

## ***Paradise Lost* and the Cultural Genetics of Shame, Remorse, and Guilt**

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innocence, that as a veil  
Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone,  
Just confidence, and native righteousness,  
And honour from about them, naked left  
To guilty shame.

*Paradise Lost* 9.1054-58

### ***Abstract***

The impact of shame, guilt, and remorse on the culture of seventeenth-century England is apparent in the literature of the time. The social construction of these emotions lies heavily within the Catholic and then Protestant churches and arises largely from congregants' fears of punishment. Throughout the century preceding Milton, clergy, natural philosophers, and even social scientists like Thomas Hobbes demonstrate the social origins of these emotions. For Milton, however, these emotions begin with Adam and Eve before the Fall. They are inherent attributes meant to serve for protection against temptation and sin and for justification of God's ways. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton not only demonstrates the wide range of meaning these terms suggest, but he also posits a system of understanding that allows for some social construction of shame and guilt as an appendage to Adam and Eve's inherent shame, guilt, and prelapsarian knowledge of good and evil.

### ***Keywords***

Shame, guilt, remorse, fear, Milton, Hobbes, repentance, Satan, Rochester, inherent, Catholic, Protestant

A careful reading of *Paradise Lost* reveals that Milton imbued Adam and Eve with an inherent knowledge that protected them against temptation, a knowledge that helps Adam to recognize evil when Eve describes her dream “of evil sprung” (5.99). This inherent knowledge also allows Eve to feel remorse, an emotion often linked to feelings of shame and guilt. In this regard, shame shares a place in Adam and Eve’s inherent knowledge of good and evil. Milton posits these not only as essential and innate qualities in every fallen human being, but also as something with which God preprogrammed man and woman in the beginning in order to make them “just and right / Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall” (3.98-99).<sup>1</sup>

The implication that Milton’s Adam and Eve possessed this inherent knowledge contradicts most modern theoretical and critical arguments that shame is strictly a social construct, but even more important is that an inherent sense of shame also contradicts many of the philosophical discussions of Milton’s period, for many seventeenth-century philosophers like Thomas Hobbes argue that shame is solely a social construct. From the church to natural philosophers, the root of shame and the understanding of good and evil were in a state of flux. Many poets, philosophers, and clergy used shame as a tactic to identify and help shape the moral climate of early modern England, but it is with Milton that readers find the clearest definition of what shame is, should be, or, more precisely, where it comes from and how much it affects the idea that men and women are created “just and right / Sufficient to have stood.” Milton demonstrates that, despite the clear connections of shame and guilt to the social sphere, there is an inherent sense of conscience, a preprogrammed sense of shame and remorse, that arms man and woman with the ability to choose right from wrong.

The involvement of the church in the social construction of

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<sup>1</sup> Though specific references to shame, guilt, and remorse permeate Milton’s epic, there has been little scholarly attention paid to the cultural meaning of these terms and how Milton intended their use in *Paradise Lost* before the fall. Additionally, no scholarly attention of which I am aware has been paid to the idea that Adam and Eve possessed any such emotions inherently.

shame complicates matters. Before shame, even before knowing good and evil, one must fear God. In the beginning, “the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17).<sup>2</sup> Essentially, one of the first directions God gives Adam and Eve in the garden is framed as a threat, and they are taught from their births to fear their creator. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton makes it clear that Adam and Eve do not know “whate’er death is / Some dreadful thing no doubt” (4.425-26), so fear may not necessarily be the best means for social control in Milton’s paradise. However, for centuries, the Catholic Church had used this very means in the form of a doctrine that for reformers and Protestants had no scriptural foundation: purgatory.

Stephen Greenblatt demonstrates that the Catholic Church’s exploitation of this doctrinal belief becomes “essential to [their] institutional structure, authority, and power” (14). The fear of purgatory spread throughout Europe and England in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. It manifested in sermons, paintings, and everyday life through masses and prayers performed on behalf of the deceased until the Catholic Church had imbedded the idea so deeply into the culture that there are still clear manifestations of the indulgences associated with it in *Paradise Lost*, more than 150 years after the initial organization of the Church of England. Milton’s allusion is to those “who hope through superstitious means to pass disguised into paradise ... [but] a violent wind sweeps these deluded imposters off their feet and blows them into the ‘devious air’” (Greenblatt 38):

then might ye see  
Cows, hoods and habits, with their wearers tossed  
And fluttered into rags, then relics, beads,  
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,  
The sport of winds: all these upwhirled aloft  
Fly o’er the backside of the world far off  
Into limbo large and broad, since called  
The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown

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<sup>2</sup> All references to the bible are from the King James Version (Authorized Version of 1611).

Long after, now unpeopled, and untrod.  
(PL 3.489-97)

For Greenblatt, this is “all that remains of the elaborate cult of the dead, and what was once a massive, imposing realm has been transmuted into a comic limbo” (38).

To be sure, if one were to identify cases of humor in Milton, though darksome, this is definitely a case of it. For example, for the reference to papal mandates, Fowler cites Wycliffe’s *Grete Sentence* 16 to point out that since Wycliffe, “reformers had inveighed against those who ‘magnifyen the popis bulle more than the gospel’” (197; 492, note 3). Besides the bull, we have the “sport of winds” and “the backside of the world”—humor meant to belittle the once flourishing practices. Fowler also reminds readers that the “sale of *Indulgences* was the immediate occasion of the Reformation” (197; 492, note 1). For reformers, Protestants, and especially Milton, these practices no doubt were reminders of biblical warnings: “Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and *their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men*” (Isa. 29:13, italics mine).

This fear that is “taught by the precept of men” plays an important social role for an important contemporary with Milton, Thomas Hobbes. His *Leviathan* is an “Artificiall Man” (Hobbes 9) or deity to which men and women submit their liberty and will as one does to God. Because Hobbes’s shame is only a social construct, it is not enough to motivate man or maintain social control: “Therefore before the names of Just, and Unjust can have place, there must be some coercive Power, to compell men equally to the performance of their Covenants, by the terrour of some punishment, greater than the benefit they expect by the breach of their covenant [...] and such power there is none before the erection of a Common-wealth” (79-80). Only the fear of punishment (e.g. “in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”) can generate social control and force men to obey laws. Hobbes’s words suggest something further, that a motivation of fear prior to the commonwealth is irrelevant: “such power there is *none* before the erection of a Common-wealth” (italics mine). For believers in God and *his* laws and punishment, like Milton, Hobbes hints that only the fear of punishment by a manmade government

(fear taught by the precept of men) can compel men and women to obey, not a fear of God—perhaps another reason why Hobbes was often vehemently accused of atheism. Interestingly, the reader does not encounter a manifest fear of physical punishment in Adam and Eve other than their contemplation of death. Raphael, however, in a final warning at the close of Book 6, which is also the close of his relation of the fall of Satan and his angels, does encourage them to fear:

Let it profit thee to have heard  
By terrible example the reward  
Of disobedience; firm they might have stood,  
Yet fell; remember, and *fear* to transgress.  
(PL 6.909-12, italics mine)

This fear, however, is not taught by men. In *De Doctrina Christiana* Milton addresses fear in its relation to shame and guilt:

guiltiness; which though in its primary sense it is an imputation made by God to us, yet it is also [...] a commencement or prelude of death dwelling in us, by which we are held as by a bond, and rendered subject to condemnation and punishment. Gen. 3:7, “the eyes of them both were open, and they knew they were naked.” [...] Guiltiness, accordingly is accompanied or followed by terrors of conscience [...] whence arises shame.  
(1192)

Guilt for doing wrong leads to fear (terrors of conscience), which gives way to shame.

As Greenblatt shows, the medieval and early Renaissance Catholic Church had no place for shame. Theirs was a “cult of fear” meant “to undermine psychological security, to prevent any serene contemplation of one’s own death or that of one’s loved ones, to make the stomach churn and the hair stand on end, to provoke fear” (68, 70). And like Hobbes’s idealized use of fear, this fear served a purpose: “terror of purgation that lies ahead is an essential agent of moral restraint as well as an inducement to the pious acceptance of tribulation” (Greenblatt 71). In the end, the fear instilled by the Catholic doctrine of purgatory served only as a

means to control, a will to power.

Moving out of the cult of fear into the Reformation and Protestant dominance of England, one finds that the church is different, but most tactics to encourage moral restraint remain the same. Hobbes's push for fear as a means of social control takes a back seat to his relativism regarding good and evil, a philosophy abhorred by this new religious power. For Hobbes, meaning was never clear. At the heart of his state of nature where men and women engage in perpetual war stands the inability for those same men and women to agree on any one concept or meaning. Hobbes argues that this instability of meaning comes from the fact that the "words of Good, Evill, and Contemptible, are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: There being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any common Rule of Good and Evill, to be taken from the nature of the objects themselves" (32). What one decides is good, then, depends greatly on what one desires: "Of the voluntary acts of every man, the object is some *Good to himselfe*" (74). When men and women begin to judge what is good based upon pleasure, since there is no such thing as good or evil except their own definitions, then there is no such thing as guilt or shame except for what men and women define as such.

Additionally, for Hobbes, men and women are born with what Locke would later call *tabula rasa*, the idea that men and women are not born with any preconceived ideas or notions of rules (e.g. "Rule of Good and Evill") but that such rules are acquired through experience:

There is no other act of man's mind, that I can remember, naturally planted in him, so as to need no other thing to the exercise of it but to be born a man, and live with the use of his five senses. Those other faculties [...] which seem proper to man only, are acquired and increased by study and industry, and of most men learned by instruction and discipline, and proceed all from the *invention* of words and speech. For besides sense, and thoughts, and the train of thoughts, the mind of man has no other motion; though by the help of speech, and method, the same faculties may be improved to such a height as to distinguish men from all other living creatures.

(Hobbes 23, italics mine)

In other words, without the “invention of words and speech,” men and women never would have learned “by study and industry [...] by instruction and discipline” how to live as humans rather than as animals, and therefore, men and women would not know the difference between right and wrong, which are for Hobbes complete social constructions. Men and women would therefore not know shame, which is the result of choosing contrary to what society deems good or honorable. Therefore, Hobbes may well have said, the “words of Good, Evill, and [Shame] are ever used with relation to the person that useth them” (32). Hobbes further clarifies the social construction of good and evil, which will bring honor or shame respectively (depending on what those men and women involved have decided is good or evil, right or wrong), as “names that signifie our Appetites, and Aversions; which in different tempers, customes, and doctrines of men, are different: And divers men, differ not onely in their Judgement [...] but also of what is conformable, or disagreeable to Reason” (87). Hobbes clearly argues that there is no inherent meaning of good and evil, neither an inherent knowledge or understanding of good and evil, since any knowledge only comes “by study and industry [...] by instruction and discipline.” Men and women either learn for themselves what is good and evil by their appetites or aversions *or* their understanding of these arbitrary words is taught by others who have already decided what is good and evil. Considering Hobbes’s argument and his determinism, it is not surprising that “to be identified as a follower of Hobbes was to be identified as an atheist and a lecher, at least for some period of time in the second half of the seventeenth century” and that it was important “to distance oneself from his name” (Rogers 189). Much later in *The Leviathan* Hobbes further argues for the arbitrary nature of good and evil by

Men [who] judge the Goodnesse, or Wickednesse of their own, and of other mens actions, of the actions of the Common-wealth it self, by their own Passions; and no man calleth Good of Evill but that which is so in his eyes, without any regard at all to the Publique Laws; except only Monks, and Friars, that are bound by Vow to that simple obedience to their Superiour, to which every Subject ought

to think himself bound by the Law of Nature to the Civill  
Soveraign. And this private measure of Good, is a  
Doctrine, not onely Vain, but also Pernicious to the  
Publique State.

(Hobbes 241)

For Hobbes, outside of a commonwealth, man's decision about what is good is dangerous to the commonwealth because every man and woman believes in a different good, depending on his or her own passions. Therefore, what is good, according to the law, is something that is imposed by the commonwealth upon all men and women, and is also decided arbitrarily and by consent. It is this good that men and women need to obey.

For Milton, on the other hand, morality was not arbitrary but instead a system of right and wrong handed down from God and based upon the human condition. In the Garden of Eden, only a few commandments sufficed—till the ground, multiply, and do not eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—but humankind would soon need more commandments after the Fall to give men and women the moral road back to God. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton's God planted within men and women the seed of understanding, even an inherent knowledge of good and evil and the ability to feel remorse, shame, and guilt. This great fictional account of the Fall demonstrates the effects of these emotions, which Milton weaves into multiple layers meant to "justify the ways of God to men" (1.26).

I say *emotions* because this is the usual name under which shame and guilt are classified psychologically. Though a modern study of shame and guilt, psychologists June Price Tangney and Ronda L. Dearing's book *Shame and Guilt* lends insight to the mind of a man or woman experiencing shame. Tangney and Dearing classify shame and guilt as specific emotions (not much different from what early-modern English call the passions). They are "both 'self-conscious' and 'moral' emotions: self-conscious in that they involve the self evaluating the self, and moral in that they presumably play a key role in fostering moral behavior" (2). Citing other studies and their own research, within the concept shame Tangney and Dearing find pain and anger at oneself that is sometimes so intense "that the individual may feel 'overwhelmed and paralyzed' [...] by it" (92). This build up of emotion necessitates a release. Tangney

and Dearing offer two paths that people who feel this pain follow in order to attempt to cope with or contain this hateful emotion” (92). First, to withdraw: “research has consistently shown that feelings of shame are often associated with a desire to hide or escape” (92). Think Adam and Eve in the Garden after partaking of the forbidden fruit and looking to hide their nakedness.

The importance, then, of recognizing shame and guilt as emotions helps the reader to identify that Milton has attributed recognizable human emotions to gods and angels in *Paradise Lost* (DuRocher). This makes emotion in the epic that much more important, which is necessary to understand, as Richard J. DuRocher pointed out, that prior to the eighteenth century there was no clear secular view of feelings. Everything was founded in religion or spirituality, including shame. In other words, though Milton’s characters are fictional, it does not mean that those characters are not imbued with emotions with which Milton himself was familiar—i.e., shame, guilt, and remorse.

Each of these emotions enters the epic early with the first major soliloquy. Milton drops the reader into the narration immediately following Satan’s fall, and it does not take long for Satan to reveal his feelings. Like the typical epic hero, Satan wears his emotions on his sleeve, perhaps a warning to bridle our passions. In Book 4, we find Satan pondering his state in a tone of regret, even pondering the chance to recover his pre-fallen state:

O thou that with surpassing glory crowned,  
Lookst from thy sole dominion like the God  
Of this new world; at whose sight all the stars  
Hide their diminished heads; to thee I call,  
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name  
Oh sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams  
That bring to my remembrance from what state  
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere;  
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down  
Warring in heaven against heaven’s matchless king:  
Ah wherefore! He deserved no such return  
From me, whom he created what I was  
In that bright eminence, and with his good  
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.  
(PL 4.32-45)

Satan sounds remorseful, a feeling which often follows shame and guilt. First, Satan speaks to the sun: "Oh sun, [...] how I hate thy beams" (4.37). Satan's apostrophe to the sun reveals his feelings toward the Son (of God), "with surpassing glory crowned" and later "God-like." Here Satan alludes to the reason for his fall, a reason which Raphael later relates to Adam. When the Father proclaims,

This day I have begot whom I declare  
My onely Son, and on this holy Hill  
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold  
At my right hand; your head I him appoint;  
(*PL* 5.603-06)

"All seemd well pleased, all seemed, but were not all" (5.617)  
because

Satan, so call him now, his former name  
Is heard no more in Heav'n; he of the first,  
If not the first Arch-Angel, great in Power,  
In favour and in pre-eminence, yet fraught  
With envy against the Son of God.  
(*PL* 5.658-62)

If it wasn't clear before now, the reader understands envy as the grounds for Satan's fall, on which Satan himself elaborates. He hates the sun's beams because they "bring to my remembrance from what state / I fell" (4.38-39). Satan then confesses his sin: "Till pride and worse ambition threw me down" (4.40).

His ambition is not on trial, but his "worse" ambition. This emotion is shame. In his study of moral identity in early modern England, Paul Cefalu describes shame in terms of English Protestant theology: "shame inspires grudging and partial acknowledgment of a moral lapse" (20). Satan acknowledges grudgingly his moral lapse, but whether he concedes that those morals are worthy of his obedience is debatable. However, in her insightful comparison of Adam's Book 10 soliloquy and Satan's soliloquy here, Diana Trevino Benet, describes this soliloquy as a "spiritual deliberation," and argues that Satan has an "involuntary

attraction to goodness” (2, 3).<sup>3</sup> In addition, “Satan’s extended moral struggle belongs with the admirable qualities he sometimes exhibits, actions and attributes that serve the poem’s thematic contrast between epic and true, Christian Heroism” (3-4). So the reason for Satan’s grudging acknowledgement comes down to his own understanding of good: “his fall has not entirely vitiated his moral nature” (4). But Satan more than grudgingly acknowledges his fault. He is angry. He *hates* the sun’s beams. “Shamed people are apt to feel they are getting a raw deal from those perceived ‘disapproving others’ who have ostensibly caused their experience of shame. [...] In this way, the imagery of a disapproving other may contribute to the shift from shame to outwardly directed anger” (Tangney and Dearing 94). Satan feels shame for his actions, but knows that he cannot do anything to recover them. He has few choices when filled with the pain of this intense emotion. He decides to lash out in anger, all but outright blaming the sun for his misery begotten by his own actions. Satan’s shame results from willful rebellion against God, a clear moral lapse.

A more careful consideration of this terminology in Satan’s emotional soliloquy and to what extent Milton uses it in *Paradise Lost* reveals much more. Remorse is “a feeling of compunction, or of deep regret and repentance, for a sin or wrong committed” (*OED*). Satan, at first, does not appear to feel any remorse for that sin which caused his fall. Though he proclaims, “he deserved no such return from me [...] nor was his service hard” (4.42, 45), he still speaks out in anger and therefore lacks “deep regret and repentance.” He does not go so far as to repent and ask for

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<sup>3</sup> Benet speaks mainly to conscience or more specifically “evil conscience” which “forces the sinners to understand their transgressions” (2). This conscience, then, comes to men and women, and here to Satan, after their falls. It is a product of sin, meant to move the sinner to repentance. However, there is some cause to consider a prelapsarian conscience: “Conscience is ‘of a divine nature,’ William Perkins wrote, ‘and is a thing placed by God in the midst betweene him and man, as an arbitrator to give sentence and to pronounce either with man or against man unto God’ [...] conscience is direct communication from the deity” (7). This direct communication would come more readily to those not stained with sin and, therefore, those not unworthy to stand in the presence of God: Adam and Eve.

forgiveness, though his own words suggest he at least considers it: "is there no place / Left for repentance, none for pardon left? / None left but by submission" (4.79-81). Satan refuses repentance because he refuses to submit to the authority of God and that authority which God has bestowed on the Son. But that is not to suggest that Satan's remorse will not continue living in him too.

One finds in Bishop Joseph Hall's *Remaining Works*, published after his death, a refutation "that there is no hell but remorse" in a list of "hellish heresies [...] which have poysoned the very air of our Church wherein they were vented" (161-62).<sup>4</sup> There is no question for Hall that remorse is a hell within one's own conscience; however, he refutes the idea that beyond remorse of conscience the physical hell does not exist. Milton, likewise, presents readers both hells. At the beginning of *Paradise Lost*, we find Satan embracing his new station while in the physical hell:

thou profoundest Hell  
Receive thy new Possessor: One who brings  
The mind not to be changed by Place or Time.  
The mind is its own place, and in it self  
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.  
(*PL* 1.251-55)

Here we see that "the damned mind cannot make a Heaven of Hell, though the reverse may be true" (Flannagan 362, note 94). Milton later reveals that "within him Hell / He brings" (4.20-21), and Satan also proclaims later in his soliloquy, "Which way I fly is

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<sup>4</sup> Hall lists among those heresies what sounds like references to specific people or peoples: "One beats the keys into the sword, or hangs them at the Magistrates girdle; so as he suspends religion upon the meer will and pleasure of severaignty: One allowes plurality, or community of Wives; another allows a man to divorce that wife he hath upon sleight occasions, and to take another: One is a Ranter, another is a Seeker, a third is a Shaker: One dares question, yea disparage the sacred Scriptures of God; another denies the Souls immortality, a third the Bodies resurrection: One spits his poyson upon the blessed Trinity; another blasphemes the Lord Jesus, and opposes the eternity of his Godhead; One is altogether for inspirations, professing himself above the sphere of all Ordinances, yea above the blood of Christ himself" (161-62).

Hell; my self am Hell” (4.75). These lines demonstrate the level of Satan’s remorse in accordance with Hall—connotations with which Milton was likely familiar. However, throughout *Paradise Lost*, Milton more often portrays Hell and Paradise as states of mind—the seat of these emotions. Additionally, when talking about Satan, sin, and the resultant shame, guilt, and remorse, Richard Hooker’s explanation in *The Fifth Book* of his posthumously published *Ecclesiastical Polity* is especially revealing of Satan’s mindset: “We our selves do many more things amiss than well, and the fruit of our own ill-doing is remorse” (287). Satan feels some semblance of remorse throughout *Paradise Lost*. From “me miserable” (4.73) to “Oh foul descent!” (9.163), his misery and what often reads as regret—“He deserved no such return / From me” (4.42-43)—is all the fruit of his “own ill-doing.”

Satan’s emotions saturate Milton’s epic, emotions most often begotten from his anger and misery. He also has no trouble admitting his guilt, but does he feel guilty? Satan’s own arguments reveal a subjective guilt, especially when he debates Abdiel:

That we were formed then sayst thou? And the work  
Of secondary hands, by task transferred  
From Father to his Son? Strange point and new!  
Doctrine which we would know whence learned: who saw  
When this creation was? Rememberst thou  
Thy making, while the maker gave thee being?  
We know no time when wee were not as now;  
Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised  
By our own quickening power.

(PL 5.853-61)

Satan’s rebellion, by his “worse ambition,” has clouded his judgment. Milton works here from a long tradition that God created the universe and all things within it. Therefore, God created Satan. Remnants of this belief are found scattered throughout the scriptures, but it is perhaps most succinctly stated by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215: “Diabolis enim et alii daemons a Deo quidem natura creati sunt boni, sed ipsi per se facti sunt mali.” I like H.J. Schroeder’s English translation: “The devil and other demons were created by God naturally good, but they became evil by their own doing.” This serves as a reminder that

shortly after his fall perhaps “Satan retains spiritual clarity and the ability to exercise free will in the choice between good and evil” because “his fall has not entirely vitiated his moral nature” (Benet 4). Satan can still feel the good. He is not that far removed from that state from which he fell. In the world Milton has created, the reader understands that Satan is certainly not self-begot. It is impossible because, for Milton, nothing exists without God, and all things were created good. Satan refuses to acknowledge it, refuses to give allegiance to his creator against whom he has sinned. If he can convince himself and his followers that they are indeed self-begot, there is no accountability and no allegiance to God. However, the remorse Satan carries with him denies him that justification. Again, “He deserved no such return / From me, *whom he created*” (4.42, 45, italics mine).

Satan does not forget how he came into being, nor does he forget to whom he owes allegiance. There is definite guilt: “the fact of having committed, or of being guilty of, some specified or implied offence” (*OED*). Satan understands his offence completely. Like Satan’s example, “the Christian tradition holds that guilt represents both the sinner’s inherited, ontological status (the guilt of original sin) and an occurrent emotion that follows acts of disobedience against divine, natural, and scriptural law” (Cefalu 17). Cefalu relies on Paul Ricoeur to understand that “the experience of guilt depends on self-recognition” (17). For Ricoeur, “in very general terms, guilt designates the *subjective* moment in fault as sin is its *ontological* moment. Sin designates the real situation of man before God, whatever consciousness he may have of it” (101). Satan sins before the world was. Man did not yet exist, neither did original sin in the terms understood by men and women in the seventeenth century; therefore, the angels knew neither sin nor rebellion until Satan begot sin by his rebellion. Satan then freely admits his guilt for the sin of “pride and worse ambition” (4.40), which led to his fall. This is his “self-recognition,” and that recognition, according to Ricoeur, equates to guilt. At the same time, he has, and knows he has, acted “against divine, natural [...] law” (Cefalu 17). It is that law that, for Milton, God has nurtured from the beginning, a law inherent in every creation, even in the

devils, who were created “naturally good.”<sup>5</sup> Because that law is inherent, Satan’s guilt begets his remorse because it has weighed on his conscience—an expression of his feeling guilty: “Of the conscience, mind, etc.: Laden with guilt, haunted by the recollection of crime” (*OED*).

Throughout his soliloquy, Satan laments his fallen state, or more accurately, the state from which he has fallen, “bright eminence” (4.44). It weighs heavily on his conscience because of his “own ill-doing.” However, it becomes unclear whether Satan feels guilty for what he has done to God (disobedience and willful rebellion) or for what he has lost as a result, i.e. whether he feels sorry for himself. Satan proclaims

He deserved no such return  
From me, whom he created what I was  
In that bright eminence, and with his good  
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.  
(*PL* 4.42-45)

Satan recognizes that God created him naturally good and that he clearly owes allegiance to his creator. He feels guilty for what he has done as much as he feels sorrow for what he has lost, no less. This makes Satan’s emotions even more complicated. Of his emotions, or passions, the one constantly in the forefront and specifically mentioned is his shame. Satan feels shame for different reasons on different occasions. That shame is often “the painful emotion arising from the consciousness of something dishonouring, ridiculous, or indecorous in one’s own conduct or circumstances (or in those of others whose honour or disgrace one regards as one’s own), or of being in a situation which offends one’s sense of modesty or decency” (*OED*). Edmund Spenser offers a personified version of this shame in the *Faerie Queene* when Mammon leads Guyon into his lair, which is peopled with many other unsavory emotions: “Lamenting Sorrow did in darknesse lye, And Shame his ugly face did hide from living eye” (2.7.22). Spenser’s words remind the reader that “feelings of shame are

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<sup>5</sup> This is also a reminder that though Milton is writing a poem and not a system of divinity or theology, *Paradise Lost* is based on an established theology, which we can find in Milton’s *De doctrina Christiana*.

often associated with a desire to hide or escape” (Tangney and Dearing 92). Milton, at times, personifies shame in Satan, though Satan only hides his face in order to disguise himself. His misery, which follows him throughout *Paradise Lost* and which makes whatever way he flies Hell, is his “painful emotion arising from the consciousness of something dishonouring.” This shame takes into account both inward (“the consciousness of something dishonouring [...] in one’s own conduct”) and outward (“or in those of others”) forces. Further, the phrase *one’s sense of modesty* reveals a sense of Hobbes’s relativism, for Satan’s sense of modesty, no doubt, greatly differs from that of most men.

During his soliloquy, Satan specifically uses the word *shame* after he ponders repentance:

Is there no place  
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?  
None left but by submission and that word  
Disdain forbids me and my dread of shame  
Among the spirits beneath whom I seduced  
With other promises and other vaunts  
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue  
The Omnipotent.  
(*PL* 4.79-86)

Repentance, here, recalls remorse. However, the reader already knows that Satan cannot repent and that Satan understands that too. For one, “that word / Disdain forbids” (4.82) him. This is not the first occurrence of this word from Satan’s mouth. It first appears in a speech Satan gives to Beelzebub following another reference to repentance when he speaks about their great loss in heaven to an unexpected power:

till then who knew  
The force of those dire Arms? yet not for those,  
Nor what the Potent Victor in his rage  
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,  
Thought changed in outward luster; that fixed mind  
And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,  
That with the mightiest raised me to contend.  
(*PL* 1.93-99)

Despite his loss, despite whatever else “the Potent Victor” can inflict, despite his changed “outward luster,” Satan will not repent. He disdains repentance. But there is a significant difference between its use in Book 4 and its use in Book 1, especially in earlier versions of *Paradise Lost*. In the 1667 version, and in many early subsequent versions, the word *Disdain* is “italicized as a proper name” (Fowler 219-20). Fowler also points out that in Book 4 it “has the force of the Ital. *sdegno* – ‘scorn, contempt for what is base, unbecoming to an angel and a gentleman’” (219-20). This adds insight to the *OED* definition for *disdain*: “the feeling entertained towards that which one thinks unworthy of notice or beneath one’s dignity; scorn, contempt.” The comparison of what the *OED* gives as a definition contemporary to Milton and what Fowler points out in the Italian *sdegno*, further establishes Satan’s corrupted sense of morality. He is no longer an angel—the reader understands this from the sense of *sdegno*—at least not in the heavenly sense. Also, he is not a gentleman in that the same sense. Satan, as an antithetical type to the Son, always seeks the opposite of what is good. Therefore, in this case, his version of *disdain* is not “contempt for what is base” but for anything opposed to it: good, high class, etc.

The reader encounters Satan’s antithetical nature throughout *Paradise Lost*. First, we know that he seeks to “make a heaven of hell” (1.255). Again, Hell is not necessarily a place but what Satan brings with himself. And by the end of Satan’s soliloquy, he proclaims, “All good to me is lost; / Evil be thou my good” (4.109-10). Milton has established a pattern with Satan that makes his meaning tricky. The reader cannot rely on conventional meanings in many of the key words Satan speaks, especially when Satan’s good is evil. One cannot help but read Hobbes in Satan’s use of good and evil—“ever used with relation to the person that useth them” (Hobbes 32). Though Satan does not do so explicitly, one can argue that he has taken the Hobbesian view of good and evil as his motto. In fact, Stephen Fallon identifies Satan and his followers as “disciples of Hobbes” (224). But it is not just the corruption of good that Satan adopts by the end of his soliloquy. Because there is “no place / Left for repentance, none for pardon left” (4.79-80), Satan abandons hope and refuses to feel remorse any longer: “farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear, / Farewell

remorse: all good to me is lost; / Evil be thou my good" (4.108-110). As Satan proclaims in Book 1, repentance is to be disdained, "unworthy of notice or beneath [his] dignity" (*OED*). He proclaims the same in Book 4; however, not only does disdain now forbid him, but also does his "dread of shame." Satan flattered many of his followers away by denouncing submission to God, calling it a "yoke" (5.786); therefore, his repentance and submission now would bring shame according to his newfound morals, making him "conscious of something dishonouring [...] in his own conduct" (*shame*, *OED*), dishonoring to those whom he has led away. Because of his sin and because of the position in which he has placed himself, Satan has no choice but to bid farewell to hope and remorse and to harden himself even more and accept his place. What better way than to make evil his good?

Shortly after Satan's soliloquy, the reader sees Eden and its inhabitants through Satan's eyes. The description of Adam and Eve addresses their nakedness relative to shame: "Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed, / Then was not guilty shame, dishonest shame / Of natures works" (4.312-14). Roy Flannagan explains that "Milton takes the innocent nudity of Adam as being incapable of shame and he takes shame as a product of the Fall" (452, note 95).<sup>6</sup> I agree with Flannagan to a point, but shame does exist before the Fall on some level. Also, Flannagan does not speak to the symbolic nature of that shame. Shame here is more than an outward sense of one's own nakedness; it is the idea that one's soul is naked before God. He can see Adam's sin no matter what he uses to try to cover it.

This view of shame is comparable to what Christopher Harvey refers to in his *Schola Cordis*. It is also a shame comparable to what Satan feels. In Emblem 15, titled "Cordis humiliatio" or "The Humiliation of the Heart," Harvey quotes Ecclesiastes 7:9: "The patient in spirit is better then the proud in spirit" (61).<sup>7</sup> Satan is not patient, ever anxious to combat God in some way and to exalt himself, and readers know that his sin has involved pride. Harvey's

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<sup>6</sup> For Stanley Fish, "Adam and Eve share neither [shame nor guilt] until they fall in Book IX" (130).

<sup>7</sup> Harvey's full title is especially revealing of his work: *Schola cordis, or, The Heart of It Selfe, Gone Away from God Brought Back Again to Him & Instructed by Him in 47 Emblems*.

epigram adds further insight: "Mine heart, alas, exalts it self too high, / And doth delight a loftier pitch to flye" (lines 1-2). This equates to Satan's "pride and worse ambition" (4.40). In the emblem, a penitent, prayerful address to the Lord follows, where the speaker admits his pride: "And my swoll'n thoughts doth raise / Above themselves, untill the sense of shame makes me contemne my self-dishonour'd name" (lines 29-30). It is the speaker's self-acknowledged pride that makes him feel shame, and just so Satan's self-acknowledged pride does the same. This is the shame that Flannagan points out Adam will feel after the Fall. This leads us to "the consciousness of this emotion [shame], guilty feeling; also, the right perception of what is improper or disgraceful" (*shame*, *OED*). Again, according to Hobbes, the "perception of what is improper" will always depend on the individual, but that does not mean that for Milton (and certainly for the world he created in *Paradise Lost*) God has not declared "what is improper or disgraceful" One cannot say with any certainty that Satan feels this specific shame because no one knows what he regarded as his own pre-fallen sense of modesty or decency. However, like all of God's creations, he was created good, and the tone in his apostrophe to the sun certainly suggests he overstepped that sense of decency:

He deserved no such return  
From me, whom he created what I was  
In that bright eminence, and with his good  
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.  
(*PL* 4.42-45)

Further, "unlike guilt, which derives from a sense of transgressing moral or legal rules and precepts, and can be alleviated through reparation, the experience of shame is often intractable: it follows not simply from a moral lapse, but from a sense of an abiding defect in one's public character" (Cefalu 17). Therefore, to find Satan troubled by his own remorse, seemingly ashamed by a realization of his own guilt for having transgressed and fallen, may come as a surprise considering his reputation, but a much larger surprise looms.

When Eve wakes up at the beginning of Book 5 in *Paradise Lost*, she is troubled by a vivid dream. She describes it to Adam, who decides that these temptations and desires stem from evil and

proclaims that he cannot approve of a dream “of evil sprung”:

Yet evil whence? In thee can harbor none,  
Created pure [...]  
.....  
Evil into the mind of God or man  
May come and go, [...]  
Which gives me hope  
That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,  
Waking thou never wilt consent to do.  
(*PL* 5.97-100, 117-21)

What evil? Adam consciously uses a word whose meaning he cannot possibly understand. He and Eve have not partaken of the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. One can certainly attempt to reconcile the contradiction by speculating that God or an angel taught him that disobedience equated to evil. But since neither the biblical text nor Milton’s text confirms that, the reader must acknowledge that Milton has placed within his characters a basic, inherent understanding of good and evil. Adam and Eve know that they are not to partake of the fruit. To obey God, their creator and father, is “good,” and to disobey him is “evil.” This is the same understanding that Lucifer has before his fall, and later as Satan it is this knowledge that causes his shameful regret because, as all things, he was created good.

In his discussion of Barbara Lewalski’s essay “Innocence and Experience in Milton’s Eden,” Paul Cefalu disagrees with her invocation of “Socratic ethics in order to describe Adam’s realization that he should seek to acquire practical knowledge, rather than cosmological knowledge” (170). This, of course, refers in part to Raphael’s warning to Adam when he contemplates and inquires about the heavens:

Joy thou  
In what He gives to thee: this Paradise  
And thy fair Eve. Heav’n is for thee too high  
To know what passes there. Be lowly wise:  
Think only what concerns thee and thy being.  
Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there  
Live in what state, condition or degree,

Contented that thus far hath been revealed  
Not of earth only but of highest Heav'n.  
(PL 8.170-78)

Knowledge of the heavens is not useful, especially for one's salvation. However, Cefalu argues that

a commitment to learning useful knowledge is not a sufficient condition for Socratic virtue, which denies incontinence and requires objective knowledge of good and evil. If Adam and Eve possessed such objective knowledge of good and evil in Eden, then what point would the tree of knowledge and the Fall possibly serve?"  
(170)

Cefalu makes a strong case, but he does not address Adam's proclamation that Eve's dream is evil. To understand evil covers Adam's practical knowledge and at once goes beyond it. Adam and Eve know not to partake of the fruit, "sole command / Sole pledge of his obedience" (3.94-95); that much perhaps they know is evil, but consciously to use the word suggests an understanding beyond that "sole command." And even though one cannot ultimately conclude whether Adam's knowledge of good and evil is objective, at this point, an inherent understanding of evil is the only explanation for his recognizing evil.

God alludes to this inherent understanding in Book 3 when he foretells of Satan's success in tempting man to fall:

For Man will hearken to his glozing lies,  
And easily transgress the sole Command  
Sole pledge of his obedience: So will fall  
He and his faithless Progeny: whose fault?  
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me  
All he could have; I made him just and right  
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.  
(PL 3.93-99)

The reader must keep in mind that this use of the word *man* equates to the use found in Genesis: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female

created he them" (Gen. 1:27). God has endowed man with everything he needs to stand against Satan and his temptations. Additionally, these lines present a paradox when God the Father says "Man will hearken to his glozing lies." In the biblical account, when the serpent tempts Eve, he says that she "shall not surely die" but be "as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5). Eve does not die, at least not immediately, and she indeed gains knowledge. Therefore, Satan does not necessarily lie, at least not in her eyes.

The modifier *glozing* adds another dimension. According to the *OED*, the verb *gloze* means "to talk smoothly and speciously; to use fair words or flattering language; to fawn." Additionally, the *OED* defines the noun as "Flattery, deceit; an instance of this, a flattering speech" and the gerund as "a. The action of glossing or commenting; exposition, interpretation. [...] b. The action of glossing or explaining away; extenuation, palliation." *Extenuation* and *palliation* suggest "representing something as trifling" and "concealing something"<sup>8</sup> respectively. Often a lie both makes something a trifle and conceals something (deceives) at the same time—wherein lies flattery. In this simple phrase *glozing lies*, the reader finds all the tools Satan uses to tempt: deception, flattery, trifling, concealing, lying. Each one of these tricks might be grounds for excusing Eve.

The questions of who is to blame or who should feel shame are now placed in the hands of critics, who have debated for years about who is responsible for the Fall, or at the very least, whom Milton makes more responsible. Stella P. Revard sums up many of these arguments. A. J. A. Waldock blames circumstance, while others, like Dennis Burden, charge Adam, who, as Revard paraphrases, "by permitting Eve to go forth alone, creates the climate for her fall" (69). Revard then asks, "Does Milton wish us to see Adam morally as well as accidentally involved in Eve's fall?" (69). But in the words Milton gives the Father, "whose fault? / Whose but his own?" (3.96-97), he leaves open no further interpretation. Man has no excuse and no one else to blame, especially since the Father "made him just and right" (3.98). Even before he sends Raphael "to render man inexcusable" (Argument,

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<sup>8</sup> See *gloze* in *OED*, definitions 5 and 1.

Book 3), the Father has built a strong case against man's disobedience: he has the commandment, "sole pledge of his obedience" (3.95); there is no fault but man's own and no one to blame but himself; and since he is "just and right," the reader cannot help but see an innate understanding of right and wrong.

Although Revard makes no reference to an innate understanding, she agrees that Milton "is more likely to refer to the couple as the guilty pair than to dispute upon the division of guilt" (69), and though Milton does provide some qualification for their fall, "Man falls deceived / By the other first" (3.130-31), "this does not remove from man the responsibility for his action [...] man must recognize that he freely chose to fall" (70). Man is responsible for his own actions, and though created "just and right," knowing good from evil, he is still free to choose one or the other. Therefore, his shame is his own. Adam, however, refuses to believe that the evil he recognizes stems from Eve, and he seeks to blame another source.

The story continues, and the initial tension of the dream subsides, but with it, the reader's own careful scrutiny should not. Eve's reaction to Adam's words of comfort strikes a familiar chord: "and she was cheered, / But silently a gentle tear let fall / From either eye, and wiped them with her hair" (5.129-31). Though Adam exonerates Eve, she sheds tears. A key word follows a few lines later:

Two other precious drops that ready stood,  
Each in their crystal sluice, he ere they fell  
Kissed as the gracious signs of sweet *remorse*  
And pious awe, that feared to have offended.  
(PL 5.132-35, italics mine)

These tears are a sign of remorse, but more specifically "*gracious* signs of *sweet* remorse" (5.134, italics mine). For the narrator, perhaps the poet himself, remorse is good—a God-given attribute intended to keep humankind on the right path. If those tears, then, are a sign of it, Eve feels remorse ("deep regret") and shame (per *OED*'s "the consciousness of something dishonouring [...] in one's own conduct"), which contradict Flannagan's suggestion that for Milton shame is "a product of the Fall" (492, note 95). However, one must then reconcile when Adam suggests to Eve that they

“cover round / Those middle parts, that this *newcomer, shame,* / There sit not, and reproach us as unclean” (9.1096-98, italics mine). Either the reader must accept here that the newcomer Adam speaks of is the knowledge or recognition of shame or that Milton inadvertently implanted this emotion in Eve. The emphasis Milton gives shame—surrounding it in commas—suggests a third possibility: the shame of actually committing sin. Whereas Eve feels shame for her dreams, the shame Adam and Eve intend to cover in Book 9 refers specifically to shame that results from their actions.

With the result of Eve’s feeling shame and remorse before the Fall, the reader now must acknowledge two ideas that contrast Adam’s and Eve’s individual prelapsarian condition in the Garden. The idea that remorse could exist before the Fall is hardly conceivable. Yet Eve feels remorse and shame for something (evil) that Adam says could not have come from her. It suggests at the very least that Eve *believes* that the desire to partake the fruit lies within her. At this point, rather than lash out in anger or shift blame (she knows of no one to blame), Eve withdraws into herself, and her shame for committing such an action, though in her sleep, manifests itself in tears of remorse. Remorse brings sorrow for one’s action as well as for the actions of others. When Raphael begins to relate the war in heaven, he pauses and then asks, “how shall I relate [...] without remorse the ruin of so many glorious once / And perfect while they stood [...] ?” (5.564-68). This sorrow also plagues Eve, and her sorrowful tears are concomitant with those of Mary Magdalene in Marvell’s “Eyes and Tears”: “Two tears, which sorrow long did weigh / Within the scales of either eye” (lines 9-10). Both add to a long tradition of sorrowful, remorseful tears in Protestant literature.<sup>9</sup> Though Mary does not weep for specific sins, she weeps at the feet of the crucified Christ: “To fetter her Redeemer’s feet” (line 32). This sorrow symbolizes sorrow one feels for sins. Consider the words of the Apostle Paul:

For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with

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<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of “The literature of tears,” see Strier’s “Herbert and Tears.”

Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in  
me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the  
faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself  
for me.

(Gal. 2:18-20)

When the sinner recognizes fault in his or her life, he or she is crucified with Christ because that man or woman feels sorrow for Christ's death, which makes life possible. Eve does not yet know the Christ, but she knows that sorrow, that remorse for acting contrary to God's commandments, a remorse that must be inherent if she feels it now.

By line 135 of Book 5, "all was cleared." But it was not. Eve's tearful remorse suggests the hint of inner pain, that same emotional pain inherent to shame, no doubt taking place in "The organs of her fancy" (4.802). We now see that Milton did not only present gods and angels with real human emotions, but he has given such emotions to Adam and Eve, especially at this juncture. Perhaps Satan inspired the dream through his whisperings,<sup>10</sup> but he could not have inspired Eve's desire to partake the fruit. It smells like a desperate attempt to save honor, to remove shame, by placing the blame on someone else, i.e. "The Devil made me do it." Certainly the Devil did not make Eve partake of the fruit, but again, Milton suggests an inherent sense of conscience, a preprogrammed sense of shame and remorse that arms man or woman with the ability to choose right from wrong. This prelapsarian or inherent understanding of shame manifests itself again in Adam's warning to Eve shortly before Satan tempts her:

But other doubt possesses me, lest harm  
Befall thee severed from me; for thou knowst  
What hath been warned us, what malicious foe  
Envyng our happiness, and of his own  
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and *shame*  
By sly assault

(PL 9.251-56, italics mine)

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<sup>10</sup> Ithuriel finds Satan "Squat like a toad, close at [her] ear [...] / Assaying by his Devilish art to reach / The organs of her fancy, and with them forge / Illusions as he list, Phantasms and Dreams" (4.800-03).

In an almost prophetic proclamation, Adam foreshadows the shame he and Eve will feel when they fall. Only a preconception of shame can anticipate what it feels like.

Eve and Adam's apparently innate ability to discern good and evil to some extent, and therefore to feel remorse and shame, contrasts Hobbesian philosophy, that shame and guilt are complete social constructions, and it also reminds the reader that shame or guilt existed long before the earliest "social constructions." From the biblical account of the Fall, as in *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve hide themselves from God because they were naked. Their shame of nakedness existed only because of their remorse for their transgressions—as Adam says of their transgression, it "leaves us naked thus, of honour void" (9.1074). Other than Satan, no one else was present in the Garden of Eden who could have caused Adam and Eve to feel the shame for their nakedness, symbolic of the shame or guilt they feel for sin, especially since God had yet to arrive on the scene to confront them. One finds the idea, too, in Milton's early poetry. In "The Nativity Ode" we read of Christ's triumph over sin and death and also his triumph over pagan idols, torn down and abolished at his coming. But before this great triumph, the reader finds an abbreviated story of the Fall and Eve's state immediately following when she attempts "To hide her guilty front with innocent Snow, / And on her naked shame, / Pollute[ed] with sinfull blame" (lines 39-41). Again, we find Adam and Eve as the only inhabitants of Eden. Here we have the argument that they have partaken of the fruit, so they now possess a sense of shame, but there is still no society, no one around to construct that shame. Such shame was constructed under the direction of God's commandment. The only difference in understanding they possess after the Fall may be that they can correlate the feeling with a word, *shame*, and a meaning, "the consciousness of something dishonouring [...] in one's own conduct" (*OED*). For B. A. Wright, "that shame is the final consequence of sin and implies the first and comprehensive penalty, which is death" (62). At this point, hiding themselves from God and feeling shame for their nakedness symbolizes that spiritual death, death being the ultimate separation from God.

Shortly after Adam assures Eve that the evil she encountered in her dream could not come from her, Eve's dream receives no more

treatment. Yet the images of that dream are recalled when Satan, disguised as the serpent, begins to tempt Eve into partaking of the forbidden fruit. The most interesting development of the entire temptation sequence is that despite the fact that Milton has her describe the dream so vividly and with so much concern to Adam that she sheds tears over it, Milton never mentions the actual occurrence; even a dream that gave her “damp horror chilled” (5.65) when she watched the stranger partake of the forbidden fruit with “such bold words vouched with a deed so bold” (5.66). Despite this inherent fear of transgression (even seeing someone else partake of the fruit chills her), Eve simply moves in a perfunctory manner as if predestined to do so. But Milton, though he believed in God’s omniscience and foreknowledge, did not believe in predestination. According to Revard, “Eve is at a disadvantage in encountering Satan in an intellectual debate and Adam assuredly would have better understood Satan and his evil” (73). He certainly understands the evil of Eve’s dream.

After they partake of the forbidden fruit, Adam declares their newfound understanding of good and evil: “Since our eyes / Opened we find indeed, and find we know / Both good and evil, good lost, and evil got” (9.1070-02), but Milton makes no mention of that knowledge Adam possesses in his reaction to Eve’s dream. This new knowledge will also modify their previous knowledge of shame when they are finally confronted about their transgression. Adam and Eve both confess their actions; however, each takes care to identify the role of another in his and her transgression. In the biblical account, God asks, “Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” Adam responds almost without pretense, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (Gen. 3:11-12). Adam does not necessarily blame Eve, but he does make sure her role is understood. When God asks Eve what she has done, she is just as forthright: “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat” (Gen. 3:13). But Eve is not ready to absolve the serpent of his role. In Milton’s account, blame lingers. God asks, “Hast thou eaten of the tree / Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?” (10.122-23). Adam dissembles:

O Heaven! In evil strait this day I stand  
Before my Judge, either to undergo

My self the total Crime, or to accuse  
My other self, the partner of my life;  
Whose failing, while her Faith to me remains,  
I should conceal, and not expose to blame  
By my complaint; but strict necessity  
Subdues me, and calamitous constraint,  
Lest on my head both sin and punishment,  
However insupportable, be all  
Devolved; though should I hold my peace, yet thou  
Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.  
This Woman whom thou mad'st to be my help,  
And gav'st me as thy perfect gift, so good,  
So fit, so acceptable, so divine,  
That from her hand I could suspect no ill,  
And what she did, whatever in it self,  
Her doing seemed to justify the deed;  
She gave me of the tree, and I did eat.  
(PL 10.125-43)

From the onset, Adam vacillates between accepting full blame and applying that blame to Eve because "strict necessity / Subdues" him, as does "calamitous restraint." Milton's Adam wants neither sin nor punishment applied to him. He wishes to remain clean, innocent, deceived by the hand from which he "could suspect no ill" (10.140). One of the more intriguing aspects of Adam's reply is the fact that he really believes Eve deserves all or most of the blame. Even if he tried to conceal the truth, God "[w]ouldst easily detect" it. Another intriguing aspect lies in the word *devolve*. According to the *OED*, *devolve* means "caused to pass by legal succession, especially through the deficiency of one previously responsible." If Adam conceals the fact that Eve deserves the blame, the responsibility falls on his head. This is the desperate ploy of the fallen man. Milton's Eve, however, speaks as the biblical Eve in her simple response: "The serpent me beguiled and I did eat" (10.162). She does not dissemble; neither does she blame. She relates exactly what happened, responding "with shame nigh overwhelmed" (10.159). So here stands fallen man and woman, both possessing the knowledge of good and evil, one coping with his shame by externalizing it and blaming someone else, the other accepting her fault, ready to repent.

The new knowledge of good and evil and feeling of shame Adam and Eve gain after the Fall adds little or no insight to the knowledge they possess prior the Fall, immediately following Eve's dream. Also, it adds no insight to Eve's feelings. If one believes that Adam and Eve cannot yet possess that knowledge, it is as if they had fallen already, a result of the dream Adam says is "of evil sprung" (5.98). However, fallen Adam reveals one key difference: blame. When Adam identifies Eve's dream as evil, demonstrating his inherent knowledge of evil, he refuses to believe that that evil comes from Eve because "Evil into the mind of God or man / May come and go" (5.117-18), like a dream, but Eve would never commit evil consciously. He refuses to blame her. After the Fall, the reader encounters a different shame, a fallen shame, more like a stain Adam and Eve wish to conceal from their maker than a shame given by their maker as a protection, as well as that inherent knowledge of evil, so that they will be "just and right / Sufficient to have stood" (3.98-99). Adam and Eve may have feared the punishment (death) but they had never seen or experienced it before. Also, "a fear of external sanctions as a motive for right conduct represents, for Aristotle, the most puerile motive for action" (Cefalu 20). Yet many, especially the Protestant clergy, utilized shame to instill that very fear. This is why they so viciously attacked Hobbes. "For many in the clergy and in the court he was the atheist and immoralist, the paradigm of everything which should be pronounced anathema" (Rogers 192). But despite the clergy's best efforts to reject Hobbes, they ultimately contributed to some of his philosophy by assisting in the social construction of shame. However, despite that social construction, by his own pen Milton reveals a philosophy that God has planted such shame within men and women from the beginning, and whatever society constructs simply adds to what is already there.

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### ***Further Reading***

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