earth. The conflict between Satan and God is continued in Eden and projected into conflict between human desire and God's command, between desire

and reason, between Adam and Eve. Finally, after the Fall, the entire earth becomes the battleground for the ongoing conflict between good and evil. The epic motif of the journey as a symbol of life is also present. Again, the journey of Satan from Hell to earth both prefigures and contrasts humanity's journey out of Eden, and the progression of history presented to Adam by Michael as a panoramic journey through time.

Historical Context

The English Civil Wars, Interregnum, and Restoration

The civil wars of the 1640s in England were rooted in the conflicts between Charles I and his Parliament in the 1620s and the policies which were instituted in the 1630s, when Charles ruled without Parliament. His religious policies were resented: the apparently weakened stance regarding Catholics incensed the Puritans, as did the emphasis on the prayer book and its procedures, which curtailed the development of new religious practises and observances. In 1640-1642, a new Parliament was called which attempted religious and political reform, ultimately resulting in the first Civil War (1642-1646), which pitted king against parliament. The war was disorganized, and its outcome was determined not primarily by military factors, but hy economic, religious, and political factors. The heavy taxation, extreme religious reform, and wide powers granted to parliamentary agents led to the second Civil War (1647-1649), which was primarily a revolt of the provinces against centralization and military rule, and which culminated in the beheading of Charles in 1649.

From 1649 to 1660, the period known as the Interregnum, England was a republic (though not a democracy). Cromwell governed from 1653 to 1658 as Lord Protector and Head of State. He saw England as representing God's chosen people, working towards a Promised Land where Church and State would be as one. His religious radicalism led to what was seen as undue control of individual behavior and arbitrary government. Cromwell's son had neither the strength nor the character to follow in his father's footsteps, and with Cromwell's death in 1658, the Republic collapsed. Eighteen months later free elections were held and Charles II was recalled unconditionally.

Milton's own disillusionment with the attempt to combine politics and religion and the collapse of the government which he served so loyally can be seen in *Paradise Lost,* as he outlines the political consequences of the fall in Michael's revelation to Adam in Book XII. Yet, the poem also conveys his conviction that political justice can be achieved in this world. The Puritan stress on overcoming temptation is also a theme which recurs throughout his work, and is especially dominant in *Paradise Lost* Yet Milton's Puritanism is not as strict as that of many in his day; for example, Milton loves beauty and stresses both the beauty of Eden and the beauty and sexual bliss of Adam and Eve.

Religious Thought

The civil wars produced a chaotic variety of sects which were never entirely rooted out. Although Charles II attempted to introduce the religious toleration which was lacking in both his father's reign and the Interregnum, he was not successful, and the entire period is characterized by religious intolerance and conflict. Yet, there are some general trends which can be traced through the seventeenth century.

In the early part of the century, scientific, philosophical, and political writings are infused with hope as scholarship, scientific inquiry, and Christian faith are combined. The Protestant commitment to the authority of Scripture is combined with a philosophical search for "truth," and perceived anomalies between science, philosophy, and religion are resolved in various ways. For example, some thinkers propose the existence of various orders of truth, separating reason and faith (which is informed by scripture and therefore above reason), while others argue that the Bible is to be read allegoncally, since it conveys truth figuratively, rather than literally. Revelation, however, is not confined to Scripture. God's laws are revealed externally in the laws of nature, and internally through reason, or the moral law within. Milton shares these views, emphasizing moral guidance and free will. Scripture, passed down by human intermediaries, is less reliable than reason inspired by the Holy Spirit, which is the final authority.

There is also a stress on the combination of religious and political spheres, on God's activities within human history. It is this ideal which Cromwell attempted to realize in the Interregnum. After the Interregnum, however, the concept of the Kingdom of God was internalized, and the limitations of Church and State acknowledged. The search for peace and salvation became a personal, rather than collective, quest, and politics, science, and philosophy became increasingly secularized.

Science

The seventeenth century was characterized by a new emphasis on empirical "truth" rather than metaphysical "reality." For example, Francis Bacon stressed the importance of observation and experimental science. These principles allowed many advances in the study of plant and animal life, and the study of physiology and anatomy progressed following William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood. The seventeenth century also saw advances in physics (Isaac Newton), chemistry (Robert Boyle), and geology (Robert Hooke). Galileo transformed human knowledge of the heavens, showing change and mutability in heavenly bodies, arguing that perfection could no longer be identified with the incorruptible or the unalterable. Milton was ultimately uninterested in "scientific truth," and was indifferent to the ultimate success of either the old Ptolemaic model of the universe or the new Copernican model, yet he was fascinated by new scientific discoveries and their implications. He incorporated the separation between perfection and immutability in his portrait of unfallen humankind, created perfect but mutable, and therefore free to fall.

Philosophy

Copernicus had shown that things are not necessarily what they seem, nor what they have been said to be, and scientific advances suggested that many things which had previously been attributed to God had new, natural explanations. Yet much remained unknown, and philosophy in the seventeenth century focused on the questions of episte-mology, of what can truly be "known" about reality. Rene Descartes suggested

that God and the Soul were the first "certainties." Yet both were ultimately reduced in Cartesian thought to intellectual abstractions: God no longer had any relationship to religious experience, and the "I" whose existence was proven by conscious thought ("I think, therefore I am") was only the *thinking* part of me. Thus, there was no certainty concerning either the properties or attributes of either God or the soul. Yet Descartes's break with the past is important, embodying a new appeal to the internal authority of reason, rather than the external authority of religion. Shaking off the influence of the past also enabled the growth of the idea of "progress" (both scientific and philosophical) which was rooted in Renaissance humanism and its celebration of human potential. The world was no longer constructed from "historical" realities, but rather from inner certainties, endorsed by reason. Thomas Hobbes went a step further, identifying the real with the material, reflecting the increasing secularization of politics and science. Hobbes replaced the divine justification of political authority with de facto power, and the sovereign's ability to protect his subjects. Religion was relegated to the realm of superstition, but religious beliefs were nonetheless valuable in forming attitudes and actions, in teaching humankind how to behave as subjects and citizens. The sovereign was thus viewed as God's earthly lieutenant; the laws of God were paralleled with the laws of nature and principles of morality; and scripture was granted a limited authority. With John Locke, a new emphasis on individualism and religious toleration became the groundwork for what would become modern liberal democracy.

Critical Overview

Milton's poem has produced mixed reactions in the three centuries since its first publication. Much of the controversy surrounding the poem centers around two main issues: its style, and its content (specifically its religious subject matter and political overtones). Yet, it must be remembered, in the epic form style and content are closely related, and it is thus impossible to separate the two issues entirely.

Early reactions to the poem seem to have questioned Milton's use of blank verse in an epic poem, and the second and third issues of the first edition contain a note from ' "The Printer to the Reader" on this subject, as well as Milton's own justification of "The Verse." However, the most intense reaction to the poem in its early days focused on its content. Nicholas von Maltzahn ("The First Reception of *Paradise Lost* (1667)") summarizes the politics surrounding three early responses which typify its first reception. The episcopal licenser, Thomas Tomkins, was at first inclined to suppress the poem, finding evidence in it of the anti-royalist sentiments for which Milton was notorious after the publication of his tracts supporting the regicide of Charles I. After the Restoration, such opinions were, naturally, cause for profound concern. Tomkins disapproved of the emphasis on astrological omens, such as eclipses, which reflected a Puritan tendency to over-emphasize natural events, and which Tomkins feared would fuel dissent in the wake of numerous disasters which the English had suffered in the previous year (such as the Great Fire of London). Tomkins was also suspicious of Milton's elevation of private illumination or inspiration. However, other preoccupations also engaged Tomkins, and in a time of national crisis, Milton's emphasis on reason, first principles and common notions, and the poem's engaging development of sacred history were seen as contributing to, rather than detracting from the stability and national unity which Tomkins sought to endorse. He therefore licensed the work, in spite of his misgivings.

The initial success of the poem is seen in the reactions of Sir John Hobart, who saw the Christian epic as a welcome balance to the decadent culture of the court. While joining in the (by now) almost universal condemnation of the politics represented in Milton's prose, Hobart praised Milton's humanism, as well as his style, which he stated was "not only above alle moderne attempts in verse, but equall to any of the Antient Poets" (letter, Bodl. Ms Tanner 45, cited by von Maltzahn). John Beale, however, had a more mixed reaction. Beale responded hopefully to Milton's claims to individual inspiration, and his elevation of the claims of conscience. Yet, he was wary of the politics of *Paradise Lost,* which he saw as openly republican, as well as its demonology, which was too Calvinist for his episcopal tastes.

Criticism of Milton's epic has continued to be divided. Early poets and critics who have praised Milton's style and content include John Dryden, who in 1688 placed Milton on a level with Homer and Virgil, Patrick Hume, who published an early annotated text of the poem in 1695, and Joseph Addison, who published a laudatory series of essays in 1712. Samuel Johnson, however, was less complimentary, writing, ' *'Paradise Lost* is

one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure."

The greatness of Milton's verse was generally acknowledged in the nineteenth century, and his influence on poets such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and Matthew Arnold is clear, though all of these poets developed in their own distinctive ways. Yet, the twentieth century saw a continuation of the division which characterized early criticism. The "attack" on Milton was mounted by T. S. Eliot, who argued that Milton could only be a bad influence on later poets; that his visual imagination was flawed, and that he was not a great poet, but merely a great eccentric. Eliot's arguments, inconclusive in themselves, were taken up by F. R. Leavis, who argued that Milton has made a victim of the English language itself, and that his style is routine, monotonous and heavy. The case in Milton's defense was taken up by critics such as Basil Willey and C. S. Lewis, who argue that Milton's latinate vocabulary and syntax are highly appropriate to his subject matter and praise the broad sweep of the poem as well as its grand style. Later critics, such as Christopher Ricks and Frank Kermode, have defended Milton's style in detail and with force, and the attacks of Eliot and Leavis are now generally dismissed.

One final issue which cannot be ignored is the "split" which many critics have seen in the poem. The ostensible purpose of the poem is to expose Satan and "justify" God. However, it has been argued that Milton did precisely the opposite. In the Romantic period, criticism focused on the presentation of Satan, for which Milton has received both praise and blame. The Romantic poets, following Dryden, saw Satan as the true hero *of Paradise Lost,* and promoted the idea that Milton was "of the Devil's party without knowing it" (William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,* 1790). In this view, Milton projected his own revolutionary ideals onto Satan, presenting God (albeit unwittingly) in the image of the Stuart kings whom he so abhorred. This argument was picked up by twentieth century critics such as A. J. A. Waldock and John Peter, but its greatest champion is William Empson, who sees Milton's epic as a heroic struggle with the inner contradictions of the Christian faith itself, exposing God, in the end, as a tyrant.

There have been numerous responses to this view, but the most effective is by Stanley Fish. Fish argues that Milton's presentations of God and Satan are deliberate, and that the ambiguity of the poem represents the ambiguity of the human condition in its fallen state. The attraction of Satan and the remoteness of God thus reflect, not the true character of either, but the exile of fallen humankind, for whom Satan is a formidable enemy *because* of his compelling qualities, and God is alien because the fallen world is not in tune with its creator.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

In the following essay, Innes-Parker studies Milton's struggle to reconcile the sinful nature of humankind with the inherent value of knowledge, assessing Adam and Eve's sin which results from eating from the Tree of Knowledge,

Paradise Lost has been hailed as one of the greatest poems in the English language. While this acclaim is due in a large part to Milton's command of language and poetic style, much of the attraction of the poem lies in its content. The discussion of temptation and fall is rooted in universal questions concerning the nature of good and evil, the apparent injustice of a world where the wicked prosper and the good suffer, the nature and value of knowledge, and the nature of humankind.

Milton's struggle to reconcile the Genesis account of the Fall with his own deepest convictions and concerns is often attributed to a failure to come to terms with the particular demands of the epic form. However, in light of his prose treatments of similar themes, it becomes clear that the conflicts in *Paradise Lost* reflect a conflict between his understanding of the authority of scripture and his conviction that reason is the surest guide to truth. If reason represents the image of God in humankind, how can the Fall be attributed to knowledge, and, more important, how can knowledge be forbidden? Milton's struggle to reconcile his intellectual convictions with the text of Genesis reflects a conflict which remains to this day. The Genesis account of the creation and Fall remains one of the foundation-al myths of Western culture; yet, in our modern secular world, the intrinsic power of myth often collides with the demands of reason.

Milton's treatment of the Fall is, in fact, remarkably consistent with his understanding of the nature of humankind as created in the image of God and with his treatments of the nature and value of knowledge. The first question which must be asked, then, is what is the true nature of humankind? Or, what does it mean to be created in the image of God? In the first view of humankind (seen through Satan's eyes, but not described from his point of view) the omniscient narrator describes: "Two of far nobler shape erect and tall, / Godlike erect, with native Honor clad / In naked majesty seem'd Lords of all, / And worthy seem'd, for in their looks Divine / The image of their glorious maker shone, / Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure, / Severe, but in true filial freedom plac't; / Whence true authority in men..." *(PL* IV.287-294). Adam and Eve's outward appearance is characterized by nobility, and rectitude, reflecting the inward attributes of the image of God: truth, wisdom, sanctitude, purity and freedom. These attributes, or more accurately, the image of God which they represent, are the source of both human dignity and authority, leading to the conclusion that they are rightly "Lords of all."

Similar motifs emerge in Raphael's description of the creation of humankind as "... a Creature who not prone / And Brute as other Creatures, but endu'd/With Sanctity of Reason, might erect/His Stature, and upright with front serene / Govern the rest, self-knowing..." *(PL* VIL506-510). Again, what distinguishes humans from the creatures which they will rule is their erect stature. This is specifically associated with that faculty which, above all others, Milton associates with the divine image: reason. But reason is

associated with self-knowledge, and it is in Adam's ability to know himself (or failure to do so) that the success or failure of reason will ultimately lie.

Adam gives evidence of self-knowledge throughout *Paradise Lost.* He is aware of both his strengths and his weaknesses, as well as of his duties and obligations. This self-knowledge must be acquired by Adam through a process of growth, prompted by the reason which is innate to him.

Adam describes the learning process to Raphael in Book VIII as he describes his memories of his first awakening after his creation.

In addition to self-knowledge, Adam must acquire knowledge of the God whose image he bears. Adam intuitively deduces the existence of a creator from the fact of his own existence and seeks knowledge of the creator from the created world. In *Of Christian Doctrine,* Milton associates this intuitive knowledge of the existence of God with the possession of "right reason" or conscience, the moral sense which enables humankind to distinguish between right and wrong. In *Of Education,* therefore, Milton asserts that the purpose of education is to regain that knowledge possessed by Adam and lost in the Fall,"to know God aright," and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him.

Humankind's knowledge of self, of creation, and of God is associated with rule or authority, not only over creation, but over the self. Self-rule, like self-knowledge, is based on reason, the chief faculty of the soul. Reason must rule over the lesser faculties, and, particularly, over the passions. As long as the natural order is maintained, the passions are kept under control and happiness prevails. For example, properly ruled, the attraction between Adam and Eve is expressed in love and mutual affection, governed by reason: ".. .for smiles from Reason flow /.. .and are of Love the food, Love not the lowest end of human life. / For not to irksome toil, but to delight / He made us, and delight to Reason joined." *(PL* DC.239f). Implicit in this, however, is also a warning. Reason is vulnerable to passion, and the disruption of the natural order is inherent in Adam's very nature if he fails to know and rule his own passion. The potential for disaster is evident in Adam's words to Raphael as he describes Eve:"All higher knowledge in her presence falls / Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her / Loses Discount'nanc't, and like folly shows: / Authority and Reason on her wait." *(PL* VM.55 If). Adam blames the failure of his reason and authority in Eve's presence on his own nature and his love for Eve, foreshadowing his eventual fall. However, Raphael warns him, "Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part; / Do thou but thine, and be not diffident / Of Wisdom, she deserts thee not, if thou / Dismiss not her, when most thou need's her nigh" *(PL* Vin.560f). Adam must heed his own advice to Eve: the danger lies within himself, yet within his power, depending upon his ability to rule passion with reason.

Humankind can overcome the danger inherent within his own nature through the reason implanted in him by God. Reason, however, is vulnerable to deception: ".. .Reason he made right, / But bid her well beware, and still erect, / Lest by some fair appearing good surpris'd / She dictates false, and misinform the Will / To do what God expressly hath

forbid. / ... Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve / Since Reason not impossible may meet / And fall into deception unaware." *(PL* Df.350-354, 359-362). This aspect of reason's vulnerability is represented by Eve, who succumbs to Satan's "persuasive words, impregn'd / With Reason, to her seeming, and with Truth" *(PL* DC.735-736).

Reason properly exercised, however, gives humankind the ability to choose between good and evil. Because humankind is created in the image of God, the natural disposition of humanity is toward what is right, good, and holy. Even after the Fall, this innate ability is retained, for the divine image is impaired, not destroyed. But the moral choice which reason enables is, necessarily, a free choice. Freedom is a natural consequence of reason and is rooted in the very nature of humankind, as God himself makes clear: "I formed them free, and free they must remain, / Till they enthral themselves: I else must change / Their nature..." *(PL* IIL124f). The Fall, however, is rooted in free choice, and humankind is created with the ability to choose correctly: "Against his will he can receive no harm /But God left free the Will, for what obeys / Reason, is free, and Reason he made right." *(PL* DL349f)

The choice which is faced by Adam and Eve in Eden is, quite simply, a question of obedience. Their obedience to God is proof of their love and service, and therefore, like the will, must be left free. The single commandment that God has given does not impair this freedom; rather it reflects it. Adam tells Eve that God "requires / From us no other service than to keep / This one, this easy charge" (PLIV.419f), and asserts that"... the rest, we live / Law to ourselves, our Reason is our Law*' *(PL* DC.653-654). It is ironic that this "one easy prohibition" is both so easily kept and so easily broken.

The fact that the commandment is a pledge of obedience has enormous implications for the nature of the Fall. It is not the eating of the fruit *per se* that is wrong- it is the disobedience which that eating exhibits. As Milton states in *On Christian Doctrine,* "It was necessary that something should be forbidden or commanded as a test of fidelity, and that an act in its own nature indifferent,in order that man's obedience might thereby be manifested," The eating of the fruit is "an act in its own nature indifferent": the tree, in and of itself, is neither good nor evil, it is simply there. The eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is not forbidden because it is dangerous or wrong; it is wrong because it is forbidden. The Fall must therefore be understood as disobedience, not the acquisition of knowledge. It is not knowledge which is forbidden, but a particular action.

The Tree of Knowledge is thus a symbol of man's disobedience, the main subject of *Paradise Lost.* Milton states his theme as "Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit / Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste, / Brought Death into the World, and all our woe" *(PL* 1.1-3). The "woe" which is brought into the world is not the knowledge of good and evil, but death.

This has important implications for the understanding of the knowledge allegedly imparted by the tree. Since the Fall cannot be attributed to the acquisition of knowledge, either the tree did not impart any knowledge, or the knowledge which it did impart was not such as to lead to a "fall." In *Paradise Lost* Milton suggests that the knowledge of good and evil is not simply a new knowledge of evil where before was only knowledge

of good. Adam clearly knew of evil prior to his Fall. Raphael has informed him of the fall of the angels and of the existence of his arch-enemy Satan. Adam shows himself to be well aware of the dangers of temptation in his exhortation to Eve as well as in his earlier reaction to Eve's dream, which he immediately identifies as having sprung from evil. Rather, what has occurred in the eating of the fruit is that the knowledge of good and of evil have become so intertwined as to become inseparable: humankind can now know good *only* by knowing evil.

This understanding of the Tree of Knowledge is dictated by Milton's convictions concerning knowledge and its value. Milton sees learning as itself the service of God and of truth. But, in order to attain true virtue, one must know not only good but also evil, for "good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil" *(Areopagitica).* Milton thus argues that all opinions, even those which reflect error, will eventually lead to the attainment of truth if the mind is correctly governed. Liberty of thought and speech are thus essential in the formation of virtue.

Virtue, like obedience, is rooted in freedom of choice. Yet, in order to choose, one must have alternative to choose from, for "what wisdom can there be to choose, what contingence to forbear without the knowledge of evil?... I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue" *(Areopagitica).* Choice becomes meaningless without the freedom to choose either good or evil, and that freedom to choose can only be established and maintained through the knowledge of both.

It follows, then, that the idea of forbidden knowledge is, for Milton, an absurdity. In fact, the quest for knowledge is closely tied to the quest for virtue, and thus with the highest achievements of humankind. Far from causing the Fall, the acquisition of knowledge is the only way of repairing the divine image which is impaired in the Fall, as reason is obscured. Milton asserts that "the end ... of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him..." (Of Education). The only limits to this quest are the limits of humanity's own capacity for knowledge.

Source: Catherine Innes-Parker, for *Epics for Students,* Gale Research, 1997.

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay, Johnson examines ways that Milton uses such elements of language as symbolism, irony, ambiguity, and even puns in Paradise Lost *to evoke images of innocence and the loss of innocence.*

We cannot enter the Garden of Eden in Book 4 of *Paradise Lost* and look upon the "mysterious parts" of the innocent Adam and Eve or upon Eve's "wanton ringlets" in a spirit of complete simplicity and purity: not only do we observe with the fallen Satan as our companion, but our perceptions, including those of the poet himself, are subject to the complex connotations and associations which characterize our use of language. To some, "words alone are certain good" but not to the epic's narrator, who, as if acknowledging the hopelessness of painting a credible verbal picture of innocent life, continually calls attention to the "guilty shame" and "dishonest shame" that evoke innocence only by contrast and by a sense of absence (4.313). As the unhappy turns in the careers of Satan, Adam, and Eve demonstrate, linguistic self-subversion, irony, and ambiguity, including, at its lowest, downright bad puns, inhere in the expression of fallen natures. Such a language drifts ineluctably into waywardness and perverse complexity and is, by definition, inadequate to the task of depicting innocent perfection on its own terms. But a poet need not be limited to the depiction of innocence solely by its absence: the illusion of its presence is within the domain of artistic symbolism.

It would appear that, for the purpose of dramatizing the state of innocence, Milton's poetic style displays a remarkable bond between his language and the use of uncomplicated symbolic formal patterns. In exploring the nature of those patterns, we find that they are restricted to books 4,5, and 8 of *Paradise Lost:* precisely those portions of the epic in which Adam and Eve are described or act in their unfallen condition. We shall not come upon anything similar to Milton's art of innocence elsewhere in *Paradise Lost* or throughout *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes:* all such passages and works chiefly concern fallen experience and conditions and thus have their own appropriate modes of presentation.

The symbolic patterns associated with the style and language of innocence lend a sense of authenticity to the early speeches of the innocent Adam and Eve. Among those early speeches, the one which displays the most concentrated example of the patterns we shall now consider is Eve's love-lyric "Sweet is the breath of morn':

Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet, With charm of earliest Birds; pleasant the Sun When first on this delightful Land he spreads His orient Beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flow'r, Ghst'nng with dew; fragrant the fertile earth After soft showers; and sweet the coming on Of grateful Ev'ning mild, then silent Night With this her solemn Bird and this fair Moon, And these the Gems of Heav'n, her starry train: But neither breath of Morn when she ascends With charm of earliest Birds, nor rising Sun On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flow'r, Ghst'ring with dew, nor fragrance after showers, Nor grateful Ev'ning mild, nor silent Night With this her solemn Bird, nor walk by Moon, Or glittering Star-light without thee is sweet (4.641-56)

The principal effect of the passage is one of enclosure and depends on the careful placement of key words. The lyric's opening line, "Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet," illustrates the effect in miniature by using the same word in its first and tenth syllables. The effect continues throughout the series of clauses that completes the initial part of the passage: "pleasant the Sun," "fragrant the fertile earth," and, finally, "sweet the coming on / Of grateful Ev'ning mild." What is being enclosed, of course, is the scale of creation from "morn" to "Ev'ning mild," settings for the sun and moon whose importance and interdependence are emphasized by their use as end-words in their respective lines.

The same phrases and images reappear in the second part of the lyric: the sun and moon again serve as end-words for their lines, but Eve's sense of the harmonious interrelationships among things would not be "sweet" without Adam as her companion. Eve's lyric on the mutual support and pairing of all things ends as it begins: the word "sweet" encloses the cycles and images of day and night in a circle, which, as a symbol of fullness and perfection; is appropriate to Eve's innocent state of being. The sixteen lines of Eve's lyric, which has been described mistakenly as a sonnet, are actually much more interesting and strictly unified in their use of key words to establish patterns of enclosure and circularity of evident symbolic value.

By touching on the fullness of the scale of creation, such patterns of enclosure are notable, not for their exclusion or limitation of possibilities, but for their participation in a graceful range of complexity. In the verse paragraphs which immediately precede and follow Eve's love-lyric, Adam anticipates and echoes the imagery and form of Eve's speech. The phrase "Night bids us rest" concludes Adam's speech before Eve's lyric begins, and the words "night" and "rest" appear in the opening lines of Adam's verse paragraph as well, thereby encircling his thoughts on the mutually supportive cycles of their days and nights (4.610-33). As in Eve's lyric, so here the cyclical imagery and diction are at one with the formal design of the speech. After her lyric has ended and in response to her question about the role of starlight during their sleep, Adam considers the physical and spiritual natures of light and sound in relation to earth and earth's inhabitants. The speech is thirty lines long (4.659-88) and divides neatly into two fifteen-line halves (659-73; 674-88). In the first half, Adam notes the relationship of the stars to the sun: both sources of light, in a downward movement, irradiate the "earth," the word which appears prominently near the beginning (661) and end (672) of this portion of his speech. In the second half, he calls attention to the relationship of "Millions of spiritual Creatures," including perhaps angels, to their creator as the music of their praise rises from earth to "heaven," the word which surrounds this portion of the speech (676, 688). Thus, "Earth" and "Heaven" delimit their respective halves of the verse paragraph and, serving as end-words at the beginning (661) and conclusion (688) of the entire speech, circumscribe the mirror-effect of downward and upward motions of first physical and then spiritual forms of energy that ultimately "lift our thoughts to Heaven." Eve's love-lyric and the two surrounding speeches by Adam indicate that, to Milton, the presentation of the state of innocence is no mere study in reductive simplicity. Instead, the interaction of linguistic and formal symbols in these passages is sufficiently complex to create a coherent sense of an innocent reality that is complete in itself and that gives

the impression of not needing to be encumbered with help from an additional and fallen level of discourse.

Opposed to the circles of perfection that befit the innocence of Adam and Eve is the surrounding presence of Satan, whose speeches and activities initiate and conclude book 4. Enclosing the perfection of Eden and its inhabitants is not enough, however: he needs to break through, as his attempt at the ear of Eve demonstrates. The measure of his success is suggested at the beginning of book 5 when Eve recounts her troubled dream, which begins with images similar to those of her love-lyric in book 4. The morning sun and evening moon with their attendant birds have been replaced by "the night-warbling Bird, that now awake / Tunes sweetest his love-labor'd song" and by a moon that shines "with more pleasing light" (5.40-42). In her dream, Eve says, "I rose as at thy call, but found thee not" (5.48). The theme of loving interdependence among all things has been replaced by Satan's theme of self-sufficiency.

Adam's explanation of the dream as a product of wayward faculties seems to satisfy Eve, but then-restoration to untroubled innocence is completed by their morning-hymn which ensues shortly thereafter (5.153-208). Standing as the summation of Milton's art of innocence, the hymn, given its importance and complexity, is best seen whole with line-numbers and divisions noted in the margin:

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,Almighty, thine this universal Frame,Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then! Unspeakable, who sit'st above these Heavens To us invisible or dimly seen In these thy lowest works, yet these declare Thy goodness beyond thought, and Power Divine. Speak yee who best can tell, ye Sons of Light, Angels, for yee behold him, and with songs And choral symphonies, Day without Night, Circle his Throne rejoicing, yee in Heav'n; On Earth join all ye Creatures to extol Hun first, him last, him midst, and without end. Fairest of Stars, last in the train of Night, If better thou belong not to the dawn, Sure pledge of day, thatcrown'st the smiling Morn With thy bright Circlet, praise him in thy Sphere While day arises, that sweet hour of Prime Thou Sun, of this great World both Eye and Soul, Acknowledge him thy Greater, sound his praise In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st And when high Noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st Moon, that now meet'st the orient Sun, now fli'st With the fixt Stars, fixt in thir Orb that flies, And yee five other wand'nng Fires that move In mystic Dance not without Song, resound His praise, who out of Darkness call'd up Light Air, and ye Elements the eldest birth Of Nature's Womb, that in quaternion run Perpetual Circle, multiform, and mix And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change Vary to our great Maker still new praise. Ye Mists and Exhalations that now rise From Hill or steaming Lake, dusky or grey, Till the Sun paint your fleecy skirts with Gold, In honor to the World's great Author rise, Whether to deck with Clouds th' uncolor'd sky, Or wet the thirsty Earth with falling showers, Rising or falling still advance his praise His praise ye Winds, that from four Quarters blow, Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye Pmes, With every Plant, in sign of Worship wave Fountains and yee, that warble, as ye flow, Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise. Join voices all ye living Souls; ye Birds, That singing up to Heaven Gate ascend, Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise; Yee that in Waters glide, and yee that walk The Earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep; Witness if I be silent, Morn or Even, To Hill, or Valley, Fountain, or fresh

shade Made vocal by my Song, and taught his praise Hail universal Lord, be bounteous still To give us only good; and if the night Have gather'd aught of evil or conceal'd, Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark. (5.153-208)

Here patterns of enclosure and circles which symbolize innocent perfection receive their most highly developed expression in the entire epic. Direct addresses to the creator frame the hymn which in its body consists of direct addresses to different aspects of the creation. After the opening seven lines of praise to God and before the final four lines on the need for God's protective bounty, the hymn displays forty-five lines on the celestial and terrestrial elements of creation (160-204). These forty-five lines are symmetrically balanced: the first twenty address the celestial universe, then comes a middle section of five lines on the physical elements of the creation, and finally twenty more lines on the praise that comes from the earth. At the exact midpoint of these forty-five lines is the phrase "Perpetual Circle," which describes how the elements intermix to form all things. Images and metaphors of circles dominate the hymn as well. The "Sons of Light" addressed at the beginning of the first twenty-line section "Circle" God's throne, the "Fairest of Stars" provides a "bright Circlet" to crown the morning, the fixed stars are whirled about in the moving "Orb," and the entire passage is encircled by the word "Light" which serves as the end-word for lines one and twenty. The counterbalancing twenty-line section on the terrestrial scale of creation uses the word "praise" to end its major clauses, a praise that, according to other important words at the ends of lines, must "rise" and "ascend" as the passage touches on various aspects of earthly life associated with the springing forth of the morning light.

The symmetrical patterns of symbolic order just described would appear to counter the epic narrator's claim which immediately precedes the morning-hymn: namely, that such utterances from the innocent Adam and Eve are "Unmeditated" and spontaneous, occurring "in Prose or numerous Verse" (5.149,150). The "various style" (146) to which the narrator calls attention leads Joseph Summers to note the variety of strophic and syntactical lengths in the morning-hymn and to suggest that such variety is intrinsic to Milton's idea of perfection. Now, it is demonstrably the case that the internal structure of the hymn is irregular and, by avoiding predictable lengths in its sections, fosters a sense of freedom; at the same time, it is equally demonstrable that the hymn fulfills strict patterns of symbolic order through its images, the placement of key words, and its overall design. Milton's articulation of the artistic principle in question also characterizes, of course, the "Mystical dance" of the angels and planets, whose motions are "regular / Then most, when most irregular they seem" (5.620-24). The striking conjunction of freedom and strict form in the morning-hymn, then, is no coincidence, as if we had simply caught Adam and Eve on a good day, but is one of Milton's most telling demonstrations of what characterizes the state of innocence: spontaneous perfection.

At the conclusion of Adam and Eve's morning-hymn, the epic's narrator observes, "So pray'd they innocent, and to thir thoughts / Firm peace recov-er'd soon and wonted calm" (5.209-10). Looking back, we have no difficulty in seeing how the morning-hymn accomplishes such a firm support to the theme of innocence. Its patterns of circular imagery and symmetry recall Eve's love-lyric in book 4 but on a larger scale and in a much more elaborate way, thereby reasserting the perfection of being assigned to Adam

and Eve at the outset. The morning-hymn also recalls the scale of creation which here receives one of the most detailed and extensive treatments to be found in the epic. By this means, the theme of interdependence among all things is unequivocally restated and removes any traces of self-sufficiency as suggested by Satan to Eve in her dream. Looking ahead, we can anticipate Raphael's visit to Eden: in particular, his presentation of the scale of creation as a great tree of life (5.469-505). After listening to Raphael's speech, Adam provides a key to the symbolism with which we have been dealing: he is pleased with how the angel has the scale of Nature set From centre to circumference, whereon In contemplation of created things By steps we may ascend to God. (5.509-12)

Of course, the orderliness of the spheres and circles of existence is a measure of the primal condition of perfection.

"So pray'd they innocent," but to read innocently is another matter. Even in the morning-hymn, the magnificent purity and control of style and expression cannot eliminate opportunities for verbal dissonance. When Adam and Eve call upon the "Fairest of Stars" to praise God with the planet's "bright Circlet" and "Sphere," it is difficult not to think of Venus as Lucifer, the morning star. Were Adam and Eve to know of Satan as the false Lucifer, as they will after the departure from Eden brings a tragic depth to their experience, they could not pray so confidently and avoid wrestling with language. For the reader, the problem is similar tothatraisedbyEve's "wanton ringlets" in book 4. The morning-hymn's "Mists and Exhalations" that nourish "the thirsty Earth with falling showers" and usher in the terrestrial praise of the creator present a related problem, given that in book 9 Satan enters Eden "involv'd in rising Mist" and moves about like "a black mist low creeping" (9.75,180). In the overall context of the poem, Milton's imagery seems designed to complicate and compromise depictions of innocence, leading to further considerations of what has been lost along with the simplicity of language.

Within passages designed to express innocence, however, the function of circular patterns of enclosure is to temper linguistic complexity by supplying images of pure form that resist misinterpretation and by exemplifying those images through the symmetrical positioning of key words or other elements of poetic structure. The resulting language is purified, as it were, by the formal ritual of symbolic patterns, which are evident once more in our final example of dramatized innocence: Adam's account of his initial consciousness as a living being (8.249-91). The remarkable internal structure of the opening forty-three lines of Adam's long verse paragraph reveals a deft use of enclosure. The opening eight lines (249-56) and concluding nine lines (283-91) frame the central portion of twenty-six lines, which present Adam's first sensations and thoughts and which divide exactly in half. The key word in the framing lines around the central portion is "sleep," displayed prominently as the end-word of lines 253 and 287. Adam's account of his life's beginnings, which are thus literally and symbolically rounded with the word "sleep," then ensues (257-82), with each thirteen-line section being virtually the mirror-image of the other. In the first thirteen-line section, Adam's enchantment with the heavens prompts him to stand erect and then peruse the pastoral images around him before attending to his own physical abilities. What he has done is to go symbolically from the ethereal source of his being to an intuition of a scale of creation around him that ascends from "Hill, Dale, and shady Woods" to "Creatures that

liv'd and mov'd" and, finally, to himself. In the second thirteen-line section, he is able to speak and name all that he perceives, repeat almost verbatim the images he has noted, and he concludes by inferring the existence of "some great Maker" to account for the existence and design of the world. The entire twenty-six lines thus end almost where they began. A sense of heavenly origins encircles Adam's creation, but the end has the additional creative glory of a self-reflexive and ordered language that enables him to express an exact sense of being happier than he knows. His first perceptions, first words, and first encircling sense of perfection all harmonize precisely to give the illusion of primordial innocence.

In the fallen world, however, great poets have repeatedly lamented the indeterminacy of language and have accordingly explored the greater precision which may be forged through symbolic form. Now, Milton is not unusual in employing symbolic form to control the waywardness of language when it relies on verbal meanings alone. Other instances pervade the history of poetry, and a few words should be added to distinguish between the tempering effect of symbolic form on language for general purposes in contrast to the depiction of innocence as a particular problem. Since we have been concerned with circles and spheres especially, let us use these figures to illustrate a few distinctions. Sometimes circles and spheres appear as basically uncomplicated descriptive images without having to perform larger tasks associated with symbolic form: such is their function, for example, in depicting elements of creation in book 7 of *Paradise Lost.* More often, though, their symbolic possibilities prove irresistible. To Ben Jonson, Donne, Herbert, Marvell, Dryden, and others in Milton's century, to name a few, circles and spheres have symbolic value that focuses the themes of major poems. To T. S. Eliot in our century, the *Four Quartets* employ circles and patterns of enclosure to break away from the linear tyranny of time and the instability of words, which in "Burnt Norton" are said to strain, Crack and sometimes break, under the burden, Under the tension, slip, slide, pensh, Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place, Will not stay still

As a result, the *Four Quartets* attempt to set their images on a higher plane of symbolism in which beginnings and ends circle towards one another because Only by the form, the pattern, Can words or music reach The stillness, as a Chinese jar still Moves perpetually in its stillness ("Burnt Norton," 5.140-43)

Thus, the word "stillness" is carefully positioned to enclose the simile of the Chinese jar in a demonstration of theme through the clarity of a formal pattern. To Eliot, circles are important for containing still, central points in a turning world of words. As such, the formal pattern uses language to evoke a sense of something beyond language, a transcendent order or symbol of permanence. There is necessarily a gap between temporal and symbolic realities as form supplements language. That gap or sense of dislocation is inherent in the nature of fallen language, which perforce relates to a fallen world, and is therefore characteristic of most symbolic discourse. By contrast, innocent perfection requires that there be no sense of dislocation.

The presentation of innocence presupposes acts of perception in which reality and appearance are indistinguishable in the union of language and symbolic form. In this respect, perhaps no poet since Milton has pondered the relationship of language to pure

form so carefully as has Wordsworth, who, in his treatment of the theme of innocence, is even capable of expressing the process of perception by which innocence may be attained. An example of his ability to create a sense of innocence is in "Home at Grasmere" as the poet describes the sensation of living in that place:

'Tis, but I cannot name it, 'tis the sense Of majesty, and beauty, and repose, A blended holiness of earth and sky, Something that makes this individual Spot, This small Abiding-place of many Men, A termination, and a last retreat, A Centre, come from whereso'er you will, A Whole without dependence or defect, Made for itself; and happy in itself, Perfect Contentment, Unity entire.

The sensation Wordsworth cannot name is, of course, innocent perfection, which he is attempting to apply to his home ground. Language can only approximate that sensation, and so the passage, as it progresses, carefully refines its terms, using circles and patterns of enclosure to control the description, which becomes increasingly abstract and aligned with the purity of geometrical form, until it concludes in the line "Perfect Contentment, Unity entire" in which words of two syllables enclose those of three. Here, as in the examples from *Paradise Lost,* all elements of language are coordinated to serve the symbolism of pure form and even express the process by which that coordination or union of perceptions is achieved. Wordsworth's memories of a more perfect state of being are, of course, at the heart of his endeavor to give them a life in the present throughout his major poetry, just as they are the source of the symbolic forms he employs in that endeavor. In *Paradise Lost,* Milton attempts a fiction which may seem even more daring: a sense that his innocent Eden is no mere memory but a perception of perfection on which memories will be based. For both Milton and Wordsworth, the results show, at the very least, how an illusion of perfection may be suggested beyond the capabilities of verbal meaning alone. At the most, a poignant sense of something ranging from the archetypal to the Platonic may be awakened as the particularities of language fade into insignificance.

1 *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose,* ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957), 285 (4.306,312). Subsequent citations of *Paradise Lost* are from this edition and are indicated in the text by book and line numbers.

2 W. B. Yeats, "The Song of the Happy Shepherd," *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1956), 7.

3 The difficulty of finding the right words and thoughts for paradise is admirably summarized by Ira Clark, "A Problem of Knowing Paradise in *Paradise Lost," MS* 27 (1991): 183-207. Finding words and thoughts for fallen conditions leads A. Bartlett Giamatti to go so far as to posit a "Satanic style" of ambiguities and dissonance; see *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), 303ff. Without pausing to qualify such views, we must respect the impulse that leads to them. Perhaps Peter Berek's guidelines for a distinction between innocent and fallen language are as fair as anyone's:

Milton, I suggest, has used a certain kind of 'poetical' manipulation of facts by means of language as a powerful metaphor for corruption, and, conversely, uses patterns of words that give the effect of imitating rather than manipulating reality as a way of presenting figures of innocence and perfection ("'Plain' and 'Ornate' Styles and the Structure of *Paradise Lost," PMLA* 85 IMarch, 1970]: 246)

Moving from questions of diction to the larger arena of forms, we might wish to consider the function of unrhymed sonnets and the divine proportion as ways of expressing and redeeming fallen language: see Lee Johnson, "Milton's Blank Verse Sonnets," *MS* 5 (1973): 129-53; for the divine proportion, see Lee Johnson, "Milton's Epic Style: The Invocations in *Paradise Lost," The Cambridge Companion to Milton,* ed. Dennis Danielson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), 65-78.

4 For a discussion and notes on Eve's love-lyric as a Petrarchan-style sonnet, see Barbara K. Lewalski, *"Paradise Lost" and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985), 188, 344 n. 42; also, Barbara K. Lewalski, "The Genres of *Paradise Lost," The Cambridge Companion to Milton,* ed. Dennis Danielson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), 88.

5 Joseph H. Summers, *The Muse's Method: An Introduction to "Paradise Lost"* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962), 77-78. For another way of dividing the morning-hymn, see John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1981), 39.

6 The expressive ambiguities and dissonances of Milton's style have long elicited first-rate comments; in addition to the items by Clark, Berek, and Giamatti cited in n. 3, Ricks, Swaim, and Leonard have provided astute and provocative observations on the complexity of Milton's words. When Christopher Ricks says, "with the Fall of Man, language falls too," he shows how corruptions infect words such as "wanton," "error," and numerous others: *seeMilton's GrandStyle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 109-11. In *Before and After the Fall-Contrasting Modes in "Paradise Lost"* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1986), Kathleen Swaim discusses the morning-hymn and its troublesome "Fairest of Stars" as well as adding to our sense of puns and ambiguities in Milton's diction (70,185-86). Most thoroughly and admirably, John Leonard's *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) corroborates and extends Ricks's work: Leonard's final chapter, "Prelapsarian Language and the Poet," is especially relevant throughout to our consideration of subtleties in the morning-hymn and in Edenic language generally (233-92).

7 T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton," *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), 19 (5.149-53). The subsequent citation of "Burnt Norton" is indicated in the text by section and line numbers.

8 *Wordsworth's Poetical Works,* ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), 5:318.

9 In this passage "Home at Grasmere," the symbolism of geometrical form goes beyond the local qualities of diction to the design of the entire verse paragraph in which our passage serves as the conclusion. Echoing Milton's Edenic language, Wordsworth places his careful evocation of Grasmere in the overall pattern of a divine proportion, a geometrical way of interrelating smaller and larger sections of a verse paragraph into a symbol of interaction between temporal and timeless realities. The circles of innocent perfection which occupy us here thus reside in an overall context of geometrical symbolism which is suited to the fallen world and which, as indicated in n. 1, is also a key ingredient in Milton's art. Wordsworth's example, which blends a local pattern of innocence (the circle) with a larger design of experience (the divine proportion), is a superb triumph of his rational imagination that introduces rich complexities which deserve a separate discussion: see Lee Johnson, *Wordsworth's Metaphysical Verse: Geometry, Nature, and Form* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1982), 194-97.

Source: Lee M. Johnson, "Language and the Illusion of Innocence in *Paradise Lost,"* in *Of Poetry and Politics " New Essays on Milton and His World,* edited by P. G. Stanwood, *Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies,* Vol. 126,1995, pp 47-58

Critical Essay #3

In the following essay, the critic examines Milton's Paradise Lost *for indications that it includes references to and thoughts on the colonization of the American continent by Europeans at the time it was written.*

In his comprehensive study of the North Atlantic world, K. G. Davies remarks that "no major English literary work of the seventeenth century comes to mind that breathes an Atlantic air or takes the American empire for its theme." The purpose of this essay is to suggest that *Paradise Lost* constitutes at least a partial exception to Davies's generalization. Milton's epic, I believe, interacts continuously with the deeply ambivalent feelings which the conquest of the New World generated in seventeenth-century English culture. Like its closest classical model, *theAeneid, Paradise Lost* seems to me to be, among other things, a poem about empire.

Certainly, there were many reasons for pondering the colonization of America as Milton turned his attention back to his long-delayed plans for an epic poem in the mid-1650s. The Commonwealth's war with Spain had rekindled anti-Spanish sentiment, and writers in tune with the mood of the times were busy turning out works based on the so-called "black legend" of Spanish brutality in South America—Milton's nephew John Phillips, for instance, translated Las Casas' *Brevissima relacion de la destruycion de las Indias* into English in 1656, and in 1658 Sir William Davenant, the erstwhile governor-designate of Maryland, catered to prevailing English taste with his sensational play on the same subject, *The Cruelty of the Spaniards.* Still more to the point, Cromwell's "Western Design" and the conflict with Spain it precipitated served as a vivid reminder that England, too, was a major colonial power. Indeed, the crucial first phase of English empire-building in the New World coincided more or less exactly with Milton's lifetime. The year before he was born the first English settlers dispatched by the Virginia Company of London arrived in Chesapeake Bay. The establishment of the Plymouth colony took place when he was eleven, the widely publicized Virginia massacre when he was thirteen, and the great Puritan migration to Massachusetts Bay while he was in his twenties. He was thirty-five when the second Virginia massacre occurred, forty-six when Cromwell acquired Jamaica. By the time he had reached his fifties, England was the dominant colonial power in North America with between twenty-five and thirty thousand settlers in New England and thirty-six thousand or so in Virginia.

What is more, by the time he began to work on *Paradise Lost* Milton had come into contact with numerous men who had promoted or emigrated to the colonies. Ralph Hamor, the author of *A True Discourse of the Present State of Virginia,* grew up in the house next to the Milton family home on Bread Street. Several of his Cambridge contemporaries emigrated to New England, and his longtime friend Samuel Hartlib produced a treatise on the Virginian silk-worm. Sir Henry Vane, to whom Milton addressed an admiring sonnet in 1652, was a former governor of Massachusetts. And Roger Williams, the notorious champion of religious liberty and Indian property rights, gave him conversation lessons in Dutch in the early 1650s. It is hardlv surprising, then,

that Milton's writings are liberally sprinkled with references to the colonization of the New World.

Not that Milton needed large numbers of close friends and acquaintances actively involved in the settlement of America in order to be vividly aware of its progress. For "this glorious business," as William Crashaw called it, was deeply imprinted in the national consciuosness of seventeenth-century England, inscribed there by dozens of promotional pamphlets, controversial tracts, personal histories, and economic analyses. From 1609 to 1624 the London bookstalls were inundated with sermons and treatises either prophesying or proclaiming the success of the English plantation in Virginia. Beginning with the publication of *Mourt's Relation* in 1622, there followed a steady stream of works recording the early history of New England, detailing the political and religious controversies going on there, and asserting the progress of the gospel among the Indians. Then in the mid-1650s came a spate of tracts reporting on the power struggle between the Catholic proprietor Lord Baltimore and his Puritan adversaries in Maryland. Whether or not he had a personal stake in the success of the American colonies, Milton could hardly avoid being aware of events taking place on the other side of the Atlantic.

With the exception of a handful of works by New England dissidents like Samuel Gorton and John Child, most of the literature I have just mentioned took a wholeheartedly positive view of England's transatlantic activities. Yet just beneath the surface of even the most optimistic evaluations of England's settlements in the New World there runs a powerful undercurrent of barely repressed anxiety concerning the entire colonial enterprise. For over and over again the promoters complain mat Virginia and New England have been unjustly slandered by various unnamed detractors.

Few, if any, of these reported slanders were ever printed—like the heresies of the early Christian church they owe their preservation to the writers who endeavored to refute them—but they clearly constituted a powerful critique of England's activities across the Atlantic. As a result, whether they are excusing the failure of the New World to live up to expectations in some regard, or defending Virginia and New England against some allegedly unjustified criticism from their detractors, seventeenth-century English descriptions of America are relentlessly defensive. From Daniel Price's *Saul's Prohibition Staide... with a reproofs of those that traduce the Honourable Plantation of Virginia* (London, 1609)toJohnHammond'sLeafta«£//tac/ze/... *With a Removall of such Imputations as are scandalously cast on those Countries* (London, 1656) justification is the keynote.

Nor is it difficult to understand why a seventeenth-century English protestant might have harbored deeply ambivalent feelings about his country's American colonies. To begin with, their history had hardly been a happy one. After a disastrous beginning, which cost many of the adventurers their investments and hundreds of planters their lives, Virginia had sided with the king during the civil war and only with the very greatest reluctance had accepted the authority of the Commonwealth commissioners dispatched by Cromwell. As John Hammond put it, England's first plantation was "whol for monarchy, and the last Country belonging to England that submitted to obedience of the Common-

wealth of England." Maryland, despite several attempts to reverse Lord Baltimore's policy of religious toleration, was still a haven for English Catholics, "a receptacle for Papists, and Priests, and Jesuites" as one writer called it. New England, riven by internal disputes in the 1630s and 1640s, was regarded in many quarters as "a Nursery of Schismatickes," and had in any case lost a great deal of its ideological *raison d'itre* now that the reform of the church had been accomplished in England. And finally, as the century wore on, English protestants were becoming increasingly concerned about the question of native American property rights and the failure of the English missionaries to convert the Indians to the reformed religion.

For all these reasons, then, the colonization of America stirred deeply ambivalent feelings in the collective consciousness of seventeenth-century England. *Paradise Lost,* I now want to suggest, not only registers many of these ambivalences, but plays them out in mythic form by reenactmg on the cosmic stage many of the central events in the conquest of the New World. The argument is a complex one to which I am in the course of devoting an entire book, but in this brief "prospectus" I may be able to illustrate my general thesis by discussing the way in which Milton treats the central figure in the colonial drama, the colonist himself. He appears in *Paradise Lost* in various guises: most obviously as Satan, the diabolic deceiver who enslaves the inhabitants of the New World by cheating them out of their territory and replacing them with his own destructive plenipotentiaries; but also as Raphael, the divine missionary who brings to Adam and Eve the authentic word of God and instructs them in the history of the ancient rivalry of which their world is the focal point; then as Adam, the indentured servant placed in the paradisal garden by "the sovran Planter" (4.691) and destined for release from his labors after a fixed period of obedient toil; and finally as Michael, the representative of imperial authority who drives the rebellious natives out of their original home into the alien wilderness.

To begin with Satan, during the course of his triumphant speech in book 10 announcing the conquest of Eden, the devil sounds at times very much like Amerigo Vespucci reporting back to Lorenzo Pietro di Medici on his latest voyage to the New World. The echoes are probably accidental, but the general resemblance is not, for of the various roles that Satan plays in *Paradise Lost* none is more richly elaborated than his impersonation of a Renaissance explorer. It has often been noticed, for example, that Milton arranges the early part of the story so that we experience it as a diabolic voyage of discovery. Just as Columbus and his contemporaries heard rumors of the New World long before its existence had been confirmed, so we learn from Satan in book 1 that "a fame in Heav'n" has spread stories of "new Worlds" (650-51) elsewhere in the universe. In books 2 and 3 we then accompany him on the perilous "voyage" (2. 426, 919) across the "gulf" (2.441) of chaos to "the coast of Earth" (3. 739). And at the beginning of book 4 we finally see the terrestrial paradise at least partially through the Devil's consciousness.

The motives which impel Satan on his voyage replicate, in turn, virtually all the social and political arguments advanced in favor of England's colonial expansion in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The first of them emerges in Beelzebub's

speech at the end of the infernal debate in book 2 After mentioning the rumors circulating in Heaven about the creation of the world, he proposes that even though

Heav'n be shut,

... this place may lie expos'd

The utmost border of his Kingdom, left

To their defense who hold it: here perhaps

Some advantageous act may be achiev'd

By sudden onset (2. 358-64, Hughes edition)

This bears a startling resemblance to the political rationale for Elizabethan attacks on Spanish possessions in the New World a century before.Indeed, Beelzebub's proposal momentarily transforms Satan into a demonic Sir Francis Drake setting off to singe God's beard. On one level, at least, the assault on Eden will be a daring naval raid by an infernal buccaneer.

The second motive for undertaking the journey across chaos is disclosed by Satan himself in his parting speech to his followers in Pandemonium, Oppressed by God's vengeance, he tells them, "I abroad / Through all the Coasts of dark destruction seek / Deliverance for us all" (2.464-65). In a diabolic parody of the pilgrims on the *Mayflower* he presents himself as the ultimate separatist, a victim of religious persecution in search of a new home where he and his fellow dissidents can practice their infernal rites in peace—in heaven, we have already been told by Mammon, the angels were constrained by "Strict Laws impos'd" to celebrate God's throne with Laudian ceremoniousness, worshipping therr "envied Sovran" with "warbl'd Hymns" and "Forc'd Halleluiahs" (2.242-44). Like the faithful and freeborn Englishmen who, in Milton's words in *Of Reformation* "have bin constrained to forsake their dearest home, their friends and kindred, whom nothing but the wide Ocean, and the savage deserts of *America* could hide and shelter from the fury of the Bishops," the Devil claims to be seeking refuge from the oppression of a tyrannical power.

As Satan approaches the garden of Eden, however, a third motive makes its appearance. His underlying purpose, he now confesses, is territorial expansion. By raiding this vulnerable outpost of the heavenly kingdom he hopes to share at least "Divided Empire with Heav'ns King" (4.111). Hence the extraordinary scene in book 10 when Sin greets her triumphant parent at the foot of the "wondrous Pontifice" (348) which she and her son have constructed across chaos "by wonddrous Art / Pontifical" (312-13). Henceforth, she declares, let the Creator "Monarchy with thee divide / Of all things, parted by th'Empyreal bounds" (379-80). Cued by Milton's anti-papal puns, we seem to be witnessing a grotesque reenactment of Alexander VI's division of the western world between the Spanish and the Portuguese, a cosmic *inter caetera.*

During the course of the poem, then, Satan rehearses virtually all the major roles in the repertoire of English colonial discourse. By turns buccaneer, pilgrim, and empire-builder, he embodies not only the destructive potential of imperial conquest but its glamour and energy as well. It may well be no accident that the critical glorification of Milton's devil took place during the heyday of England's imperial power while his descent from hero to fool coincided with its decline.

Satan is not the only figure in the poem who embodies the colonial quest, however. God's emissaries, too, function as agents of imperial authority. Indeed, Raphael has in some ways even more in common with the explorers than his diabolical antagonist. For the extraordinary scene in which the archangel is greeted by two naked human beings as a "Native of Heaven" (5.361) reenacts an encounter which had been described in countless Renaissance descriptions of the discoverers' arrival in the New World. Like the ideally submissive and subservient Indians of those early narratives, Adam welcomes his "god-like" (351) visitor "with submiss approach and reverence meek" (359). Un-questioningly he agrees that he possesses the garden of Eden "by sovran gift" (366) from Raphael's divine master. Then he and Eve proceed to entertain the "Heav'nly stranger" (316, 397) in their "Silvan Lodge" (377) with all the bounty their world has to offer.

Unlike Columbus and his successors, of course, Adam's visitor really has come from heaven. As the "Empyreal Minister" (5.460) of the Almighty, his function is to instruct Adam and Eve in the indispensable colonial virtues of loyalty and obedience, to give them a brief lesson in the recent political history of the cosmos, and most important of all to alert them to the existence of an unfriendly rival power at large in the universe (5,233-41). In place of the Indians' tragic misconception of their future oppressors, the poem thus offers us an authentic encounter between man and angel, an encounter in which the problematic territorial and political claims of Spain and England have given way to the Creator's legitimate authority over his creation. In *Paradise LostOtis* anxiety attaching to the discoveries has been relieved by the simple device of re-writing the scene as if the Indians and the Spanish had both been right. This visitor really does come from heaven, as the Indians believed, and the sovereign he represents really does own the land, as the Spanish, and later the English, insisted.

Thanks to Milton's revision of the primal imperial encounter, Adam and Eve are consequently spared the violent" aftermath of Columbus's arrival in the New World. Unlike the Indians, they do not experience the horrors of Renaissance warfare at first hand; they learn about such murderous inventions as gunpowder only at second hand from then-heavenly instructor. The appalling butchery and violence which characterized the Spanish conquest of America is thus projected onto Satan's campaign against his Maker.

When the natives do eventually rebel against their master, they receive a second visitor from heaven, with orders to drive them forth "without remorse" (11.105) from their terrestrial paradise into the wilderness beyond it. Michael's mission in books 11-12 thus recapitulates in mythic form not only Spain's campaigns in Mexico and Peru— Adam is shown the seats of Montezuma and Atabalipa (11.407-9)—but England's more recent

dispossession of the Indians in New England and Virginia. The image of the colonist as a ruthless invader is too powerful to exclude entirely, and although Milton insists that the garden will remain empty once Adam and Eve have vacated it (11.101-3;123-25), their expulsion by a force of "flaming Warriors" (11.101) could hardly have failed to summon up in the minds of Milton's readers disquieting memories of the final act of the colonial drama.

The colonial figures we have considered so far were all, for one reason or another, eager to cross the Atlantic. A significant portion of the early emigrants to England's colonies, however, had to be actively recruited as indentured servants. Essentially indentured service was a mechanism which permitted potential emigrants to be shipped to America at the expense of a colonial landowner to whom they were subsequently bound as servants for a fixed term of years, usually four or five. In return for their transportation across the Atlantic and their food, lodging, and clothing in the colony, they worked on their master's property without wages until their term of service expired, at which time they received enough cash, provisions, and land to set up as independent smallholders themselves."

Seen in this general context, Adam's situation in *Paradise Lost* resembles nothing so much as an idealized form of indentured servitude. Placed in an earthly paradise by the "sovran Planter" (4.691), he is destined to serve out a fixed term of "pleasant labor" (4.625) at the end of which, "by long obedience tri'd" (7.159), he may be given the status of an angel and allowed to dwell permanently in the terrestrial or the celestial paradise (5.500). His biblical counterpart, of course, had long been regarded as aparadigm of the colonial settler. In 1612 Robert Johnson, for example, commended "that most wholesome, profitable and pleasant work of planting in which it pleased God himself to set the first man and most excellent creature Adam in his innocencie." But in *Paradise Lost* the current of correspondence between the two figures is reversed: the colonist doesn't resemble Adam so much as Adam resembles the colonist. The result is a vision of prelapsarian man unlike any other in the history of the Genesis myth. To take just one example, the concept of indentured labor may well be responsible for the quite unprecedented significance which Milton gives to Adam's daily toil in *Paradise Lost.* As I have shown elsewhere," in no other version of the biblical story is the necessity of cultivating the garden so emphatically asserted.

When Adam and Eve eventually break the terms of their contract, moreover, they behave at first like run-away servants—they hide from then-master and blame him for their disobedience. Adam, in particular, makes it sound as if he had been kidnapped by a "spirit," as the agents of the colonial landowners were called, and forced to work against his will on God's plantation:

... did I solicit thee

From darkness to promote me, or here place

In this delicious Garden?

(10.744-46)

In spite of the care with which the system of indentured labor has been purged of its most flagrant abuses—in Milton's definition of the human situation the master is benevolent and just, the servants are well fed and well lodged, the labor is strenuous but not backbreaking—a residue of uneasiness is still detectable in Adam's protest. He may admit that "then should have been refus'd / Those terms whatever, when they were propos'd" (10.756-57), but the lawyerly debating point cannot entirely dispose of the underlying objection. For when Adam was presented with the conditions of his contract, his existence was already *a. fait accompli.* Like the convicted criminals who were beginning to be shipped to the New World in ever greater numbers as the seventeenth century wore on, Eden's original colonist had only two choices: indenture or death.

As these examples may suggest, Milton not only divides the role of colonist among the various characters in his poem. He associates the characters in his poem with different colonial roles at different points of the narrative. In some episodes, we have seen, Adam resembles the English settlers laboring in indentured servitude on a royal plantation; in others, he has more in common with the Indians welcoming Columbus to their American paradise. Clearly these contradictions and disjunctions do not permit a naive, uniplanar interpretation of the poem—we cannot simply equate God with James I, Eden with Virginia, and then read the poem as a straightforward political allegory about the conquest of America. My point is both simpler and more complicated. Milton's epic, I believe, not only breathes an Atlantic air but expresses in all their bewildering complexity the radically divided attitudes towards the American empire which existed in seventeenth-century English protestant culture.

1 K. G. Davies, *The North Atlantic World in the Seventeenth Century* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1974), 325.

2 The word echoes and re-echoes throughout the text of *Paradise Lost.* See: 1.114; 2.296, 310, 315, 327, 378, 446; 4.145, 390; 5.724, 801; 7.96, 555, 585,609; 10.389, 592; 12.32, 581.

3 Davies, 63.

4 See W. R. Parker, *John Milton: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 1.53,410; 2.698,1008.

5 William Crashaw, Preface to Alexander Whitaker's *Good Newes from Virginia* (London, 1613), A2.

6 Leah and Rachel (London, 1656), 22.

7 Anon., *Virginia and Maryland* (London, 1655), 199-200.

8 John White, *The Planter's Plea* (London, 1630), 37.

9 See, for example, Hakluyt's *Discourse concerning Western Planting* (1584), chap. 5.

10 CPW 3:49-50.

11 For this account I have relied principally on: Abbott E. Smith, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America* 1607-1776 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1965), chap. 1; CarlBndenbaugh, *Vexed andTrou-bled Englishmen* 1590-1642 (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), chap. 11.

12 Robert Johnson, *The New Life of Virginia* (London, 1612), 17.

13 "Native Innocence" in *"Paradise Lost" andthe Genesis Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968).

Source: J. Martin Evans, "Milton's Imperial Epic," in *Of Poetry and Politics. New Essays on Milton and His World,* edited by P. G. Stanwood, *Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies,* Vol 126,1995, pp 229-38.

Adaptations

Paradise Lost has never been adapted as a film or play. However, it is discussed in the video *Milton and 17th-century Poetry* (Films for the Humanities and Sciences, Princeton N.J.).

The story of the garden of Eden is included in the film *The Bible—In the Beginning* (1966), directed by John Huston and produced by Dino DeLaurentis, starring Ulla Bergryd as Eve and Michael Parks as Adam.

The devil's work is presented in four periods, one of which is the temptation of Adam and Eve in Eden, in Luigi Maggi's film *Satan—or the Drama of Humanity* (1912).

There is a reference to *Paradise Lost* in the 1967 *Star Trek* episode "Space Seed." Ricardo Montalban portrays Kahn (who resurfaces in the movie *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Kahn),* a eugenically enhanced human who flees earth after leading an unsuccessful revolt of "supermen" like himself. Having taken him aboard the *Enterprise,* Kirk offers Kahn and his "rebel angels" the choice of exile on an untamed and uninhabited planet or returning to earth to face trial. Kahn chooses exile, referring to Satan's statement that it is "Better to reign in hell, than serve in heav'n." This is consistent with the theme explored in other *Star Trek* episodes, such as "The Apple," "Return of the Archons," and "This Side of Paradise"—that if there is a paradise, unredeemed humanity does not belong there.

Paradise Lost is an important source for Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein,* which explores the themes of forbidden knowledge and the proper relationship between creator and creature. *Frankenstein* has been adapted as a film several times. A recent adaptation, by Francis Ford Coppola (Tri Star Pictures, 1994), stars Robert DeNiro and Kenneth Branagh and is available on video.

Frankenstein and its presentation of *Paradise Lost* is also a source for Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), which was adapted into a popular movie in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (The Ladd Company, 1982), starring Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, and Sean Young. It is also available on video.

Topics for Further Study

Milton presents the political consequences of the Fall in Michael's preview of human history (Book XII). Discuss this presentation in light of the Restoration of the monarchy in England and the political controversies surrounding the debate concerning the merits of monarchy vs. republic.

Discuss Raphael's admonition to Adam concerning the limitations of human knowledge and his discouragement of Adam's inquiries into the movements of the heavenly spheres (Book VIII) in light of the advancements in science and the new "scientific" attitudes towards knowledge in the seventeenth century.

Research the philosophical trend towards rationalism in the seventeenth century, and then discuss Milton's view of the Fall as a failure of reason and obedience, rather than as an acquisition of "forbidden knowledge."

Book I, in part, describes the building of Pandemonium. Book IX describes the tending of Eden and the consequences of the Fall for nature. Both descriptions associate sin and the Fall with a disrupted natural affinity for the earth and the introduction of an indifference to the planet, which results in its "wounding." Discuss this in light of present-day arguments for humanity's responsibility toward environmental preservation.

Compare and Contrast

1642-1660: The English civil wars resulted in an Interregnum, during which England was a republic, although not a democracy, ruled by Parliament alone. In 1660, the republic collapsed and the monarchy was restored.

1700s: The late eighteenth century saw the French Revolution and the American Revolution, both of which sought to establish republics in the place of monarchies. The French Revolution was a civil war which toppled the French monarchy. The American Revolution was the revolt of a colony against England, and while the English monarchy survived intact, its colonies in what became the United States were lost.

Late twentieth century: England is governed by a democratically elected parliament. Although the monarchy survives, the Queen, as head of state, has little real political power.

1600s: The seventeenth century saw scientific advances which included William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, Isaac Newton's theory of gravity, and developments in chemistry (Robert Boyle) and geology (Robert Hooke). Science was only just beginning to be seen as a discipline divorced from theology and philosophy, based on empirical observation of "objective fact" rather than metaphysical speculation about "truth."

Late twentieth century: The value of scientific and technological research is taken for granted, to the extent that more philosophical study of issues such as ethics is now being called for. Radical advances have occurred in all fields, producing results which would have been viewed as miraculous in Milton's day.

1600s: In the field of astronomy, Galileo was transforming human knowledge of the heavens with his telescope, viewing the surface of the moon. Copernicus had developed an entirely new concept of the universe, in which the earth, like the other planets, revolved around the sun. This theory had not yet displaced the old Ptolemaic view, in which the sun and planets revolved around the earth. The Ptolemaic view was preferred by theologians, who wished to maintain man's place at the centre of creation, and Milton is carefully non-committal in his epic, relegating knowledge of the motions of the heavenly spheres to the category of unfathomable, and therefore not useful, knowledge against which Raphael warns Adam.

Late twentieth century: While our knowledge of the universe is still in its infancy, technology has begun to open up "the final frontier," and our knowledge of our own solar system is expanding. Space travel has become a reality, and satellites and space telescopes are expanding our knowledge of planets beyond the reach of space stations and shuttles.

1660s: Milton's presentation of Eve assumes that women are naturally inferior to men in reason and intelligence, as well as physical strength. Eve is characterized by wanton beauty, physical desire, and domestic achievements.

Late twentieth century: The feminist movement has exposed gender bias in society and literature, fighting for the recognition that women are not intrinsically inferior to men and striving for equal rights in the home and in the workplace.

1643: Bitterly disillusioned with his own failed marriage, Milton published *On the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,* arguing that unsuccessful marriages should be dissolved. His arguments had little effect in an age where the Church had a large influence on public policy.

Late twentieth century: Divorce, while not welcomed, is now publicly accepted.

What Do I Read Next?

Paradise Regained (1671) is the sequel to *Paradise Lost,* in which Milton explores the temptation of Christ in the wilderness in order to show how redemption is achieved through the reversal of Adam's disobedience by Christ's obedience.

Bitterly disappointed in his own first marriage, in 1643 Milton published *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,* arguing that poor marriages should be dissolved. This essay provides an interesting contrast to the view of Adam and Eve's conjugal bliss in *Paradise Lost.*

Of Education (1644) is a treatise in which Milton explores the contribution of education to mankind's ability to withstand temptation, examining many of the issues which resurface in the treatment of the temptation in *Paradise Lost.*

Areopagitica (1644) is a treatise calling for freedom of the press and the removal of censorship. Here Milton develops many of the ideas concerning reason and knowledge developed in *Paradise Lost,* particularly the interdependence between the knowledge of good and evil and the folly of considering any knowledge "forbidden."

Samson Agonistes (1671) is a verse drama in which Milton portrays the story of Samson and Delilah in true tragic style. The author presents Samson as engaged in a heroic conflict in which he conquers despair and triumphs over his foes.

Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (1818) is deeply influenced by *Paradise Lost,* as she explores the problems of justice and the responsibility of the creator towards his creature through Victor Frankenstein's abandonment of his creature and the creature's subsequent "defense."

Further Study

Adams, Robert M. and George M. Logan, eds."The Seventeenth Century" in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* 6th ed., Vol. I. Norton, 1993

Provides a good introduction to both the period and the poem, situating *Paradise Lost* in the context of Milton's life and works, the seventeenth century as a whole, and the epic tradition.

Berry, Boyd M. *Process of Speech: Puritan Religious Writings and "Paradise Lost".* Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976

Discusses *Paradise Lost* in the context of the English Civil Wars and Puritan ideology. He compares the battle scenes in heaven to the unheroic Puritan militarism of Cromwell's troops

Chnstensen, Inger. "'Thy Great Deliverer': Christian Hero and Epic Convention in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and C S. Lewis's *Perelandra* ," in Kennedy, Andrew and Overland, Orm (eds), *Excursions in Fiction,* pp. 68-88. Novus, 1994 Compares the presentation of the epic hero and the epic form in *Paradise Lost* to C. S. Lewis's science fiction trilogy, especially *Perelandra*

Daiches, David. *Milton* Hutchinson and Co., 1957. Provides an excellent introduction to Milton's major works, including a general overview and reading of *Paradise Lost.*

DuRocher, Richard J. "Dante, Milton and the Art of Visual Speech," *Comparative Literature Studies,* Vol 27, no. 3, 1990, pp 157-71

Provides a comparison of Milton's use of the epic tradition in *Paradise Lost* with Dante's use of the same tradition in *The Divine Comedy*

Dyson, A.E. and Julian Lovelock, eds. *Milton: "Paradise Lost": A Casebook.* Macmillan, 1973.

Provides a selection of critical responses to the poem, ranging from its earliest reception to 1973.

Eliot, T.S "Milton," *The Sewanee Review,* Vol LVI.no. 2, spring 1948, pp. 185-209.

Repeats but modifies his earlier claim that Milton was a bad influence on later writers, retracting this claim in part.

"Milton II," in his *On Poetry and Poets,* pp 165-183. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1957.

Close analysis of Milton's versification, through which Eliot argues that Milton's influence on later authors and on the English language is a bad one.

Empson, William *Milton's God.* Chatto and Windus, 1961,

Studies Milton's major works for evidence of his beliefs about God He develops the claim made by Blake and others that Milton unconsciously elevates Satan to the role of the epic hero, presenting God as, by contrast, a rather weak character. This is a classic study and well worth reading.

Evans, J Martin. "Milton's Imperial Epic," in Stanwood, P.G , ed, *Of Poetry and Politics: New Essays on Milton and His World,* pp. 229-38 Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995.

Studies *Paradise Lost* in relation to its historical context, relating it in particular to the imperialism and colonialism of seventeenth-century England

Fish, Stanley *Surprised by Sin The Reader in "Paradise Lost"* Macmillan and St. Martin's, 1967.

A classic study, in which Fish answers the arguments of critics who suggest that Satan is the true "hero" of the poem Fish argues that Milton's presentations of Satan and God are deliberate attempts to manipulate the reader, thus showing both the attraction and the danger of evil

Frye, Northrop "Agon and Logos" in his *Spiritus Mundt: Essays on Literature, Myth, and Society,* pp. 201-27. Indiana University Press, 1970.

Studies the use of classical genres in Milton's major poetry.

Gardner, Helen *A Reading of "Paradise Lost".* Oxford University Press, 1965.

A classic study by a leading Milton scholar. Gardner examines such issues as the subject matter of the poem, the character of Satan, Milton's personal comments through the voice of the narrator, and the human elements of the poem

Golstein, Vladimir "Tolstoj and Milton: How to Open an Epic," *Studies in Scottish Literature,* Vol 40,1994, pp. 23-36

Compares the use of the epic genre in *Paradise Lost* and Tolstoy's *War and Peace*

Hughes, Merntt Y., ed. *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose,* Odyssey Press, 1957.

The standard edition of Milton's poetry and translations of his major prose works. Hughes provides an excellent introduction to each piece, as well as extensive annotations to the texts.

Hutson, Arthur E. and McCoy, Patricia *Epics of the Western World.* J.B Lippincott, 1954.

Provides a solid introduction to the epic form and to the major epics of western civilization, from Homer and Virgil to Dante and Milton

Johnson, Lee M. "Language and the Illusion of Innocence in *Paradise Lost,"* in Stanwood, P.G., ed.. *Of Poetry and*

Politics: New Essays on Milton and His World, pp. 47-58.

Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995.

Explores Milton's use of language and symbolism in relation to themes of innocence and the loss thereof.

Kurth, Burton O. *Milton and Christian Heroism: Biblical Epic Themes and Forms in Seventeenth Century England,* University of California Publications, English Studies 20. University of California Press, 1959.

Explores the poem as a cosmic drama which exposes true and false heroism. He focuses on the idea of the Christian hero as a fallen hero.

Langford, Larry L, "Adam and the Subversion of Paradise," *Studies in English Literature,* Vol. 34, No. 1, Winter, 1994, pp. 119-34.

Studies the nature of humankind as expressed through Adam and the problems of man's relation to paradise.

Lewis, C.S. *A Prefaceto "Paradise Lost"* Oxford University Press, 1942.

A now-standard work which provides an excellent introduction to the poem, with a positive view of *Paradise Lost* as a great Christian epic as well as a classic of English literature.

Low, Lisa and Anthony John Harding, eds. *Milton, the Metaphysicals and Romanticism* Cambridge University Press, 1994

A new volume studying the influence of Milton on the romantic poets. A must for any student of literary heritage

Martin, Roberta C. '"Thy Heart's Desire': God the Father and the Feminine Ideal in Milton's Perfect World," *English Language Notes,* Vol. 33, no. 4, June 1996, pp 43- 52 Provides a feminist reading of the character of God the father as it relates to the feminine ideal in the poem

Norvell, Betty G "Milton's Satan Origins and Nomenclature," *The Bulletin of the West Virginia Association of College English Teachers,* Vol. 12, Fall, 1990, pp 26- 34

Provides a study of the sources for the presentation of Satan in *Paradise Lost*

Pavlock, Barbara. "Milton's Criticism of Classical Epic in *Paradise Lost,"* in *The Classical Heritage: Vergil,* edited by Craig Kallendorf, pp. 291-314. Garland, 1993

Shows how *Paradise Lost* can be read as a critique of the classical epic genre by comparing the poem to Virgil and Homer Peter, John. *A Critique of "Paradise Lost "* Columbia University Press and Longman, 1960.

Provides an insightful analysis of the "satamst" argument (that Milton was unintentionally of the devil's party), and continues the arguments begun by Waldock.

Porter, William M. *Reading the Classics and "Paradise Lost".* University of Nebraska Press, 1993

Pedagogical approach to the relationship between *Paradise Lost* and the classics, providing a useful introduction for first-time students

Ricks, Christopher. *Milton's Grand Style,* Oxford University Press, 1963

Another now-standard study of Milton's epic style which is a fine analysis of the power of Milton's poetry and his command of language. This is a "must read "

Christopher, ed. *John Milton: "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained".* Signet, 1968.

An inexpensive and extremely useful edition of the two poems, with a good introduction, a short bibliography, and brief but useful notes.

Rumrich, John. "Milton's God and the Matter of Chaos," *PMLA,* Vol 110, no. 5, October, 1995, pp. 1035-46. Examines the presentation of chaos and the story of the creation in *Paradise Lost* and compares it to the ancient Near Eastern creation story, *Tke Enuma Elish.* This would be a useful study to those who are interested in the epic style in Milton and *The Epic of Gilgamesh,*

Sharratt, Bernard. "The Appropriation of Milton," *Essays and Studies,* Vol. 35,1982,30-44.

Studies the influence of Milton on later authors. This is an excellent source for students interested in the literary descendants of Milton and the lasting influence of his work Steadman, John M. "The Arming of an Archetype* Heroic Virtue and the Conventions of Literary Epic,' * in *Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,* ed. Norman T. Burns and Christopher J Reagan, pp 147-96 SUNY, 1975.

Explores the use of the Homeric epic tradition in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained,* arguing that both involve a reworking of the readers' expectations concerning the epic form.

Tillyard,E M W *Studies in Milton* ChattoandWindus, 1951. A collection of Tillyard's major essays on Milton, and is a good representation of the thought of a major scholar in the

field von Maltzahn, Nicholas "The First Reception of *Paradise Lost," The Review of English Studies,* Vol XLVII, No 188, November, 1986, pp. 479-99.

Provides an insightful study of the early reaction to *Paradise Lost* at the time of its publication, relating it to the social and political concerns of its day.

Waldock, A. J. A. *"Paradise Lost" and Its Critics* Cambridge University Press, 1947

Written by one of the first twentieth-century critics to take up the "satanist" argument. While not a particularly good analysis, and less insightful than Peter or Empson, Waldock was the first critic who attempted to "answer" C. S, Lewis, and is therefore interesting in terms of the history of criticism.

Webber, Joan Malory. *Milton and His Epic Tradition* University of Washington Press, 1979.

Offers a fresh look at the relationship between *Paradise Lost* and the epic tradition, examining the poem in terms of seventeenth-century thought and concluding that it is a "subversive" epic Willey, Basil. *The Seventeenth-Century Background: Studies in the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and Religion* Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1934, repr 1979 An indispensible, now-standard study. Willey provides an extremely useful and insightful study of seventeenth-century religious, philosophical, and scientific thought, relating it to major authors of the time, including Mjlton

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Epics for Students (EfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, EfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of EfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of EfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in EfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by EfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

EfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Epics for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the EfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the EfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

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□Night.□ Epics for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from EfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

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Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

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