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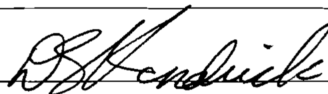
Title:

Dual Temptation: A Comparison between the Temptations of Eve in *Paradise Lost* and the Lady in *Comus*

Abstract Approved: 

Abstract

In Paradise Lost and Comus, John Milton portrays the two tempters, Satan and Comus, as having similar skills and character traits and using similar approaches to tempt their victims. Yet Comus fails in his temptation of the Lady while Satan succeeds in his temptation of Eve. To determine why one tempter fails and the other succeeds, one must first understand that in developing the outcomes of the temptations, Milton was bound, to some degree, by the Genesis story and the conventions of the masque. Furthermore, an analysis of the Lady and Eve and their responses to the tempters shows that the two women are helped or hindered in their resistance by their different states of existence and environments. The Lady, living in a fallen world, has acquired knowledge of good and evil and a solid inner voice, her conscience, both of which help her identify her tempter for what he is. She is thus able to withstand the temptation. Eve, in contrast, lives in the unfallen world of the Garden of Eden, where acquiring knowledge of good and evil is specifically forbidden to her. Not having developed the inner voice that comes with learning how to choose good over evil and having to rely on outer voices for guidance, Eve falls prey to her tempter. The thesis attempts to show that in the two poems, knowledge of good and evil is a pre-requisite to resisting temptation, putting the unfallen Eve at a disadvantage in comparison to the Lady.

DUAL TEMPTATION: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TEMPTATIONS OF EVE IN PARADISE LOST AND THE LADY IN COMUS

A Thesis

Presented to

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by Doris J. E. Van Pelt

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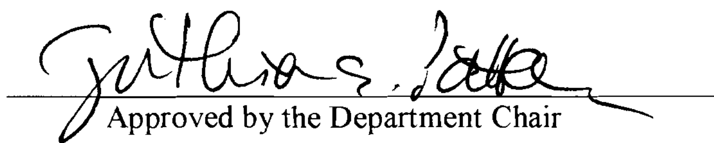
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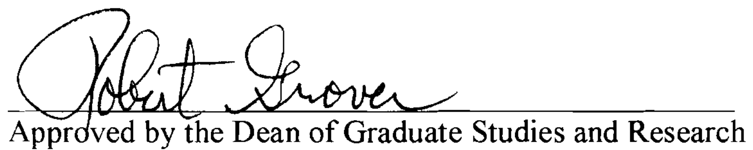
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Acknowledgements

I fell in love with the English language when I was ten years old and sat in an old German schoolhouse, excitedly listening to my English teacher and imitating the sounds she was making to show us how English was different from German. Since then I have enjoyed learning, speaking, reading, and writing English and have appreciated the many opportunities knowledge of this language has given me to communicate with people throughout the world. My wish to study English in a university setting was finally realized when I enrolled at Emporia State University in the fall of 1998. Today I am happy to say that with the completion of this Master's Thesis, I have achieved a dream that I began dreaming many years ago before I ever came to this country.

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Chapter I

Introduction

For centuries, even millennia, the theme of temptation in the biblical narrative of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden has stimulated theologians, scholars, writers, and artists to engage in doctrinal interpretations and intense discussions and to produce literary works and paintings. This fascination with a simple story, or myth, reveals the deep meaning Christians see in the creation of the first two humans, whose lives begin in the Garden of Eden and end with the temptation of Eve and the subsequent fall of both. Because the narrative explains the origins of life, the law of actions and consequences, and the difficulties humans encounter in the world outside of the Garden, it touches readers on an elementary as well as on an abstract level. Thus the story in Genesis deals with issues of marital togetherness, the need for others, and the desire to procreate, indicating that even at the beginning of life, people were confronted by familial and social concerns. On an abstract level, the narrative introduces religious, philosophical, and moral issues like obedience to God, the existence of good and evil, the idea of temptation and tempters, free will to make choices, and the possibility of failure when faced by temptation. As a result, as Evans states, the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve have been "the subject of commentaries by every major Christian and Jewish thinker from Philo to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, of poems and plays by writers from Prudentius to Bernard Shaw, and of pictures by artists from the anonymous painter who decorated the crypt of San Gennaro in Naples to Marc Chagall" (9).

John Milton, no doubt, can be seen as the most significant writer who has approached the theme of temptation. In his major works Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes, all of which deal with temptation, Milton uses Biblical figures and plots and adds to them his own creative ideas. The temptation of Eve in Paradise Lost by far constitutes Milton's most complex and mature exploration of temptation, explaining the fall of humankind and the suffering that followed. The temptation of Christ in Paradise Regained, in turn, sets up a necessary continuation that completes the cycle of the fall of Adam and Eve and the required redemption through Christ. Samson Agonistes, as John I. Ades states, demonstrates its importance as a work because of Samson's ability to learn from his temptation by Delila and to withstand a second temptation (265), thereby indicating that humankind is able to avoid the mistakes made in the Garden.

Milton's choice of theme should come as no surprise, considering early modern readers' regard for the topic of temptation, the poet's own unwavering devotion to the principles of free will, and his knowledge and awareness of the conflicts and struggles humans experience in their moral decision making. As Grant McColley points out, readers before and during the seventeenth century expressed a constant interest in the temptation of Adam and Eve because it "possessed the four essentials of convincing drama: a concrete setting, a dynamic plot, important and human characters, and above all, universal significance" (158). These elements are all present in Paradise Lost, which James G. Turner calls the only significant literary text produced by the myth of Eden (v). Milton's creation of a pastoral environment, much revered by an early modern audience, his masterful, non-chronological development of the biblical plot, mixed with

mythological allusions, and his skillful and complex portrayals of the main characters all must have appealed to readers, eventually heightening the tension they experienced when the temptation of Eve took place.

In addition, knowledge of Milton's Puritan belief in free will, a concept that entails freedom of choice among opposing options and accountability and punishment for wrong or poorly chosen actions, leads to an understanding of the poet's desire to deal with temptation. Temptation, Milton must have realized, is part of free will because it forces a person to take a stand for either virtue or vice and influences the choices given to the individual, revealing his or her strengths or weaknesses. In his development of Comus, Satan, and Delila, Milton shows that temptations often come from outside forces, which tempt the individual to turn into the wrong direction, thus testing him or her and helping the decision-making process along. Milton, the poet, then, found his richest material for the development of conflict in this arena of free will, temptation, and choice.

Yet another reason for Milton's pre-occupation with temptation is, as James Holly Hanford explains, the poet's understanding of and sensitivity to moral conflicts that exist in human life. According to Hanford, Milton's ability to explore and uncover these moral conflicts lies in part in the fact that temptations in the poet's works were temptations of Milton's own experience (244-45). Hanford points out that with Eve and Christ, Satan directs his temptations in part to the senses, in part to the desire for power, in part to the wish for knowledge, and in part to a hunger for a god-like existence after death (247-55). The types of temptation with which Milton deals, however, are not just elements of Milton's life; rather, they are temptations that are part of all humans' lives. No matter in which society people live and to which religion they adhere, all are subject to physical

needs and responses, most desire knowledge, and many, if not most, want personal power and show interest in a life after death. Because the conflicts that lie at the heart of these temptations lead to "the eternal struggle between good and evil" (Hanford 244), the greatest issue in Milton's works becomes the resulting failure or success of the person trying to overcome the temptation to act on behalf of evil (244).

While it might seem that Milton as Puritan preferred to take his temptation stories out of the Bible, with which he was very well acquainted, he did not restrict the theme of temptation to Biblical narratives alone. At age twenty-five, he wrote a masque, Comus, in which he sets up an encounter between a woman, the Lady, and her tempter, Comus. John I. Ades sees in Comus an indication that the poet had at an early age reached the necessary maturity to deal with the theme of temptation because "he had already seen the necessity of placing one's virtue on trial" (271). The Lady in Comus is indeed an example of "virtue on trial," providing the young Milton with an opportunity to demonstrate his grasp of the depth evil can have and the determination one needs to withstand it. Just as in Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes, Milton in Comus connects the theme of temptation with that of redemption, brought about by the nymph Sabrina. As Ades states, the poem Comus thus can be seen as Milton's "youthful first elaboration of this grand scheme of [temptation and] redemption" (265).

Indeed, some writers consider the masque the forerunner to Paradise Lost because it deals with issues similar to the epic. A woman in an isolated situation meets a powerful tempter who confronts her with a serious choice, which, if not made correctly, will bring major negative consequences into her life. In Paradise Lost, Eve, who has been warned by God, angels, and Adam not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of

good and evil, submits to Satan's persistent temptation and does eat, forever affecting the human race when she and Adam are expelled from the Garden of Eden and enter a fallen existence. In Comus, the Lady's failure to resist would lead to a life of reveling in the forest with degraded creatures whose behavior and appearance indicate an equally fallen existence. In contrast to Eve, the Lady stoically refuses to give in to her tempter's seductive words and does not drink the liquid. Thus, as Miller states, the Lady's trial is in its substance much like Eve's, and Comus is much like an early version of Satan (42).

A close reading of Paradise Lost and Comus shows that Satan and Comus as tempters have similar skills and character traits and use similar approaches in tempting the two women. They do, however, by no means achieve equal success with their temptations. A comparison of the temptations in the two poems, then, ought to show that the reasons for failure and success of the tempters must be sought in the characters and responses of the tempted women themselves. In the following thesis, I will first consider the importance of Milton's sources – the Bible and the masque – and the influence they had in determining success and failure of the two temptations. Next, I will demonstrate that the two women are helped or hindered in the responses to their tempters by their different states of existence and by their environments. Finally, I will analyze the tempters themselves, connecting their skills in tempting to the responses of each woman. Ultimately, I hope to show that Eve's inability to resist and the Lady's ability to withstand the temptation are based on each woman's ignorance about or knowledge of good and evil, creating for Eve, as Moore suggests, "the paradox that only through the fall could [she] attain that which would have saved her: the knowledge of good and evil"

(2)[1]. Of the two women, only the Lady has gained experience in the fallen world and thus bases her response on her knowledge of good and evil and on her own soundly established value system, ultimately defeating her tempter, Comus. Eve, on the other hand, has lived in an unfallen, protected world, where knowledge of good and evil is specifically forbidden to her. Her response to her tempter is thus one of ignorance, innocence, and naivete, making her tempter, Satan, successful throughout the entire temptation scene.

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[1] In 2002 Jeanie Grant Moore published a similar study, "The Two Faces of Eve: Temptation Scenes in *Comus* and *Paradise Lost*," in which she reached the same conclusion about the paradox of the knowledge of good and evil.

Chapter II

The Book of Genesis and the Masque Genre as Sources for Paradise Lost and Comus

When dealing with Milton and the sources on which he relied, it is "imperatively necessary to emphasize the independence of Milton's mind, character, and method" (Whiting 3). Milton, therefore, "assimilated, modified, and transmuted" material he took from various sources until it fit his purpose (3). Whiting's observation is demonstrated, for example, in Paradise Lost, in which Milton develops his own unique Eve and Satan by blending Biblical material and Puritan doctrine with careful character development, leading to the creation of two complex characters who show their depth and ambiguity in thought, word, and deed. In Comus, Milton ignores the central role masquers play in the presentation of masques even though, as Leishman observes, "the whole performance [of the masque] revolved around the masquers, who neither spoke nor sang, but only danced" (179-80). In Comus, three of the main characters are two brothers who speak and a sister who speaks and sings, while dancing is limited to the reveling of Comus's crew and the victory dance at the end (188-89). Nevertheless, despite his persistent desire to exercise independence in the creation of his works, Milton, when developing the temptations of Eve in Paradise Lost and the Lady in Comus, was bound to follow what his Biblical sources dictated and what the conventions of the masque required. The outcomes of the temptations are therefore fixed beforehand as far as sources and genres are concerned, limiting Milton in the development of the basic plot but not in the creation of his own

unique characters, scenes, songs, and dialogues and the usage of mythological characters, rhetorical devices, and Puritan teachings.

The competence with which Milton approached Paradise Lost was based on his personal, intensive study of the Bible, his knowledge of the Biblical interpretations of theologians and scholars, and his own religious ideas as developed in his On Christian Doctrine. In "Milton's Eden," Gordon Campbell explains that Milton had a daunting knowledge of languages, enabling him to read the Eden event in ten languages other than English. His linguistic abilities gave him access to the literatures of these languages and allowed him to draw on numerous sources for the development of his Eden (220-21). In addition, as Lois Potter states, Milton was familiar with the writings of Church Fathers and Biblical scholars, who, for centuries, had interpreted the Bible and helped the doctrine evolve. Milton's version of the story of the fall, for example, was specifically based on the teachings of St. Augustine, who provided the orthodox interpretations subsequently taught by Christians. From St. Augustine, then, Milton took the ideas that the serpent was Satan; that Satan was a fallen angel; that Eve fell in ignorance but Adam in full knowledge; and that sexual relations existed before the Fall (67-68). Furthermore, Milton, as Musacchio demonstrates, was familiar with the teachings of the Reformers, who established the "concept of fallible perfection" (36). This concept taught that the human creature, while created in the image of God, was less perfect than its Creator and possessed free will, enabling it to fall if it chose to do so (12-13). In Paradise Lost, Milton follows this concept of "fallible perfection" when he denies Adam and Eve the same knowledge God possesses and when he gives them free will to choose their own course in regards to the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Milton did not just rely on the writings and interpretations of others, however. His independent thinking as "[a]n individualistic Puritan" (Musacchio 8) and his own religious beliefs are laid out in On Christian Doctrine, a work written in Latin and considered by the English church of the time to be partially heretical. According to Flannagan, it "provides Milton's clearest definitions for the motives and characterization of all the major figures, good and evil, whose actions or thoughts move his epics, from the Son of God to Moloch to Abdiel" ("PL: Introduction" 306). In this work, then,

> [Milton] discusses in detail all the theological subjects important to Paradise Lost: the nature of God as father, judge, and avenger of evil; the creation; the origin of evil, which cannot be blamed on God merely because He had foreknowledge of it; free will and predestination; the Fall; the prevenient grace issued by God to undeserving human beings, like a line of godly credit; confession, atonement and eventual salvation. (307)

In addition to advancing and using his own doctrines, the poet, as Anne Ferry points out in "Milton's Creation of Eve," also made changes when he developed his characters. Ferry notes that while Milton felt compelled to observe the "fixed points of interpretation" (113) by following the original outline of the story as given in Genesis and as interpreted by St. Peter and St. Paul, he also found occasions to change his Eve and to put her in contrast to his Biblical sources. Ferry thus finds in some of Milton's passages "slight modifications of the Pauline interpretation, which foreshadow much more radical treatment of biblical materials to be shown in later parts of the poem" (117). Milton, then, did not just follow accepted doctrine when he wrote Paradise Lost. Rather, because he believed that a Christian had to be loyal to God alone (Potter 65), he relied, at times

rather arrogantly, on his own Biblical interpretations, which occasionally conflicted with the teachings of his Puritan faith. No doubt, Milton's personal religious convictions more than the interpretations of others give the epic its drive, complexity, and focus and allowed the poet to tackle such a vast project as the creation, fall, and future of humankind with so much devotion and skill.

As a poet who desired to "justifie the wayes of God to men" (PL 1.26), Milton had to tie together the events surrounding the Fall in Paradise Lost with the Biblical account of the fall, the expulsion from paradise, and the resulting need for a Savior. Therefore, it was crucial for him to follow literally the happening in Genesis so that there could be no doubt who was responsible for the Fall and why a Savior was needed. While as a poet Milton was free to develop characters, dialogues, and settings and make changes as he saw fit, he could not change Satan's temptation of Eve and the resulting Fall. In Paradise Lost, then, both Satan and Eve become bound in their actions by the narrative in the Bible. Carey states that Milton's devils know exactly that God is omnipotent and omniscient and that He therefore has a full awareness of what the fallen archangels, particularly Satan, are going to do. All the devils' actions, therefore, lead to their own defeat ("Milton's Satan" 135). Satan himself knows that his attempts to destroy the human race will bring him only further punishment. Why, then, does he continue on in his journey to the Garden of Eden and in his plans for the temptation? As Carey notes, "The answer, strictly, is that [Satan] cannot escape the terms of the fiction he finds himself in" (136). Despite the complexity and depth Milton gives his Satan, the tempter nevertheless is constrained in his behavior and purpose by the Biblical story in which he is cast as the fiend (136-37).

Likewise, Milton cannot give his Eve a real choice in her response to the tempter. It is clear that Eve could have withstood the temptation. While she does not have the same knowledge that Adam possesses and thus has finite understanding of God's creation and laws, she nevertheless has at least some reasoning abilities and knows, as she tells Satan, "[we] shall not eate / [Of the forbidden fruit], nor shall [we] touch it, lest [we] die" (PL 9.662-63). Her love for Adam is strong as well, indicating that she would want to preserve her existence in the Garden of Eden. Moreover, Eve, just like Adam, has been given "the same free Will and Power to stand" by God (4.66), enabling her to make the right choice and to resist the tempter. One reason why Eve falls is that the text in Genesis dictates it, and when she eats the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and causes the Fall, she fulfills her fictional function.

Just as the Biblical text determines the action in Paradise Lost, Comus has to fulfill at least in part the conventions of the masque of Milton's time. While Samuel Johnson harshly criticized Comus as an "inelegantly splendid, and tediously instructive" drama written in the epic style (qtd. in Demaray 1), Demaray nevertheless makes the point that Comus is a masque rather than a drama and therefore follows the masque tradition of the early seventeenth century (2). To understand the Lady's determination to resist temptation, then, it is important to consider the purpose of the masque in general and of Milton's masque Comus in particular.

As Barber explains, the main function of the masque was to entertain nobility by giving "meaning and beauty to noble persons, noble places, noble occasions" (38). The contents of the masque contained a superficial plot that often referred to actual events but flattered and idealized the nobility at the same time (39). Aristocrats played the parts of

virtuous, often allegorical characters, using allegorical dance to present their superior character traits. Commoners portrayed "figures of vice," displaying their characteristics through song, speech, and dance (Demaray 10). Masques, then, were not dramas; rather, they were presentations that symbolized the high character of the nobles, complimenting and idealizing it through dance and song (11).

When writing Comus in honor of the First Earl of Bridgewater, for whose inauguration as Lord President of Wales the masque was commissioned, Milton, according to Hunter, was not free to develop the plot, characters, and scenery the way he wanted. All masque writers had to follow exactly what they were commissioned to do, or the actors would make changes during rehearsals. As a matter of fact, Milton was told not to consider the event of the Earl's inauguration at all. Rather, the performance was to center around the reunification of the family with the three children as the main performers. The topic, Milton was instructed, "would be the vindication of family virtue as [the] youngest daughter confronted temptations and assault" (4-5). This vindication of the family's virtue was particularly important because three years earlier, the family of the Earl of Bridgewater had been associated with the Castlehaven Scandal, a sexual abuse scandal that had happened in a family related to them. While the abused women in the case were innocent, seventeenth-century society nevertheless declared them whores who had not defended their chastity properly (Moore 3-4). As Moore states, it is not clear whether the Castlehaven Scandal was actually connected to the production and performance of Comus or not. Nevertheless, the family of the Earl was deeply embarrassed by the scandal and wanted to show in the masque the outstanding moral qualities of their own daughter, Lady Alice Egerton, who staunchly defends her chastity

(3-4). Hunter, in turn, points out that Milton chose the theme "chastity" because it was a traditional subject of the time, allowing Milton to develop it within the broader topic of temptation (5). It is clear that all these instructions left Milton limited in his creation of plot and characters as well as in the outcome of the temptation scene.

As a result, Milton kept some of the conventions of the masque while adding others to suit his own purposes. Because masques, as Barber explains, typically presented figures of mythology and native folklore, Milton added spirits and river goddesses as saving characters in the masque while leaving out his usual Christian terms. At the same time, Milton used poetry to present meaning rather than elaborate scenery and costumes alone to impress the audience as was done in other masques. Nevertheless, Comus is an attempt to express Christian ideals and themes with the usage of aristocratic children playing idealized characters, just as regular masques required (45-46). Milton's compromises were not rejected. Instead, Henry Lawes, composer and producer of the masque, expressed his pleasure about the masque in a letter to John, the Second Earl of Bridgewater, by saying the poem was "so lovely, and so much desired, that the often Copying of it hath tir'd my Pen" (qtd. in Hunter 7).

Milton, therefore, could not overlook sources and conventions and instead allowed them to direct the events in his epic and in his masque. As a Puritan, his main objective was to demonstrate the God-given principle of free will, which made temptation and choice a necessity, and the need for a saving power, whether that was the Christian god or a sea nymph like Sabrina. Thus both the Biblical temptation in Genesis and the temptation of the Lady in a masque offered themselves as opportunities to demonstrate the ideas of choice and consequences and to give moral guidance. That one

woman, controlled by the Biblical source, gives in to her tempter and the other, constrained by the conventions of the masque, does not is only helpful to Milton who now can contrast the innocent, unfallen and the experienced, fallen conditions. Milton's willingness to follow his sources, therefore, only strengthens his attempts to incorporate his Puritan beliefs, especially his so-called heretical beliefs, into his poetry.

Chapter III

"Eve Our Credulous Mother" and "Som Virgin Sure":

The Innocence of Eve versus the Experience of the Lady

In Paradise Lost and Comus, Eve and the Lady find themselves in different states of existence and in environments that vary significantly from each other. Eve is immortal, innocent, even "pure of sinful thought" (PL 8.506), and ignorant of matters that belong to a fallen world. The Lady, in turn, is mortal and has lived in a fallen world in which she has gained knowledge of good and evil, helping her make choices when they are required. Both women meet their tempters in environments that not only reflect their states of existence but also contribute to them. The Garden of Eden, "A Heav'n on Earth" (4.208), with its newly created plant and animal life matches, as Giamatti states, the perfect and innocent state of both Adam and Eve (299). Moreover, the purity and perfection that exist here only add to Eve's innocence because they deprive her of the experiences of mortal life. In contrast, the forest is an ambiguous place, which, with its darkness and secrecy, provides protection and hides danger at the same time, making it a place of good and evil, just like the mortal world. To survive, people who enter must be able to make the choice on behalf of good. The forest, therefore, not only tests the Lady's ability to exercise her free will but also strengthens her ability to do so. The state of existence and the environment in which the women live and in which they are tempted therefore contribute to their ability or inability to withstand the temptations later offered by their skillful tempters.

Eve's immortal and innocent state of existence begins with her creation, a procedure that does not follow the normal birth process mortals have to go through. As the first woman, she is created out of Adam's rib and instantly grows into an adult under the forming and fashioning hands of her creator. Had Eve been borne by a mortal, she would have experienced the pain of a normal birth and the forces that work within a laboring mother, compelling the child to push against opposition and to develop resilience. Eve thus enters into her existence unacquainted with struggle and physical harshness. This ease with which Eve begins life will later be reflected in her life in the Garden, where her immediate tasks will be to submit to Adam, to garden, and to entertain angels rather than dealing with the harsh realities of a fallen world.

Eve also misses out on a normal childhood, a crucial time to be self-absorbed, to encounter people, and to learn the rules of society. Her experience at the lake shortly after her creation, when she wonders "where / And what [she] was" (PL 4.451-52), shows her search for an identity and for connection with other people, both of which are part of a normal development for infants and children. After the birth process, the mortal child is immediately surrounded by people who allow the bonding necessary for the child's survival. Eve's first encounter with people, however, does not involve other people at all; rather, she detects her own image in a lake and gets so attached to what she sees that only a warning voice can keep her from becoming completely self-absorbed. Eve's response to her image in the lake has been analyzed by some scholars as a sign of her narcissism, by others as an indication of her childlike nature (Fish, Surprised 217). James W. Earl admits that he "always saw Eve's narcissism as a symbol of *vanitas*, itself a symbol of *cupiditas*" (13), which would not only lead her away from Adam but also from

God. Earl soon realized, however, that Eve's narcissism should be seen as primary narcissism, a stage in the development of the infant self (13). Eve's primary narcissism, in turn, can be connected to what Lacan calls the "mirror stage," in which the infant recognizes itself, for the first time, in a mirror and thus begins to establish an image of an autonomous self (1286). Eve's addiction to her own image in the lake, then, gives an indication that even the divinely created Eve at least attempts to undergo the normal development of an infant who is occupied with itself and no one else.

One might also argue that Eve at the lake, rather than being self-absorbed, seeks to bond with another human, and because no other human is present at that moment, she takes whomever she can, and that is her image in the lake. This image is "A Shape within the watry gleam" (PL 4.461) and therefore not quite clear, indicating that Eve sees it with the undeveloped eyesight of a newborn who cannot yet clearly distinguish its surroundings. At the same time, the image is "Bending to look on [her]" (4.462), suggesting another human being who is bending over to take care of the infant with "answering looks / Of sympathie and love" (4.464-65). In search for an answer to her questions "where" and "what," Eve, on a subconscious level, is looking for identity and human bonding, trying to make up for missed opportunities of development that would have provided her with a strong identity and possibly later with the ability to see her tempter for what he really is.

As a mortal, Eve would also have experienced the opposition of the established rules of her parents, who would have forced her into making decisions to obey or disobey these rules from early on. Many of these rules would have taught her to distinguish between good and evil and to consider the consequences that come with breaking rules.

As she lacks these developmental experiences, she thus has no decision-making abilities, a deficiency that becomes crucial later on in the temptation scene. One might argue that God Himself is a parent who sets the one rule of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God, however, does not give Eve any practice in following or breaking small rules and in suffering mild consequences. Rather, His one rule is so strict and the consequences of breaking it are so "deadly" that the inexperienced Eve does not have a chance to predict the future that follows her transgression. Because Eve neither experiences opposition and early bonding at the start of her life nor becomes acquainted with the internalization process a society establishes for its members, she remains unknowledgeable and dependent on the instructions of Adam, who, according to Milton's Puritanism, becomes her "Guide / and Head" (PL 4.442-43).

Adam thus gets to be Eve's only teacher because, as she says, "so God ordains, / God is thy Law, thou mine" (PL 4.636-37). While this argument might be desirable for those raised in Puritanism, it is also troubling because Eve's dependence on Adam's knowledge is questionable at best. Adam does not have any personal experience either and relies on repeated instructions given by angels. Adam knows that he must not eat the fruit of knowledge of good and evil and that he will suffer death if he does. He also knows that he has free will to choose what he might. When he passes this knowledge on to Eve, however, his remark about death, "what ere Death is, / Som dreadful thing no doubt" (4.425-26), clearly indicates that his knowledge is shallow and vague as well as childlike and based on abstract ideas rather than concrete understanding. Eve, therefore, can hardly be expected to rely on Adam's knowledge to guide her through crucial decisions.

In addition, Adam's instructions constitute for Eve an outer voice, not one she has internalized and can depend upon when she is alone. Stanley Fish, who emphasizes that Milton's works consistently prioritize the inner over the outer, sees the inner as "a deep truth always present and always governing" while the outer is concerned with "the appearances and surfaces that seem to be, or seek to be, divorced from [this truth]" (How Milton Works 31). This deep truth, or conscience, that includes knowledge of good and evil, is not developed in Eve yet. Instead, as Eve's encounter with Satan shows later, she is easily led by appearances and skillful rhetoric, both of which are disconnected from the truth, and depends again on someone else's outer voice when that of Adam is missing. As a result of her dependence on Adam, Eve in her innocent state of existence lacks the conviction and guidance an inner voice would give her. Once separated from Adam, her outer voice, she is unable to resist Satan's "fraudulent temptation" (PL 9.531).

In contrast to Eve, the Lady in Comus is mortal and as such a part of the fallen world. As a mortal, she must at some time have been taught the consequences of mortality through lessons, conversations, and experiences, which principles should be valued highly, and how temptations should be dealt with. That the Lady has special upbringing and that she is elect is obvious from the Attendant Spirit's remarks: "Yet som there be that by due steps aspire / To lay their just hands on that Golden Key / That ope's the palace of Eternity" (lines 12-14). Because the Lady has been confronted by good and evil in her fallen state, she indeed has developed an inner voice, which helps her make decisions about good and evil. Moreover, the Lady's strength of conviction lies within her because, according to Fish, "her eyes are turned inward to the faith that attends her and to which she stands" (How Milton Works 178). The Lady, therefore, does not only

rely on her human conscience but also on the internalized rules of her religious community, which consists of the "truly Reformed society [Milton] never ceased to imagine or labor for" (Shullenberger 33), or, in other words, the Puritan society. Because of her devotion to high ideals and her ability to exercise her free will to her benefit, the Lady has decided to live by the principle of chastity long before Comus tempts her, making it easy for her to "be assail'd, but never hurt" (Comus 589) when temptation comes.

In addition to a well-developed conscience, the Lady has achieved a sense of being rather than a sense of aspiring for something better (Fish, How Milton Works 32). She has arrived at the goal of her aspiration, which is, according to Fish, "the internalization of what [she] seek[s]" (32). The Lady can now aspire in the root sense of the word – "*aspirare*, 'to breathe'" – by "aspiring, breathing out, at every moment and in circumstances that are physically very different, the same meaning, the same loyalty, the same sober certainty, the same home-felt delight, the same faith" (Fish 32). Being directed by her inner principles, which the Lady accepts as true, she can now boldly declare that Comus, or anyone else, cannot "touch the freedom of [her] minde" (Comus 663). The temptation, therefore, becomes irrelevant and its outcome predictable.

In contrast to the Lady, Eve is still in the learning stage and thus in a state of aspiring "to a place, or existence, that is better" (Fish, How Milton Works 32). Her task is made difficult because learning comes to her from angels through Adam, whose knowledge, as has been shown, is equally inexperienced. The Garden does not present many opportunities for decision making, and the order to stay away from the tree of knowledge of good and evil only contributes to Eve's ignorance. Eve has therefore

neither opportunities to learn what good and evil are nor occasions to practice making choices between the two. Thus to learn what she needs to know to resist temptation later will prove difficult if the very principle she has to learn is forbidden to her. Because of these obstacles to Eve's moral growth, Eve's inner set of values has not been established yet and her sense of being is undeveloped.

Eve, therefore, has to aspire to develop her inner self. Deborah Shuger shows the development of Eve's aspirations: Eve, she writes, progresses "from an initial wonder to a search for knowledge of first principles and causes, especially the causes of one's own being, and thence to a divine science that attempts to understand the ways of highest Agents" (195). Eve's aspirations for freedom, independence, knowledge, and equality with Adam indeed are worthy of pursuit and part of her free will. Her later aspirations for superiority and the trivial and vain god-like existence Satan promises, however, are inappropriate and based on Satanic images and ideas rather than on ideas that would lead to her inner development. Unfortunately, it is precisely because her inner self is so undeveloped, creating a vacuum in her mind, that the tempter finds such easy access to her thoughts and is able to instill in them his own evil ideas and aspirations. Thus it is during and after the temptation that Eve's aspirations go astray, leading her into the exact path which Satan wants her to follow. More specifically, these desires are expressed in her soliloquy after she has fallen, when she reveals her wish to be "more equal" to Adam and "perhaps / A thing not undesirable, somtime / Superior" (PL 9.823-25). Eve's aspirations, then, go much further than those of the Lady, who is content with the internalization of societal rules. Unfortunately, in her search for a stronger identity and a

more fulfilling life, Eve becomes easy prey to a tempter precisely because the knowledge of good and evil is forbidden to her.

Closely associated with the women's states of existence are the environments in which Eve and the Lady encounter their tempters. Eve lives in the Garden of Eden, an isolated and protected environment in which mortal challenges do not exist. It is a place, a "happy rural seat of various view" (PL 4.247), that in its abundance demonstrates the creator's skill to create and provide the necessities of life for Adam and Eve. According to Giamatti, Milton, in creating the Garden of Paradise Lost, was confronted by the "ostensible task . . . to make the earthly paradise in Book IV perfect and delightful, and out of allusions to and reminiscences of almost every Biblical, classical, modern, and 'real' garden he could find, he composed his own complete, integrated version" (300). Thus Milton's Garden boasts "Natures whole wealth" (PL 4.207) with its "pleasant soile" (4.214), "fertil ground" (4.216), and "fresh Fountain" (4. 229), which produce an abundance of trees, flowers, lawns, herbs, fruits, and other vegetation, used by animals and humans alike for their benefit.

Everything in the Garden appeals to the senses. The coolness of "Grots and Caves" (PL 4.257), the warmth of the morning sun, the "quire" of the birds (4.264), the "murmuring waters" (4.261), "fruit burnisht with Golden Rinde . . . of delicious taste" (4.249-51), and the "smell of field and grove" (4.265) all attest to the creator's desire to allow Adam and Eve a life of pastoral pleasure, comfort, and peace. God's intent for his newly created race is that they tend the Garden, produce children, and, as a general principle, be independent, exercise their free will, and use reason as their law. The only requirement the creator puts on the first couple is "not to taste that onely Tree / Of

knowledge [of good and evil]" (4.423-24), an act that, if committed, will terminate their blissful existence in the Garden and expose Adam and Eve to mortal life and death. As long as Eve remains obedient to this one command, she does not have to deal with sickness, sorrow, and death and can feel free to pursue her life in a carefree environment.

But are protected circumstances as they exist in the Garden really sufficient for Eve's personal growth? Some scholars seem to think so. In recent years, several critics have developed the idea that Milton's prelapsarian Garden provides a carefree yet productive and growth-promoting environment for those living in it. Rather than seeing the Garden as a place in which life is characterized by comfort, ease, and leisure, Campbell, Lewalski, Fish, and Diane McColley analyze life in the Garden as one of dynamic activity, requiring Adam and Eve to be positively and actively involved. Thus one of the most important aspects of life is the Garden's maintenance and cultivation and with it the development of the two people living there. To lay a foundation of work rather than comfort, Milton, according to Gordon Campbell, therefore establishes his own Puritan work ethic in the Garden. Campbell points out that Adam's and Eve's tasks in their pastoral environment must be seen as ennobling activities because, as Adam says, "Man hath his daily work of body or mind / Appointed, which declares his Dignitie" (PL 4. 618-19). Eve shares this attitude when she insists on division of labor because, as she says, looks, smiles, and discourse exchanged between the two hinder the required work (Campbell 224-25).

For Lewalski, Fish, and Diane McColley, Adam's and Eve's work in the Garden is more than just a representation of the Puritan work ethic. Lewalski argues that for Adam and Eve, "Edenic life is radical growth and process, a mode of life steadily

increasing in complexity and challenge and difficulty but at the same time and by that very fact, in perfection" (88). She sees in the growth that takes place in the Garden a relationship to Adam's and Eve's own growth, which must take place so they can perfect themselves. Adam and Eve, thus, are not only gardeners but also a component of the Garden and as such are required to grow and develop through the cultivation of their own characters (93). Fish, in turn, asserts that next to handling the growth in the Garden, Adam and Eve need to manage their own growth by choosing consistently to become more like God or to side with Satan. Becoming more godlike, to Fish, means the constant cultivating and pruning of Adam's and Eve's own thoughts, actions, and interactions, making these "their own chief crop" (How Milton Works 528-29). Diane McColley, who sees Eve as an equal partner to Adam ("Beneficent Hierarchies" 231), widens the perspective of life in the Garden when she states that Eve's carefree environment gives her time to devote to creative, sustaining activities rather than to spend in hard work and with suffering and disease. Thus McColley sees Eve's prelapsarian life as far superior to her postlapsarian life because Eve can devote her time to her roles as lover, ruler, gardener, artist, moral philosopher, conversation partner, and creator. Furthermore, while living in a state of goodness and purity unhampered by hardship, sin, and death, Eve converses with God, angels, and her husband, develops maturity and responsibility as a caretaker of the Garden, and finds challenges as a spiritual, intellectual, and social being (Milton's Eve 211). According to these scholars, then, life in the Garden of Eden is an opportunity for Adam and Eve to develop their talents, build their relationship with each other, and engage in a growth that will eventually raise them to a higher level of existence.

One can indeed find much evidence in Paradise Lost that Milton has instilled the Puritan work ethic in Adam and Eve, who follow a proper procedure of preparing for their bedtime, rising in the morning, going to work in the Garden, returning for supper, and spending time entertaining. Lewalski, Fish, and McColley, however, paint pictures of an idealized life in the Garden that exaggerate the equality between Adam and Eve and ignore the limited growth available to Eve. That Adam and Eve are far from being equal partners is obvious when Satan first encounters the pair in the Garden. In his description of the "Two of far nobler shape erect and tall" (PL 4.288), Milton immediately points out that "both [are] / Not equal, as thir sex not equal seemd" (4.295-96), portraying Eve as the one who "[yields] with coy submission" (4.310). When one person submits or has to submit to another, there cannot be real equality. Adam confirms Eve's inferior state when he reveals shortly after their first night together that "[he] understand[s] in the prime end / Of Nature her th'inferiour" (8.540-41). That Eve is part of a hierarchy that defines her as inferior rather than as equal is also apparent from her position in relation to God. Thus, while "[Adam is] for God only," Eve stands one step lower because "shee [is] for God in him" (4.299), meaning that her approach to God must come through Adam. Likewise, Eve's status as one of inferiority is emphasized in the separation scene, when Adam communicates to Eve that he cannot trust her working alone and that he must protect her as the weaker one. It is no wonder, then, that Eve's status in the Garden eventually creates in her deep-seated desires for equality, even superiority, which make her an easy target for the observant Satan.

In addition, life in the Garden does not provide the social, spiritual, and intellectual growth that, for example, McColley so lavishly imagines for Eve. After all,

Eve cannot develop as a social being if there is only one person, Adam, to socialize with and if the other person, the angel Raphael, speaks only to Adam. Her spiritual development is also stifled because her attempts to understand God and to be obedient to Him directly are frustrated when she has to use Adam as a mediator. At the same time, Adam discourages her intellectual growth because he consistently stresses Eve's beauty and domestic duties rather than the development of her talents and because he admits that he is attracted to her body rather than to her intellect. Indeed, Adam goes as far as stating that Eve is "in outward shew / Elaborate, of inward less exact" (PL 8.538-39), emphasizing Eve's "appearances and surfaces" (Fish, How Milton Works 31) and contrasting them to what he sees as the deficiencies in her intellect and character and her ability to govern herself. Adam, by insisting on togetherness in the separation scene, shows his low opinion of Eve's intellectual abilities again when he counters her appropriate suggestion to separate to get the work done faster. Instead of encouraging his wife's inner development, Adam instead consistently denies her opportunities for growth. Obviously, it is not only life in the Garden but also life with Adam that prevents Eve from developing herself into a knowledgeable, confident person able to resist temptation.

Most importantly, life in the Garden evidently does not give Eve the knowledge of good and evil that she needs to deal with her tempter in that all-important temptation scene. While there are subtle suggestions in the text that the Garden is not as innocent a place as one might think and that evil in some form exists here, it is obvious that both Adam and Eve are sheltered not only from evil in its obvious forms but also from evil in its cunning forms. It is not until after the Fall that Adam receives visions and tales from the angel that show him what is ahead for all humankind. These visions and explanations

demonstrate that evil does not just express itself in murder and disobedience to God, among others, but also in subtle actions that look attractive in their outer manifestations. Thus Satan does not present himself and his temptation to Eve in an apparently evil form; rather, he approaches Eve as a "sly Snake" (PL 9.613), using pleasing flattery and deceitful, appealing rhetoric instead of obviously evil behavior that might have caused Eve to be shocked and alarmed. In addition, because there have been few opportunities in the Garden for Eve to exercise free will and to find out what consequences follow her actions, she is simply unprepared to predict exactly what will happen to her if she gives in to Satan's temptation. Life in the Garden, therefore, has not allowed the innocent Eve to learn how to recognize and define evil when she is confronted by it and how to make a choice for or against it. It does not come as a surprise, then, that Eve gives in to Satan's temptation, convincing herself that much more is gained from eating the fruit than from staying obedient. Lacking Adam's outer voice at the time of the temptation, she eats the forbidden fruit, causing the Fall of all humanity and that "dreadful thing no doubt," death (4.426).

A significant indicator that the Lady lives in a fallen world is the environment in which her temptation occurs. Watkins describes the forest in Comus as having "winding labyrinths, hidden springs, secret openings" (91), representing "a world of magic, of mysteries and disguised symbols, both threatening and benevolent" (92). According to Fish, Milton develops in his description of the wood a "pattern of 'ambiguous valuing'" (How Milton Works 145), showing the wood as a place that can either be welcoming and safe or confining and dangerous. Thus, in Comus,

> This wood is "ominous" (61), thick with "black shades" where hidden dangers lurk "imbow'r'd" (62); it is a "wild Wood" (312), a "close dungeon" (349), a "surrounding waste" (403), a "dark sequester'd nook" (500), a "hideous Wood" (520), the "haunt" of sorcerers who are "Immur'd in cypress shades" (521), a place of "inmost bow'rs" (536), where a monstrous rout like "stabl'd wolves" (534) can be heard howling. (Fish 144-45)

At the same time, the wood is a "kind hospitable" place (Comus 187) of which the Attendant Spirit speaks sympathetically and in which the Lady finds comfort, shade, food, and lodging. Nevertheless, the overwhelming feeling the wood presents in Comus is one of negative confinement and enclosure, putting at risk weary travelers who must journey through it (Fish, How Milton Works 145).

As all forests, the wood in Comus is a place of darkness where dangers cannot be easily seen. Thus in this world of darkness in which the Lady finds herself lost, activities take place that are "concealed" (143), "mysterious" (130), and "secret" (129), making it impossible for the traveler to use the eye to detect dangerous activities. Here Comus thrives, using the darkness for his own purposes by "[cheating] the eye with blear illusion" (155), changing his own appearance to deceive, and using magic to transform weary travelers into beasts. Unlike the Garden of Eden, in which expectations are clearly explained and where activities take place during the day, deception routinely occurs in the wood and perverse activities happen at night, requiring travelers to be cautious. The wood, as Miller states, therefore reminds of the real world through which people must struggle, not always knowing what is ahead and who might tempt them (43). In order to

survive, then, the Lady has to have a strong determination to stick to her values, and this determination sees her through the temptation scene.

The dark wood is also a place of isolation from an outside world where there is light and where people can orient themselves more easily than in the wood. When finding themselves lost in the forest, the Lady and her brothers express a sense of confusion, wishing for "a rush candle from the wicker hole" (Comus 338) to give them some "streaming light" (340). As Barber writes, this sense of disorientation causes the Lady to reach for those internal values that have been part of her life (51). At this time of confusion and disorientation, the Lady naturally relies on her "strong siding champion Conscience" (Comus 212), using it as her inner light when the outer world is dark. To give herself further guidance, she calls into her memory "pure ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope" (213) and the "unblemish't form of Chastity" (215), whom she "[sees] visibly" (216) in her mind. The Lady's isolation, then, requires her to reach deep within her soul and to remind herself of the principles that have governed her life in the past, giving her hope that she can once more overcome the fear and temptation the wood presents to her.

While the Garden with its growth and fertility resembles the enclosure of a womb in which children live for a limited time period, the forest reminds of an enclosure through which the Lady and her brothers pass in a horizontal movement (Wilkenfeld 172). Adam and Eve in their innocence, unlike children, hope to stay forever in the womb of the Garden, but a stronger force, this time a consistent God rather than a laboring mother, pushes them out into the real world. The Garden, therefore, is a place where entry and exit are the same and through which there is no straight path that requires one to move on. Rather, there is comfort and warmth and the invitation to stay,

all indicating the innocent life that is possible here. The forest, in contrast, begins and ends at different places, suggesting that one must travel through rather than linger and that one must reach a goal. Here cultivation is possible only in limited ways, and life is desirable for only those who have something to hide. Because of its darkness and secrecy, the forest encourages vigilance, experience, and swift travel. The horizontal movement through the forest suggests that the journey is similar to the journey through life, which has a beginning and an end and where one is tested and tried, requiring a knowledge of the difference between good and evil in order to arrive successfully at one's destination. The Lady, then, finds her test in this dark environment and she successfully passes it because, unlike Eve, she has long ago decided to stand by the rules of her fallen society and to exercise her free will with the help of her well-developed conscience.

Chapter IV

Comus and the Lady: "Thou Canst Not Touch the Freedom of My Minde"

When analyzing the masque Comus, scholars have long referred to the sorcerer Comus as the figure of the tempter who preceded the more complex character of Satan in Paradise Lost. Brooks and Hardy call Comus Milton's preliminary study for the Satanic character in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained (215) while Flannagan sees him as "the spiritual ancestor of Satan" ("Comus" 28). To show further how Comus and Satan are connected to each other, Ades, in a comparison of Comus and Paradise Regained, points out the similarities among the temptations of Eve, Christ, and the Lady. Satan and Comus, Ades states, both base their attempts to seduce on what Protestant theology considered the "temptations of necessity, fraud, and violence" (266-67), appealing to the needs of the tempted, using deception in appearance and argument, and resorting to threats and violence when nothing else seems to work. Thus Milton develops parallels between not only the figures of the tempters, but their methods of temptation as well. Even though both tempters are equally skilled at their craft, they by no means achieve equal results when they tempt their chosen victims. Comus's temptation of the Lady results in failure. Satan succeeds with Eve, yet finds no listening ear in Christ, who, like the Lady, steadfastly maintains his own viewpoint. Whether a tempter succeeds or fails, then, depends not only on his skill and methods but even more so on the experiences and convictions of the tempted and their determination to hold their moral ground.

In Comus, the tempter faces the Lady, who appears as a staunch representative of Milton's Puritanism. Despite his constant involvement with his reveling and immoral

herd of beast-headed humans, Comus nevertheless easily identifies the Lady as a virgin, a sign that in his evildoing, he has not lost the ability to discern good when he meets it. The Lady's virginity, which he recognizes from her "different pace" (Comus 145), and her guilelessness, which is apparent in her song, at once impress and excite him, offering him the special challenge of a seducer who wants to conquer the unconquerable. Comus's brilliant abilities as a tempter are rooted in his character and in the way he presents his arguments, but they do not lead him to success. Instead, the Lady proves to be solid in her response to his arguments and expresses her determination to exercise her free will based on her own moral background. Rather than refuting Comus's arguments, the Lady lays out her own views and even leaves the tempter secretly agreeing with her. Despite his best efforts, Comus fails in his seduction of the Lady because he does not assess her character accurately and because his subtle approach in presenting his arguments reveals his cause as dishonorable and his arguments, though excellent, as deceitful. He also fails because the Lady, who perceives the deceit and the distortion of his arguments, is grounded in her own beliefs to such an extent that she has achieved the characteristics of self-actualization, which have lifted her onto a higher level of existence than her tempter.

Comus's character is best explained through an analysis of his ancestry, the potion he uses, and the setting in which he tempts. Milton makes Comus the son of two mythological parents, Circe and Bacchus, who are both skilled at tempting and transforming people, leading them into a life of lust and idolatry. Circe, a goddess encountered by Odysseus on the island of Aeaea (Powell 569), works her magic through a song and a potion, using this "charmed Cup" (Comus 51) to turn many who taste it into

"groveling Swine" (52). According to mythology, Circe lives on an island occupied by forests and surrounded by a mist that makes it almost impossible to see the rising and the setting of the sun (Powell 569). Comus's father, Bacchus, is the male god of fertility who encourages "burgeoning of everything else" (243) and the first who "from out the purple Grape / Crush't the sweet poyson of mis-used Wine" (Comus 46-47) to intoxicate his followers. It is no doubt the misuse of wine that leads to his followers' drunkenness and inspires in people a madness that causes them to lose their identity and thus their rational behavior (Powell 244). Bacchus also has the ability to transform people, his best known transformation being an act of revenge when he changes pirates into dolphins after they abduct him (252-53). Comus indeed is "Much like his Father, but his Mother more" (Comus 57). Like his father, he engages in fertility rites, misusing the abundance of nature to excess and idolizing the creation rather than the creator. Like his mother, he lives in an isolated place, a forest, in which it is difficult to see clearly and to deceive easily. Like both his parents, Comus transforms people when he uses an "orient Liquor in a Crystal Glasse" (65), turning humans' faces into those of beasts and changing their "express resemblance of the gods" (69), causing his victims to forget their origins without realizing what has happened to them. As Felch notes, "The fruit of Bacchus and Circe's lust is Comus himself," a demon who in every aspect lives up to his idolatrous and lustful ancestry (62).

While Comus's parentage produces in Comus an inherited and learned ability to deceive, capture, and transform, the liquid the sorcerer uses for his temptation is a symbol of the tempter's deceitful and perverted character itself. The potion is, according to Brooks and Hardy, a "complex, 'mixed drink'" because its true character, like Comus's,

cannot be perceived on the surface alone (192). Its description demonstrates what can be expected from Comus: the liquid "flames, and dances in his crystal bounds / With spirits of balm, and fragrant Syrops mixt" (Comus 673-74). While the word "flames" points to the heat of sexual indulgences which is a regular part of Comus's life, it also suggests a different meaning when used in combination with "dances." Thus the flaming and dancing liquid reminds one of mysteriously moving lights, the swamp fires, which at times can be spotted on marshes at night. While these lights have a clear scientific explanation, they have in folkloric belief been interpreted as being either the souls of wandering dead or, more appropriate in this context, demons who lure unwary wanderers into the marshes from which they can never return ("Irrlichter"). This attractive, yet deceptive and finally fatal characteristic of the drink corresponds precisely with the character of Comus, who, as a demon, appears charming but deceives humans into immoral activities from which their characters can never recover.

To brew this seductive potion, Comus uses the richness of nature, producing it in such a way that it appeals to the senses of sight, taste, and smell and therefore becomes so desirable that it is hard to resist. Mixed with "fragrant Syrops" (Comus 674), the liquid is sweet, making it easier to seduce people into drinking it. As a balm, the "cordial Julep" (672) can be used as a fragrance or perfume and has soothing as well as medicinal properties ("Balm"). It is unclear what ills the potions would cure, unless, of course, it "cures" people's desire to indulge in intoxicating drink and to live, like the Attendant Spirit states, "Confin'd and pester'd in [a] pin-fold" (Comus 7), making it a destructive cure at best. Ironically, a balm can also be used to anoint the dead ("Balm"), a quality that, in the context of Comus's activities as a tempter, points to the spiritual and moral

death that will be the result for those who use it. The potion, then, just like its bearer, is ambiguous and deceiving and attracts and lures the unsuspecting while at the same time sealing the fate of those who cannot resist.

The darkness of the forest in which Comus lives suggests that he is a personage who can function only in the dark and who tolerates neither physical nor spiritual light. As a result of his love for darkness, in which no one can perceive clearly what is evil and what is not, Comus uses deception, with which he produces "false presentment" (Comus 156). When he poses the question "What hath night to do with sleep?" (122), he presents nighttime, rather than daytime, as a time of activity, evoking the false impression that the festivities he likes to perform in darkness can be hidden from clear sight and thus lose their sinful character. Comus and his cohorts clearly pervert the quietness of night by engaging in revelry, fertility rites, and sexual promiscuity, thus leading to degeneration rather than regeneration. As a result, his activities in the dark forest have developed in him a mind that neither welcomes truth nor tolerates light. If he does not welcome truth, why does he then get excited when he hears "som chast footing" of "Some Virgin sure / . . . / Benighted in these Woods" (148-50)? His response to the Lady's arrival reveals that goodness and purity attract him because he can now pervert them rather than adhere to them. While the word *benighted* here simply indicates that the Lady is lost in the woods at night ("Benighted"), it also shows, ironically, that it is Comus, rather than the Lady, who is benighted spiritually, socially, and mentally and therefore truly in darkness. Thus the word *benighted* as applied to Comus shows the depth of moral and spiritual depravity to which the sorcerer has sunk.

In addition to being a representative of darkness, Comus, as Flannagan states, is also an "eloquent and seductive orator" ("Comus" 30). As such he understands, or should understand, how to assess an audience, present himself as an orator, and organize and put forth his argument effectively. He first evaluates the Lady as "Som Virgin" (Comus 148) who would be astonished and attempt to flee if she saw Comus and his herd for what they really are. This is a correct assessment, and to prevent her flight, Comus decides that he can win the Lady over only by deception, using a magic dust that will change her perception of him. Comus's idea that a virgin can be easily deceived and thus seduced proves to be an error on his part, however. Had Comus truly observed the Lady's two brothers in their search for their sister, he would have heard from their dialog that the Lady is more than just "som Virgin." The Elder Brother describes her as being "clad in [the] compleat steel" of chastity (421) and protected by "the sacred rayes of Chastity" (425), while at the same time using "the arms of Chastity" (440) to defend herself. Moreover, as the Elder Brother states, "So dear to Heav'n is Saintly chastity, / That when a soul is found sincerely so, / A thousand liveried Angels lacky her" (453-55). This language of war presents the Lady as a woman warrior rather than "a hapless songbird, unfledged and untried" (Simons 59) and, coupled with the language of divine protection, suggests that the Lady's moral shield is simply impenetrable. Comus, as Simons argues, also develops a false image of the Lady based on his knowledge of "mythological personages of wile and destruction" like his own mother, in whose songs magic and evil rather than good are represented (66). Thus he believes that the Lady's pleading, almost prayerful song to Echo has magic, and as a result, rather than comprehending her spiritual nature, he identifies the young woman with people who

deceive (66-67). Miscalculating the Lady's true strength and character, then, is Comus's first mistake in the assessment of his audience and the first step to his defeat.

Because it is an important part of persuasive argument to connect with the audience, Comus also needs to establish his character and credibility with the Lady. To win her trust, he thus appears to her as "som harmless Villager" (Comus 166), who pretends to have her interest at heart. He expresses his concern for her brothers, invites her to his "low / But loyal cottage" (319-20) to make her feel safe, and further gives her a sense of security when he tells her how well he knows the forest. His care, hospitality, and knowledge of their dark surroundings impress the Lady, who at this point has no idea that Comus tells half-truths about who he is and where he lives. In fact, Comus is so attuned to what he considers the Lady's values that he presents himself, according to Brooks and Hardy, as a person of "lowliness and humility" just because he understands that these values are important to the Lady (204). Comus is truthful only in his description of how well he knows the dark wood, understanding that when telling lies, some truth is important in convincing a listener. As an orator who is trying to win his audience over with a description of his own good character, Comus, then, skillfully mixes self-praise with half-truths, which, he hopes, will convince the Lady of his good intentions and will make her receptive to his upcoming argument and seduction. Comus's initial attempt to deceive the Lady works: she accepts his word, praises him for his hospitality, and asks him, the perceived shepherd, to "lead on" (Comus 330).

While Comus's initial presentation of himself persuades the Lady to follow him, she soon becomes aware that his arguments are deceitful rather than reassuring. Comus's verbal arguments are conducted with a subtle, or indirect approach, an indicator that

"[his] cause is discreditable" and deceitful and might ultimately lead to the alienation of his listener (Cicero 17). Before ever seeing the Lady, Comus outlines his intent in the following words:

> I under fair pretence of friendly ends,
> And well plac't words of glozing courtesie
> Baited with reasons not unplausible
> Wind me into the easie-hearted man,
> And hugg him into snares . . . . (Comus 160-64)

These lines, already dripping with pretended courtesy and ulterior motive, foreshadow that Comus's style and reasoning will consist of deception and flattery. They also indicate that Milton as early as Comus saw the tempter in terms of a serpent who "winds" his way into the heart of the easily deceived. Thus Comus begins to flatter the Lady by addressing her as a "forren wonder" (265), which she actually is considering that she comes from a world with different values that might well seem exotic to Comus. He engages her in a rapid dialogue, for which Milton uses stichomythia calculated to keep the Lady's attention and to get knowledge from her. Comus's frequent questions, however, do not just serve the purpose of acquiring knowledge. The questions are also designed to create trust and to make the Lady feel important because they indicate that this pleasant-appearing stranger takes an interest in her. Comus's flattery reaches a climax when he describes her lost brothers to her, whom, he says, he worshipped when he realized that they were "more then human" (297-98). As Brooks and Hardy state, Comus's extravagant praising of the two brothers is meant to flatter the Lady herself because the tempter hopes that "the brightness of the compliment should be reflected

upon her" (204). Comus sounds much like Satan here, who at first worships, then flatters Eve before he begins the temptation. The Lady, however, is not impressed. She rejects the hyperbole Comus directs at her and her brothers by referring to her "unattending Ears" (Comus 272), demonstrating that she is not in need of emotional and mental support. The Lady does not at this instant detect the deception in which Comus engages, but neither does she fall for his flattery. Up to this point, Comus has not even mentioned what he wants from the Lady. Rather, in his subtle approach, he has done what ancient orators were advised to do when their cause was discreditable, which was to consider the agent first rather than the action and then proceed in roundabout ways to get to the point of their argument (Cicero 17-18). Having successfully deceived the Lady, yet failed to appeal to her sense of vanity, Comus takes his intention to make her his Queen one step further: he brings her to his Palace rather than the promised low and loyal cottage to put her on his ground and in his power.

In the Palace, the Lady's surrounding and her immobilized condition in an enchanted chair quickly reveal that the handsome villager's real intentions are to seduce rather than protect her. Again, Comus's seduction focuses on appealing to the Lady's vanity and youth, an appeal that is centered on perverted self-love and the suggestion to live an indulged life. When Comus invites the Lady to join in "all the pleasures" (Comus 668) in which youth should be interested, he really does not mean *all* the pleasures of youth, however. Instead, his references to fertility suggest that he proposes only the pleasures of youthful sexual desires, which carry with them a high degree of fertility. What Comus does not explain – and here lies the deception – is that these pleasurable youthful activities also carry with them high risks of disease, unwanted pregnancy, loss

of identity, and, speaking in terms of Puritan beliefs, sinfulness. Comus's argument appeals directly to the human desire to be self-centered, indulgent, and undisciplined and thus reveals itself as an argument directed at the physical appetites and lower instincts of human beings while at the same time leaving out all serious consequences that are associated with this kind of life.

The Lady, in turn, does not hesitate to answer. Clearly recognizing the evil that surrounds her in Comus's Palace and the deceit the "false traitor" (Comus 691) engages in, the Lady counters with a statement that sets her free from all of Comus's appeals to her vanity and youth. Even though Comus has been able to threaten and immobilize her, the Lady is aware that someone else's power over her body is by far less significant than someone's power over her mind. "Thou canst not touch the freedom of my minde" (663), she informs Comus and sets his tempting words in contrast to her own "wel-govern'd and wise appetite" (705). Her answer is perhaps one of the most significant statements in Milton's poetry, indicating that the correct usage of freedom of will, especially in terms of moral choices, leads to the capacity to develop a high degree of morality and thus independence in the individual. Indeed, the Lady has already developed this high level of morality, and with it, she identifies Comus for what he is, a person who cannot offer good things because he is not good. With the Lady's remarks, the lines for and against evil are drawn for the debate that follows. Having established the superiority of her independent mind and her precise knowledge of the difference between good and evil, the Lady moves her part of the debate onto a truthful, if not always rational, level.

Indeed, as Brooks and Hardy state, the Lady "argues from an implied premise so different from [Comus's] that its introduction amounts almost to the dismissal of the disputed problem" (221). In *his* argument, Comus defends the usage of an abundant nature, which, in its excess, promises physical and natural pleasures and does not require responsibilities. One is reminded of the importance God places on pruning and keeping the Garden of Eden. Only when Adam and Eve act as masters and work in the Garden, pruning, propping, binding, and controlling the "wanton growth" (PL 9.212) can the beauty and purity of the Garden be preserved and the first couple be assured a peaceful, prosperous life. Yet work is not on Comus's mind. Instead, he asserts that nature is producing abundantly on its own, creating everything in great abundance. Nothing needs to be restrained, says Comus, but everything needs to be indulged in for its own sake and, ironically, for the sake of thanking and praising God, the "all-giver" (Comus 723). It is an interesting paradox that Comus claims that the earth would be "surcharg'd," "strangl'd," "cumber'd," and "over-multitude[d]" (728-31) if its abundance is not used for pleasure when in fact, the earth is already all these things precisely because it is not used with civilized care. Comus's distorted assertions also show themselves in his idea of God as a "grudging master" (725), who remains "unprais'd," "unthank'd," and "despis'd" (723-24) if humans, his superior creations, do not indulge themselves in nature, his lower creation. Rather than seeing the relationship of humans to nature as that of responsible master to dependent creation, Comus perverts the relationship and turns it upside down by making humans the inferior abusers of nature, which, uncontrolled, will eventually destroy the master who only revels but does not control.

No doubt, Comus's argument is full of mentally appealing imagery and shows his exact knowledge of the workings of nature. However, he has not yet involved the Lady directly in his argument. To convince her to participate in the physical pleasures he offers and to "be not cosen'd / With that same vaunted name Virginity" (Comus 737-38), Comus again appeals to a female vanity that he sees as part of a woman's personality:

> Beauty is natures coyn, must not be hoorded,
> But must be currant, and the good thereof
> Consists in mutual and partak'n bliss,
> Unsavoury in th' injoyment of it self
> If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
> It withers on the stalk with languish't head.
> Beauty is natures brag and must be shown
> In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities
> Where most may wonder at the workmanship. (739-47)

Comus's argument, which seeks to acknowledge and display the outer, physical body for the enjoyment of people in high places, is obviously meant for youthful women, with the encouragement to "seize the day" because tomorrow their beauty will be withered like a rose. Like Satan with Eve, Comus appeals to the Lady's sense of vanity, which, he hopes, will convince her to forego the rigid requirements her society has placed upon her. To contrast the good life the beautiful Lady should enjoy in the outside world with a life less desirable, Comus belittles the work done at home by those who have "homely features" and "course complexions" (Comus 748-49) and who are worth no one's attention. Comus's argument is distorted because he tries to make the Lady believe that

she has enjoyment and control only when her outer beauty is exposed and paraded in front of those of higher rank. The distortion of the argument becomes apparent when one considers that real control does not come in the form of being dependent on what others think and say, especially when those thoughts and words are directed to one of youthful appearance. Comus, truly, does not understand that the Lady knows how to distinguish between "inner and outer" or "deep truth" and "appearances and surfaces" (Fish, How Milton Works 31). Even though his arguments are distorted, they are nevertheless convincing on the surface, and it speaks for the Lady's moral development and insights that Comus cannot persuade the young woman to be "not cosen'd," or tricked, by the concept of virginity. Ironically, the Lady is indeed not tricked, but it is the tempter's argument by which she is not tricked, not his idea of "wasted" virginity.

Unfortunately for Comus, the Lady is an attentive but not receptive audience. Instead of using a subtle approach with *her* argument as the tempter does, the Lady begins her argument with a direct and initially rational approach, which "straightway prepares [her] hearer to attend to [her] speech" (Cicero 13). She instantly reveals Comus's statements for what they are, and that is "false rules pranckt in reasons garb" (Comus 759). But instead of refuting Comus's arguments, the Lady, according to Fish, now simply declares another position in which she sees God as superior to nature and in which she emphasizes the liberating and positive aspects of temperance (How Milton Works 155-56). In fact, so liberating is the Lady's temperance that in her world of social justice, nature's abundance would lead to a moderate but even distribution of all natural good to "every just man" (Comus 768) rather than be available in excess to just a few. While this argument, which is based on idealism rather than reality, is maybe not

completely rational, the Lady nevertheless shows with it that her goodness is not just focused on herself but also extends to the well being of others.

The Lady's second argument is directed towards the defense of "the sage / and serious doctrine of Virginity" (Comus 786-87), which Comus has challenged her to transgress. According to Evans, among others, the terms "virginity" and "chastity" in Comus are interchangeable (226), both symbolizing virtue directed in one's actions towards God (Bennett 21). During Milton's time, chastity was a concept that was highly valued and strictly taught to women. Diane McColley states that in early modern writing, women were often admonished to give highest priority to the upholding of their chastity, placing it above all other endeavors (Milton' Eve 25). For Milton, the Puritan, chastity was not only the individual woman's "faithfulness of body, mind, and heart" (188). It was also a "state of purity that could exist either before marriage or within the state of matrimony" because it not only referred to sexual purity but also to domestic and communal support as well as to charity in general (Flannagan, "Comus" 25). Fish further explains that "[one] who is chaste pledges herself to the highest possible service and rejects all other services as unworthy and idolatrous" (How Milton Works 165). In addition, he sees chastity as "the unchanging principle, the abiding commitment, the overriding loyalty, in relation to which temptations are resisted and fears allayed" (166). Chastity was thus more than control of one's sexual desires; rather, it encompassed high ideals that reached from physical control to matrimonial love to human service, making it a way of life on the highest level.

Still, one is left to wonder why Milton in Comus ignores the Biblical trio faith, hope, and charity and replaces *charity* with *chastity*. According to Kathleen Veyvoda,

Milton, in his On Christian Doctrine, defines chastity as the love of self while he sees charity as the love for others. Chastity itself, Veyvoda writes, is "a reflection of personal integrity, the precondition for all other virtues," making it the "foundational virtue that enables agency itself" (560-61). This agency can then be expressed through critical thinking, creative and resourceful expression, and finally, love for others (561). As a result of this viewpoint, chastity and charity become inseparably connected, making chastity a necessary and required part of charity (Mc Colley, Milton's Eve 188-89), without which true charity cannot be achieved. Obviously, the Lady has high principles to uphold when she resists her tempter, and Milton, in his choice of "chastity," makes it clear that the Lady is required to defend only her love of self, not her love for other people. Defending the principle of charity is not essential because there are no other people involved who might need her defense. The test to protect her chastity alone is appropriate for the Lady because she is a young woman and must first prove that she can stand up for her own high principles before she can rise to the level of love for all humans.

One reason, therefore, that the Lady is successful in her resistance to Comus's temptation is the fact that she has internalized these teachings of her society. As a result of such consistent teaching during Milton's time, it was possible that the ideal of chastity eventually became so deeply instilled in a woman that it was internalized, turning, as Barber states, into an inner resource that had heavenly goals in mind. With these goals governing her behavior, the Lady *can* resist the pleasurable ideas Comus presents (54). The Lady, then, does not allow anyone to control her actions because she is able to control them with the help of the internalized conviction that chastity is a superior

principle that can withstand temptation. Her upbringing has developed in her an inner voice, a strong conscience, on which she has learned to rely, in contrast to Eve, who has to rely on outer voices. It is clear that the Lady's conscience is a stronger guide in fighting off temptation than the voice of Adam, who cannot always be around Eve.

Despite her firm convictions about maintaining her chastity, the Lady surprisingly neither spends much time in defending her beliefs to Comus nor tries to persuade him that she is right. Because she sees Comus for what he is, a person who does not understand "sublime notion, and high mystery" (Comus 785) with ear or with soul, the Lady defends "the Sun-clad power of Chastity" (782) only shortly in her debate with Comus. Rather than expound the virtue of chastity to Comus, the Lady instead becomes more and more enraged in her tone, adopting "increasingly extreme positions," as Oram states (132). Indeed, her tone and diction become quite hostile, accusing Comus, rightfully, of inability to understand and promising to express her argument in a "flame of sacred vehemence" (Comus 795). The final image she presents is one of outright violence, wishing that "[his] magick structures rear'd so high / Were shatter'd into heaps o're [his] false head" (798-99). While the Lady, then, begins her argument in a straightforward and rational manner, her fury at being detained and confronted by such a "Jugler" (757) as Comus turns the argument, as Oram points out, into "the desire to finish her opponent once and for all" (133). The Lady truly shows herself as the woman warrior she is, but because she is incapable of moving and because she probably would not attack Comus physically anyhow, she resorts to strong and direct, even militant, language, the only weapon available to her. For Milton's contemporary readers, the Lady's response must have been surprising because women were expected to be quiet

rather than outspoken. That the Lady speaks so assertively and forthrightly makes her argument for free will, temperance, and chastity even stronger and more convincing than if she had become involved with the tempter in a refutation of his argument. By arguing her point alone, the Lady separates herself from him and his seduction and stands firmly in her defense of high ideals. Her approach works because Comus admits that "[s]he fables not" (Comus 800), but as if to confirm the Lady's idea that he really cannot be reached by ear or soul, the tempter, instead of giving up, now decides to "try her yet more strongly" (806) and more violently than he had originally planned. The debate, however, has come to an end, the tempter has not won, and the Lady, as Simons observes, has proven herself "resolute and virtuous when urged to carnal indulgences" (74).

Finally, Comus's seduction cannot succeed because the Lady has in her young age achieved what Abraham Maslow calls self-actualization, enabling her to live on a level of autonomy that is not possible for Comus, who consistently strives for the fulfillment of lower needs. Maslow's pyramid of needs encompasses eight sections, the lowest of which deal with the most basic needs all humans have and the highest of which lead to self-actualization and self-transcendence. According to Maslow, the basic needs of all humans consist, first and lowest on the pyramid, of the physiological need for water, food, sex, and sleep; second, the need for safety, protection, and avoidance of pain; third, the need for belongingness and love as represented in affection and affiliation; and finally, the need for esteem such as respect from others and feelings of competence and worthiness. Maslow observed that these needs are often in a state of deficit, causing humans consistently to seek to fulfill them before they can move on to a higher level (Phares 185-86). That Comus himself exists only for the fulfillment of these basic needs

is clear from the "Tables spread with all dainties" (Comus pg. 153) in his Palace as well as his references to the "Nocturnal sport" (line 128), or sexual activities, in which he likes to engage with his friends, the "rabble." While Comus as the master of the forest does not have immediate need for protection, he does, unbeknownst to him, have need for order and structure, an indication that he has not only a deficiency in this area of needs but also an unawareness of it. His animal-headed friends, who do "[n]ot once perceive their foul disfigurement" (74), and their "rouling" are an indicator that Comus does not wish others to ever rise above the level of fulfillment of the lowest instincts. His seduction of the Lady, therefore, becomes a curious attempt to topple a person of high achievement into the pit of revelry, debauchery, and immorality.

Because he knows nothing else than a life focused on the constant fulfillment of his most basic needs, the tempter, in his seduction, attempts to promise the Lady that same fulfillment of basic needs. The Lady indeed is in a situation where her basic needs are not met: she is hungry, needs shelter and protection, and would like to be reunited with her brothers. On the surface, Comus performs well when he promises to fulfill these needs. He offers her a drink, presents himself as her protector, invites her to join his gang of revelers, and flatters her with remarks about her youth and beauty. The Lady initially is grateful for his so-called concern, but what she does not realize until later is how perverted the fulfillment of these basic needs is going to be. First, the drink, rather than bringing her refreshment, will bring about her transformation into a half-human, half-beastial life form, in which she will be ruled by her beastly head with its primitive instincts rather than by her human head with its rational thinking. Second, the tempter's harmless appearance coupled with his reassuring words about his knowledge of the

frightening woods leads to abduction rather than protection and security. Third, the sense of belonging Comus promises is nothing more than the forced membership in a gang of "ougly-headed Monsters" (Comus 695), who abuse their bodies intemperately, rather than use them temperately, to satisfy their physical desires. Finally, the Lady's need for esteem and respect from others is again perverted through Comus's suggestion that she use her youthful, beautiful body as a commodity to gain the lust-filled attention, if not the respect, of others. Gratification of human needs, especially the most basic ones, is a positive and necessary part of life. What Comus has in mind, however, has nothing to do with meeting deficiencies. Instead, it has everything to do with perverting those needs, turning them into excuses for "[rouling] with pleasure in a sensual stir" (77).

What Comus does not understand is that the Lady is far removed from being concerned with her basic needs. Rather, she argues as one whose basic needs have been fulfilled, enabling her to achieve, one by one, the fulfillment of those higher needs as outlined by the upper end of Maslow's pyramid. Here one finds abstract needs like the desire for knowledge, understanding, and exploration; the desire for aesthetics as found in order and beauty; the desire for self-actualization, with which a person develops his or her potential; and finally, the desire for self-transcendence, with which a person moves beyond his or her self and tries to become connected to something higher than the ego and to help others in their search for fulfillment (Huitt). The Lady indeed has achieved a high level of knowledge, specifically about the dictates of her society and her value in this society that has given her a strong sense of belonging. In her argument about temperance in nature, the Lady also expresses her insights into the aesthetic aspects of

nature, which call for order, beauty, and even proportion of sharing rather than wild growth, disorder, and disharmony, on which Comus insists.

Most importantly, the Lady has reached a level of self-actualization and self-transcendence with which she governs her life independently from others and with which she expresses her interest in the well being of other people. According to Phares, Maslow sees self-actualization as a metamotive, the purpose of which is to enrich life and enable on to find personal fulfillment in extended experiences. This growth motive, however, is governed by weak motivations because it requires people to know themselves and to take a stand against society. While most people do not want to take risks, others pursue their self-actualization until they reach their potential (187-88). Considering these criteria, it is obvious that the Lady, while conforming to her own society, is able to take a stand against a society of which she does not approve, thus demonstrating her independent thinking and the ability to live her life according to her own convictions. Likewise, the Lady shows indications of self-transcendence because she connects her life to those high ideals that come from divine sources rather than only from societal sources. She thus becomes one of those who "lay their just hands on that Golden Key / That ope's the Palace of Eternity," as the Attendant Spirit remarks (Comus 13-14). As a result of her spiritual connection to high principles, the Lady is able to think of others, and she does so when she advocates that "Natures full blessing [sh]ould be well dispenc't / In unsuperfluous even proportion" (772-73) to all just people, not just a few. Because self-actualization and self-transcendence can only be achieved when all lower needs are satisfied, the Lady's needs are obviously fulfilled in most circumstances, making it impossible for Comus to impress her with his tempting words and images of the so-called

goodness of the passionate, physical life. The Lady and Comus, therefore, exist on completely different levels of the needs pyramid, and as a result, they simply argue past each other when they engage in their debate about pleasures, nature, abundance, temperance, and chastity.

To understand why the temptation of the Lady fails, more emphasis must be placed on the role the Lady plays than that of her tempter. While Comus is a brilliant tempter, as is evident by his parentage, upbringing, tools, and arguments, he nevertheless fails to understand the Lady and her strength of character, moral background, and high degree of personal achievement. As he tries to deceive, so the Lady, after an initial moment of ignorance, is able to perceive Comus's intentions. In her resistance, the Lady, according to Simons, "becomes [a] prototypical figure" (54), who, as Milton's God later points out in <u>Paradise Lost</u>, is "sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (3.99). The Lady, indeed, stands rather than falls, and in her mortality and knowledge of good and evil becomes, in Milton's thinking, an example of what fallen humans can achieve if they are willing to be "[mindful] of the crown that Vertue gives" (<u>Comus</u> 10).

But the Lady is more than just a woman who resists or a prototype of those who overcome the desire to indulge in mortal pleasures. Rather, as Ades states, the Lady shows "supernatural powers in withstanding her temptation" (271), suggesting that her strength is derived from a divine source, Christian or mythological. This divine source is indeed paramount in the teachings of Milton's Puritan society and consists of the Biblical teachings to which Puritans adhere. The Lady, in defending her chastity, thus defends the higher laws of Puritan religion and society and becomes their representation. As such, she cannot and will not waver in her determination to maintain her chastity. As a result,

as David Miller states, "the Lady seems far less human than later protagonists" (42), indicating that her character is flat and lacks the complexity and development of, for example, Eve, whose inner and outer development is clearly expressed before, during, and after her temptation. The Lady is flat exactly because she is a representative of a Puritan society that is strict about its values and that does not leave much room for diverse behavior. As discussed earlier, the Lady has achieved a state of being in which she securely rests, making it unnecessary to search, question, listen, and change. As a result of her obedience to Puritan values, which have practically elevated her into the realm of what the Attendant Spirit calls the "true servants / Amongst the enthron'd gods on Sainted seat" (Comus 10-11), the Lady is in a fixed spiritual state and simply sees no need to refute Comus's arguments (Demaray 89). While this state is not necessarily all positive, it helps the Lady through a difficult situation and allows her to return to her parents unharmed. While she still needs the help of a mediator, in this case the nymph Sabrina, to become physically free as well, she has been spiritually and mentally free throughout the entire masque, a fact that makes the outcome of her temptation foreseeable. Despite his "fair pretence," "glozing courtesie," and "reasons not unplausible" (Comus 160-63), Comus, the pagan demon, then, simply fails because he cannot succeed in tempting the entire determined Puritan society.

Chapter V

Satan and Eve: "Such Prohibitions Binde Not"

In his best-known work, Paradise Lost, Milton creates in Satan the figure of a tempter who is complex, talented, insightful, persuasive, and, by choice, profoundly evil. Milton's Satan, indeed, is "a creature of dynamic tensions" (Carey, "Milton's Satan" 133) who has been the cause of energetic discussion throughout the years, involving scholars who either emphasize his folly and selfishness or stress his superior performance and courage. As Carey notes, the complexity of Milton's Satan lies in his ambivalence, which makes it possible for pro-Satan and anti-Satan critics to defend or condemn the tempter. Carey, in turn, attributes to Satan a depth of character that other figures in Paradise Lost do not possess and that explains the tempter's ambivalence. While Adam and Eve "exist simply and transparently at the level of the words they speak" (133), Satan is a character who exists on several levels, not all of which are sufficiently revealed to the reader. Thus Satan plays roles as the Archangel in heaven, as the Prince of Devils in hell, and as the tempter in a serpent's body in the Garden of Eden. While the text reveals much about Satan as Prince of Devils and tempter in Eden, it only alludes to his role as Archangel in heaven (132-33). This uncertainty about Satan as Archangel in heaven gives him a "hidden dimension and a 'past'" (133), adding depth and complexity to his role as tempter. Satan's change in roles leads him from the highest to the lowest level of existence, indicating a fall that is even steeper than that of Adam and Eve, especially since his self-deception does not make him eligible for God's mercy.

Despite the fascination one might experience when observing the performance of Milton's Satan as tempter, it is important to remember the profound evil of which Satan is the first and ultimate representative and with which he unscrupulously pursues his victims. After his fall from heaven to "bottomless perdition" (PL 1.47), he arrogantly and proudly plans revenge with the hope to wage war on God, whose strength, he knows, cannot fail. He therefore directs his efforts towards the destruction of God's newly created race, represented by Adam and Eve, who have "in them / The whole included Race" (9.415-16). Grant McColley sees Satan's early lamentations in the Garden of Eden as an indication of the seducer's greater hatred of man than of God (170). However, the fact that the tempter chooses the weak representatives of the new human race as his target explains that his desire is to take his ultimate revenge on God rather than humans by destroying those God created and therefore loves.

According to Flannagan, Satan's plan to deceive "the newly-born Adam and Eve" shows Satan as a weak, almost childish character, who can vent his frustrations only on those he perceives as weaker than himself, making him a "child-abuser" of the young and innocent ("PL: Introduction" 322). Adam and Eve are indeed still in a state of innocence and therefore of vulnerability while they live peacefully in the Garden of Eden, assured by the Creator's promise that their consistent obedience will eventually raise them to the level of the spirits. To test the first couple's obedience and to preserve them from misery and death, God has given Adam and Eve the divine command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan quickly identifies obedience to this command as the weak element in Adam's and Eve's otherwise perfect prelapsarian lives and chooses it as the focal point of his temptation. As a tempter, Satan has already

successfully tempted one third of the host of heaven, who have followed him into "the great Deep" (PL pg. 353) where he continues to be the ruler. All Satan has to do now is choose the best disguise, the best moment, the best oratory, and, most importantly, the best person at whom to direct his temptation. Because he fears what he considers Adam's higher intellect, strength, and courage, he singles out Eve as the weaker of the two. In contrast to Comus, who is not afraid to test and tempt a being who is by far superior to him in strengths and convictions, Satan clearly signals by his choice that his evil designs are shaped by cowardice rather than courage, making his evil intentions even more profound.

While Comus fails with his temptation, Satan succeeds brilliantly in his attempts to bring about the Fall of Eve and with her, the Fall of all humankind. As he observes Eve, Satan realizes what an attractive yet ignorant and innocent female she is, ignorant because she does not have much knowledge about anything, especially evil, and innocent because she is therefore free from all sin. Because of her inexperience in detecting evil, Eve is dependent on Adam's counsel and advice and allows him to be her guide and outer voice. Satan's success, therefore, is based first and foremost on Eve's inexperience and inability to detect evil in any form, a matter that was discussed in chapter III. Satan's victory in the temptation of Eve is also based on a three-pronged approach with which he sows the seeds of disobedience into Eve's mind by means of a dream, a tale, and a display of great oratory. But the success of the temptation is not just based on Satan's skills as tempter. Eve willingly accepts the tempter's flattering words, which praise and glorify her and which promise what she does not have in the Garden, namely equality and even superiority. Satan, who has these desires himself and can thus verbalize them to

her, becomes an easy guide to Eve, who almost helps him along when she begins to look at the fruit through his eyes and persuades herself in her own soliloquy to eat what is forbidden to her.

Milton's ambivalent tempter becomes a creature of two minds and thus a conflicted adversary because he originates from the divine creator and because he rebels against that same creator. As opposed to Comus, who descends from two lustful, deceitful, and immoral people, Satan stems from the Christian God who is omniscient and omnipotent as well as holy, infinite, and immortal. As a creation of God himself, Satan enjoys the special privilege of being "the first / If not the first Arch-Angel, great in Power, / In favour and in præeminence" (PL 5.659-61), suggesting that he already has achieved much superiority among the angels in God's presence. Satan's name is initially Lucifer, or light-bearer, indicating that as a powerful heavenly personage, he possesses much of the intelligence, knowledge, and truth that God holds. Most significantly, Satan has also received free will from a creator who wants to be worshipped and obeyed voluntarily and not by force. While one might argue that the evil that exists in Satan is an indicator that there is evil present in God himself, it is the exercise of free will, given to angels as well as to humans, that allows Satan to become what he pleases before, during, and after his fall. Satan, therefore, has not only been created by God himself, but has also been endowed with the highest privileges God is able to give.

His elevated position in heaven is not sufficient for Satan, however. Because he possesses a proud and ambitious mind, he desires superiority over *all* others, including God. This flaw in his character begins to be clearly expressed when God introduces his Son as the one to whom He has given all His power and "to [whom] shall bow / All knees

in Heav'n, and shall confess him Lord" (PL 5. 607-08). The command to bow to someone else and thus confess inferiority is too much for the envious and conceited Satan. Exercising his free will and his powers of persuasion, Satan gathers one third of the angels to his side, rebels, and, in a war fought in heaven and won by the other side only with the help of the Son of God, suffers the consequences of his choices when he is "Hurld headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie / With hideous ruine and combustion down" to hell (1.45-46). Before his own fall is complete, Satan, who, as a creation of God, possesses divine, if now perverted, characteristics, among them superior intelligence and knowledge of good and evil, becomes a foe with whom Adam and Eve must reckon and whom they must not underestimate. Considering Satan's divine origin and background, one should not be surprised at the tempter's superior skills of self-reflection, observation, and planning when he approaches his chosen victims. His inclinations to deceive, pervert, and persuade show him as the master tempter, who, to name one example, delivers in Eve's temptation one "masterstroke" in his tale of how he gained speech (Carey, Milton 109), a masterstroke that in its deception is beyond the comprehension of the innocent Eve. Satan's superior abilities as a creation of God thus also experience a fall from divine qualities to demonic perversions.

Milton uses a number of devices to develop the characteristics of Satan as tempter. First, his descriptions of Satan's outer body coupled with images of height throughout the poem demonstrate the tempter's inner arrogance, blown-up ego, and desire for self-elevation, all of which lead Satan to plan revenge against God and the newly created race. That Satan after his expulsion from heaven is neither humbled nor subdued is obvious in his "Head up-lift above the waves, and Eyes / That sparkling

blaz'd" (PL 1.194-95) and in the "shape and gesture proudly eminent" (1.591) with which he stands like a tower above the rest of the devils. Likewise, Satan's body of "monstrous size" (1.197), even his completely fallen body as "monstrous Serpent on his Belly prone" (10. 514), suggests that Satan's power will not be minimal and that evil will be monstrous, just like the body of its originator. In addition, Milton's consistent usage of images of largeness, height, and magnificence – whether they are expressed in Satan's body, in the devils' "Godlike shapes and forms / Excelling human" (1.358-59), in mighty armies and armor, or in the high throne on which Satan sits exalted – shows that superiority and self-elevation are major themes in the poem. It is exactly these themes that Satan later tries to instill in the mind of Eve, who has so far only experienced submission to Adam but not pride, equality, and superiority. Milton's description of Satan's body and the images of height the poet uses, then, are clear indicators of the tempter's perverted desire to achieve superiority for himself, leading him to use exaggerated and faulty ideas to tempt successfully.

Second, by allowing Satan the powers of a shape-shifter with which the tempter is able to inhabit the bodies of different animals, Milton clearly portrays the character of his Satan as a creature who sets out to hunt and destroy his prey. The animal bodies that Satan uses for his purposes in the Garden of Eden all belong to animals who are at the time as innocent as Adam and Eve and cannot do harm to the first couple. The modern, and therefore fallen and knowledgeable reader, however, is able to detect in each one a potentially frightening and dangerous animal. Thus Satan as Cormorant, this time ironically elevated in the tree of life where he plots death, represents the characteristics of a bird of prey, which hunts and fishes those whose capture takes them out of their

element and who cannot defend themselves. In the bodies of the lion and tiger, two big predators, Satan once again enlarges himself to show a contrast to the peaceful, fawn-like creatures, Adam and Eve, who are so vulnerable that they will not be able to resist their predator. Satan's ability to possess the bodies of these animals shows the shifting and deceitful nature of the tempter, with which he will later confuse and deceive Eve in the dream and at the tree.

Milton's depiction of Satan as toad points to a complex and paradoxical characteristic of the seducer, one that shows the tempter on a dual mission, one part of which is perhaps unknown to him. It is not quite clear whether in initiating Eve's dream, Satan is actually in the form of a toad or is just "[squatting] like a Toad" (PL 4.800) at Eve's ear. What is crucial, however, is that Eve at that moment is exposed to what the toad traditionally has represented and to what it secondarily represents as a healer. As Paul Cheshire writes, the toad as a creature who is ugly and venomous is primarily associated with "symbol[s] of evil, lust, jealousy and . . . demonic familiar[s]" (39). This image of the toad not only identifies Satan's own characteristics as evil, lustful, and jealous but also indicates that these same ideas will be put into Eve's mind to deter her from the responsibilities she has been given. The toad, however, is not just a symbol of evil but also of eventual redemption. Cheshire, who investigates the role of the toad in early modern literature, points out how in the alchemical tradition, the death and metamorphosis of toads produced healing medicines. According to Cheshire, Milton's portrayal of Satan as toad thus indicates the tempter's evil as well as that same evil's antidote (39-40). Applied to the outcome of the story of Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost, the paradoxical image of the toad can thus be seen as a foreshadowing of the introduction

of evil as well as of death for the human race, coupled with the final redemption of Adam and Eve. This insight makes the episode of Eve's dream a significant factor in the temptation because it demonstrates that despite the forthcoming Fall, hope for a better, if fallen, life is available to Adam and Eve. It also shows that even though Satan is a skillful tempter who tries to thwart God's work, it is God, not Satan, who will have the final word for the future of Adam and Eve.

Finally, Satan's usage of the serpent after consideration of every creature shows more the tempter's deviousness than any future evil one might assign to the snake. Even though Raphael tells Adam that the serpent is "Not noxious, but obedient to [his] call" (PL 7.498), Satan corrupts that harmless nature when he uses the snake's "mazie fould" (9.161) as a hiding place for himself and identifies its wit and subtlety as a means to avoid suspicion. The serpent's body is also an ideal instrument because with it, Satan can slither, slide, and climb secretly to observe Eve and to stay undetected until he is ready to reveal himself. Nevertheless, while Satan recognizes his own descent into the body of a lowly beast and agonizes over it, he cannot help but elevate himself again when he approaches Eve. Thus, instead of wriggling on the ground as an inferior creature, Satan rises "on his reare, / Circular base of rising foulds, that tour'd / Fould above fould a surging Maze, his Head / Crested aloft, and Carbuncle his Eyes" (9.497-500). While the sexual implications are obvious in these lines, the diction – "rising," "above," "surging," and "aloft" – also indicates the constant self-elevation Satan seeks, even in the body of the serpent. Satan's usage of animal bodies is a deceptive device, and Adam and Eve cannot detect him in these bodies because they are unacquainted with good and evil and therefore know nothing of deception. Satan's choice to inhabit the bodies of these

animals therefore not only shows his deviousness but also his ability to shift his body, his position, and his value system, giving him the competence to adjust to and exploit every situation.

Milton's repeated usage of the word *maze* – once as an adjective in "mazie fould" (PL 9.161) and once as a noun in "surging Maze" (9.499) – suggests the complexity of Satan's character as well as the perplexity of his oratory that Eve will soon experience. Furthermore, the noun *maze* indicates a "complex network of paths" ("Maze"), or a labyrinth, that is constructed in such a complicated manner that it is difficult to find one's way out of it alone (Swaim 132). The word, then, foreshadows Eve's mental wandering in the labyrinth of Satan's ideas, all of which will be presented so skillfully that Eve will not be able to escape their confusion. It is important to note that the word *maze* in Milton's time in the transitive usage of the verb meant "to bewilder," "to stupefy," "to befuddle," "to perplex," and "to confuse" ("Maze"). Thus the "mazie fould" and the "surging Maze" in which Satan hides are indicators of his active intent to do just that to Eve, namely to confuse and befuddle her so that she will eat the fruit. Likewise, the verb could be used in an intransitive way, meaning in this case "to be delirious or bewildered" or "to be unsettled or incoherent in one's mind" ("Maze"), suggesting, for Eve, the state of mind in which she will make the decision to eat the fruit. Kathleen Swaim, who conducts a thorough analysis of Milton's usage of the word *maze* in Book IX of Paradise Lost, also sees the term as one carrying "an aura of destruction, evil, and grim death" (134), exactly what Eve will experience after her fall.

A third device Milton uses to portray Satan's character is expressed in the speeches the tempter uses to influence, manipulate, and tempt others. Milton thus equips

the tempter with the powers of an effective and deceptive orator who knows how to speak with "high words, that [bear] / Semblance of worth, not substance" (PL 1.528-29). The "worth" Satan seeks to impart to his followers consists of projecting his own faults onto God and pretending to offer the devils freedom of speech, a return to their former heavenly existence, along with a life disconnected from serving God. Satan thus attempts to diminish the position of God, whom he portrays as an equal among equals who has elevated himself above others and who rules by force as a tyrant. In reality, it is Satan himself who consistently strives to lift himself above others and who is envious of those whom he perceives as possessing power and privilege. Milton's diction demonstrates that Satan, not God, is the dictatorial tyrant: as "Sultan" (1.348), "Commander" (1.358), and "Emperor" (1.378), Satan rallies the troops, who obey their "Generals Voyce" (1.337) unquestioningly.

Furthermore, in the council in hell, Satan gives the devils pretentious freedom of speech to indicate that they have equal rights of decision making. In reality, Satan has long ago made the dictatorial decision to use the newly created race as his means to take revenge on God. Freedom of speech and free will are not part of the "heaven" Satan is preparing for his followers. Satan also promises his devilish followers a return to their heavenly existence, "Whether [by] open Warr or covert guile" (1.41), and a life in which they will not have to serve the God who just threw them out of heaven. In reality, Satan knows exactly that entrance into heaven would be based on submission, a requirement he is not willing to obey. Likewise, heaven without service to God, a service that according to Satan himself is not hard, is not possible because Milton's God requires praise, thanks, obedience, and true allegiance. In his oratory to the other devils, then, Satan reveals

himself as an outright liar, whose intentions are to get his own way and to play the part of the God against whom he has rebelled. He finds a willing audience in those easily misled: despite the presentation of better ideas, the devils unthinkingly follow Satan's suggestions or have no opinions at all when it comes to making a major decision.

Fourth, the reason why so many scholars have been so fascinated by Satan no doubt lies in the honest conversations Satan holds with himself and in which he reveals himself as the conflicted creature he really is. In these soliloquies, Satan not only demonstrates his ability to identify his mistakes and faults but also shows his knowledge about good and evil and about the motives that govern his choices. In fact, Satan, who is already a fallen creature, shows that he has a conscience that bothers him and that he has to quiet to proceed with the temptation. Even though in his confrontation with Abdiel he insists that the devils were "self-begot, self-rais'd / By [their] own quick'ning power" (PL 5.860-61), to himself he admits that God is his creator and that it was his, Satan's, "Pride and worse Ambition [that] threw [him] down" (4.40) because of his desire for superiority above all others. Wishing to repent, yet realizing that he would just fall again and the next time even lower, Satan talks himself out of repentance and submission to God, stating that "all Good to [him] is lost" and ultimately embracing evil as his good. His first observations about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden show him as a creature torn between his attraction to the first humans and his desire to cause a fatal change in their condition. Equally, while his pleasure in observing Eve overcomes his evil desires so completely that Milton describes him as "for the time . . . / Stupidly good" (9.464-65), Satan nevertheless allows his "Fierce hate" and "thoughts / Of mischief" (9.471-72) to emerge again quickly, thus enabling him to get on with the task of the temptation.

Satan's soliloquies clearly show the inner turmoil of the fallen Satan, who, once having made the decision to oppose God, seems to find no rest. Through his own inner conflicts, Satan demonstrates the fierce struggle between good and evil that exists in the soul of all humans. When he initiates the Fall, Satan passes on these inner struggles to the human race, which, like the Lady, will see itself forced into the usage of free will to make the choice for one or the other. The fact that Satan does engage in so much reflection about his condition and his motives make him a character with which, to a point, one can identify. What makes Satan different from humans and what causes him to be ultimately so deeply evil is his conscious choice to deny the mercy of the Son and to engage in evil with his eyes wide open to the consequences.

Milton brings the description of Satan's deceptive character to a climax right before the temptation, when he uses a powerful simile which he shortly describes in Comus, but which he applies in full force in Paradise Lost. At the moment when Eve abdicates her power of decision making and allows Satan to "Lead then" (9.631), Milton likens the hopeful and joyful tempter to the "wandring Fire" (9.634), or the swamp fire,

> Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends
> Hovering and blazing with delusive Light
> Mislead[ing] th' amaz'd Night-wanderer from his way
> To Boggs and Mires, and oft through Pond or Poole,
> There swallow'd up and lost, from succor far,
> So glister'd the dire Snake, and into fraud
> Led Eve our credulous Mother, to the Tree. (9.638-45)

Satan's identification with a misleading swamp fire stands in direct relation to his previous role as Lucifer, the light-bearer, who was filled with divine and therefore truthful light, which led to God, not away from Him. The fallen Satan, in contrast, perverts his role as light-bearer when he takes on the role of the "delusive Light" and, incapable now to show the way to God, leads his willing victim to places from which there is no return. That Eve is compared to an "amaz'd Night-wanderer" indicates that she will become lost "in the maze of delusive experience" (Swaim 131) and shows her ignorance of and gullibility for attractions that are heretofore unknown to her. Eve indeed wanders in the night of her own ignorance and will become "amazed" – or "bewildered, perplexed, confused" ("Maze") – when she arrives at the tree. The simile, then, is an expression of both Eve's and Satan's characters as well as of their future actions, placed by Milton at that crucial moment when the temptation turns into a disaster for Eve.

Satan's abilities as tempter, then, show his experience and cunning and stand in definite contrast to Eve's innocence and ignorance. As Miller writes, Eve in the Garden is the unsophisticated, innocent country beauty, an easy target for Satan, who, as the sophisticated cosmopolitan (123), plans well, persuades well, and carries through successfully. To pursue his goal of destroying God's chosen race, Satan decides to work on Eve in three stages, slowly exposing her to the ideas of disobeying the one divine command that will have the most devastating consequences. In the initial stage, Satan plants the ideas of eating the forbidden fruit and of acquiring knowledge and self-elevation in Eve's head by means of a dream. Next, as the serpent, he deceives Eve with the tale of his own transformation into a speaking and thinking individual, who, as a

result of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, has risen in the chain of being. Having turned Eve's subconscious attention to the delectable fruit, Satan, at the tree, finally engages his abilities as an orator to bring the unsuspecting Eve into compliance with his wishes. It is thus by subliminal suggestions, pretended acquisition of reasoning and knowledge, and skillful argument that Satan wins the battle over Eve, using the principles of modeling and repetition to weaken her resistance.

As Madsen points out (164), Eve's temptation has its beginning when Satan first "[squats] like a Toad, close at the ear of Eve" (PL 4.800), attempting to fill her mind with illusions and dreams that are meant to lead to "distemperd, discontented thoughts, / Vaine hopes, vaine aimes, inordinate desires / Blown up with high conceits ingendring pride" (4.807-09). Some scholars have argued that the dream reveals Eve's sinfulness long before the actual temptation occurs and thus shows her to be "Eve the Temptress, the Mother of Evil, the leak in the sealed bliss of Eden" (Petty 44). Eve, however, is not the one who is the perpetrator of wrongdoing at this moment. Rather, it is Satan who actively perpetrates "Illusions . . . Phantasms and Dreams" (PL 4.803) while Eve, unable to reject them in her sleep, passively receives and later recalls them. It must also be remembered that Eve is used to listening to the outer voices of God, angels, and Adam, all of which she has obeyed so far. Her limited experience coupled with her obedience to voices and the lack of control she has over her subconscious mind at the time of the dream makes Eve vulnerable to Satan's "Devilish art" (4.801) with which the tempter lays the foundation for the later temptation.

According to Freud, dreams in classical antiquity were divided into "vain, fraudulent and empty dreams" and "true and valuable dreams" (5). While the former

were seen as ways to misguide the dreamer and to send him or her into destruction, the latter were regarded as inspirations sent by either gods or demons and served the special purpose of predicting the future and giving warnings to the dreamer (4-5). Eve's dream fits into both categories even though in the second category, the interpretation must be applied with caution. On the one hand, as her subconscious accepts the suggestions made in the dream, Eve eventually is misguided into eating the fruit, leading to the destruction of her prelapsarian life. On the other hand, the dream, which indeed comes from a demon, predicts Eve's future at least partially with accuracy because it foreshadows the temptation at the tree. But instead of fulfilling the role of being completely "true and valuable" to Eve, the dream mixes truth with lies because the future it predicts is based on the deception that Eve will gain knowledge, superiority, and god-hood through the fruit. To Eve, the dream could also be a warning of what is ahead even though a warning, according to Petty, cannot be Satan's intent (43-44). Rather than employing the dream as a warning, Satan in his role as demonic toad uses the dream as a means with which to introduce the idea of disobedience to Eve. Eve, Satan hopes, will see the dream as a foreshadowing of the future and will direct her mind favorably towards the transgression.

As Diane McColley suggests, the dream has a positive aspect because it can be seen as an opportunity for both Adam and Eve to be exposed to evil and "to experience [it] without doing evil" ("Eve's Dream" 28). The dream thus could have served as the means with which to prevent the fall, had Adam and Eve used it as a teaching tool to learn about the reality of evil and how to avoid it when confronted by it (28). While the dream indeed could have served as a "trial run" for the inexperienced Eve (Lewalski

102), it is used for a different purpose by the scheming Satan. Instead of becoming a learning tool for Adam and Eve, the dream serves as a powerful instrument for the tempter to infiltrate Eve's subconscious mind and to suggest ideas to her that fertilize her mind rather than warn her of what the future holds. The dream thus becomes an invitation, rather than a warning, creating subliminal images in Eve's mind that will be familiar to her later.

It is possible to see, through Freudian interpretation, Eve's dream as a wish fulfillment (Freud 33-43), revealing the woman's inner ambitious desires, which are allowed to exist only subconsciously while consciously Eve plays the role of the dutiful wife. It is also possible to argue, with Irene Samuel, that the dream "was induced by Satan . . . but produced by Eve's own mind" (9), thus making Eve responsible for the ideas in the dream. However, Eve's short life, which has not exposed her to *any* ideas other than God's through Adam, does not allow for such views. Rather, it is obvious that the ideas Satan tries to generate within Eve are reminiscent of those that brought about the tempter's own fall. They indicate that Satan is trying to project his own arrogant pride and desire for superiority onto Eve, hoping that she, just like him, will experience a fall that will drive her out of the Garden of Eden, just as he has been driven out of heaven. Eve will then become his follower, not in the sense that she voluntarily follows Satan as the devils do, but that she follows him in a fall the consequences of which she as well as her descendants will have to suffer their entire lives. By causing God's race to be expelled from the Garden of Eden, Satan will thus gain his revenge on God, who will punish Himself by "[abolishing] his own works" (PL 2.370).

With the illusions in the dream, Satan accomplishes a number of objectives, all focused on doubt, desire, and perversion. He perverts Eve's position as the mother of all living; creates doubts in her concerning the creator and his command not to eat the fruit; distorts the acquisition of knowledge as a means to become like God; models how to taste the fruit; and tempts Eve with the hope for a debased superiority. Eve's role as the mother of all living is significant not only because Eve will initiate the human race, but also because the birth-giving process and the raising of children require sacrifice, unselfishness, and turning to others and away from oneself. If Satan can pervert this role and make her focus on selfishness and self-centeredness, he has succeeded in distracting Eve from one of her future roles and has created doubt about its significance. Satan, then, uses images of the night, which promise a "pleasant time" (PL 5.38), a time of love, but also a time in which shadows, and with them deception, prevail. Like Comus, Satan engages in flattery, appealing to Eve's vanity when he calls her "Natures desire" (5.46) and when he makes subtle suggestions to the sexual desires that "all things" (5.47) experience when they gaze at Eve. Like Comus, Satan refers to Eve's body as a commodity upon which "all things," not just rich people, should have the opportunity to gaze. Satan thus distorts Eve's role as the future "Mother of all living," turning it into the role of "the desire of all things," whether alive or not, and thereby suggesting that the lively role Eve will play as a mother is replaced by an abstract, almost immoral concept. In addition, Satan suggests that Eve should find fulfillment in the twisted sexual ravishment Satan's world requires rather than in appropriate "wedded Love" (4.750) that would lead her to her role as mother of humankind.

To erode Eve's confidence in God and in herself further, Satan casts doubt on the creator, who forbids eating the fruit of knowledge of good and evil, and presents instead the desire for knowledge as a means to "make Gods of Men" (PL 5.70). Knowledge of good and evil and knowledge to gain superiority are as distinct from each other as God is from Satan because one provides protection from evil while the other promotes undeserved elevation as a result of evil. In his argument, Satan, then, develops the image of an envious God who forbids consumption of the fruit not because He wants to spare Adam and Eve sorrow and death but because He wants to remain superior in knowledge and would be jealous if His creations had His knowledge. Portraying God as a small-minded individual whom he, Satan, certainly will not obey, diminishes the creator in Eve's eyes, encouraging disobedience because a creator with such faults as envy does not need to be obeyed.

In the final thrust of Eve's temptation in the dream, Satan models the impulsive consumption of the fruit and creates the illusion of elevation for Eve, an elevation that reveals Satan as a cheap imitator and falsifier of high, divine principles. Satan's quick plucking and tasting of the fruit is meant to create in Eve a visual image and a sense of impulsiveness that will readily be available in her mind when the actual temptation takes place. Eve indeed later uses her "rash hand" (PL 9.780) to pluck and eat, just as Satan has primed her to do in the dream. As a result of Satan's example and the sensory overload the tempter creates in his victim, Eve, as she later confesses to Adam, "[can]not but taste" the fruit in the dream (5.86), a deed that catapults her high into the clouds with Satan, who has promised her the status of Goddess among Gods. Eve's "high exaltation" (5.90), however, is a false imitation of what it really is like to be among the gods. Rather

than representing a superiority of creation, care, and goodness, which would truly exalt Eve, Eve's superiority simply consists of a physical elevation that has no purpose other than to take her breath away as if she were in a ride at the fair. As Empson states, "What Eve means by becoming a God . . . is quite specific; she means becoming able to do space-travel, like the modest angels whom she habitually hears singing" (154). Eve's exaltation as suggested in the dream, then, consists of trivial activities, all of which are self-centered and meaningless. Interestingly, the dream foreshadows one important, truthful aspect of the temptation: just as Eve's guide is suddenly gone in the dream, causing her to sink down as in a fall and wake up, so Satan as serpent slinks back into the thicket after the temptation is accomplished, leaving Eve to fall and eventually to wake up to the realities of a fallen life. While Eve during and after the dream remains sinless, the idea of possible superiority above Adam has successfully been implanted in her mind and returns to her after the Fall when she has to decide whether to make her mortal change known to Adam. The dream for Satan thus fulfills the vital function of challenging divinely established criteria for Eve's sinless life in the Garden and plants into Eve's "Organs of . . . Fancie" (PL 4.802) perverted ideas like damaged seeds that will come to fruition later on in the temptation.

In the second stage of Eve's temptation, Satan, now in the body of the serpent, accelerates his deception by creating a tale about his own transformation from mute to speaking and reasoning beast. As Mackin states, "Traditionally, the power of speech was equated with reason and thus formed the chief distinction between man and beast in the scale of existence" (37). When Satan pretends to have acquired speech as a serpent, then, he also pretends to have achieved for the beast the ability to think critically and the right

to be heard by those he addresses. Satan's objective, of course, is to portray the fruit as the means by which he achieved "Reason in my inward Powers, and Speech" (PL 9.599). Eve indicates that she understands that speech distinguishes man from beast when she, "not unamaz'd" (9.552), remarks" "Language of Man pronounc't / By Tongue of Brute, and human sense exprest? / The first at lest of these I thought denie'd / To Beasts" (9.553-56). Eve's amazement, coupled with curiosity and the question, "How cam'st thou speakable of mute" (9.563), leads the woman to invite the serpent to explain the sudden change from mute to speaking beast, opening the way for her to receive and internalize, once again, Satan's suggestions about eating the fruit. Satan as serpent, meanwhile, engages in general babble about how his sudden acquisition of speech and reason have led him to "Speculations high or deep" (9.601), making him look like a deep thinker when, in reality, he is just a liar. His arguments, however, are convincing to Eve because not only is she *not* trained to detect and reject lies and flattery but she also believes that Satan's ability to speak is his own best evidence. So skillful is his description of how he acquired this "Strange alteration" (9.599), brought about by "tasting those fair Apples" (9.585), that even the reader has to struggle to remember that Satan is engaging in a lie.

The tale at once reinforces and enlarges the images and ideas Satan has already planted in Eve's mind by means of the dream. When Satan begins his tale at the tree, his second appeal to Eve's vanity is successful because "Into the Heart of Eve his words made way" (PL 9.550). This time, however, Satan attempts to create an even more expansive vision of Eve's beauty when he refers to her as "Celestial Beauty" (9.540) and as the "Fairest resemblance of [her] Maker faire" (9.538), who is "universally admir'd"

(9.542). Likewise, he again alludes to Eve's possible position of superiority as "A Goddess among Gods" (9.547), but this position is now made even more important by the adoration and service of "Angels numberless, [her] daily train" (9.548). With these superlatives, all based on superficialities and easily accepted by the now aspiring Eve, Satan tries to create the idea that ever higher positions can be achieved in the hierarchies of beauty, power, and superiority.

To demonstrate further the idea of superiority, Satan uses his own purported existence as talking and reasoning serpent as an example of how one might rise in the chain of being. Thus he describes himself as a beast who initially was "of abject thoughts and low" (PL 9.572) that "apprehended nothing high" (9.574). Only when he wound himself high into the tree, an act that required "utmost reach" (9.591) and that elevated him above all the other beasts who wanted to but could not reach as high, was he able to pluck and eat and thus change his low position. Satan's descriptions of the lowly serpent in the tree as well as his usage of that serpent to tempt Eve are a far cry from the "exalted" images Milton has previously developed of the fallen Satan. Nevertheless, Satan will do anything, including condescending into the body of a subtle beast, to get Eve to eat the fruit. After all, he implies, if a lowly beast like the serpent can acquire language like a human after eating the fruit, then Eve also can rise up to become a goddess after consuming that same fruit.

A final important aspect of Satan's tale is the repetitious modeling of what the tempter considers desirable behavior, in this case the impulsive plucking and eating of the fruit. In the dream, Satan implanted in Eve's mind visual, if hazy, images of a "wing'd one of those from Heav'n" (PL 5.55) – in other words, an image of his own distorted and

therefore misleading self – who modeled eating the fruit when he "paus'd not" and "pluckt" and "tasted" quickly (5.64-65). In Satan's tale of transformation, the tempter produces in Eve's mind those same images by means of oral suggestions, using this time a beast that, just like a beast with unbridled appetite, tries "To satisfie the sharp desire" (9.584) the fruit supposedly produces to portray how one might pluck and eat in the same impulsive fashion. Each time, the consumer of the fruit is so overcome by the fruit's deliciousness that no self-discipline is applied to restrain the appetite. Rather, by repeated modeling, Satan makes a special effort to instill in Eve the idea that the fruit is irresistible, hoping to create that same desire to reach, pluck, and eat without thinking. Paradoxically, Satan, who has on several occasions promised Eve elevation to god-hood, now reduces Eve to the level of a lowly beast who has no self-control and thus indulges just like an animal. His modeling is effective: when Eve finally eats the fruit, she "Greedily . . . ingorg[es] without restraint" (9.791), demonstrating that same animal-like behavior Satan has repeatedly modeled by means of visual images and oral suggestions.

At the tree, Satan begins the boldest and most passionate part of the temptation. Having prepared Eve carefully by repetition and modeling, he now rises up "As . . . of old som Orator renound" (PL 9.670) and according to Musacchio, sets up four major points to convince Eve of the moral correctness of the choice he wants her to make (157). Satan's arguments are based on the premise that he as serpent ate the fruit and thereby gained speech and reason, a lie that Eve cannot detect because of her ignorance of evil and her limited reasoning powers. Eve thus accepts Satan's premise as true and falls for the fallacy of an argument which "[s]uggest[s], from fraudulent confusion of general and particular, that the improbable is probable" (Lanham 169). While the reader, then, can

detect and refute Satan's arguments, Eve is not capable of seeing the underlying falsehoods presented to her. As a result, Satan's words "Into her heart too easie entrance [win]" (PL 9.734), making her an easy victim of the skillful orator.

According to Musacchio, Satan first claims that "God is consistent." If He did not cause the snake to die after it ate the fruit, He will also not cause Eve's death (157). This argument is partially true because God is indeed consistent as exemplified by Satan's own expulsion from heaven. What is not true, however, and what Eve does not know is that the serpent did not *not* die because God spared its life. Rather, the serpent is still alive because it never ate the fruit. Next, after minimizing the act of disobedience, Satan suggests that "the end justifies the means" (157). Eve, who by now strongly desires superiority and knowledge, will "[achieve] what might leade / To happier life, knowledge of Good and Evil" (PL 9.696-97). This point, which is another example of Satan's consistent attempts to implant into Eve's head the desire for superiority and thus a happier life, is based on the previous argument that happiness will come because Eve will not die. In reality, Eve, after transgressing, will die, and because neither sin nor death constitutes a happier life, her life will not give her a sense of superiority. Third, Satan indicates that "God is just" and will not hurt Eve, and if He is not just, he does not need to be obeyed (Musacchio 158). With the third point, Satan, as he has done before, questions the creator's integrity, once again diminishing God in Eve's mind and making her believe that there will be no punishment after eating the fruit. God, however, is just and He will punish Eve and therefore must be obeyed, if the consequences of eating the fruit are to be avoided. Finally, Satan states, God "does not deny man any of His good creations," so why should He deny Eve the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and

evil? (158). The good creations in the Garden, however, do not include this particular fruit, and therefore the fruit should be avoided. It takes reasoning power and with it knowledge of good and evil to detect the flaws in Satan's argument, and unfortunately, Eve possesses neither.

To make Satan's argument even more persuasive, Milton uses appropriate rhetorical devices with which he identifies Satan's style of speech. As Broadbent writes in "Milton's Rhetoric," Milton was the "last great practitioner" of narrative, lyrical, and dramatic rhetoric on a grand scale, using rhetorical schemes and tropes throughout his poetry to create special effects and meaning (224). Even though these schemes and tropes during Elizabethan times were not meant to be a means for interpretations and analyses but rather a way to write a speech or poem (224), Milton's rhetorical devices nevertheless can be used to analyze main points in Satan's argument. As Broadbent explains, "[Satan's] rhetoric tends to question-begging *parison* and *traductio* and especially to *aporia* (affected doubt); his figures flicker with suspicious speed, sentences wind with serpentine ease" (232). Obviously, these devices portray Satan's character as questioning, doubt-creating, and deceiving tempter. In addition, Milton uses anaphora, chiasmus, and understatement, among others, in Satan's speech at the tree to allow the seducer to pursue his two strongest arguments, that in Eve's eyes God must be diminished while Eve must be elevated. Satan's contempt for God is best shown when he assures Eve that

ye shall not Die.

How should ye? By the Fruit? it gives you life

To Knowledge. By the Threatner? Look on mee,

Mee who have touch'd and tasted, yet both live

And Life more perfet have attaind then Fate

Meant mee, by venturing higher then my Lot. (PL 685-88)

The anaphora "by the Fruit?" and "by the Threatner?" at once creates emphasis through repetitive questioning, making clear the connection between the forbidden fruit and the one who forbids its consumption, and casts doubt on God by questioning His authority and power. Satan, who, it must always be remembered, is lying, again presents himself as his own effective evidence to show that death does not kill and the fruit does bring ascension to a higher state. With the usage of another anaphora, again in the form of questions that create doubt, Satan once more reduces God to a narrow-minded, grudging individual who has forbidden the fruit for only one reason: "Why but to awe, / Why but to keep ye low and ignorant" (9.703-04). The simultaneous repetition and questioning of the anaphora lead to a chipping away at God's role as superior being while at the same time giving Eve the pompous idea that she can achieve superior status by disobeying. Milton strengthens the arguments just mentioned by means of a chiasmus and an understatement that this time demean not only the creator but also his command: "God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just; / Not just, not God; not feard then, nor obeyd" (9.700-01). The usage of this chiasmus, which in its reversal and shortness focuses the attention on what God is, namely just, negating both God and just at the same time, is meant to lead Eve from a denial of God's justice to a refusal of obedience exactly because of God's implied injustice. In addition, the understatement "petty Trespass" (9.693) when a sin of tremendous consequences is at stake completely brushes off the creator's command as one of insignificance.

What ultimately is on Satan's mind is expressed in the oxymoron the tempter uses right at the moment when he encourages Eve to "reach then, and freely taste" (PL 9.733). While throughout the temptation scene Satan has consistently addressed Eve as an almost divine personage, trying to flatter her and win her over, he now stumbles over what might be called a slip of the tongue. The phrase "Goddess humane" (9.733) shows that Satan's subconscious has at this moment gained the upper hand and is revealing the tempter's real intentions, namely his attempts to cause Eve's fall to mortal woman rather than her elevation to divine goddess. At the same time, the phrase makes clear that Satan is becoming less cautious simply because he is convinced that he has Eve at the point when she will eat the fruit. This sudden change in address from "fair Angelic Eve" (5.74), "Sole Wonder" (9.533), and "Goddess among Gods" (9.547) to "Goddess humane" indicates a semantic fall and should have been noticed by Eve. Instead of being alerted, however, Eve, whose ignorance of Satan's deception prevents her from understanding his guile, sees Satan's argument as cohesive and coherent and accepts his "perswasive words" which are, to her, "impregn'd / With Reason . . . and with Truth" (9.737-38).

Eve, in fact, finishes Satan's argument for him, reasoning in Satan's vein of argument, rationalizing the eating of the fruit and even acknowledging the authority of Satan as "Author unsuspect" who is "friendly to man, farr from deceit or guile" (PL 9.771-72) and thus superior to God. So completely has Eve accepted Satan's arguments that she, just like Satan, who previously addressed the tree, begins her musing by addressing the fruit and thus turns her worship from a God who promises life to an object that contains the seeds of death. The similarities to Satan's argument are evident: Eve acknowledges the fruit's beneficial powers over those of its creator's; questions and

diminishes God; confirms Satan's lie that the fruit gave the tempter speech, reason, and continued life, using them as evidence to support her own argument; expresses her outrage that what is allowed to and benefits the beast is not allowed to her; and finally, convinces herself that the fruit of knowledge of good and evil is the "Cure of all" (9.776). As Giamatti explains, Eve is not able "to tell the difference between what seems and what is," just as "S[1]he cannot tell whether what she feels" – and, one might add, what she sees, hears, and reasons – "is true or not" (341). Eve, indeed, suffers "Under this ignorance of good and Evil" (PL 9.774) because she is incapable of distinguishing good from evil, truth from deception, reality from appearance, and Satan from the serpent. Thus Satan's desired moment finally comes when, as a result of skillful argument, supplemented by Eve's, "she pluck[s], she eat[s]" (9.781). Miller explains what an understatement Eve's final action of plucking and eating is:

> Ravening death and foul digestion, the banquet with Raphael, the Platonic lecture on digestive ascension, the myriad references to food, appetite, nourishment, poison, and temperance, add an astonishing richness to Eve's first bite. Milton's preparation for the fall has been so thorough that the reader is unprepared. The understatement itself is appalling. We have come 7,501 lines for these four words. (128-29)

The fall has been initiated; Satan as serpent "Back to the Thicket [slinks]" (PL 9.784). It is only a matter of time until Adam finishes the fall "Against his better knowledge, not deceav'd" (9.998).

To understand why the temptation of Eve is successful, it is important to realize the profound contrast between the evil of the tempter and the innocence of the woman

who is tempted. Not only is Satan evil himself but he also has the capacity to multiply the elements of his evil nature, as is evident from his depraved relationship with Sin and Death. Satan's evil powers from early on become so strong that he produces Sin, who originates from his rebellious thought and therefore springs out of his head and who produces with the tempter in incestuous intercourse a "formidable shape," Death (PL 2.649), who later has power over all of fallen humankind. In their relationship to each other, Satan, Sin, and Death form a trinity of evil in which the first tempts to do evil, the second produces evil, and the third becomes the horrid consequence of the initial evil committed by Adam and Eve. As a counterfeit of the godhead itself, the three therefore have the potential of wielding a power that, even though ultimately not as mighty as that of the godhead, brings misery to all humans during their mortal lives.

While showing cowardice in choosing Adam and Eve as his means to seek revenge on God, Satan himself demonstrates by his choice of Eve that he is capable of evaluating accurately the inexperienced woman who easily opens her mind to his ideas. In his entire plan to cause the Fall of that "new Race call'd Man" (PL 2.348), Satan shows his great, if perverted, skills through his abilities to plan, deceive, move, change shape, flatter, persuade, and create appetite, aspirations, and arrogance. Satan as tempter, then, is as absolute in his evil as his creator is in his good, representing a foe so superior that the newly created Eve is simply no match for him.

In contrast to Satan, Eve, with her ignorance of and inexperience with good and evil, her undeveloped conscience, and her willingness to obey others, exists on the other end of the spectrum, that of untested goodness. Made of Adam's rib and thus lacking an individualized creation and personality, Eve is carefully placed under the guidance and

protection of Adam, who has been given by God a Garden which reflects in its external nature "the essential harmony and purity of [Adam's and Eve's] nature" (Giamatti 299). What is more, Eve is explicitly forbidden by God to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, protecting her from a knowledge that would have saved her when confronted by the tempter. While Milton at times alludes to the existence of evil in the Garden, this evil is far removed from the deviousness, subtleness, and viciousness with which Satan operates. As a result, Eve is unacquainted with evil, untested by it, and unable to distinguish and choose between what is good – and thus beneficial to her – and what is bad – and thus disadvantageous to her. Because Eve, unlike the Lady, does not call internalized teachings her own, she cannot judge the tempter's ideas against a value system of her own. The success of the temptation thus depends on how easily Eve opens her mind to the tempter, how quickly she submits to his influence, and how effectively she allows him to change her thoughts. That she does all the above, and rather quickly, is as important for the success of her temptation as are Satan's skills as tempter.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

As the comparison between the two temptations shows, Milton, while giving Satan and Comus different origins and thus different reasons for tempting their victims, also gave them a number of similarities that prove the close relationship between the two tempters. Isolated places, female victims, missing family members, effective oratory, deception, lies, flattery, appeals to vanity, selfishness, and self-indulgence, denial of the Creator's power, worship of nature, allusions to and usage of the body of the snake – all are elements of both temptations, and all indicate that the tempters have equal skills and that they tempt according to the rules of a fallen world. Comus resembles the Lady in that he is a fixed character who does not engage in moral self-reflection and who does not undergo changes. Satan, of course, is the result of Milton's later years, created at a time when the poet must have had more insights into the complexity of human nature, enabling him to develop a tempter who is insightful and purposefully evil and therefore more vibrant and attractive than Comus. Despite the similarities between the tempters and the temptations, Comus fails and Satan succeeds because it is not only the skills of the tempters that influence the outcomes of the temptations but also the responses of the women. Both women show how one's state of existence and one's life in a fallen or unfallen environment contribute, or fail to contribute, to a moral development that makes it possible to detect and reject tempting offers and to judge consequences accurately. The women's responses to their tempters demonstrate the importance of knowing the challenges of a fallen world, which brings with it the knowledge of good and evil and a

determination to become a morally strong person who can successfully make difficult choices and resist tempting offers to avoid negative consequences.

Comus is unsuccessful with his temptation because, as was shown, the Lady exists on a higher moral, social, and intellectual level than he does and as such represents the teachings of Milton's Puritan society. With the Lady's argument, which is based on high ideals and strict compliance to these ideals, Milton expresses his own, highly individualized Puritan principles. His demand for purity in Biblical doctrine and for a god-appointed church government and his call for high standards in education exemplify these high principles. In addition, Milton's emphasis on the Lady's inner strengths rather than her outer beauty shows his belief that reliance on one's own moral compass by far surpasses acknowledgement by others whose acceptance might change from day to day. "Appearances and surfaces" (Fish, How Milton Works 31), then, are irrelevant, even dangerous, to Milton because they lead to superficial lives and the inability to stay one's course when needed. The Lady does not suffer from superficiality; rather, she relies on her inner voice and successfully resists the temptation.

It is exactly the "appearances and surfaces" and the lack of a conscience that so plague the inexperienced Eve. Adam – as well as Milton – consistently refers to her outer beauty and overlooks her inner qualities like kindness, unselfishness, intelligence, and desire to learn. Even the animals are attracted to her outer beauty and gaze at her while grazing and playing near her. While Adam takes the opportunity to gain knowledge and actively engages in discussions with the angel Raphael, Eve is denied such opportunities and remains the passive object of the gazes of Adam and the angel as well as the narrator and the readers. No emphasis is placed on Eve's inner development

and even less on her acquisition of knowledge. When Adam calls her "of inward less exact" (PL 8.539), he makes reference to Eve's undeveloped cognitive and moral powers. As the OED reveals, to be "exact" as related to persons means to "be characterized by accuracy of knowledge" ("Exact"). Adam is right: Eve by no means possesses this exactness. Newly created, clearly isolated in the Garden of Eden, and obviously denied a development of intellect, character, and conscience, Eve has to rely on the guidance of outer voices, of which Satan eventually becomes one. Despite her God-given right to exercise her free will, Eve eventually simply succumbs because she lacks the qualities that make the Lady successful in resisting her temptation.

Most importantly, it is the knowledge of good and evil that either helps or hinders the women in their replies and reactions to the tempters. That the Lady possesses this knowledge and that she applies it in her best interest is undisputed. In contrast to the Lady's experienced dealing with temptation, Adam and Eve have to learn the principles of proper decision making after the fall. Adam's and Eve's initial knowledge of good and evil changes their thoughts and behavior, creating lust, deceit, guilt, and a number of other negative emotions, all indicators that this newly acquired knowledge centers at first on them and not on their decision-making ability. It will take time and repeated application of their free will to learn how to choose what God or their society requires of them, but it will be well worth it. Eventually, the knowledge of good and evil will lead them to a morality in behavior that is unavailable in the Garden yet superior because it takes into consideration not only the self but also the community as a whole. Thus, had Eve possessed this knowledge and the resulting high moral standards, she would have thought beyond herself and of the future of all humankind. Instead, Eve's lack of

knowledge of good and evil leads her to notice only the immediate charm and flattery of the tempter and her own greed for the fruit, not the real intent behind the carefully set-up temptation. She therefore does not possess the moral judgment she needs to resist Satan. Eve, then, is hindered in her response to the tempter precisely because she does not have what she needs to avoid the Fall, namely the knowledge of good and evil.

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