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Daniel W. Bobier April 15, 2013

Cloaks and Daggers: The Functions of Deceit in Paradise Lost

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Abstract

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In this thesis, I seek to explore the forms and functions of deceit in Milton's magnum opus. I explore how in his role as the "artificer of fraud," Satan uses deceit as both a self-protective mechanism and as a weaponized offensive. This thesis establishes a background for the Devil's invention of fraud via an analysis of his physical devolution, and it attempts to demonstrate in consummate terms why his transformations are necessary, yet vary in effectiveness. These considerations terminate in a close reading of the method of Eve's capitulation to the serpent. With that event, this project focuses on the parallels between Satan and Eve, both in terms of their personal susceptibilities to falling and of their actual falls from grace. I conclude by examining the reasons for Adam's free choice to follow Eve into sin, and I jusitfy this choice as one that The Almighty actually approves. Finally, noting that postlapsarian Adam and Eve begin their long journey toward redemption, the project observes that Satan unnecessarily defeats this possibility for himself, becoming the poem's greatest victim of devilish deception.

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Introduction: Hypocrisy is Born

Milton writes that "Hypocrisy [is] the only evil that walks / Invisible, except to God alone, / by his permissive will, through Heaven and Earth," and from these lines it would appear that this rule is absolute. However, the inability of angels and man to sense fraud is not unconditional, as Milton clarifies: "And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps / At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity / Resigns her charge" (3.686-88). While these lines further describe that the natural state is an unsuspicious one, they also seem to suggest that should a character's suspicion be aroused, his wisdom to intuit duplicity will become capable.

It is on this concept of intuition that we will begin our analysis of Satan's deceits and the corresponding receptions of them. The changing audiences to Satan's wiles throughout the text play an enormous role in determining the relative success of these deceptions. In each of these interactions, the figure on the receiving end of Satan's fraud comes equipped with his own set of influential characteristics, which in turn determine the level of intuition that figure is prepared to exercise. These changing features make for unique interactions and must be considered within their own context in order to get at the heart of the function of Satan's hypocrisy. For example: is the figure in question mortal or divine? What is the figure's relation to Satan: subordinate, equal, or superior? What experience has this figure had with Satan, and what does the figure know of Satan's history?

So, taken as a whole, the characteristics of the audience cohere to answer a single question: given the particular characteristics of one of Satan's targets of deception, how enabled is that audience to exert intuition? The problem of being unable to take Satan at his word is central to his role as the "artificer of fraud"; but, in many cases, being empowered

with skepticism appears to be an enlightening ability for Milton's otherwise vulnerable characters.

Remember that in Milton's universe, fraud simply does not exist before Satan's displeasure at God's introduction of His Son. As the progenitor of deceit, Satan introduces fraud to a world that is unprepared to recognize and combat it. We consistently see in the poem that the upright[1] characters, be they angelic or mortal, are disastrously ill-equipped to identify Satan's deceit. In the rare cases when a figure successfully detects the lie, however, that intuition is raised by either knowledge, perception, or a combination of both. Lacking a glaring reason to be suspicious (as by awareness of Satan's history or else from a markedly conspicuous visual cue) Milton's innocent figures are doomed to be deceived.

But before we analyze some of Satan's attempts at deceit and the occasional resistance of intuition that he encounters, let's consider the form of deception we most often encounter in *Paradise Lost.* In speaking of Adam and Eve's upright nakedness, the Milton shares one of the more physical descriptions of hypocrisy:

> Nor were those mysterious parts were then concealed,
> Then was not guilty shame, dishonest shame
> Of nature's works, honour dishonourable,
> Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
> With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure. (4.312-16)

And, as Milton describes Adam and Eve's preparation for love-making in their bower, he adds: "[into the bower] Handed they went, and eased the putting off / These troublesome disguises which we wear" (4.739-740). In these selections, Milton equates Man's covering of

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[1] Throughout this thesis, I will often use "upright" to mean prelapsarian. This reflects Milton's use of the term in the poem, as when Michael lambasts Satan for being "once upright / And faithful, now proved false" (6.270-71).

his nakedness with dishonesty. If hypocrisy is creating a false exterior to hide an inner truth, then Milton makes it clear in these selections that he considers hypocrisy in a very corporeal manner. He lambasts "shame" as creating among men "mere shows of seeming pure," and even goes so far as to denounce clothing, a man-made veil, as "disguises." Thinking of hypocrisy within physical terms will guide our further considerations of Satan's deceitful transformations.

Consider the scene in which Satan, guised as a lowly cherub, speaks with the archangel Uriel, regent of the sun. When Satan lies to Uriel that he has come to Paradise out of sheer curiosity, Milton narrates:

> So spake the false dissembler unperceived
> . . . . . .
> which now for once beguiled
> Uriel, though regent of the sun, and held
> The sharpest sighted spirit of all in heaven;
> Who to the fraudulent imposter foul
> In his uprightedness answer thus returned.
> Fair angel... (3.681, 3.689-693)

This instance provides a good example for the obscuring powers of upright innocence. Here, the sinless Uriel is completely taken in by Satan's guise, and the guardian kindly directs the questioner directly to Paradise. Uriel is the "sharpest sighted spirit of all"; if any angel would be naturally equipped to see through Satan's pretended form, it would be he. Lacking an egregiously conspicuous identifier, it seems that no single attribute can equip an Upright figure to discern fraud. The complication arises when an innocent figure falls, and in so doing becomes duplicitous but gains the power of insight. For Milton, such a fundamental change in character allows for a consummately fundamental shift in perception and acumen.

Introducing Fraud's Complications: Abdiel the Dissenter

In talking about the presence and power of suspicion, the very first instance of deceit in the poem provides an excellent window for analysis. When God declares to the company of Heaven that his newly begotten Son has become their universal superior, Milton illustrates that "with his words / All seemed well pleased; all seemed, but were not all" (5.616-17). This moment of false seeming is Satan's apparent first exercise in fraudulence, and it is clear that his peers have not developed an eye for such deception.

Especially in the plot events that follow, Milton focuses his narration's attention on the suspicions and intuition of Satan's audience. In the case of the rebellion, it might be the throng's inexperience with deceit that leads many of the angels to follow Beelzebub into Satan's camp, and eventually into War with The Almighty. As an exercise in the type of evaluation this thesis will focus on, let's follow the events of Satan's assembly, considering the deceptions at hand.

Recall that Satan doesn't blatantly invite the legions of Heaven to rebel against the Almighty; rather, the tricky angel commands his subordinates to meet in order "to prepare / Fit entertainment to receive our King, / The great Messiah" (5.689-691). Although this mission statement is riddled with sarcasm, it is possible that those angels who respond to Satan's commandment do not initially grasp the non-literal meaning. After all, Milton describes that it is "with lies [that Satan] / Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host" (5.709-710). This lack of comprehension could explain how a figure like Abdiel ends up among Satan's throng despite his fervent dedication to God. The lone dissenter among Satan's audience in Book V, Abdiel is described as the angel "than whom none with more zeal

adored / The Deity" (5.805-06). It would seem a stretch to argue that this loyal seraph wound up among the faithless by any means but mistake. Unlike God, whose "Eternal eye ... discerns / Abstrusest thoughts," Abdiel is not omniscient (5.711-12). He fails to decode Lucifer's fraudulence, and he fails to exert any suspicion toward Satan's summons.

Still, because Abdiel is the *only* angel in Satan's initial crew to withdraw from the rebellion, we're forced to consider that many of the faithless horde *did* intuit Lucifer's intentions from the beginning. For why else, having learned Satan's intentions and also having seen an example in Abdiel for how to exit, would every one of the remaining angels choose to stay behind? Of course, Satan and Beelzebub commanded only those "which [they] lead chief" to gather in preparation; their election of soldiers, then, is selective (5.684). It would have been unwise for Satan to call God's most devout followers (consider Michael and Gabriel) to hear his cry for rebellion. Some of the summoned angels might simply have been malleable, easily persuaded by Satan's arguments against The Almighty, but it is possible that still others, already incensed by the Son's appearance and promotion, suspected their leader's true motives and were eager to lend their support. This hypothetical presents a final problem: if there were angels who, like Satan, were displeased with the God's elevation of the Son, were these angels likewise able to duplicitously hide their discontent? Just as Abdiel does not initially recognize Lucifer's true intentions, we are unable to definitively identify these angels' genuine motivations.

Intuition, Aroused by Knowledge and Perception

In the case of Satan drawing a third of heaven's host after him, there is little evidence beyond conjecture to support the case that these angels were operating under aroused suspicions of their leader. This tacit trust of the Devil is not always present in Milton's characters, however. Consider the moment when the trespassing Devil is first caught in Eden. Having fooled Uriel in the guise of a curious cherub and alighted in Paradise, Satan quickly finds our slumbering patriarchs and creeps up to Eve's ear in the form of a toad. As toady Satan closes in on the object of his obsession, Milton narrates the evening awakening of Eden's angelic guard:

> Now had night measured with her shadowy cone
> Halfway uphill this vast sublunar vault,
> And from their ivory port the cherubim
> Forth issuing at the accustomed hour stood armed
> To their night watches in warlike parade. (4.776-780)

And, shortly after the angels are roused, Milton details Gabriel's swift instructions to his subordinates:

> Ithuriel and Zephon, with winged speed
> Search through this garden, leave unsearched no nook,
> But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,
> Now laid perhaps asleep secure of harm.
> This evening from the sun's decline arrived
> Who tells of some infernal spirit seen
> Hitherward bent (who could have thought?) escaped
> The bars of hell, on errand bad no doubt:
> Such where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring. (4.788-796)

In the following episode, Ithuriel and Zephon, having thus been dispatched, make quick work of locating Satan in Paradise. Even though they find him crouched as a toad at Eve's ear, Milton describes no hesitation or conversation between the two cherubs. The pair

simply march up behind the toad, Ithuriel sticks him with his spear, and suddenly Satan is transformed back into his proper self. But this course of action, while fortunate for the guardian angels, is suspect according to Milton's usual rules of identifying fraud. Just a short while earlier, Satan was able to pass by and actually interact with Uriel completely undetected. How is it that Uriel, the "sharpest sighted spirit in all of Heaven" and an archangel to wit, is duped by Satan's transformations but the lowly cherub Ithuriel is not? What equips the spear-wielding angel to see immediately through Satan's deception, his false pretense?

Unlike our difficulty with Abdiel, the answers to these questions rest clearly in the text. Simply, every aspect of the cherubs' profession and commandment are infused with suspicion (demanding their intuitive faculties). These two are part of Eden's "night watch," the holy guard meant to protect Adam and Eve while they rest in their bower. Surely, no such garrison would exist if the angels did not feel that Paradise was in danger of infiltration or onslaught. Thus by the very nature of their profession, Ithuriel and Zephon are inclined to be on watch, alert, and prepared to intuit the slightest disturbance as a threat.

Further, this evening's rounds have arrived with a specific set of instructions. Gabriel, their superior angel, has alerted them that "some infernal spirit" was seen in Paradise. The couple is tasked with locating and seizing the demon before any damage can be done. So not only are the two guardians charged nightly with a job that requires suspicion, but on this evening in particular they have received a direct warning and charge from their superior officer. Finally, their orders even include the exact physical area in which to most exercise their suspicion. Instructs Gabriel: "[Search] chiefly where those two fair creatures

lodge...” (4.790). For Ithuriel and Zephon, no longer does “suspicion sleep / At wisdom’s gate”; external factors — their profession and specific orders — have forcibly roused their suspicions from slumber (3.686-87).

Having transformed and arrested their quarry, the cherubs return Satan to Gabriel. The archangel’s interrogation of the captured demon provides further insight into the function of Satan’s fraud and its outcomes. Brought before Gabriel, Satan claims to be in Eden solely for the innocuous escape from the torments of Hell. But the archangel refuses to take this testimony at face value, replying incredulously: “But wherefore thou alone? wherefore with thee / Came not all hell broke loose?” (4.915-16). By challenging Satan’s attestation, Gabriel expresses skepticism. A few lines later, Gabriel’s accusation of dishonesty is direct: “To say and straight unsay, pretending first / Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy, / Argues no leader but a liar traced” (4.943-46). But what equips Gabriel to be skeptical in this scene, assuming ill without evidence? For one possible solution, consider how the archangel confronts Satan in this conversation:

> And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
> Patron of liberty, who more than thou
> Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored
> Heaven’s awful monarch? wherefore but in hope
> To dispossess him, and thy self to reign? (4.954-58).

Gabriel describes Satan’s original hypocrisy, the deceit that titled him “artificer of fraud” (4.120). Although Gabriel and the other angels might have been ignorant of Satan’s duplicity in the moments leading up to his rebellion, it seems that the archangel is quite capable of identifying Satan’s hypocrisy in retrospect. Because of his previous experience with the antagonist’s fraud, Gabriel is equipped to be permanently skeptical of Satan. By this

point in the poem's chronology, the guardian of Eden *is* intuitive; but that intuition is the result of knowledge gained by experience, not an inherently angelic (or even archangelic) ability.

All of Heaven entered into War when Satan challenged The Almighty, and so all the angels (fallen and otherwise) are aware of the trespass. In this scene, Gabriel is reciting Satan's universally known history and, by virtue of expressing this knowledge, demonstrating a freedom from ignorance. There is no chance that this angel would carelessly follow Satan's guiles, simply because Gabriel's knowledge of Satan's habits and history is too extensive. Recall that in his instructions to his cherub inferiors, Gabriel describes how Satan came to Eden "on errand bad no doubt" (4.795). Clearly, Gabriel's suspicions of Satan have been permanently awakened. Beyond this, Milton gives us no reason to assume that Gabriel is any better equipped that the other angels to exercise doubt when history or direct order doesn't command it.

The Physicality of Fraud

The physicality of angels is a subject often discussed in *Paradise Lost*. From Raphael's explanations to Adam of angelic lovemaking to Milton's long depiction of heaven's great war in Book VI, it is made clear that angels are not merely ephemeral beings. They are principally corporeal: they bleed, move love, and (though rarely) feel pain. Milton takes great strides to bring this significant corporeality to the fore of his poem. In the depiction of the great war, for example, we learn from the clash between Michael and Lucifer that angels' bodies follow very different rules than our own. Equipped with his flaming sword from the

"armoury of God," Michael wins the upper hand over Satan and smites him on the side (6.321). But although he is dealt an egregious wound and feels pain for the first time, Lucifer does not die. Milton tells us: "The griding sword with discontinuous wound / Passed through him, but the ethereal substance closed / Not long divisible . . . [spirits] Cannot but by annihilating die" (6.329-347). He continues: "All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear, / All intellect, all sense, and as they please, / They limb themselves, and colour, shape or size / Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare" (6.350-54). In describing the means of Satan's recovery, Milton points us to an important fact. Angels assume whatever shape they like; their forms are fully morphable.

This fact is especially important within the context of fraud in the poem. When Milton writes that "Hypocrisy [is] the only evil that walks / Invisible, except to God alone," and also that "goodness thinks no ill / where no ill seems," a proper consideration of *hypocrisy* becomes especially relevant (3.683-84; 3.688-89). A hypocritical figure is "two-faced," having one set of internal desires or motives while falsely presenting an artificially rendered exterior. As angels in *Paradise Lost* have the ability to adopt whatever external form they choose, it is a no wonder that it is one such shape-shifter who becomes the "artificer of fraud" (4.121).

But before we delve into an analysis of Satan's fraudulent transformations, it will be helpful to look into the reason that the antagonist needs to change at all. Since the moment of his rebellion against God and His Son, a change begins to take place in Satan. Slowly, the good that departs from man's great enemy takes with it his angelic splendor — his luminescence. Milton's description of the rebellious angels in Book VI foreshadows this loss.

After hilltops are dumped upon the rebel horde, those demons begin to struggle up from underneath the earth: "Out of such prison, though spirits of purest light, / Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown" (6.660-61). Here the rebels are merely covered in dirt, their light besmirched by mud.[2] Still, by writing "gross by sinning grown," Milton points to Satan's own eventual devolution. Obviously, the filthy throng wouldn't be plastered with grit it they hadn't sinfully rebelled against God in the first place.

This devolution of form is a problem for Satan for the simple reason that the change makes him conspicuous. For proof, look to a moment in the poem when he tosses aside his guise. The scene in which Satan is brought before Gabriel, having been identified and caught in the Garden, is one such example. Already caught, Satan approaches in his genuine form. Gabriel, for his part, is able to identity the enemy even from a great distance: "[the guards are returning] And with them comes a third of regal port, / But faded splendor wan; who by his gait / And fierce demeanour seems the prince of hell, / Not likely to part hence without contest" (4.869-872). Note here that "faded splendor" is one of the characteristics the archangel first recognizes in his quarry. With all pretense gone, Satan is immediately recognizable.

Obviously, for a character whose main ambition is to confuse and deceive a host of wary subjects, being readily identifiable is not a useful quality to have. Simply put: for this fallen angel,[3] transparency is dangerous. Whenever he is not hidden behind a false face,

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[2] This moment hideously mirrors the "birth" of all animals (as from the earth) in the creation (7.462-472). Here, however, the angels are being "re-born" as sinners.

[3] On "wary subjects": The subjects Satan attempts to deceive are often wary (though not naturally intuitive) of deception. Uriel and Gabriel are charged with guarding Paradise; Adam and Eve (though she indirectly) are warned of fraud by Raphael.

Satan's evil intentions (having occluded his angelic light) shine through and, despite his rhetorical mastery, awaken suspicion in his audience.

It is for this reason that Satan's deceptions in the poem (and certainly his *successful* deceptions) are nearly always accompanied by one such shifting of physical form.[4] As Milton narrates before Satan approaches Uriel, "But first [Satan] casts to change his proper shape, / Which else might work him danger or delay" (3.634-35). Though he is still angel in name he is no longer Lucifer, bearer of light; indeed, the devil's true angelic name was erased by God in Satan's fall and none can recall it. Gaining Sin, Satan is forever changed; consider his principally altered state as the antagonist struggles with his doubts over the plan to infiltrate Eden and bring about man's Fall.[5] Here, his expression reveals his inner torments: "each passion dimmed his face / Thrice changed with pale, ire, envy, and despair; / Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed, Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld" (4.113-15).

At this moment, Satan's appearance corresponds directly with his emotions, creating what is for Satan a very dangerous transparency. His doubt and despondent reflections "mar [the] borrowed" form of the cherub Satan uses to fool Uriel, for Milton describes that "heavenly minds from such distempers foul / Are ever clear" (4.117-18). It is on this event that Frank Kermode comments that "Satan is affected by unregulated passions, as the unfallen Adam and Eve cannot be, [and] he is the first person on earth to experience this" (Kermode 115). The problem here is obvious. If Satan is to remain undetected in Paradise, he's going to

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[4] As opposed to his failures, for example in Book IV when he tries to convince Gabriel that he came to Paradise innocuously.

[5] Later, we'll return to this scene as an example of an "anchor to the truth" of *Paradise Lost*, a moment free of Satan's deceptive influence.

need to maintain a false exterior for himself. He does this, hypocritically cloaking himself in the pretense of "outward calm" (4.119). After Satan adopts his invented calm exterior, Milton emphasizes that such duplicity originates with the devil: "[he] was the first / That practiced falsehood under saintly show, / Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge" (Orgel 4.120-23).

In short, Satan is forced into a state of hypocrisy because he becomes detectable otherwise. As Milton lays forth when he describes the chief demon suffering from "distempers foul" that never enter "heavenly minds," Satan is plagued by evils that are unique to a fallen mind. By his fall, Satan is permanently changed in some inherent way. Milton lays this out clearly in the beginning of the poem. Satan stands looking out over Pandemonium, and the poet says,

> [He stood] like a tower; his form had yet not lost
> All her original brightness, nor appeared
> Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
> Of glory obscured: as when the sun new risen
> Looks through the horizontal misty air
> Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon
> In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
> On half the nations, and with fear of change
> Perplexes monarchs. (1.591-99)

Having just awakened from his fall, Satan is apparently still aglow with some of his original light. Still, Milton outlines the inevitable: the great antagonist will lose all of his angelic splendor eventually, left a mere shell of the brilliant form he had once been.

The marred nature of Satan's genuine appearance constantly serves to undermine his deceits throughout the text. Again, in perceiving something disturbed about Satan's looks, other characters become skeptical of him and apply intuitive reasoning (thus often unmaking

the deceit). It is this fallen visage that is the instigating factor in Uriel's eventual recognition of the devil. After Satan departs the sun-regent's company, Milton narrates: "[Satan yet] not enough had practiced to deceive / Uriel once warned; whose eye pursued him down / / [and] saw him disfigured" (4.123-26). "Disfigured" in these lines can mean both "unfigured" (as Satan's pretended form is unmade) and "deformed" (as Satan's appearance is marred by his unangelic passions). In either case, it is Satan's unintelligent (or uncontrolled) display of his true form that alerts Uriel, who in turn warns Gabriel and his evening guard.

In changing his form (and maintaining that change), however, Satan achieves much greater success with his frauds. His efforts while in the guise of a toad provide a good example of this. When Zephon and Ithuriel accost Satan in the garden, the latter cherub touches the toady demon with his spear. This contact causes Satan to return "Of force to [his] own likeness..." (4.813). We'll get into the causes for that forced transformation in a moment, but first we ought to consider Satan's relative success at deception in this scene. Although the devil's toad-form might not have fooled the questing cherubim, his actions in that form achieved their intended result. The archfiend crouches "squat like a toad" at Eve's ear, whispering to her as she sleeps,

> Assaying by his devilish art to reach
> The organs of her fancy, and with them forge,
> Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams,
> Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
> The animal spirits that from pure blood arise
> Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise
> At least distempered, discontented thoughts,
> Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires
> Blown up with heigh conceits engendering pride. (4.798-809)

True, Ithuriel and Zephon find the toady Satan and arrest him, but it appears that Satan's trespass achieves his desired result.

Adam wakes the following morning to find the sleeping Eve "With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek, / As through unquiet rest..." (5.10-11). For her part, the unsettled mother of man relates that she dreamed "of offense and trouble, which my mind / knew never till this irksome night" (5.34-35). In the dream that Satan creates, Eve is provided an example for eating the forbidden fruit and she might even sample the fruit herself. This presentation is a deceptive one: no aspect of Eve's retelling seems nightmarish; the eating of the fruit and the subsequent apotheosis is an enjoyable experience (quite contrary to the effects of eating the fruit in reality). It is only in her awakened, closing remarks that Eve comments: "Oh, how glad I waked / To find this but a dream!" (5.92-93). Notably, Satan's whispering in this scene ends not merely when the cherubs catch him, but specifically when they cause him to abandon his toad form and transform back to his genuine self. In this scene, the disruption of Satan's pretended form equals the disruption of his fraud. Because the two are halted contemporaneously, the example of Ithuriel's spear adds weight to the thesis that physical form plays a significant role in facilitating Satan's deceits.

The problems Satan has regarding his physical form aren't limited to the issue of detection, however. For Satan, a derivative quandary is that he fails to recognize or accept the debasement he has suffered. His interactions with Zephon in the garden and with Death in Book III shed light on the Devil's failure to recognize his lowered position (mirrored in his baser appearance). Fundamentally, this failure is a problem of ego.

After Uriel sees Satan's form "disfigured," Zephon and Ithuriel accordingly capture the toady Satan in Eden. But when they challenge his presence in Paradise, Satan answers derisively:

> Know ye not me? Ye knew me once no mate
> For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar;
> Not to know me argues yourselves unknown,
> The lowest of your throng. (4.828-31)

What is useful in this scene for our discussion is how the common cherub answers Satan's insult. Notice how Zephon's own offenses center round Satan's physical appearance:

> Think not, revolted spirit, thy shape the same,
> Or undiminished brightness, to be known
> As when thou stood'st in heaven upright and pure;
> That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
> Departed from thee; and thou resemblest now
> Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul. (4.833-38)

His comments here are meant to insult. First, the fact that Zephon is capable of issuing such an insult to Satan at all is significant. As the devil relates, Satan once "soared" while Zephon merely "sat." This description is probably sardonic, but it relates the reality that Lucifer, a seraph, bearer of light and adored by God, was certainly higher in the angelic hierarchy before the Fall than a lowly soldier cherub such as Zephon. It is also of note that in Zephon's eyes, calling out Satan for his diminished glory and glimmer is paramount to a great insult. Remember that Zephon and Ithuriel are the first non-fallen angels that Satan (transparently) encounters after his demise — it takes a startling insult to force Satan's rude awakening to the fact that he is not what he once was.[6]

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[6] I will analyze Satan's self-realization and his verbal response to Zephon's insult later on, as an example of how the Devil uses pretense as a shield to defend his ego.

Before the Fall, Satan was a beacon of light in Heaven. But now, his luminescence is being eclipsed by his evils. This fundamental change affects the outcomes of his deceit. If "goodness thinks no ill / Where no ill seems," then it could reasonably follow that, seeming ill, a subject can draw goodness's suspicion (3.688-89). Now that Satan's genuine appearance "resemblest ... sin," even those not predisposed to suspicion are distrustful of him (4.839-840). Thus, Satan's warped appearance might be another reason that Gabriel directs constant skepticism toward his foe. The inquiring warrior might not have done so with an innocent-appearing angel.

But for another proof of Satan's diminishing heavenliness, consider again the moment when Ithuriel and Zephon first accost the toady Satan in the garden:

> Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
> Touched light; for no falsehood can endure
> Touch of celestial temper, but returns
> Of force to its own likeness. (4.810-13)

While this description clearly lays forth that Ithuriel's (un-fallen) celestial temper disrupts Satan's falsehood, these lines also detail something else: if "no falsehood can endure / Touch of celestial temper," then Satan must not have any such temper left. If the devil were still imbued with such temper, it stands to reason that this celestial force would abolish any fraud he attempted. Or, looked at another way, it could be that by virtue of having the impulse to deceive, Satan's celestial temper is displaced. Let us not forget that Satan's first exercise in hypocrisy occurs at God's unveiling of The Son — *before* his fall. This chronology seems to indicate that Satan misplaced his angelic temper even before he was banished from Heaven. Also, these lines might explain why Milton first tells us that angels may "limb themselves,

and colour, shape or size /Assume, as likes them best," and yet it is Satan who we see practicing this ability most often.

Of course, Satan is not the only angel who changes his form in the poem. Raphael does so (as a phoenix in his descent to Eden),[7] and so does Michael. However, it is worth noting that neither of these archangels transforms himself for deceitful purposes. In Michael's case, he comes "Not in his shape Celestial, but as Man / Clad to meet Man" to follow The Lord's empathic command to "all terror hide" (11.239-240; 11.111). This form communicates to Adam precisely whom he is to meet. He says to Eve, "[Michael, approaching, is] yet not terrible, / That I should fear, nor sociably mild, / As Raphael, that I should much confide, / But solemn and sublime, whom not to offend" (11.233-36). Finally, in Adam's salutation to Michael, it is obvious that the archangel's presented form offers *exactly* the truth of his station and intent, rather than a duplicitous one (as is Satan's intent in transformation). Adam begins: "Celestial, whether among the thrones, or named / Of them the highest, for such of shape may seem..." (11.296-97) Michael's transformation is used to soften the delivering of his dreaded decree to Adam (and Eve), not to obscure the truth or manifest some different one.

Obviously, Satan does not use his own transformative ability for such innocuous purposes. Having fallen, the deceiver is too conspicuous in his genuine form. Satan's meeting with his horrible children in Book II further demonstrates how far the angel has fallen from grace and the status (mirrored in physical appearance) that attends it. In his encounter with

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[7] It isn't obvious that Raphael actually becomes a phoenix, but a few lines later Milton says "and to his proper shape *returns* / A seraph winged" (5.276-77, emphasis mine). Whether we view this description as a literal change or a simile, Hughes echoes J. Whaler's comment in *PMLA* XLVII (1932), 545, that the image may "have had a secondary application ... in the Elizabethan proverb that 'A faithful friend is like a phoenix'" (Hughes 309).

Death, his incestuous offspring, Satan sees the terrible form, but he does not fear it. Instead, the angel stares the ogre down: "Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof, / Hell-born, not to contend with spirits of heaven" (2.686-87). This brazen challenge is significant for two reasons. First, note that by establishing his alleged superiority Satan invokes his status as a "spirit of heaven." Even in Hell, he wears this as a badge of mighty authority and natural right; of course, this is no longer a title to which Satan has any valid claim. And, because Sin interrupts the standoff before it can come to blows, we can't be certain if Satan's powers are (as he supposes) truly substantial enough to have wrangled with his son.

The other reason that Satan's response in this exchange is significant is the nomenclature he uses to address Death. Being yet ignorant of the beast's heritage, Satan's condescends, telling his "Hell-born" opponent to step aside. This titular insult refers to both Death's birthplace and to his parentage. Thus, Satan unintentionally and correctly describes himself as a being "of hell," rather than "of heaven," as he would like to imagine. Death returns Satan's insult, and once again Satan finds himself in the unusual position of being insulted by someone he deems an inferior.

Speaking on what he calls the "Hierarchal conception," C.S. Lewis sheds some light on Satan's insulted amazement at both Death and Zephon. Lewis stipulates that in *Paradise Lost* and elsewhere from Aristotle to Jonson, this Hierarchal conception is a central and dominant thought. As he says:

> According to this conception degrees of value are objectively present in the universe. Everything except God has some natural superior; everything except unformed matter has some natural inferior. The goodness, happiness, and dignity of every being consists in obeying its natural superior and *ruling its natural inferiors*. (Lewis 73, emphasis mine)

As if his insult at being scorned by his alleged inferiors weren't enough proof, there is other evidence that shows Satan is certainly aware of this hierarchy. One such example comes when the cherub-Satan has maintained his physical deception long enough to learn the whereabouts of Eden from the unsuspecting Uriel. Having gathered his sought-after information, Satan thanks the sun-regent, and "Thus said, he turned, and Satan bowing low, / As to superior spirits is wont in heaven, / Where honour due and reverence none neglects, / Took leave" (3.736-739). Milton demonstrates the ubiquity of hierarchal awareness in Heaven, and Satan is obviously no exception to that knowledge. In this moment, Satan knows to emulate the actions of his pretended form's lowly station. Failing in this duty would reasonably appear odd to Uriel, who might then become suspicious of the seeming cherub's curiosity.

However, Satan has some difficulties with the hierarchal construction which reveal the source of his cognitive dissonance in speaking to Zephon and Gabriel. The source of these difficulties is twofold. First, Satan wasn't able to appreciate his place within the hierarchy even before his fall; second, he is unable to accept his new (lower) position in the hierarchy after he is cast out of Heaven.[8] For proof of this first of Satan's hierarchal issues, consider the simple narration Milton gives us upon the Son's first introduction to Heaven. Writes Milton:

> he of the first,
> If not the first archangel, great in power,
> In favour and pre-eminence, yet fraught
> With envy against the Son of God . . .

[8] The latter of these problems is why Satan takes such offense at the insults he receives. By wrongly continuing to perceive himself as superior to those who are affronting him, Satan senses a disturbance in the cosmic hierarchy; for a reason thus far invisible to (or ignored by) Satan, he isn't able to "[rule his] natural inferiors" (Lewis 73).

could not bear
Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired. (5.659-665)

At this point in the narration, there is no objective reason for Lucifer to feel debased. He remains "great in power, / In favour and pre-eminence," yet maintains all his shiny luster; but despite these marks of high station and value the angel feels "impaired." On this word Orgel and Goldberg gloss "damaged, injured"; Merritt Hughes, with greater detail, notes "lowered in rank among the heavenly peers or aristocratic hierarchy" (Orgel 888, Hughes 318). Thus Lucifer's perceived insult of The Son becomes a matter of just that: subjective perception. He retains his qualifications and status — it is only his *ego* that has been damaged. At this point, Lucifer would have done well to follow Raphael's advice to Adam: "ofttimes nothing profits more / Than self esteem, grounded on just and right / Well managed..." (8.571-73). If it had been in his nature to do so, the egotistical angel would have dodged a serious thunderbolt.

The problem of Satan's ego interferes with the hierarchal conception *after* his fall too. After shaking off the sleepy astonishment of his fall in Book I, Satan muses on the changes to his form.: "[Nor] do I repent or change . . . Though changed in outward lustre; that fixed mind / And high disdain, from sense of injured merit" (1.96-98). The language of this self-reflection is critical. Satan acknowledges what ought to be an indicator of change to nature's hierarchy: some of his "outward lustre" is gone. Despite this acknowledgment, the semantics of Satan's speech do not point toward acceptance of a debased station.

Satan states, "[Nor] do I repent or change, / Though changed," and Milton's repetition of the key verb "change" is revealing. Although the semantics of these lines direct the first

"change" to refer to Satan's "fixed mind / And high disdain," the true importance of these lines arises out of a simpler reading. Satan has *been changed* outwardly (he acknowledges a change that is forced upon him), but he still refuses to admit that he *will change* of his own volition. This betrays the misconception that he wields an equal say (an equal transformative power) over the fate of his physical form. Truthfully, although Satan retains the ability to transform his physical self into other shapes, his relative brightness lies outside his conscious control.

Guarding His Ego: Satan's Willing Self-Deceptions

But why, then, is Satan's lackluster change so obvious to his audiences and so undetectable to him?[9] Why does Satan believe the fiction that he has the capability to *not* change? The answer is that Satan has been confounded by his own deceits. What does it matter if Satan would prefer not to change — if he would prefer to maintain his shiny luminescence? His brightness is diminishing because of his sin, his fall, and thus is divinely ordained; the Devil doesn't have a say in the matter. Even in immediate defeat, Satan wrongly presumes that his strength is on par with the Almighty's. If there is self-deception at work, I would suggest that this self-deception is willful, at least on some level. By deceiving himself, Satan can ignore his lowly position and lack of celestial light and he can continue with an unbruised ego. Taken from this angle, another of C.S. Lewis' musings becomes especially relevant. On the subject of our illusioned antagonist, Lewis writes:

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[9] True, we've just seen Satan acknowledge his outward change, and yet that recognition is temporary; several more times in the poem Satan appears to re-discover his outward change as if noticing it for the first time. I will discuss some of these moments in the coming pages.

> But I do not know whether we can distinguish his conscious lies from the blindness which he has almost willingly imposed on himself . . . when in Book I he claims that the 'terror of his arm' had put God in doubt of 'his empire,' I am not quite certain [that Satan knows this is untrue]. It is, of course, mere folly. There never had been any war between Satan and God, only between Satan and Michael; but it is possible that he now believes his own propaganda. (Lewis 97)

This question is central to our examination of deceit in the poem. Does Satan, the ultimate hypocrite of Milton's epic, become a victim of his own pretense? Does the premiere demon lose his grasp on the universe's hierarchy and convince himself of imagined truths? Is Satan the Deceiver by himself deceived?

The examples that Lewis puts forth in favor of this explanation are not the only times that we see Satan's hyperbolic language and wonder if he believes it. Consider, for example, the Devil's reflections on the Fall in Book I: "Innumerable force of spirits armed / That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring, / His utmost power with adverse power opposed / In dubious battle on the plains of heaven, / And shook his throne" (Goldberg 1.101-06). Satan's language would convince his audience that the rebellion had some effect on the Almighty, "[shaking] his throne." We also have to wonder if Satan's comment about being preferred over The Almighty is a truth in the Devil's mind. In Book V, Milton would have us believe that it was not by genuine affection or loyalty, but "with lies [that Satan] / Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host" (5.709-710).

Another such instance comes when Satan prepares to enter the serpent for his ultimate deception. Yet all alone, with no one to fool but himself, the guileful angel considers the "reward" of causing man's Fall:

> To me shall be the glory sole among
> The infernal powers . . .
> . . . . . .
> since I in one night freed
> From servitude inglorious well-nigh half
> The angelic name, and thinner left the throng
> Of his adorers. (9.135-143)

Notice that his ambition to obtain "glory" is a prime motivation. This is a farce, of course: no glory can be gained by heaping sin on top of sin. More odd is the devil's assertion that he "freed / ... nigh half" of The Lord's "adorers." First, Satan's throng was doomed to Hell for rebelling, not freed by any means. This seems a reiteration of the Satanic lie: "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven" (1.263). Further, Milton tells us that "one-third" of Satan's host falls with him. Being alone and having no one to impress, why would Satan exaggerate that number to "well-nigh half" if not to satisfy his own ego?

For evidence of the satanic benefit of self-deception, we only need to look at how pained man's adversary becomes in the rare moments when he is honest with himself. One such moment comes when Satan first descends upon Eden at the start of Book IV. Milton narrates, "now conscience wakes despair / That slumbered, wakes the bitter memory / Of what he was, what is, and what must be / Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensure" (4.23-26). Other than in this brief section when Satan painfully but honestly reflects upon his fallen (and falling) state, it would appear that this truth, this "bitter memory," slumbers quietly within Satan and is ignored. And, by refusing to acknowledge his descent and his future doom, Satan avoids having to face the "bitter" reality (which, by digesting, would mean a necessary re-estimation of his own station and worth, something his ego cannot allow).

What is especially significant to note on this occasion of honest self-reflection is how quickly the moment fades. In pondering his "bitter memory," Satan first muses: "The lower still I fall, only supreme / In misery; such joy ambition finds" (4.91-92). But then, a mere 20 lines later, Satan reverses himself: "Evil be thou my good; by thee at least / Divided empire with heaven's king I hold / By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign; / As man ere long, and this new world shall know" (4.110-13). In this first quotation, Satan realizes that "*higher is better"* is not a bright-line rule. By being the foremost and highest of all Pandemonium, Satan is also the foremost in misery. This reflection reveals Satan's recognition that ambition is dangerous, and that not all height should be coveted. And yet, by the time Satan speaks the second quotation, "Evil be thou my good," he has already convinced himself of a new lie. By making "evil [his] good," he thinks to gain at least some satisfaction, some success from his malicious efforts. But he has already learned (and just *said*) that gaining height (even a relative height) is often not worth the while and in fact can intensify the pain. But this is the natural and seemingly unchangeable nature of Satan: he cannot hide from his native ambition.

Returning for a moment to Satan's verbal altercation with Zephon, we see evidence of another type of deceit used for self-protection. After the cherub snidely rebuts Satan's presumption of superiority and draws attention to the enemy's diminished form, Milton tells us that "abashed the devil stood . . . and pined / His loss; but chiefly to find here observed / his lustre visibly impaired; yet seemed / Undaunted" (4.846-851). Satan realizes again[10] that a change has been worked in him. Realizing that, he again uses deceit to protect his ego. But rather than through self-deception, this time Satan uses the hypocrisy that he invents at The

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[10] As mentioned earlier, Satan already acknowledged his "change in outward lustre" in Book I (1.97). Here, he appears to completely rediscover that fact.

Son's unveiling in Heaven. While internally the devil is "abashed," realizing his fallen impairments, he does not allow these sentiments to show on his features, instead "seem[ing] / Undaunted." By effecting a disconnect between his inner turmoil and his outer expression, Satan shows Zephon that the cherub's insults did not hit home. Presuming himself superior, Satan is not about to be reduced to (or below) Zephon's level by acknowledging a rightfully delivered insult. By not openly admitting the truth of his loss, Satan doesn't have to admit the loss to himself.

As Satan has more occasions to practice deceit throughout the poem, his frauds improve. For a concrete proof of this, notice how Milton describes Satan just before he enters the serpent for his greatest deception yet: "When Satan who late fled before the threats / Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved / In meditated fraud and malice, bent / On man's destruction ... / ... fearless returned" (9.53-57). We see in these lines that Satan is learning from his mishaps and his failures. Gabriel, of course, identifies Satan in his genuine form and no amount of rhetorical trickery will convince the archangel of Satan's harmlessness in the Garden. After his serpentine success with Eve, Satan's deceits (fueled by his now-tremendous ego) become more successful still.

For a consideration of this increasingly perfect deception, consider the manner in which he descends through Chaos toward Pandemonium: "Satan in the likeness of an angel bright / / Disguised he came, but those his children dear[11] / Their parent soon discerned, though in disguise" (10.327; 10.330-31). By now, Satan is *no longer* an "angel bright," so to appear as one is totally deceptive. At first, this example might demonstrate that Satan had

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[11] Death and Sin

been right in his assertion that he mustn't "change / Though changed in outward lustre" if he doesn't want to, and that his appearance (including his luminosity) is indeed under his control and not The Almighty's. Yet, Death and Sin readily recognize Satan from his approach, "though [he is] in disguise." This recognition indicates there is either something fundamentally un-angelic about the light that Satan clothes himself in, or else that his sin is strong enough to be sensed even through a pretense of angelic brightness. Still, this scene demonstrates Satan's apparently newfound (or newly honed) ability to mimic the show of angelic brightness.

We see a similarly strong (and light-oriented) deception when Satan arrives in Hell amid his throng. He enters under the guise of "plebeian angel militant, / Of lowest order, passed; and from the door / Of that Plutonian hall, invisible" (10.442-44). A moment later, Satan materializes upon his throne, shining brightly: "At last as from a cloud his fulgent head / And shape star-bright appeared, or brighter, clad / With what permissive glory since was fall / Was left him, or false glitter" (10.449-452). In this theatrical appearance, Satan astounds his throng with "that so sudden blaze," but we necessarily have to wonder about the light's origin (10.453). Is their amazement a matter of relativity, simply being unused to seeing *any* celestial light in Hell, much less whatever shine of Upright Lucifer that Satan still retains? Or is this light counterfeit, a "false glitter?"

To either extent, Satan's ego is again the legend we use to decoded these shiny deceits. In these scenes, we see the same hypocrisy that was once used to protect Satan's ego upon meeting Zephon in Book IV is now used to *inflate* that ego. In a physical sense, Satan never actually regains any celestial right nor glimmer. As he becomes more and more fully

convinced of his own deceits as the poem continues (insofar as to allege himself the permanent victor after man's Fall), his physical, outward deceit is empowered enough to mimic (though not emulate) that which only God can give. He imagines himself risen, the glorified victor returning from an Earth destroyed, and so his physical deceptions consummately brighten, reinforcing his misguided ego.

Of course, whether Satan owes this brightness to remnants of his original splendor or else to a false reproduction, the freedom to shine is limited by God's "permissive will" (3.685). The Almighty's absolute power over Satan is one truth the devil never accepts except for more than brief, errant moments. Satan is thus astonished when after his triumphant return the only applause he receives is hissing; he looks down to find himself forcibly transfigured, "a greater power / Now rul[ing] him..." (10.515-16). All "false glitter" and angelic form stripped away, Satan is reminded far too late of the reality of his subordination under God.

Satan's Lies Unravel

The problem with the great antagonist's exaggerated claims and constant self-deception is that reality too often gets in the way of Satan's imagination. Still, he refuses to "repent or change . . . that fixed mind" (1.96-98). Our danger here is in being swept up in the same murky tides of untruth that Satan both creates and falls victim to. Fortunately, Milton provides some anchors to the truth of things. One such anchor is Sin, Satan's other "child," and so to her we now turn our attention.

Again driven by ego, it is out of self-love that Lucifer mates with Sin, his beautiful offspring. As she relates to her patriarch, "thee chiefly, who full oft / Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing / Becam'st enamoured, and such joy thou took'st / With me in secret" (2.764-67). A few lines earlier, Sin describes herself as "Likest to [Lucifer] in shape and countenance bright, / Then shining fair" (2.756-57). So, it is because Sin is a reflection of Lucifer (and he is consumed with love for only himself) that a deadly attraction develops.

And, given that Sin is the Devil's reflection, we approach Satan's reaction to her in Book III with newly informed perspective. Meeting the fallen Sin for the first time, Satan does not recognize his daughter/mate: "I know thee not," he says, "nor ever saw till now / Sight more detestable than him and thee" (2.744-45). Of course, it is possible that while Sin and Lucifer were "perfect images" in Heaven, that similarity does not persist in Hell. And yet Milton does not supply us with evidence of the cessation of reflection either. In considering Satan's twin problems of losing his angelic glow and being unable to recognize that loss, it seems significant that in seeing Sin, a figure earlier deemed his "perfect image," Satan finds her deformed and terrible.

In considering Satan's various frauds and how / when suspicion of those lies is aroused, we've already seen that transparency is dangerous for Satan. He is considerably more successful in deceit when inhabiting or emulating a form other than his true one. Might this be because to his audience, Satan's fallen form appears as wrecked and maligned as Sin's does to him? If Sin is an anchor to Satan's reality, then his transmogrification should be as his daughter's. Sin poses of her progenitor: "and do I seem / now in thine eyes so foul, once

deemed so fair[?]" (2.748-49). Satan's response to Sin here and Gabriel's to Satan in Book IV is the same. In short: there *is* a difference, and the difference is obvious.

Aside from Sin operating as an anchor to the truth, there are several brief moments in the poem when Satan acknowledges (by action or reflection) that his pretense is mere pretense. These moments help us differentiate between Milton's truth and the devil's. Having been insulted by Zephon and subsequently recognized and indicted by Gabriel, Satan dilates his form, preparing for battle. Before a single sword is swung, however, the guardian of Paradise says to his militant foe, "what folly then / To boast what arms can do, since thine no more / Than heaven permits,[12] nor mine, though doubled now / To trample thee as mire: for proof look up" (4.1007-1010). In the sky, Satan sees Libra, and takes it as a sign that his might has been weighed against Gabriel's, and God's hand is not on Satan's side of the scale. Although Satan makes several claims throughout the poem to equality or superiority over the Almighty, here, faced with direct contest, he makes none. In a rare acknowledgment of God's superiority, Satan turns and flees.[13]

Of course, these "anchoring" moments are for our benefit, not Satan's. The devil makes it obvious throughout the poem that he is doggedly determined to ignore any truth that rebuts his own philosophy or inflated sense of self-worth. Despite these brief acknowledgments of truth (and, as in the case of Sin being Satan's reflection, instances where the devil *fails* to recognize a truth the reader sees), Satan preposterously continues to delude himself, possibly until he and all of Pandemonium are forcibly turned into serpents by the

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[12] On these lines, Thomas H. Luxon of *The Milton Reading Room* helpfully notes: "That is, all power, like all grace, flows from God alone according to Milton's theology."

[13] For another such "anchoring moment," turn to Satan's despairing self-truth at 4.37-43.

Almighty. We have witnessed that until the final scene in Hell, Satan's deceptions have grown strong enough to even mimic angelic light with "false glitter," artificially restoring what he lost in the Fall. What we have not yet considered is the other way that Satan's deceits are enabled by their increasing strength: as the enemy of Man becomes more adept at fraud, his deceptions shift from defensive mechanisms to weaponized, offensive ones.

The Weaponization of Deceit

Before looking at Satan's weaponization of fraud in the Garden, let's consider for illustrative purposes the first chronological example of such an offense. Analysis of this scene's deceitful weapon and its eventual defeat will also lend itself to our ongoing consideration of the function of Satan's hypocrisies. During their social meeting, Raphael narrates the story of the angelic war to Adam. In this selection, the archangel relates the approach of the rebellious horde on the second day of battle:

> in hollow cube
> Training his devilish enginery, impaled
> On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,
> To hide the fraud . . .
> . . . . . .
> *(here Satan speaks)* Vanguard, to right and left the front unfold;
> That all may see who hate us, how we seek
> Peace and composure
> . . . . . .
> Which to our eyes discovered new and strange. (6.552-571)

The hellish cannons that Satan and his horde employ in this scene are disastrously effective against the Upright angels, which is odd, considering that all other dastardly offenses up to that point had proven futile. Milton tells us that by remaining innocent, God's "inviolable saints" fight "Invulnerable, impenetrably armed . . . Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained /

By wound" (6.398; 6.400-05). And yet, when Satan's throng introduces these hellish engines to battle, those same "impenetrable," innocent souls fall "By thousands" (6.594). Against the cannon's offensive, "none on their feet might stand" (6.592).

So wherein lies the disconnect? Why are God's angels immune to exhaustion, pain, or wound on the first day of battle, but bowled over by Satan's cannons on the second day? The answer to these questions lies not in the *force* of the machine but in its *function*. At heart, the presentation and use of the engine is deceitful. The doomed throng wheels the cannon up to the front lines behind a vanguard, a false face. To Milton, this is an obvious physical representation of the hypocrisy for which Satan is famous. The problem for the Upright angels isn't in the mortar the cannon fires, but in the angels' inability to perceive the cannon behind Satan's soldiers. Lacking that perception and imbued with Upright innocence, the saintly angels have no ability to exercise intuition. Their weakness in front of the cannon is Milton's manifestation of a simple truth of the poem's dogma: lacking intuition, innocence is susceptible to deception. Having received a solid beating after the first day of battle, the sinful horde resigns itself to using deceitful tactics. When Raphael's narration describes that the angels in God's camp find the weapon "to [their] eyes discovered new and strange," the sociable spirit is expressing that they were surprised by the engine because it was physically hidden, but also because there was *no chance* of them intuiting its presence without actually seeing it first.

Following this initial setback, the Upright angels manage to defeat these weaponized deceits. In so doing, they further validate Milton's notions of hypocrisy and transparency. Faced with weapons that they are unprepared to defend against, the righteous angels simply

lift up mountaintops and drop them upon Satan's engines. As Raphael describes it, "Till on those curséd engines' triple-row / [The horde] saw them whelmed, and all their confidence / under the weight of mountains buried deep" (6.650-52). At first, it might seem odd that the defeat of Satan's cannons is by returning them to their initial, hidden state (by burying them under mountains). But here is the difference: it is not merely *covering* something (hiding it from view) that is hypocritical; rather, hypocrisy occurs when an outer pretense (e.g. a vanguard) is deceptively unlike the inner truth (e.g. the cannons) that it conceals.[14] When the legions of rebellious angels surround and obscure the engine, there is hypocrisy in battle. But when the mountains are dumped upon the devices, the cannons become useless — sealed under the earth once again as they are meant to be. So, in returning to a *buried and useless* state, the exterior of the engine reflects perfectly the interior. The upright angels, then, confront and confound the devilish engine of fraud by restoring upright transparency (even, oxymoronically, by hiding the engine from view).

As the angelic war's final testament to Milton's thoughts on transparency and deceit, consider how The Almighty's forces win victory on the third and final day. God, having determined that after two days of battle "War wearied hath performed what war can do," sends His Son to put an end to the fighting (6.695).[15] The Son accordingly ascends God's chariot prepared for battle. His entrance to the fray is described by Raphael:

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[14] Even God, though surely not duplicitous, hides himself: "The filial power arrived, and sat him down / With his great father, for he also went / Invisible" (7.587-89). For Milton, invisibility does not necessarily equal deception.

[15] Obviously, the battle ending on the third day through The Son's grace mirrors Jesus's resurrection on the third day in Luke 24 (*King James Version*, Luke 1-53).

> His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged four,
> Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels
> Distinct alike with a multitude of eyes;
> One sprit in them ruled, and every eye
> Glared lightning . . .
> . . . . . .
> And of their wonted vigour left them drained,
> Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.[16] (6.845-49; 6.851-52)

For this scene, Milton could have chosen any manner for God's grace to be weaponized through The Son. Yet, of all possibilities, the poet chose *sight*. Notice here not only the thrice-over repetition of "eyes," but also that The Son's physical weapons (arrows and lightning) seem to emanate from these eyes. Faced with this all-seeing combatant, the Satanic forces are immediately defeated. With his ultimate sight, The Son penetrates all deceptions and blasts his sinful foes out of Heaven, proving the paradigm that we've long since established in *Paradise Lost*: for Satan, transparency is dangerous.

The Ultimate Weapon for the Ultimate Deception

Seated in his Father's all-seeing chariot, The Son defeats the Satanic forces and banishes them to Hell. Unfortunately for Eve, mother of Man, the ability to "discern / Abstrusest thoughts" is not something that she and God's eternal eye have in common (5.711-12). Lacking the ability of intuitive sight, Eve falls victim to the serpent's wiles and brings Death to Eden. Of course, it is Satan's role as the serpent that we have been marching toward in the considerations of his increasingly effective self-transformations. But before we evaluate Satan's most perfect guise and Eve's fatal response to it, it will be helpful to look

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[16] Milton draws upon the description of the four cherubim and wheels from Ezekiel, wherein we find the "hand of God" descending to Earth in "the likeness of four living [men with] four faces, [moving in] "a flash of lightning" (*King James Version*, Ezekiel 1-14).

into the inherent weaknesses of Eve's character that make the serpent such a perfect choice for her deception.

Milton tells us clearly and often that of our two paradisal parents, Eve is the weaker in intuitive faculties. For one example among many, consider Adam's communication of his spouse's weaknesses to Raphael: "For well I understand in the prime end / Of nature her the inferior, in the mind / And inward faculties" (8.540-42). Adam goes on to say that by her seeming lovely, Eve sometimes appears wiser and more reasonable than he. In response, Raphael (send by God to educate Man) chastises Adam: "what transports thee so, / An outside? . . . weigh with her thy self; / Then value" (8.567-571). For Satan's part, he elects to tempt Eve over Adam partially because he shuns Adam's "higher intellectual" (9.483).

And yet, Eve's allegedly lower intelligence notwithstanding, consider the explicit manner in which Raphael repeats God's prohibition against the Tree of Knowledge. As the sociable angel says, "Thou mayst not; in the day thou eat'st, thou diest; / Death is the penalty imposed, beware, / And govern well thy appetites, let Sin / Surprise thee, and her black attendant Death" (7.544-47). Of course, it is only Adam who directly receives this angelic warning, but to erase any doubt of his subsequent communication to Eve, we need only look at her final words to Adam before parting his company. Speaking on Adam's reaction to the dangers of Satan in the Garden, Eve says:

> His violence thou fear'st not, being such,
> As we, not capable of death or pain,
> Can either not receive, or can repel.
> His fraud is then thy fear, which plain infers
> Thy equal fear that my firm faith and love
> Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced. (9.282-87)

This brief selection proves some important facts. First, whether her intelligence is diminished or not, Eve absolutely knows that an enemy is nigh. And more importantly, the mother of Man demonstrates clearly here that she recognizes the enemy in question is a *deceitful* one, whose exact aim is to "shake or seduce" her by "fraud." Given how plainly Eve understands the perils she walks toward in Eden, how is it possible that she still fails in her trial? As I will discuss shortly, Satan's serpentine deception is perfect and unique for Eve. But still, armed as she is with such knowledge of Satan's presence and wiles[17], I suggest that Eve's faults must be more substantive than merely lacking manly intellect.

Eve and Satan: Parallel Susceptibilities and Parallel Falls

Fortunately for Satan (and unfortunately for all of us), Eve's susceptibilities to sin mirror his own. This parallel informs the manner in which the serpent-Satan crafts his argument. Milton gives us plenty of evidence to support the Satan/Eve similarity, and it isn't particularly difficult to see how his fall foreshadows Eve's own. Raphael gives us some indication of this similarity when he speaks on Satan's intent in Book VI:

> that with him
> Bereaved of of happiness thou mayst partake
> His punishment, eternal misery;
> Which would be all his solace and revenge
> . . . . . .
> Thee once to gain companion of his woe.
> But listen not to his temptations, warn
> Thy weaker.[18] (6.902-09)

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[17] Though, being innocent, still lacking native intuition.

[18] Again, we're coming to the reasons that Eve is "weaker" beyond an allegedly lower intellect.

According to Raphael, Satan seeks a "companion of his woe." This could simply mean that Satan desires more fallen company (especially when that gain would be God's loss). And yet, Milton gives us other clues that clarify Raphael's words, making clear that Satan not only seeks Man's demise, but that he toils specifically to have Man emulate his own Fall.

The dream that Satan plants within Eve's mind as he crouches toad-like at her ear is one support. Eve, waking with "tresses discomposed," relates to Adam how the angelic figure in her dream approaches her: "he drew nigh, and to me held, / Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part / Which he had plucked" (5.10; 5.82-84). Whether or not we detect Eve actually tasting the proffered fruit in her dream, the effect of Satan's seemingly angelic offer is the same. The poet expressly shows us that the dream-Satan offers Eve the *same fruit* that he'd plucked and tasted. As I will explain next, this is a powerfully proleptic moment in the poem. Eve not only falls as Satan did, committing similar trespasses, but the manner by which she falls (her susceptibilities) are identical to his.[19]

Perhaps the most impactful of these shared weaknesses is the characteristic of excess self-love. Obviously, we've already seen that self-love is one of Satan's defining traits. Recall that he "Becam'st enamoured" with Sin and lay with her because he viewed in her his "perfect image" (2.766, 2.765). Eve too, though truthfully beautiful, suffers from this ill. Indeed, her first waking moments after Creation echo the legend of Narcissus. As she relates later on, her first action was to peer into a reflective pool "with unexperienced thought":

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[19] To accuse prelapsarian Eve of being flawed would call into question the perfection of God's creation. Rather than make that accusation and claim Eve's imperfection, I focus instead on how sin is able to infiltrate Eve via the serpent.

> Bending down to look on me, I started back,
> It started back, but pleased I soon returned,
> Please it returned as soon with answering looks
> Of sympathy and love; there I had fixed
> Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
> Had not a voice thus warned me. (4.462-67)

Notice here that her "start[ing] back" reflects the initial reaction of Lucifer and his company to the spontaneous genesis of Sin from the chief rebel's temple.[20] In both of these cases, the surprised party recovers from the initial shock and returns; in both cases, that is a choice based on vain attraction.

To be fair to the universal mother, Eve openly recognizes that this event was an exercise in vanity: "there I had fixed / Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire" had not the voice of God interrupted, guiding her to Adam (4.465-66). And yet, knowing her "unexperienced" vanity in that moment, Eve goes on to explain that in seeing Adam for the first time, she couldn't help but think that he is less pleasing than her watery image: "[I saw thee] ...yet methought less fair, / Less winning soft, less amiably mild, / Than that smooth water image; back I turned" (4.478-480). Hilariously, Eve even *turns back* as if to return to her narcissistic viewing rather than spend time with her "less fair" spouse. That spouse only adds to Eve's inflated sense of self-beauty. He praises her aesthetic throughout the poem in nearly every address he makes to her.

For proof of how her vanity makes Eve more susceptible to Satan's wiles, consider again her description of the Satanic dream.[21] Eve describes the dream-voice of Satan (though

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[20] This moment mirrors the birth of Athena from Zeus's head in the Greek myth. She (and in the same fashion, Sin) represent forethought of her progenitor.

[21] The dream's use of flattery excellently prefigures Satan's play upon that same conceit as the serpent.

at this point in the dream she alleges it to be Adam's voice). The voice says: "heaven wakes with all his eyes, / Whom to behold but thee, nature's desire, / In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment / Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze. / I rose as at thy call" (5.44-48).[22] Milton could have framed Satan's call to Eve in any number of ways, and yet he chose the call to come through compliment of Eve's beauty. Note how responsive our vain mother is this flattery. The voice praises her, and she immediately rises.

Ambition is another susceptibility to sin shared by Eve and Satan. In Satan's case, it was his feelings of subordination at the unveiling of The Son that sparked discontent and vain aspiration. Eve, too, was designed to be a subordinate (under Adam) and unlike Satan she generally seems happily fit for that role. Yet, Satan begins preparing Eve for ambitious thoughts early. As his figure says in her nightmare: "Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve . . .Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods / Thyself a goddess, not to earth confined" (5.74; 5.77-78). Satan not only promises that eating the fruit will bring her apotheosis, he already calls her a rightful, angelic goddess. Four Books later, as the Mother of Man succumbs to the serpent's suggestion, Milton shows us what ambitions are on her mind: "nor was godhead from her thought" (9.790).

Having established how Eve's characteristics parallel the traits in Lucifer that bring about his own fall, let's turn our attention at last to Satan's ultimate deception. We looked once before at the passage where Satan, having fled Gabriel under The Lord's scales,[23] returns

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[22] With "heaven[‘s] ... eyes," Satan calls upon the same divine sight that is dangerous when turned in his direction and which will later be a danger to the fallen Eve. Used here, it strikes Eve as a compliment.

[23] Libra, as on page 31 of my thesis

to Eden. With an eye for the deceits Satan manifests (rather than on the ego that attends those deceits), let's look at the passage again. Milton writes, "When Satan who late fled before the threats / Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved / In meditated fraud and malice, bent / On man's destruction . . . fearless returned" (9.53-57). This was our introductory passage for considering the improving caliber of Satan's deceptions. Having apparently been awakened to the inadequacy of his former frauds by being accosted in the garden and easily read by the archangel, Satan meditates on his "fraud and malice" in order to improve.[24]

And improve he does. Remember that in his first breach of Eden's defenses, Satan simply jumps right over the wall: "At one slight bound high over leap'd all bound / Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within / Lights on his feet" (4.181-83). The outcome to this infiltration is swift detection and subsequent expulsion from the Garden. Of course, it was Uriel who first saw Satan descend to Earth and so it was he who warned the guards, but this nuance only adds to the hypothesis that by frontal approach and blatant trespass Satan is easily found in Eden. Returning a second time in order to put his serpentine mastery into effect, Satan's method of entry into the Garden is more subtle — and thus more auspicious.

This time around, the trespasser "In with the river sunk, and with it rose / Satan involved in rising mist, then sought / Where to lie hid" (9.74-76). At this point in the poem, this is Satan's greatest transformation yet. Here, the devil doesn't merely change his shape; he becomes a different type of matter all together. Entering Eden with vile intent and subtlety on his mind, Satan rises from the water as a mist.

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[24] In his "mediation," Satan flies seven laps around the globe, always staying on the nighttime side to avoid Uriel's eye.

We know what follows. When Satan finally achieves his aim and confronts Eve alone and unperturbed, the slithering devil approaches her with flattery and sound reasoning. Having led our matriarch to the Forbidden Tree, the Serpent rebuts God's prohibitive command:

> Queen of this universe, do not believe
> Those rigid threats of death; ye shall not die:
> How should ye? by the fruit? it gives you life
> To knowledge: by the threatener? look on me,
> Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live. (9.684-88)

He goes on to argue that because the fruit endowed him, ostensibly a beast, with manlike capabilities, Eve's indulgence would consummately elevate her (as in the toady dream five Books earlier) to godhood: "So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off / Human, to put on gods, death to be wished, / Though threatened, which no worse that this can bring" (9.713-16). Being yet innocent, Eve receives all information equally, unable as is she to intuit deception. When Satan twists God's grave warning to mean a transformative apotheosis and further swears that he himself has tasted of the Forbidden Fruit, Eve does not have the intuitive faculties to exert suspicion. Eve capitulates to this serpentine illogic: "she plucked, she ate" (9.781).

Being yet innocent, Eve lacks native intuition. But she had been outright warned against deception by Raphael (via Adam) and clearly demonstrates her understanding. I began this thesis by identifying the two ways suspicion are aroused via intuition in *Paradise Lost*: by knowledge and by perception. One could easily argue that by virtue of being as diligently warned as Ithuriel and Zephon (also innocent, Upright characters) were by Gabriel, Eve ought to have knowledge enough even in her Innocent state to sharpen her intuitive faculties.

Counter to the reasoning in that argument, however, Eve intuits no deceit in the serpent; she falls. This failure is due in part to Satan's direct plays upon her susceptibilities (which parallel his own), and also in part to the unique character of this deception. Unlike Satan's former frauds, his persuasion of Eve is partially genuine.

Satan's Serpent: Perfectly Perplexing

When I refer to Satan's ultimate deception of Eve as "partially genuine," I am referring to the unique combination of deceit *and truth* that is present in the serpent's form and argument. Here, Satan's confounding "half-lie" is effective for three main reasons: first, the devil atypically *enters* his new form, rather than mimicking it; second, the serpent's inherent qualities mirror Satan's own; and third, the flattery the serpent exercises is based on Satan's genuine impressions of Eve. Indeed, Satan's blending of truth and lie is so perfect in the serpent that even the poem's narrator seems to lose account of the Devil. Once Satan enters his subtle quarry, he is only ever referred to as "the serpent"; never once does Milton mention Satan stowed away inside.

If we're considering a fraud's ability to hide its engineer, it is useful to recognize the enormous discrepancy between the physical shapes of Satan (as his honest self) and the serpent. Satan is an obvious presence and prides himself on being the center the attention. Recall that in Book IV, Gabriel identifies the "prince of hell" even from the great distance of Satan's approach (4.871). Shortly thereafter, Satan makes himself an even larger presence in preparation to battle Eden's guardian: "On the other side Satan all armed / Collecting all his

might *dilated* stood, / Like Teneriff or Atlas unremoved" (4.985-87, emphasis mine). With that conception of Satan in mind, here follow his thoughts upon preparing to enter the serpent:

> The serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds
> To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
> O foul descent! that I who erst contended
> With gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
> Into a beast, and mixed with bestial slime,
> This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
> That to the height of deity aspired. (9.160-67)

Though his ego can barely stand the change, Satan descends into the serpent. But this novel method of fraud raises an obvious question: Why does the devil bother to enter the serpent? Why doesn't he merely transform himself into one, as he has with all his former physical deceptions in the poem? By entering the serpent rather than merely becoming one through transformative pretense, Satan achieves a form of weaponized deceit hereto unseen in *Paradise Lost*. The cannons in the angelic war *appeared* to be one thing but were actually another. The same for the cherub and the toad. But the snake is a serpent before Satan enters it and after he leaves it.[25] The exterior is a truth, albeit a mask, and so is even less detectable.[26]

Notice that Satan's descent into the serpent continues a pattern of his transformations in the poem: with each change, Satan becomes an increasingly lower form. He began as a false angel (albeit a lowly cherub), and from there moved through the cormorant, lion, tiger, toad, and then a low-creeping mist, arriving at last "mixed with bestial slime" in the serpent.

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[25] Hughes helpfully points out that Milton's serpent is definitely just that, "Mere serpent in appearance," not at all the serpent with the head of a woman as depicted in Andreini's *L'Adamo II, iii* and elsewhere (Goldberg 9.412-13; Hughes 388).

[26] Although it was delivered to Adam in a different context, Eve would have been greatly benefitted by heeding Raphael's warning against placing too much stock in appearances: "...what transports thee so, / An outside?" (8.567-68).

Though he's revolted to do so, this descent might contribute to his effort's success. By descending with each transformation, Satan becomes marginally closer to Hell each time. As Hell is his prison, any change that lowers him closer to home (rather than elevating him away from it) is a less massive pretense. And so, in lowering himself, Satan is being at least somewhat more genuine in his morphing.

Despite his revulsion at descending into the lowly serpent, Satan enters a beast whose native qualities mirror Satan's own. The devil intentionally selects an animal with these qualities, so as to further conceal his intentions from scrutiny. As Milton narrates Satan's selection, it is

> The serpent subtlest beast of all the field
> . . . . . .
> Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom
> To enter, and his dark suggestions hide
> From sharpest sight: for in the wily snake,
> Whatever sleights none would suspicious mark,
> As from his wit and native subtlety
> Proceeding, which in other beasts observed
> Doubt might beget of diabolic power. (9.86; 9.89-95)

When Satan poses as a cherub, his self and his appearance were at fierce odds. The devil's emotions shone through the guise; Uriel easily saw the disconnect and was alerted. Because the serpent is "native subtle," however, Satan's own subtlety enhances (rather than disturbs) his guise. No one will "suspicious mark" the serpent for being wily, and so by possessing him Satan hopes to avoid awakening the "suspicion [that] sleeps / At wisdom's gate" (3.686-87).

Of course, Satan's prediction of evading detection within the serpent turns out to be exactly correct. Though surprised by his gift of speech, Eve doesn't mark the serpent with undue suspicion: "Thee, serpent, subtlest beast of all the field / I knew, but not with human

voice endued" (9.560-61). Still, we have to wonder why Eve, encountering something unusual (a talking snake) doesn't immediately consider Adam's parting caution to her that morning. It might be that Eve was prepared to meet a demon, or even a transfigured demon, but not an actual serpent — something she knows to be subtle and likely encounters every day. Regardless of the exact reasoning, both Satan's entering of the serpent and his shared (thus better concealed) characteristics with the beast point to a rationale for this deception's total success. Milton tells us that "goodness thinks no ill / Where no ill seems," and here we find less unseemliness about the serpent than of any other of Satan's disguises (3.688-89).

The *method* of Satan's possession of the snake is significant, too. Milton shows us: "Nor nocent yet, but on the grassy herb / Fearless unfeared he slept: in at the mouth / The devil entered" (9.186-88). Though not yet capable of causing harm to man (without Satan's assistance) the serpent later becomes feared for his bite and venom. Obviously, this fear is forecasted by the following scenes, wherein Satan poisons mankind with his argument from the mouth of the serpent. One of the main tacts the temper takes in this persuasion is to flatter Eve with his rhetoric, playing upon the narcissism that we discussed earlier.

By praising the mother of man with lofty compliments, Satan seeks to elevate Eve's perception of herself enough to excite her ambition and tempt her to taste the fruit. Thus, the devil plays upon both of the susceptibilities shared between himself and Eve. These are just a few of the compliments that the serpent bestows upon her: "sole wonder . . . thy looks, heaven of mildness" (9.533-34), "Fairest resemblance of the maker fair" (9.538), "celestial beauty" (9.540), "universally admired" (9.542), "A goddess among gods, adored and served / By angels numberless, thy daily train" (9.546-47).

But again, the wonder of Satan's use of the serpent is that not all of his wiles in that form are lies. Even though these flatteries are designed to tap into Eve's conceit and move her toward temptation, the sentiments behind the shower of compliments are genuine. When Satan first sees Adam and Eve making love in the garden, "aside [he] turned / For envy, yet with jealous leer malign / Eyed them askance" (4.501-03). There is also evidence of Satan's appreciation of Eve's beauty even beyond this expression of jealousy. Having been doomed to Hell, Satan cannot find happiness. And yet, see how he speaks about Eve: "With what delight could I have walked thee round, If I could joy in aught" (9.114-15). Later, Milton writes, "Such pleasure took the serpent to behold [her] / / But the hot hell that always in him burns, / Though in mid-heaven, soon ended his delight" (9.455; 9.467-68). Unavoidably, Satan takes delight in Eve's beauty. Thus, while many parts of his argument in favor of tasting the fruit are fictitious, the flattery he bestows upon Eve is genuine.

Looking back over the scene of Eve's temptation, it is hard not to applaud Satan for the mastery with which he executes this all-important deception. If aroused suspicion can awake intuition in the poem through knowledge or through perception, the devil does an excellent job of restricting the possibility of either. Eve's knowledge of the serpent tells her that the beast is subtle. Unfortunately for her, so too is a serpent possessed by Satan; she gains no intuitive benefit here. She perceives the serpent as well, but the beast appears to they eye exactly as he is — serpentine. There is no "marr[ing] of a borrowed visage" as in the case of Satan's emulation of the cherub.

By being partially genuine, the conceptual distance between Satan's internal and his external is reduced: more of him is actually as he appears, and so his impersonations wax

from impressive (as in the cherub) to masterful. If Zephon and Ithuriel were again tasked with finding out the traitor and the guardians happened upon this serpent, would even they be able to intuit the truth?

Thus far in our evaluation of the serpent, we've spent our time analyzing the deception from Eve's perspective: why is she unable (though warned) to recognize the slippery fraud in her tempter? But now let's consider this scene from the other perspective, looking instead at how by entering such an ideal form for his fraud, Satan is uniquely enabled. Safely hidden within the snaky folds of his perfect lie, Satan's deceptions grow bolder: no longer merely bending the truth, the devil's claims to Eve are bold-faced lies. Even so, the power of his guise protects him from intuitive detection.

Speaking of his own fictitious delights at having tasted the fruit, the serpent tells Eve, "And life more perfect have attained than fate / Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot" (9.689-690). Obviously, this is the exact opposite of Satan's true story. He didn't gain a "life more perfect" through his ambitious trials. Rather, he suffered an antithetical fate — a heinous fall that he now persuades Eve to duplicate. The important thing to note here is that only now, couched safely within the serpent, is Satan capable of making such brazenly disingenuous claims and *still remain undetected*.

Before, when his physical frauds were strong enough only to shroud him as mere defenses, Satan could not safely practice the same offensive tactics. Take again the example of Satan (in full cherub guise) speaking with Uriel. The devil relates that he has come to Eden out of "Unspeakable desire to see" Man, "That both in him and in all things ... / The universal maker we may praise" (3.662; 3.675-76). Obviously, the first part of this claim is actually true

(Satan was indeed curious). The second half of the claim is a total lie, of course, Satan actually comes to the Garden to despoil it, thereby rebuking The Almighty, far from praising him. And, while the story momentarily fools Uriel, this is a guise that Satan cannot maintain. He is impersonating a form unlike his own, and so his bold-faced deception cannot go unnoticed.

In his serpent form, Satan achieves the same type of offensive fraud as he did with his hellish engines in Heaven. Those cannons were Lucifer's ultimate weapon in the angelic war; by weaponizing deceit, the devil's crew scored a victory against an Upright, fully innocent combatant. In both these cases, the innocent parties were fully equipped to exercise intuition (God's camp already knew Satan's nature, and Eve, as we've seen, was fully aware of possible fraud in the garden); yet in both events, Satan's weaponized lies prove powerful enough to win the hour. In the latter case, Eve is so bowled over by Satan's offensive that she not only believes the serpent's antithetical evidence, but she actually repeats them herself. Just before tasting, she ponders the serpent: "author unsuspect / Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile" (9.772). These musings reflect Satan's exact intention in deceit: "[the serpent put on] show of zeal and love / To Man" (9.665-66).[27]

As a final parallel between these two scenes,[28] consider how the deception is vanquished in each case. When Satan's weaponizations are put to use and even Upright forces are defeated, only divine sight can right the ship. We've seen how in His Father's chariot, adorned with a "multitude of eyes," The Son blasts the fraudulent horde to Hell, excising

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[27] Seeing this evidence of Eve absorbing and emulating Satan's own tactics prepares us for the parallels between her fallen thoughts and the Devil's.

[28] The hellish cannons and Eve's temptation.

deceit from Heaven (6.847). After man's fall in Eden, Milton presents us with a similar ousting-by-sight. God sends Michael down to Paradise, not alone, but with a "cohort bright" in tow: "watchful Cherubim; four faces each / Had, like a double Janus, all their shape / Spangled with eyes more numerous then those / Of Argus" (11.128-131). As in The Son's solution to the war, Michael applies celestial sight in order to banish any traces of deception (which, unfortunately for our ancestors, meant their removal from the garden).

Eve's Sequel, Fallen Thought, and Action

With the Fall, the order of the universe is disturbed. In Man's trespass the world's fundamental perfection is broken. After Adam's subsequent sin, Milton narrates: "Some say [God] bid his angels turn askance / The poles of the earth twice ten degrees and more / From the sun's axle; they with labor pushed / Oblique the centric globe" (10.668-671). In these lines, Milton describes the natural tilt of the Earth. The poet imagines man's fall as the inciting incident in the globe's imperfect orientation: God sends angels to wrench the universe out of alignment. This depiction is reflective of the change we see occur in Eve herself. After her Fall, Eve's character is likewise "turn[ed] askance," wrenched into an arena of thought and hypocrisy that had been totally alien to her moments earlier. This tumultuous change is Eve's indoctrination to the world of deceit — her loss of innocence. And, having fallen, Eve's thoughts become as parallel to Satan's as were her Upright faults.

The first thoughts Milton shows us of the newly fallen Eve are extremely revealing. Muses the great mother:

> And I perhaps am secret; heaven is high,
> High and remote to see from thence distinct
> Each thing on earth; and other care perhaps
> May have diverted from continual watch
> Our great forbidder, safe with all his spies
> About him. (9.811-16)

Note that in these very first thoughts as a fallen woman, Eve's impulses are duplicitous. The same Eve who was previously unable to intuit duplicity in others is hoping that she may become undetectably hypocritical, continuing to walk through Paradise as if sinless. She has the novel impulse to be "secret," to herself become a "false dissembler" (3.681). Here, Eve commits another heresy: assuming that her sight and God's are similar. She supposes there might be *any* distance or veil that could hide her from God's sight (this a testament to her fallen devaluing of The Almighty), but this weakness of sight is a weakness of God's subordinates, as Raphael explains: "God to remove his ways from human sense, / Placed heaven from earth so far, that *earthly* sight, / If it presume, might err in things too high" (8.119-121, emphasis mine).

Also, in a poem marked by a constant allegory of altitude and spatial distance, note that by wishfully positioning heaven as "high" (and thus removed from her), Eve necessarily positions herself as "low" (or, at least, *lower*). Her location in the spatial universe of the poem is as her newly found moral one: debased. Interestingly, this newfound lowness is by her own admission and *her own hope*. As is the case for Satan, the more clear a view her audience has of Eve, the greater danger she finds herself in. Transparency has become Eve's antagonist. Of course, the irony here is that in falling, Eve will painfully lose the proximity to Heaven that she enjoys in Paradise.

Finally, this selection shows us another way that Eve's Fallen psyche has become more like Satan's. In referring to The Almighty, Eve calls him "Our great forbidder... [surrounded by] his spies." Suddenly, God has become an antagonistic voyeur, prying into Paradise to wrongfully see the evidence of Eve's secrets. This fear of prying eyes soon translates into Eve's (and Adam's) newfound embarrassment over sexuality. It is clear that Eve's novel fear and derision toward God originate in a fierce desire to maintain her farce — a desire to have her secrets protected. In another show of her newly Satanic mind, Eve starts comparing her knowledge to that of the "gods who all things know" (9.804). Beyond her inappropriate willingness to compare herself to heaven, notice here that Eve uses "gods" rather than the singular. Hughes remarks on this line that the mother of man has been thoroughly "muddled," "echo[ing] Satan's equivocal use of the word" (Hughes 397).

The Satanic "echo" continues to reverberate in Eve's mind as her thoughts turn earthward, to a consideration of her yet-innocent husband:

> But to Adam in what sort
> Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known
> As yet my change, and give him to partake
> Full happiness with me, or rather not,
> But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
> Without copartner? So to add what wants
> In female sex, the more to draw his love,
> And render me more equal, and perhaps
> A thing not undesirable, sometime
> Superior; for inferior who is free? (9.816-825)

First, these thoughts show us that in her fall, the nascent ambition that Satan helped mature in Eve comes to fruition. Though she cannot physically morph her shape as Satan can, Eve still considers misrepresenting her "form" to him. This is an unequivocally hypocritical impulse

(despite Eve's being unable to physically manifest her hypocrisy in the same manner as Satan). The fallen Eve seems to have discovered (or at least re-centered her thinking around) the ability to be deceptive. When she finally determines to share the fruit with Adam, it is not out of a desire for honesty but rather out of envy. Eve muses to herself:

> But what if God have seen,
> And death ensue? then I shall be no more,
> And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
> Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct;
> A death to think! (9.825-29)

But in her entreaty to Adam, Eve hypocritically states the opposite of her genuine thoughts: "Were it I thought death menaced would ensue / This my attempt, I would sustain alone / The worst, and not persuade thee" (9.977-79). The fallen Eve is one disabused of innocence and prone to deceit.

In her appearance to her husband, Eve puts on the same deceit she encounters in the serpent. As Satan begins his serpentine deception of Eve with flattery, the sound most pleasing to her ear, so does Eve begin her entreaty to Adam with his favorite words. "Thee I have missed," Eve tells her spouse, "and thought it long, deprived / Thy presence, agony of love till now / Not felt . . . The pain of absence from thy sight" (9.859-863).[29] Adam, of course, had been remiss to let Eve wander alone in the first place, alleging that a Satanic attack "on us both as once / The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare" (9.303-04).

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[29] Still, Eve can't prevent an edge of condescension from creeping into her argument: "Lest thou not tasting, different degree / Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce / Deity for thee" (9.883-85).

Yet these arguments, imbued as they are with deception, run into a brick wall in Adam. Though he chooses his fate with Eve, he is never deceived by her. When Adam first hears of Eve's trespass, he expresses what he knows to be God's truth without hesitation:

> O fairest of creation, last and best
> Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
> . . . . . .
> How art thou lost, how on a sudden lost
> Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote?
> . . . . . .
> some cursed fraud
> Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown.[30] (9.896-97; 9.901-05)

In a rather intuitive leap, he alleges here that Eve's fall must have been orchestrated by some "cursed fraud." This first reaction shows right away the opinion he steadfastly maintains until his fall: Eve's breaking of God's prohibition was sin (likely wrought by deception), and all the promised punishments of The Almighty will come to pass. Throughout his wife's entreaties, the Father of Mankind never for a moment believes Eve's argument that the fruit "open[s] eyes, and make[s] them gods who taste" (9.866). Together, Adam's inability to be duped and his regardless, subsequent election to fall raise a pair of questions. First, what equips Adam to discern Eve's fraud? And second, having correctly separated the truth from her lies, why does Adam choose to fall anyway?

Intuitive Adam: Free in Choosing, Free to Fall

We've already seen in our discussion on Eve's beauty that she and Adam were not equally made: "Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed; / For contemplation he and valour

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[30] Recalling Eve's narcissism and Adam's contributions to it, notice that even in mourning Eve's mistake, Adam's first reaction is to praise her.

formed, / For softness she and sweet attractive Grace" (4.296-98). According to Milton, Adam is designed for "contemplation," for more advanced thought than his wife. In terms of detecting fraud, it appears that enhanced intuition might have been part and parcel with this greater intellect.

When Eve eats the forbidden fruit, she is obviously on the other side of the Garden from her husband, from whom she has departed that morning. Despite this distance, however, Adam senses that something has gone awry in his wife's solo sojourn: "Yet oft his heart, divine of something ill, / Misgave him; he the faltering measure felt; / And forth to meet her went" (9.845-47). Here, Adam's heart is "divine," having an almost Godlike ability to foreknow what he'll find once he and Eve reunite.[31] But Milton also writes at this moment that "Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat / Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe" (9.782-82). So while the first of these selections seems to describe Adam intuitively sensing Eve from across Eden, it could be that in earth's "feel[ing] the wound," Adam is merely involved in that sensation.

Regardless, there are other reasons that Adam is protected from deceit. Eve was a likely victim in part because of the devilish susceptibilities of ambition and exceeding self-love. Adam, however, does not harbor these same weaknesses. Instead of ambition, Adam's conversations with The Almighty reveal only humility. In arguing for the creation of a partner, the patriarch says that a spouse could "solace his defects," for:

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[31] This deifying word choice will become more significant when we consider the reasons for Adam's *choice* in falling.

> man by numbers is to manifest
> His single imperfection, and beget
> Like of his like, his image multiplied,
> In unity defective, which requires
> Collateral love, and dearest amity. (8.419; 8.422-26)

In humble fashion, Adam is born thinking he's incomplete, that he is imperfect.[32] Eve, Adam's "weaker," is born aware of her perfection (6.909). Were it not for God's call to attention, the newly formed Eve would have stared forever into the pool, captivated by her own image. By alleging himself imperfect, Adam is less susceptible to sin than Eve. Yes, Eve admits that her pool-gazing was "vain." But this single admission doesn't seem sufficient to excuse her narcissism or else defend the rebuttal that she is totally aware of (and thus may remedy) that susceptibility. As for selfishness: if Adam suffers the weakness of excess love, then it is an excess of love for Eve. No where in the poem does he praise himself or extol his own virtues, except, on the rare occasion, when so doing offers greater glory to his Creator.

Beyond being pure of the susceptibilities that make Eve susceptible to the serpent, Adam has another reason to thank for being prepared for his wife's untruth. We learn in Book VIII that Eve's toady dream is actually a bastardization of an earlier (non-Satanic) version. Milton doesn't reveal much about the origins of dreams according to his dogma, but whether you ascribe the origin to God (from whom all things descend) or else to Adam's own drowsy mind, the effects of the dream upon our patriarch's consciousness are the same. This is how Adam describes his first dream to Raphael:

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[32] This nascent self-perception is incorrect, of course; Adam is perfect prior to the Fall. Still, by alleging himself incomplete in solitude, Adam prepares himself to be mentally wedded to Eve, his "solace" (8.419).

> one came, methought, of shape divine,
> . . . . . .
> by the hand he took me raised,
> And over fields and waters, as in aid
> Smooth sliding without step last led me up
> . . . . . .
> Each tree
> Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to the eye
> Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite
> To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found
> Before mine eyes all real, as the dream
> Had lively shadowed. (8.295; 8.300-02; 8.306-311)

One of the striking characteristics of this proleptic description is the serpentine character of Adam's guide and movement. The sibilance in the lines "as in aid / Smooth sliding without step last led me up," reflect a serpentine direction toward the Tree of Knowledge. Of course, Adam never has any interaction with the serpent, but having this vision nonetheless prepares him for serpentine wiles — even when they manifest themselves in his beloved. Certainly, Eve's attempted deception of Adam is supposed to be a duplication of the serpent's wiles.[33] As Milton narrates: "To observe the sequel, [Satan] saw his guileful act / By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded / Upon her husband" (10.334-36). Milton writes "unweeting," here, and we're reminded that at this point, Eve hasn't recognized the doom inherent to eating the fruit; she "knew not eating Death" (9.792). Still, the sentiments she expresses in this entreaty are untrue and so are (even if not intentionally on her part) deceptive to Adam.] Before her argument with Adam, Eve is led "into fraud" by the snake, indoctrinating her into a deceitful world.

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[33] Though I won't discuss it here, the two persuasions are similar even in the captivating beauty that the serpent and Eve both share.

Beyond this obvious prefiguring for sly deception, the dream also prepares Adam for his eventual challenge, simply: to make a choice. The fruit may be tempting in Adam's dream, but this is reasonable; the fruit is tempting in the waking world as well. God doesn't hide that temptation from Man, nor should He. Man's Creator places the Tree of Knowledge in Eden so that Man must constantly choose to remain innocent as a test of his obedience. When Adam awakens, the temptation (and the choice) from the dream lay before him: they are real. Inherent to these temptations is The Almighty's allowance of free will in Paradise. We mustn't forget that in discussing Adam's capability to detect Eve's deception, we are marching toward his subsequent choice. He is "free to fall," and God leaves that decision fully within Adam's discretion (3.99).

With native intellect, a lesser susceptibility of character than Eve, and a cautionary dream in his arsenal, Adam is well enough equipped to dodge deception. And yet, he makes the choice to eat: "he scrupled not to eat / Against his better knowledge, not deceived, / But fondly overcome with female charm" (9.997-99). This choice, made both willingly and knowledgeably,[34] was made for moral reasons. Adam weighs the choice before his fall:

> The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
> Bone of my bone thou art,[35] and from thy state
> Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.
> . . . . . .
> However I with thee have fixed my lot,
> Certain to undergo like doom, if death
> Consort with thee, death is to me as life;
> So forcible within my heart I feel

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[34] Knowledgeably of ensuing death and doom, even if the meaning of these terms are not yet within Adam's comprehension.

[35] These lines borrow from Genesis 2:23, where Adam refers to Eve, saying, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

> The bond of nature draw me to my own,
> My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
> Our state cannot be severed, we are one,
> One flesh; to lose thee were to lost my self. (9.914-16, 9.952-59)

Most significant to our consideration of Adam's thought processes here is the consistent emphasis he places on unity. The bond of nature he describes between himself and Eve is so complete ("we are one") that his words recall Raphael's description of angelic lovemaking a Book earlier: "...obstacle find none / Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars: / Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace / Total they mix..." (8.624-27). Indeed, it is this unity of being in his relationship with Eve that Adam holds most dear: "[I am delighted much more by] all her words and actions mixed with love," he says, "And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned / Union of mind, or in us both one soul" (8.602-04). His love for her transcends the limitations of earthly bounds and becomes almost angelic.

Indeed, it is this unity of being with Eve that Adam holds most dear: "[I am delighted much more by] all her words and actions mixed with love," he says, "And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned / Union of mind, or in us both one soul" (8.602-04). His love for her transcends the limitations of earthly bounds and becomes almost angelic.

The near-celestial character of Adam's love further supports a principal difference between him and the object of his affections. As Adam states (and Raphael does not correct), he understands that she "in outward ... resembling less / His image who made both" (8.543-44). Simply put, Adam is more similar in form to God. Indeed, Adam has other characteristics even beyond his unearthly love that bespeak this godliness. We know from the God's own mouth that he allows for free will: "[I made Man] just and right, / Sufficient to

have stood, though free to fall" (3.98-99). Interestingly, Milton makes a point of showing us that Adam places a great importance on the same allowance. When Eve argues for her brief independence, the father of Man says at last: "But God left free the will, for what obeys / Reason, if free, and reason he made right / / Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more" (9.349-352; 9.372). Even after the Fall, Adam maintains his godlike devotion to the impregnability of the freedom of choice. He retells his warning against parting ways to Eve, saying "[but] beyond this had been force, / And force upon free will hath here no place" (9.1173-74). Despite all this godliness, however, Adam still gives in Eve; loving her, he still falls.

And yet love might be the means of Adam's fall, but it is also the vehicle for his recognition of the untruths in Eve's rhetoric. Consider the enlightening ability of love that Raphael describes: "love refines / The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat / In reason, and is judicious, is the scale / By which to heavenly love thou mayst ascend" (8.589-592). Notice also the comment Raphael makes on love's ability to help one ascend to "heavenly love" (God's grace). It is odd that this should be the archangel's sentiment, especially because he is in the Garden as The Almighty's sociable emissary, and God (being omniscient) must know that love will be Adam's *downfall* rather than the method of his *ascension*.

Nor is this the only counterintuitive advice that Raphael gives Adam. First, the angel informs the man of his own free will: "Attend: that thou art happy, owe to God: / That thou continuest such, owe to thyself . . . Our voluntary service he requires" (5.520-21; 5.529), and Adam expresses that this knowledge is new to him. "Nor knew I not," he responds, "To be both will and deed created free" (5.498-99). But beyond merely showing Adam that he wields

choice in his hands, Raphael also says (this time on the subject of angelic relations): "...Let it suffice thee that thou know'st / Us happy, and without love no happiness" (8.620-21). Having just discussed Adam's fixation upon his marriage's "love...which declare[s] unfeigned / Union of mind," it is easy to see the conceptual connections Adam makes when the ultimate decision comes to him in Book IX. For Adam, whose first amazed hours on Earth quickly become eclipsed by fears of loneliness, to lose Eve is to be without union of mind, without love, and (following Raphael's lesson) without happiness. Prevailing in Eden without her, though in Paradise, would be an unhappy alternative indeed.[36]

Of course, Raphael doesn't speak verbatim for The Almighty. And, just as God places the Tree in the Garden in order to test daily Man's obedience, so would he want Man to be aware of the free will that makes that trial meaningful. Yet by expressing both that Man has free will and that lacking love, he lacks happiness, Raphael's lessons certainly seem to predispose (if not destine) Adam to making the choice to fall. True, Raphael warns Adam against being beguiled by Eve's beauty: "[Eve is] fair no doubt, and worthy well / Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love, / Not thy subjection," but this is more a warning against uxoriousness than a prohibition against loyalty to one's spouse (8.568-570). Loving Eve, Adam falls. But given Adam's consideration of his wife's quandary backed as he is by a lack of serious faults, a godlike allowance for free will, a near-celestial love, *and* the indirect

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[36] Adam doesn't merely fear *loneliness.* He, like Eve, considers God's creation of a second Eve to replace the fallen original. Yet, Adam says even if that occurred, the "loss of thee / Would never from my heart" (9.912-13). This obviously contrasts with Eve's newly fallen fears of being replaced.

teachings of God's lessons about happiness, my argument is that his choice to fall with Eve *is* the godly choice.[37]

It is true that in thinking of man's eventual Fall (which, by the time of this musing, has yet to occur by earthy standards of time), God seems angry: "[Man] will fall, / He and his faithless progeny, whose fault? / Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of me / All he could have" (3.96-98). But here The Almighty appears more upset at the Fall of mankind generally (and perhaps at Eve especially, being inexcusably deceived) than he is at Adam's choice, specifically. Indeed, in response to Adam's expression of need for a spouse (which, remember, is the vehicle for his election to fall), God is not upset. Adam requests a partner, and "the Almighty answered, *not displeased* " (8.398, emphasis mine). In the rest of God's answer, we can see His coy, quiet smile: "A nice and subtle happiness I see / Thou to thyself proposest" (8.399-400). Of course Adam needs a partner and is incomplete with her; the timidity of Adam's request for something God knows is necessary is the cause of The Lord's humor.

So while the trespass Adam commits is damnable, the reasons for that action do not themselves anger God. After all, Milton tells us that Adam is created "for God only, she for God in him" (4.296-300). The obvious reading of this line is that Eve is made to be an addition to and a subordinate of the godliness in Adam. But read another way, this line shows that Eve is designed for *the use* of "God in Adam," that the godlike qualities in Adam are amplified by his relation to Eve. To ignore Eve or lay his devotion aside would be to ignore

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[37] Indeed, Adam's free choice parallels the forecast of Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Choosing Eve, Adam steps away from God, his father, as well as from his birthplace in Eden.

the part of "God" within him. At last, by choosing the mate whom he loves with unearthly devotion, Adam makes the godly selection. As he says, "I with thee have fixed my lot . . . the bond of Nature draw me to my own, / My own in thee, for what thou art is mine; / Our state cannot be severed, we are one, / One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself" (9.952-59).

In Conclusion: The Redemptive Good of Adam's Elected Fall

Adam's choice, though made for pure reasons, completes man's fall. Subsequently, Michael and his many-eyed cherubim arrive in the Garden to oust mankind and erase all traits of deception, though the archangel does this relatively gently. In expelling our universal parents, Michael offers Eve this consolation: "Thy going is not lonely, with thee goes / Thy husband, him to follow thou art bound; / Where he abides, think there thy native soil" (11.290-92). In this significant advice, God's chief angel[38] places a primary importance on the pair's unity, which Adam just used as a metric for his decision to taste the fruit. Here, God's messenger tells us that same unity (first, a cause for Sin) is now the pair's windbreaker against the burdens of their Fall.

And although mankind's progenitors fall to squabbling after their joint trespass in Book IX, by the time they come to terms with their doom in Book X, their tone has changed substantially. Having accepted the doom they face, Adam and Eve's mutual love resurfaces. With that love comes selflessness, and through that the admission of Sin. Adam wishes "That on my head might all be visited, / Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven" (10.955-56). For Eve's part, the mother of man admits her principal role in the Fall and a desire for appropriate

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[38] Second only to The Son, if he would be considered an angel.

punishment: "first and last / On me, me only, as the source and spring / Of all corruption" (10.831-33). And, later: "On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe, / Me me only just object of his ire" (10.929-936). In these latter quotations, Eve's egocentrism from before the Fall returns. This time, however, her self-emphasis ("me, me") is one of admission of guilt and apology. In this selflessness, Eve demonstrates a more highly tuned morality than she did even *before* her fall.

On these admissions of guilt, Merritt Hughes notes that "Conviction of sin marks the first of four steps in regeneration in [Milton's] Christian doctrine I, xix: 'Conviction of sin, contrition, confession, departure from evil and conversion to good'" (Hughes 426). If we are to believe that this is the process Adam and Eve initiate for themselves in Book X, then we gain another evidence of the godliness of their love.[39] Eventually, though the completion of this process might not come until the Messiah's coming, their love will bring them to redemption. This reasoning also helps substantiate Raphael's roadmap of love, grounded in reason, as the means to ascend "to heavenly love" (8.592).

But as God predictively describes, "Man therefore shall find grace, / The other none" (3.131-32). For Satan there is no redemption.[40] But this doom is entirely his own fault. Not only did he and his horde "by themselves ordain their fall," he even supposes that his own fall was inevitable (3.128). The Devil wishes, "O had His powerful Destiny ordained / Me some inferiour Angel, I had stood / Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised /

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[39] No longer just proof of only *Adam's* godly love.

[40] Origen Adamantius disagrees, writing in Book III of his *On the Principles* that Satan will eventually become a totally neutralized threat against God when Satan is "no longer death," made so through The Almighty's omnipotence. This seems to indicate that for Origen, Satan will return to godhead when The Lord is "all in all" (6.732).

Ambition" (4.58-61). While Adam and Eve have a "coming to God" moment in their fall and begin the road to redemption, Satan contents himself by blaming the Almighty for his own native ambition. He blames the force of godly creation[41] for placing him high among the angelic orders, that he might aspire ambitiously and fall. His egotism sees no alternative; being high, how can one not reach higher?

Satan also reveals in this section that he doesn't comprehend *how,* specifically, the upright angels chose not to fall: "but other powers as great / Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within / Or from without, to all temptations armed" (4.63-64). By saying "from within / Or from without," Satan reveals his ignorance. The decision to stand by God and not reach for a higher station is outside his comprehension. These yet-standing angels, Satan muses, must have remained Upright by either some unknown, internal power, or else an external, stabilizing force (perhaps, to Satan's eye, as in divine fate). Either way, the devil can only conjecture; to him, it is all mystery.

Finally, we see that Satan does consider redemption, although he dismisses the possibility:

> 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. (4.79-83)

For Satan, the same ego that spurred him to ambition, caused his fall, and often strengthened his deceptions now serves to forever block him from the path to repentance. This angel

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[41] Which he lies about in Book V, arguing fallaciously to his horde than angels were not created by the Lord.

ventures out of Hell and through Chaos without a moment's hesitation or sign of visible fear, and yet he appears afraid of "submission," and of acknowledging his wrongs in front of his subordinates. For the ambitious and egocentric Devil, this option is completely impossible. Throughout all Milton shows us in *Paradise Lost*, Satan goes to any ends in order to protect his own ego, even to the point of convincing himself of his own deceptions. Michael may eject Adam and Eve from the Garden and Satan's goal is realized, but this is not a final victory. Ultimately, having deceived himself into believing that redemption is impossible, Satan becomes the greatest victim to his own deceits.

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