INTO THE WILDERNESS

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THE FLEEING FIGURE IN EARLY MODERN HEROIC POETRY

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Lay Abstract

All the major epic poems from the Renaissance include a marginalized character who tries to escape from the action. These fleeing figures reflect a growing critique of the epic genre and the values it celebrates, such as martial conquest and sacrificing personal well-being for the sake of imperialism. The fleeing figure subverts those values, representing autonomy and the needs of the individual over the demands of the state. I trace the development of the fleeing figure through five major early modern epics: Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. With each successive poem, the fleeing figure becomes more and more successful in undermining imperial enterprise until the epic genre itself is finally put to rest.

Abstract

All the major epic poems from the Renaissance include a marginalized character who tries to escape from the action. The fleeing figure appears in Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and his *Paradise Regained*. Each iteration of the fleeing figure trope gets a little closer to attaining freedom from their oppressive social contexts until the limitations of the epic/romance polarity are finally dismissed in Milton's brief epic. This study identifies the fleeing figure trope in early modern epic romance poetry as a site of resistance against imperial discourse and explores how its development eventually undermines the epic genre. The retreat of marginalized, chivalric romance characters from their epic narrative contexts can be understood as a rejection of consumptive narratives that are hostile to the individual subject. This research draws upon Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and David Quint's theories of epic continuity and the tension between epic and romance (*Epic and Empire*, 1983) to identify and trace the generic mediation of imperial epic and chivalric romance through early modern heroic poetry. As each successive poem moves further away from polarizing gender constructs, the evolving feminist critique of heroic narratives that movement represents leads to the absolute rejection of imperial discourse. This research traces the mediation between imperial narratives and individual autonomy through the maturation of heroic poetry as it outgrows the limitations of simplified gender assumptions.

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Contents

Introduction: "A goodly Lady did foreby them rush"[1]: Chasing the fleeing figure through early modern heroic poetry

In his *Epic and Empire*, David Quint examines epic poetry and its relationship to chivalric romance narratives. In brief terms, Quint explains that romance narratives offer a plurality of perspectives whereas epic has a singular focus on some type of large-scale martial achievement. Epic poets and the works they compose are traditionally resistant to the multiple points of view of romance narratives. Quint identifies Virgil's depiction of Cleopatra in the *Aeneid* as the site where epic and romance narratives collide and diverge. The Egyptian queen's flight from the history-making naval battle at Actium and Marc Antony's pursuit of her is emblematic of romance and its subversive relationship to epic. Quint goes on to suggest that Angelica's flight in Ludovico Ariosto's epic echoes Cleopatra's: "Her flight is the opening image of the *Orlando furioso*, and it announces a centrifugal trajectory that will eventually carry Angelica out of the poem itself, still fleeing, as she seeks to return to her home in Cathay (30.16)" (*Empire* 36). Chivalric romance flight from epic is also in Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, and Quint suggests Rinaldo's relationship to Armida is patterned after Antony's relationship to Cleopatra. In Tasso's handling, Rinaldo's decision not to pursue Armida when she

[1] *FQ* III.i.15.3.

retreats from the final battle corrects Antony's choice to follow Cleopatra when she panics and flees.

Quint identifies a tantalizing narrative intertextuality in which motifs from antique poetry recur in later epics. Angelica as a Cleopatra figure is an instance of narrative typology and demonstrates epic continuity (*Empire* 8). Epic continuity is Thomas Greene's term for the tendency of epic poets to reference and build upon the major works that have preceded their own efforts (5). For example, Homer provides the model for Virgil's epic, just as Virgil provides the model for Tasso's. Epic continuity and Cleopatra as an archetypal fleeing figure representing chivalric romance are the two foundational concepts from Quint's research that inform this study. Quint's insights lead to the questions that guide my own research. Are there other instances of fleeing figures in later epic romance poems? How do English Renaissance epics build upon the poetic lineage begun by Virgil and continued by poets such as Ariosto and Tasso?

This study is in direct dialogue with Quint's research, expanding upon his identification of Virgil's Cleopatra and her flight from the battle of Actium as emblematic of romance narratives and their relationship to the epic genre. Just to be clear, Quint identifies Cleopatra's flight from Actium as emblematic of romance narrative dissent and is the archetypal image that Angelica's flight mimics in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. According to Quint romance flight also occurs in Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata.* Rinaldo is an Antony figure who only pursues the fleeing Armida once the battle for Jerusalem has been decided. With Quint's guidance, I follow Angelica's trajectory in a different direction.

All the major epic romance poems from the Renaissance have a character who tries to escape from the action. In Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, for example, the Muslim princess Angelica spends most of the poem dodging overly aggressive suitors, and Florimell charges through Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* pursued by hero and villain alike. These characters and others like them are excluded from whatever power structures are in place or are being negotiated through the epic action, and their personal agency is contested by those with hegemonic authority. In generic terms they are romance characters who reject the epic narratives that they find themselves in, and their flights can be understood as expressions of dissent. The fleeing figure in early modern heroic poetry is the site where chivalric romance destabilizes imperial epic, and the development of this trope through successive works is indicative of how the genre itself evolves and matures. What we can identify as a feminist critique of imperial narratives is steadily developed throughout Renaissance heroic poetry and eventually unhorses the entire genre. This study traces the development of the fleeing figure trope and the critique it represents through the five major epics that span the early modern period: Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516), Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581), Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590 and 1596), John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (first published in 1667, then in a revised edition in 1674), and *Paradise Regained* (1671). Before introducing these works and my argument I must first discuss the classical precedence for the fleeing figure trope, what differentiates epic from romance, and what generates tension between these two genres.

Like so many other conventions of heroic poetry, the fleeing figure originates with Virgil. In Book 8 of the *Aeneid* the narrator describes Aeneas's shield, which includes a depiction of the naval battle between Caesar Augustus and Marc Antony. This historic confrontation to determine who will rule the Roman Empire is decided before it begins when Cleopatra, queen of Egypt and Antony's ally, suddenly retreats (8.671-713). Her departure is an early instance of a figure in a heroic narrative who decides to extract herself from the action.[2] The narrator is critical of Cleopatra's actions, and her absconding determines who inhabits imperial discourse and who is ignobly jettisoned from it; by following his paramour, Marc Antony forfeits his claim to the empire and both he and Cleopatra lose their place in heroic poetry. Quint argues that Antony and Cleopatra's exclusion from epic aggrandizement introduces the possibility of narratives other than imperial discourse. Cleopatra's flight can be understood as generic dissent and a deliberate rejection of a narrative that threatens to consume her.

The *Aeneid* defined heroic poetry in the Renaissance and is the exemplar that Torquato Tasso invokes in his cinquecento discussion of poetic genres. The following discussion is built upon Tasso's theories about epic versus romance, which are based on his reading of the *Aeneid*.[3] Tasso's theories about poetry clarify the choices he made in

[2] Although it can be argued that Achilles from Homer's *Iliad* is the first character in an epic to walk away from military conquest in protest, I do not consider him a fleeing figure for three reasons: he is an active participant in the invader's imperial narrative, he remains close at hand while expressing his discontent, and he eventually rejoins his comrades. For dissent in the *Iliad*, see Barker, 40-88.

[3] My exploration of Tasso's theories is based on Lawrence Rhu's translation of the poet's *Discoursi dell'arte poetica*.

composing his own heroic epic, and the *Discourses* are also a literary criticism of his predecessors. Tasso's discussion of epic versus romance is based on an analysis of Ariosto's popular *Orlando furioso* (and to a lesser extent the earlier *Orlando innamorato* by Matteo Boiardo), which happily ignores the Aristotelian conventions that Tasso insists upon. In developing his argument Tasso cites Aristotle as the final authority in literary matters, although Daniel Javitch points out that doing so may have been attributing to the philosopher more concern for genre than he himself demonstrates (205). Poetic genre in general acquired urgency in the Renaissance due to the comparatively recent advent of chivalric romance.

Before examining specific characteristics of epic poetry, Tasso declares there to be three general matters that the aspiring heroic poet must attend to: worthy subject matter, a refined aesthetic, and artistic form. Worthy subject matter, or the "raw material" that the poet uses, should be based on history (Tasso in Rhu 99). It is not necessary to discuss the "refined aesthetics" of verse here, but what is meant by artistic form must be explored in some detail. Tasso is clear about what qualities go into the form of a proper epic poem: verisimilitude, unity, coherence, and singularity.

According to Tasso an epic poem must have verisimilitude or plausibility, which is best accomplished when the "raw material" is taken from actual events: "the theme of epic poetry must be based on some history" (113). That recommendation is not as dogmatic as it first seems, and Tasso allows for what he calls "poetic license" within his concept of verisimilitude; he is quite comfortable with the epic poet adding or reinterpreting events provided the essential truth remains untouched. For example, in the

Aeneid the love and death of Dido and Aeneas's descent into the underworld are fictitious but contribute to the overall truth of Virgil's poem. In the *Aeneid* and in epic poetry in general, truth relates to imperial discourse: "Power … is defined by its capacity to maintain itself across time, and it therefore requires narrative in order to represent itself" (Quint, *Empire* 45). When it comes to heroic epic, form has the explicit function of perpetuating imperial discourse to preserve its accomplishment. In chronicling the assertion of imperialism, epic poetry acts as a vehicle for its realization.

The next concern in imbuing epic with artistic form is unity, and a poem must have a complete trajectory to be considered worthwhile: "The plot must be whole or entire because we expect perfection of it, and whatever is not whole cannot be perfect." The poet continues: "This wholeness will be found in the plot if it has a beginning, a middle, and an end" (Tasso in Rhu 114). Tasso is critical of Matteo Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* for not having an ending, and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* for not having a beginning, making both works incomplete (Homer's *Iliad* is excused because the plot is not really about the Trojan war but about Achilles' rage, which subsides by the end of the poem). In Colin Burrows' summation: "Neoclassical literary theory has, since at least the mid-sixteenth century, celebrated epic as a form unified by plot, by canons of decorum, and by subject-matter" (1).

Closely related to plot and unity is coherence, which Tasso attributes to size and proportion. According to him, an epic should impart "beauty and perfection" to its subject matter, but the poet must take pains to ensure that the work is neither too brief nor too expansive. In the poet's esteem: "small epic poems may … be lovely and elegant, but not

beautiful and perfect." On the other hand, and with a sideways glance towards the *Furioso*, Tasso also cautions against epics that are too ambitious: "That poem is suitably large in which the memory does not darken or fail but, taking the whole in at once, can consider how one thing connects with another and depends on a third and how the parts are in proportion to themselves and to the whole" (Tasso in Rhu 116-17). Simply put, the reader gets lost in epics that are too long.[4]

The final component of proper artistic form is singularity, which also relates to plot. In discussing Ariosto and the conventions that his *Furioso* introduced into contemporary literary production, Tasso admits: "I still think he should not be imitated in the matter of multiple plots; for such multiplicity will never be deemed praiseworthy" (118). The poet objects to multiple plots as imperfect and detrimental to a work's unity. Too many different narratives will compromise the integrity of the whole: "the plot is the essential form of the poem, as no one doubts; so if the plots are distinct and independent of each other, it follows that there will be more poems than one." For Tasso such multiplicity is not only confusing, but "monstrous" (118-19). Quint succinctly explains the necessity for heroic narratives to follow a singular progression: "epic linearity—the sequential linking of events—becomes a teleology: all events are led, or dictated, by an end that is their cause" (*Empire* 33). In other words, an epic has a predetermined goal, and every action should bring the narrative closer to its realization. Tasso is not entirely averse to different narratives within a single work and is quite fond of what he calls

[4] Tasso's concern with coherence is mentioned for the sake of thoroughness; Milton's brief epic disproves the first point, and Spenser's ambitious but nonetheless cohesive epic romance is well on its way to disproving the second.

"variety." As with instances of poetic license, though, any variation must somehow support the whole, and brief deviations should eventually return to the pristine unity of a single, self-contained plot (Tasso in Rhu 130). Tasso's insistence on an overarching unity is an attempt to impart discipline onto innovations that were introduced in the widely popular *Furioso*, and as Anthony Welch asserts: "Tasso sought to reconcile Ariosto with the classical epic–especially Virgil's *Aeneid*–through a compromise position of variety within unity" (579). In brief, according to Tasso's theories a proper epic poem is based on history, is self-contained, is neither too long nor too short, and has a single plot. Underlying his concept of an effective heroic poem is an unwavering, linear movement towards a single, predetermined objective. Tasso is also clear about what an epic poem is not.

Daniel Javitch credits Giovambattista Giraldi Cintio with being the first to recognize and discuss chivalric romance as being distinct from epic. In his *Discorso intorno dei romanza, delle commedie e delle tragedie e di alter manière di poesia* (1554), Giraldi "proposed that the *romanzo* could not be judged according to ancient epic norms because it was a more modern kind of poetry and observed different formal laws" ("Epic Theory" 211). Despite its contested claim to authenticity romance literature was appreciated by a diverse readership in the early modern period. Tasso himself rejects differentiating between the two genres and romance's exemption from the expectations of epic, insisting: "romance and epic imitate the same actions, they imitate in the same manner, and they imitate with the same means; they are, therefore, the same genre"

(Tasso in Rhu 122). According to Tasso both epic and romance recount "illustrious actions" and are therefore bound by the same criteria.

Tasso's *Discourses* cite two chief characteristics of romance that deviate from epic poetry: the theme is imaginative rather than historic, and there are too many subplots. Tasso includes love, chivalry, adventure, and enchantment as invented themes, but the most grievous sin against accepted conventions of epic is including multiple narratives that infringe upon and obscure the unity of a singular plot: "I maintain that variety warrants praise until it becomes confusing and that up to this point unity of plot is as capable of variety as is multiplicity" (130). The poet is critical of such deviations because, in his estimation, variety too easily descends into confusion and unintelligibility: "Episodes of this sort are, in sum, vain and self-indulgent and of no effect toward the main aim of the plot." He goes on to say that "a variety of episodes deserves praise inasmuch as it does not undermine the unity of the plot or cause confusion in it" (134). In Javitch's summation, to Tasso:

> the confusing multiplicity, the excessive length, the absence of beginnings and ends, the discontinuity of both Boiardo's and Ariosto's romances are not … formal features of the *romanzo* as an independent genre. They are structural flaws inherent in episodic narratives that refuse to observe classical, that is proper, norms of unity and continuity. ("Epic Theory" 212)

Tasso is careful to contain variety in his own *Gerusalemme liberata*, where digressions about love, chivalry, and enchantment eventually resolve themselves in the imperial narrative of Godfrey's heroic conquest of Jerusalem.

To summarize, Tasso does not allow for differentiation between epic and romance but insists that they are bound by the same rules that were established in antiquity. He

specifies two ways in which romance deviates from classic epic: its basis in imagination, and its use of multiple narratives. Recent critics are more tolerant, of course, and explore ways in which the genre moves beyond the demands of antiquity. Alex Davies examines chivalric romance as an inclusive genre with cross-cultural appeal, and Steve Mentz considers how its development determined the evolution of literary production itself. More relevant to this discussion is Quint's characterization of romance as aimless wandering which deliberately eschews the self-contained unity of epic (*Empire* 34). Anthony Welch identifies the move of European heroic poetry towards interiority in the early modern period, which in turn accommodates the ambivalent, open-ended goals of romance (579). Exploration of the interior implies personal development without a predetermined goal, which becomes critical to the development of the genre.

Tasso may not have had patience with such empathy and although he avoids stating any explicit conclusions about romance, he does make it clear that the genre is obliged to conform to the same criteria as epic. The implication of Tasso's critique is that romance is failed epic, which calls to mind Cleopatra excusing herself from Augustus's imperial narrative. In the words of Quint:

> Virgil's description of Actium not only schematizes an imperialist ideology handed down to later epic fictions, but it also shows that the triumph of Augustus and the flight of the defeated Cleopatra are emblematic of the two narrative forms, epic and romance, that themselves become freighted with political meaning. (*Empire* 10)

Despite Tasso's reluctance to recognize alternative genres, traits that his contemporaries identify as belonging to romance steadily seeped into heroic poetry, creating tension within the genre itself. Welch suggests that the entry of chivalric motifs into humanist

epic came about through Boiardo's and Ariosto's use of Arthurian romance, and he goes on to say: "Negotiations between the two traditions quickly began to crystallize as a tension between epic *ira* and romance *amor*, with dynastic martial imperatives pitted against dilatory, amorous wandering" (579). For Tasso the epic "ire" or wrath that motivates military heroism is of more value than infatuation, and in the *Liberata* he makes every effort to curtail the encroachment of chivalric romance upon epic that the earlier poets allowed. Quint explains:

> The romance episode … resists being fitted into the teleological scheme of epic, and Virgilian epic consequently sees any deviance from the historical course of empire assuming the shape of romance narrative, whether this be the deviance of the Eastern conquered peoples whom we have seen to be without historical identity or that of the individual whose personal desire or very individuality is opposed to the collective goals of history or empire. (*Empire* 34)

In Quint's model romance acts as a site of resistance within an epic narrative, undermining the linear progression of imperial discourse for the sake of independent objectives. Romance furthers the interests of the individual over the collective demands of the state. If the *Furioso* does indeed exemplify romance unchecked and run amok within an epic narrative, the *Liberata* in turn enacts the concentrated effort to contain such disruptions. Both approaches assume tension between the two genres, as well as their unequal relationship when co-inhabiting a narrative.

Tasso's treatment of romance elements in his epic poem expands on an unstated assumption in Virgil's account of Cleopatra's encounter with imperial narrative, specifically the implied gendering of the genres. Virgil's stern disapproval of the Egyptian queen and his praise for Augustus has the indirect effect of assigning gender to the conflicting narratives that the two rulers inhabit. In the *Aeneid* epic is masculine, and

any narrative that deviates from it is sneered at as being feminine. That implied gendering is made explicit in the *Liberata* through Rinaldo's desertion. When Godfrey's lieutenants find the wayward knight at leisure in an enchanted bower, they chastise him using misogynist language:

> What drowsiness or lethargy could lull
> your manhood? Or what baseness was your bait?
> Get up, get up! The field and Godfrey call! (16.33.1-3)

The 'baseness' alluded to is the enchantress Armida and the domesticity that she and the knight share in her garden.[5] The disapproving lieutenant invokes duty and martial heroism to shame the knight into returning to the poem's imperial enterprise, which touches on yet another important aspect of epic as opposed to romance that is worth mentioning. Quint suggests that genre is also indicative of its participants' social standing:

> To the victors belongs epic, with its linear teleology; to the losers belongs romance, with its random or circular wandering. Put another way, the victors experience history as a coherent, end-directed story told by their own power; the losers experience a contingency that they are powerless to shape to their own ends. (*Empire* 9)

In the opening books of the *Aeneid*, for example, Aeneas and the other surviving Trojans inhabit a romance narrative after losing Troy. The later books of Virgil's poem, in which Aeneas leaves Dido to conquer Italy and establish the Roman Empire, are epic.

Suggesting that genre could be invested with gender sounds archaic now (not to mention inflammatory), but that is a crucial aspect of the tradition that Tasso inherited

[5] Welch suggests that romance itself becomes a physical place of refuge (in the form of magical gardens) for heroes within the epic tradition (578).

and codified through his own literary production. Gender as a polarizing construct is steadily mitigated through early modern heroic poetry until the genre finally abandons such differentiation in Milton's *Paradise Regained*. A large part of the intention in my argument is to map out that generic mediation and identify the ways in which heroic poetry matures beyond the limitations of simplified gender assumptions. Along with mapping out an expanded understanding of gender to include those who are marginalized by exclusionary power structures, my argument proposes there to be a direct correspondence between the development of feminist critique within heroic poetry and that poetry's eventual rejection of imperialist narratives.

Engaging gender through poetic genre leads us back to Cleopatra, the prototype for the fleeing figure who tries to escape from imperial discourse. The narrator of the *Aeneid* is critical of the queen's actions, but that assessment is from an imperial perspective. Augustus's steadfast pursuit of empire, however, is looked upon with admiration – one either participates in imperial discourse or is excluded from it. Although Tasso is reluctant to acknowledge any heroic poetry other than epic, in its rejection of imperial expansion and military heroism, Cleopatra's flight denies the absolutism of epic discourse. Her retreat can be read as an attempt to enter an alternative narrative that accommodates the individual and eschews hierarchal political structures. It is quite possible that in fleeing the queen tries to attain a narrative that does not subordinate the subject to a pervasive political construct. As Quint puts it, "the romance that Virgilian epic sees as the 'other' of its teleological plot is almost pure adventure" (*Empire* 9). Romance is the genre that values the meandering journey over the limitations of the

singular objective, demanding of its participants the openness to adventure that Quint identifies. Along those same lines Helen Hackett suggests: "Travel produces stories: it both creates encounters between characters, and separates characters to produce multiple interlaced narrative strands" (126). Travel for its own sake is the foundation of chivalric romance, and the absence of a predetermined outcome creates room for more travelers. Unlike epic, romance provides a vastly wider context that can comfortably support multiple narratives.

The steady development of the fleeing figure trope through successive works in the Renaissance reflects larger changes within the genre itself. Building on Quint's assertion that epic narratives reinforce imperial discourse and patriarchal social mechanisms, I trace the development of subversive elements embedded in early modern romance epics through an examination of the marginalized characters who resist their poems' interpolative imperatives. I argue that these fleeing figures represent an evolving critique of imperial discourse that rejects social determinism in favour of individual autonomy and eventually undermines heroic poetry altogether.

The structure of my discussion is based on Quint's suggestion that the *Aeneid* is an epic that imitates and exceeds its predecessor (Homer's *Iliad*), just as later poets imitated Virgil. Heroic poetry evolves as each contribution responds to and furthers what has gone before, creating what Quint identifies as "epic continuity" (*Empire* 8). Recognizing continuity in a narrative genre is not only intriguing but also productive, and I understand that to mean each major epic romance builds on conventions and innovations that have been introduced by its immediate predecessor. In keeping with that

idea of lineage, I argue that the poems included in my discussion – Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and *Paradise Regained* – form a chronology that spans most of the Renaissance, and each of their dissenting characters represents a stage in the evolution of the heroic genre. Angelica from Ariosto's poem decides to flee from her epic context and "is the very emblem of the *Furioso*'s wandering, entangled romance plots" (Quint, *Empire* 36). Erminia from the *Liberata* is Tasso's attempt to reintegrate the fleeing figure back into imperial discourse and reestablish the subordinate relationship of chivalric romance to heroic epic. Florimell from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* demonstrates the integration of the fleeing figure through institutional absorption, and Eve from Milton's *Paradise Lost* destabilizes imperial narratives and succeeds in escaping the genre. Jesus from *Paradise Regained* is the typological fulfillment of the fleeing figure trope and finally puts imperial epic discourse to rest.[6]

I trace the development of this movement through the four chapters of this study. In the first chapter I consider how fleeing figures in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* disrupt hegemonic cohesion and threaten the realization of imperial enterprise. I also explore the possibility of alternative narratives and autonomy beyond imperial inscription before the reining in of chivalric romance plurality and re-

[6] Concluding this discussion with Milton's Messiah does raise a practical question. The fleeing figures discussed in chapters 1, 2, and 3 are all women, so how does a lineage of female characters lead to a male one? The logic of that development is discussed in detail below on page 173. For now, it is enough to say that Jesus represents what Mandy Green calls "the feminine principle" (197) of mercy and self-sacrifice, characteristics that are antithetical to the military heroism that epic poetry glorifies.

assertion of epic unity through institutionally mediated subjectivity. In the second chapter on Spenser's epic, I consider the use of heroic poetry in constructing a post-Reformation nationalist identity. I also examine the denial of subjectivity to those who are not representative of the hegemony and the consequent hostility of imperial cultural contexts towards the fleeing figure. I uncover the predatory nature of cultural assimilation and examine the threat of dissolution leveled at the subject who is denied inclusion in the hegemony. Chapter III on *Paradise Lost* investigates the fleeing figure bound within the institutions that perpetuate imperial discourse, and the importance of recognizing alterity both personally and politically. I analyze the mechanisms that deny personal agency within hegemonic structures and deconstruct the antagonism of dominant social structures to self-determination. Chapter IV on *Paradise Regained* concludes the movement away from imperial discourse. I examine the rejection of imperial discourse and its inscription to successfully reclaim individual autonomy.

The following study contributes to ongoing discussions in several fields, most notably epic poetry, gender politics, and Reformation theology. Building upon David Quint's theories I identify a heretofore unrecognized convention of early modern epic romance poetry, as well as an evolving feminist critique embedded in imperial narratives that culminates in the conclusion of the heroic genre. I uncover the predatory nature of cultural assimilation and forward an ancient military formation as a new and compelling metaphor for analyzing the mechanisms involved in exclusionary social organization.

Chapter I: "Petticoats never slow her where she flies"[7]: Angelica from *Orlando furioso* and Erminia from *Gerusalemme liberata*

Angelica

In keeping with epic conventions established by Homer and Virgil, Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*[8] begins *in medias res* during the Saracen invasion of Europe. The poem's narrative commences with the Muslim princess Angelica fleeing from the Christian camp after the emperor Charlemagne declares that she will be awarded to the paladin who kills the most enemy soldiers in the upcoming confrontation:

> Pledging that he would grant her in reward
> To which of them in the impending fight
> More infidels impaled upon his sword,
> Excelling thus in prowess and in might. (1.8.6-8, 9.1-4)

The royal proclamation is a political maneuver to alleviate the tension that has grown between Orlando and his cousin Rinaldo, renowned knights who both desire Angelica for themselves. The paladins are willing to concede to Angelica being a contested bit of property, and Charlemagne's promise establishes the princess's status as that of a commodity within the narrative. She is made into an object through which those who enjoy a privileged position in the poem's social hierarchy maintain their standing. For the Christian emperor Angelica is a disruptive presence, distracting his knights from their

[7] *OF* 6.82.5.

[8] Citations of *Orlando furioso* are taken from *Orlando Furioso*, trans. Barbara Reynolds (Penguin Books, 1973).

military objective and causing civil unrest within the ranks. She is a threat to imperial cohesion, and as such must be absorbed to reassert hegemonic unity.

At the very onset of the *Furioso* Ariosto affirms the disparity between its inherited narrative modes through the two characters that motivate the poem's action. Despite his absence from the *Furioso*'s local events Charlemagne is an exemplar of epic linearity moving the poem to its epic closure, whereas Angelica is a disruptive object of romance causing repeated narrative deferral that is characteristic of chivalric wandering. Charlemagne's proclamation regarding Angelica is the emperor's attempt to contain a troublesome romance narrative within epic discourse, a political move that would establish unity and reinforce his own predominance within the hierarchical social organization of the Christian forces.

The emperor's position would thus be stabilized through the subjugation of the Muslim princess, who is made into a vehicle for Christian homosocial bonding. As Valeria Finucci explains, "If it is the possession, or, more accurately, the non-possession, of a seemingly possessable object of desire that keeps male rivalry and the male competition for political power alive, narrative closure can come only after such an object loses its value" (139). To put it another way, there is fraternal cohesion in the competition for the same prize as long as that prize remains unclaimed. Finucci draws attention to a crucial aspect of Angelica's status within the poem; she is only useful as an object for masculine rivalry as long as she is available, both figuratively and literally. Along with the allure of her perceived availability, the admirers that Angelica attracts also contribute to her desirability within the *Furioso*. Deanna Shemek notes: "each

contender for Angelica—or any other object of desire, be it a sword, a helmet, or a woman—wants what he wants *because* it is desired by someone else" (*Ladies Errant* 50). In homosocial competition value is only recognized when it is confirmed through the admiration of a fellow competitor. Shemek's observation explains how male rivalry works within a patriarchal structure, where objects and even people become signifiers of advancement with the elusive promise of increased status.

Angelica's availability and her commodification are matters of contestation throughout her pursuit and are symptomatic of the poem's attitude towards women in general. There was heated debate over the status of women during the Renaissance and humanists, Ariosto among them, took it upon themselves to champion female virtue. Admiration for women became a political position that acquired a degree of cultural currency, evolving into an indicator of enlightened social attitudes. In her study of Renaissance book publisher Gabriel Giolito, for example, Androniki Dialeti discusses the advantages of presenting oneself as being sympathetic towards women in early modern Italy: "Having its origins in courtly rhetoric, the identity of the 'defender of women' was part of an exemplary elite masculinity" (17). The cultural worth of demonstrating – or at least proclaiming to have – empathy towards women is affirmed in Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, the definitive codification of courtly behaviour in the early modern period.[9] As an enlightened attitude towards gender became indicative of one's

[9] "… for like as no Court, how great soeuer it be, can haue any sightlinesse or brightnesse in it, or mirth without women, nor any Courtier can bee gracious, pleasant or hardie, nor at any time undertake any gallant enterprise of Chivalrie, unlesse he be stirred with the conuersation and with the loue and contentation [contentment] of women" (Nv.iii).

social standing, it was appropriated by those with ambitions of class advancement. Dialeti explains:

> in the 1540s and 1550s the ideal of defending women gradually spread beyond the narrow limits of court culture, and *literati* of lower origins who were not associated with court life often fashioned the identity of the defender of women to assert their own noble sentiments and ideals. (17)

The Renaissance vogue of assuming proto-feminist tolerance for women enacts a less obvious process of commodification than Charlemagne's political use of Angelica. Women became the means through which men could demonstrate sophistication and social standing. Advocacy as commodity is evident in Ariosto's own use of the conceit, such as in the opening stanzas of Canto 37 where the poet suggests that women themselves should circumvent biased male historians and storytellers to proclaim their own worth:

> And would they might their powers then devote
> To women's own commemorative praise,
> Rather than look to men to sound this note,
> Whose envious spite their judgement overlays,
> For Woman's merits many a man will not
> Proclaim, though gladly ill of her he says.
> By women, women's fame could reach the skies,
> Higher perhaps than men's renown could rise. (37.2)

It is a rhetorical gesture that nicely satisfies the courtly demand for a pro-woman stance while safely, even magnanimously excusing the writer himself from the work of rectifying centuries of neglect.

To return to the issue of Angelica's availability, what the knights presume to be her sexual accessibility – a status that is a result of her exclusion from the patriarchal hegemony via marriage – is a necessary component of her commodification and central to

Ariosto's narrative. The centrality of the princess's availability is evident in the metaphors that are used throughout the poem to describe what is delicately referred to as her maidenhead or, more accurately, her genitalia. Angelica's genitalia are continually alluded to through garden and floral motifs, as when the knight Sacripante, another one of the princess's desperate admirers, considers the object of his desire in Canto I:

> A virgin may be likened to a rose
> Which on its slender stem, by thorns defended,
> Within a garden unmolested grows. (1.42.1-3)

Sacripante introduces the floral motif that reoccurs throughout the chase, as well as exhibiting the cultural anxiety that such flowers inspired. As Finucci notes, "Angelica is pursued for her rose—a trope of her maidenhood and her genitals—to which all her worth is tied, as long as the rose remains intact" (112). A woman's chastity, in the limited sense of sexual abstinence, was itself a highly valued commodity in the Renaissance, acting as collateral for a woman to attain the highest possible position that was available to her at the time, that of wife, or, in more analytical terms, adjacent to a representative of the culture's imperial, male-centric hegemony. Ita MacCarthy asserts: "Ariostean women, Isabella, Angelica, and even Bradamante, for example, treasure chastity over all other 'possessions' as the most powerful endorsement of marriageable value and the greatest gift to offer a husband" (183). Women were relegated to exchange transactions through the value that was invested in their abstinence, and chastity itself became the sole commodity that they were afforded in early modern patriarchal discourses. Even then, an upper-class woman was more often than not bereft of that limited agency through

subordination to her father's authority in matters of matrimony (Mendleson and Crawford 112).[10]

The use of floral imagery betrays Sacripante's attitude towards the princess in particular, and women in general. Although the knight's musings are inspired by Angelica, they quickly develop into generalizations that include all women as he denies their agency and affirms their commodified positions (1.42.1-3). For Sacripante flowers are objects of consumption, and a rose is made more valuable for remaining "on its slender stem" intact. The forlorn knight speaks from a position of homosocially-defined desire, participating in the competition for Angelica and thereby contributing to the value of her "rose." In doing so Sacripante perpetuates the princess's commodification and increases the value assigned to her in his culture's social economy. Such a rise in homosocial currency is accomplished through the devaluing of the princess herself, and as Finucci explains: "Disempowered within discourse and not empowered to accede authoritatively to discourse, [Angelica] finds herself surrounded and diminished by discourses that unceasingly present her as a prisoner of biological laws" (111). In other words, the cultural context that the princess finds herself in is incapable of recognizing an unmarried woman as anything other than fair game.

Sacripante's use of garden motifs is made even more unsettling by the way that such metaphors negate Angelica's humanity. Viewing Angelica through floral imagery

[10] Chastity as personal and public virtue is explored in-depth in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and in the next chapter as well.

denies her subjectivity, allowing the knight to seriously consider rape as the means to realize his desire:

> So I will pluck the early-morning rose
> Forthwith, lest I by dilly-dallying
> The moment of its perfect freshness lose. (1.58.1-4)

Aside from his almost off-handed resolution to enact sexual violence, the knight's concern for what he perceives to be the tentativeness of Angelica's virginity, her "perfect freshness," is worth exploring. Sacripante's actions are determined by the urgency of the competition that he participates in, and he is motivated by the need to "pluck" the princess's "early-morning rose" before any of his competitors do. The dehumanization of Angelica through floral metaphors is a process that the narrator participates in as well, evident when Angelica finally resolves the issue of her sexual availability herself in Canto 19:

> She lets Medoro pluck the morning rose
> Which no despoiling hand had ever touched (19.33.1-4)

The reductive nature of consumptive metaphors was not lost on Ariosto's contemporary female audience, discernable in the often heated exchanges in the *querelle des femmes* literature of the period. As Shemek dryly puts it: "it is not likely that sixteenth-century women missed entirely the offensive nature of conventional comparisons of their bodies with perishable goods" ("Elusive Object" 125).

Inspiring the use of floral metaphors for female genitalia is the knights' and even the narrator's preoccupation with sex. Maggie Günsberg points out that the defining characteristic of women in heroic narratives is their sexuality (9), which Judith Bryce notes is intimately entwined with their subjectivity (41). Female sexuality is a

fundamental matter being negotiated within the poem and in its cultural context. That fixation compromises the narrative's epic discourse and complicates any definitive identification of the poem's genre, as evident in the opening lines of the *Furioso*:

> Of ladies, cavaliers, of love and war,
> Of courtesies and of brave deeds I sing (1.1.1-2)

Ariosto immediately blends literary elements that are usually confined to either epic or romance, and Chimène Bateman suggests that these introductory lines signal the poem's fundamental duality. In her concise summation: "The *Furioso* … presents itself as a text double from the beginning, constructed around the fundamental opposition of male and female, love and war, romance and epic" (1). The duality of the *Furioso* that is brought about through the intrusion of romance into an epic narrative is metaphorically represented by the pursuit of Angelica, even as she is reduced to an object of homosocial bonding by her pursuers. As Shemek notes in her analysis of how the wandering princess functions in the *Furioso*: "Angelica remains the cipher of a femininity that resides in the eye of male desire" (*Ladies Errant* 58). That is an eloquent way of conveying how desire obscures Angelica's individuality, and how femininity itself is regarded through the limiting lens of patriarchal consumption. More than her cultural lineage, it is Angelica's sexuality that marks her as the poem's eroticized Other. Her otherness enables those who uphold the patriarchy to reduce her through consumptive terms that infringe upon her agency, but it is also menacing, evident in Charlemagne's attempt to quickly subjugate and dispense with the princess through codified rivalry.

Angelica's otherness contributes to the romance that she brings into the *Furioso*, where her character functions as an elusive objective for the wandering knights who

pursue her. As Bryce explains, "Angelica, throughout the poem, is the fantasied Other who can provide a mythical identity and wholeness for male figures of the poem" (48). I agree, and it is the knights themselves who turn the princess into a distracting romance device as they relentlessly pursue her. Such a reflective attitude towards someone who exists beyond the established cultural context and inhabits the societal role of the Other, however, could only prevail in a purely uncompromised romance narrative. The *Furioso*'s imperial concerns do not allow any type of otherness to be anything except a threat to epic closure. Such a character must be assimilated through any means necessary, and in imperial discourse "[t]he other is there only to be reappropriated, recaptured, and destroyed as other" (Bryce 49). The imperial compulsion to neutralize and contain sexual otherness leads to some rather extreme responses to Ariosto's wandering princess.

The compulsion to police female sexuality was strong in the early modern period, regardless of the humanists' seeming reevaluation of women. As Tracey Sedinger asserts: "unmarried women were often perceived as a threat by the authorities, who went to considerable efforts to reincorporate such women into more traditional social arrangements" (172-73). The social arrangement that Sedinger refers to is, of course, matrimony, the socially sanctioned institution that perpetuated patriarchal hegemony through the subjugation of female agency. Matrimony in the early modern period is a further expression of female sexuality as commodity, one with negotiable proprietorship: "Directly related to the notion of female virginity and chastity as patriarchal constructs of possession and power, is the concern in the [*Furioso*] on the part of fathers to police the sexuality of daughters in the interests of family fortune" (Günsberg 32). Marriage as a

type of patriarchal exchange economy is evident in Bradamante being promised to two different suitors by her father and her brother (47.12, 35).

Bradamante's familial associations are helpful in understanding the implications of female commodification within the poem. Even though Bradamante enjoys a level of agency through the wearing of armour, the uniform of patriarchal authority, her sexuality is not acknowledged as being her own but considered family property and protected as such. Angelica, by contrast, is far away from her home in Cathay and her father, the Great Khan, the patriarchal representative who would be recognized as having what can only be called the bartering rights over her sexuality. The princess's absolute estrangement from patriarchal structures not only makes her a menacing Other within the poem's narrative, but also leaves her sexuality unpoliced and, by extension, unprotected, which in turn makes her susceptible to sexual violence.

While navigating through the *Furioso*'s imperial narrative, Angelica must also constantly evade the threat of sexual violence. Almost every male character that the wandering princess encounters tries to rape her, from Sacripante (1.58), to Ruggiero (11.2), to Orlando (29.61). Even an elderly and impotent hermit tries to ravage Angelica, though his failure to do so is rendered comedic in Canto 8.31, an episode that evidences what Bryce characterizes as the narrator's "salacious connivance" in the matter (42).[11]

[11] The hermit's impotence is alluded to through ribald metaphor:

> With many a prick he made his donkey smart,
> Striving to urge it on with shouts and groans;
> And yet for all he cudgelled the poor beast,
> Trot it would not, not hurry in the least. (8.31.5-8)

The episode is thus invested with a jocularity that diminishes the threat of sexual violence.

Sexual violence is a menacing extension of the need to police female sexuality, a logical albeit brutal expression of proprietary conceits. It is also the means to control the sexual availability that threatens the stability of the patriarchal social organization, as well as the unity of imperial discourse.

Evidence of the dissolution of Angelica's sexual availability in Canto 23 is what drives Orlando mad. After a long search, the wayward knight finds himself in the grove where the princess met her consort and is taken in by the shepherd who acted as host to the fugitive couple. Orlando suffers a dramatic epiphany when resting on the bed where Angelica and Medoro consummated their relationship:

> Then in his travail suddenly he knows
> That in this very bed on which he lies
> His love has lain, and often, in the close
> Embrace that nothing of herself denies. (23.123.1-4)

Orlando's failure to assimilate Angelica into the poem's imperial discourse undermines his subjectivity, alienating him from the narrative and his own sense of self. The princess is an elusive object of desire whose otherness destabilizes the narrative's imperial objectives, and her unanticipated disappearance is traumatic to those who seek her. I will return to Orlando's madness, but for now it is enough to say that the pursuit of the princess has estranged the knight from the poem's epic march towards closure, and her sudden unavailability leaves him bereft of a narrative context.

As mentioned earlier, the narrative of the *Furioso* begins with Angelica's absconding from the Christian camp:

> Angelica did not prolong her stay.
> She, who was promised as a victor's bride,
> Into the saddle leapt and straight away,

Choosing her moment well, set out to ride. (1.10.1-4)

Her actions are not only disruptive to Charlemagne's knights, but also to any genre expectations with which the reader may have approached the text. The princess embodies the *Furioso*'s generic ambivalence, and Dennis Looney proposes that Angelica's flight signals Ariosto's departure from Boiardo and his other inherited literary sources (130). Daniel Javitch applauds the poet for taking advantage of the permeability of late quattrocento romance and using that relaxed structure as an opportunity to sample from several different generic codes ("Reconsidering" 404). Most critics agree that Angelica herself is a representative of the *Furioso*'s narrative ambivalence, what Bateman describes as "a catalyst for instances of romance wandering and deferral" (5).

Angelica's departure from the Christian camp signals the fracturing of the poem's epic narrative. She represents romance within an epic/imperial context, and in rejecting her role as prize in Charlemagne's homosocial competition, Angelica becomes a character at odds with her narrative context, subverting its objectives by fragmenting the hegemonic unity of the camp. As Shemek explains: "Inexplicably blonde and supremely beautiful, she [Angelica] inspires pursuit and thus sets off the narrative mechanisms of movement and errancy that structure Ariosto's poem" (*Ladies Errant* 45). Although the princess flees to reclaim personal agency, a goal that in itself is directly related to romance individualism rather than epic assimilation, she destabilizes the narrative linearity of epic discourse when her various admirers choose to pursue her rather than Charlemagne's imperial objectives. Angelica is a figure of romance compelled to negotiate an epic narrative. Those who chase her are proponents of the imperial

patriarchy who have succumbed to the allure of romance wandering, subsequently becoming alienated and perpetuating endless deferral as the narrative diverges to follow the paths of Angelica's pursuers. Marion Wells suggests that Angelica's symbolic association with the principle of romance is manifest in the quest for her "prima rosa," which motivates the poem's action up to the point where she yields to Medoro (21). In other words, the first half of the *Furioso* essentially chronicles the pursuit of female sexuality, as well as the splintering effect that it can have on homosocial bonding and imperial discourse. Romance wandering disqualifies epic narrative, which is concerned with establishing stability through the instatement of a unified hegemony.

Critics have noted Ariosto's own participation in the contemporary *querelle des femmes*, the often-heated debate about women being fought through printed pamphlets and ephemera. Critics like Shemek maintain that the *Furioso*'s relation to the era's literature dealing with the "woman question" is easily recognizable ("Of Women" 69), and many others assure us of Ariosto's empathy with women. Bryce, for instance, asserts that the *Furioso* "is not, in spite of the many ambiguities, a misogynist text: it may even be a 'feminist' text within the limitations of its historico-cultural context" (50). In the poem, however, the narrator's empathy and admiration for women are localized and even contained through warrior figures like Bradamante and Marfisa: "The splendid Amazonian heroines embody a celebration of women's potential effectiveness on this most crucial of testing-grounds [war], and women of all kinds may both embrace and refuse the conventional role of spectator and inspirer to the martial activity of men" (McLucas 45). Although Ariosto's warrior women are indeed as capable as their male

counterparts (often more so), they themselves must don their culture's uniform of authority to assert their worth and enjoy agency. Angelica, instead, does not have the same advantages that Bradamante and Marfisa do; she does not have armour, nor the security of familial association. The princess's lack of recognized signifiers of agency complicates arguments over Ariosto's attitude towards gender and how that is defined. In her consideration of how gender operates in the poem, MacCarthy points out: "At times the *Furioso* clearly does propose gendered identity as 'socially constructed, as, in a sense, a fiction'. At other times, however, it strips the carefully constructed androgyny bare to reveal the 'truth' behind the fiction" (188). The 'truth behind the fiction' is the unequivocal reinforcement of patriarchal privilege.[12]

Bereft of such indicators as armour or family ties Angelica is excluded from the poem's attempts at proto-feminist advocacy, evident in the narrator's attitudes towards the Muslim princess: raping Angelica would be a "sweet assault" (1.59.2) for example, her naked breasts are "young fruit, so firm and fair" (10.96.7), and her body is "that sweet form which so delight[s] and please[s]" (29.61.3). For all the narrator's assurances of empathy with his female readers, his participation in the princess's objectification

[12] Some notable examinations of Ariosto's poem as a pro-feminist text include: Pamela Benson's *Invention of the Renaissance Woman* (1992) argues that the poem's pro-feminism is designed to defend patriarchal social organization; Eleonora Stoppino's *Genealogy of Fiction* (2012) examines the connections between chivalric culture, the dynastic system, and gender relations; Albert Ascoli's essay "Ericthonius's Secret: Body Politics in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*" looks at the poet's exploration of contemporary gender politics and the appropriation of female power; Valerie Finucci's *The Lady Vanishes* (1992) considers the construction of female identities in the works of Ariosto and Castiglione and subjectivity as it relates to gender and gender as it relates to culture.

denotes an underlying concern that the *querelle* itself identifies – Angelica's entire social and narrative context is hostile towards her. She is the sole woman character whose femininity is uncomplicated (she does not engage in what could be considered cross-dressing or sorcery), and the poem's narrative context recognizes Angelica as a threat to its coherence and endeavours to assimilate her through sexual subjugation.

While being chased through the *Furioso* Angelica is constantly subjected to the male gaze, the Lacanian concept adapted by second-wave feminist critic Laura Mulvey to describe how the female subject suffers a loss of autonomy through the objectification of male scrutiny. Shemek asserts: "Where Angelica is concerned, gazes play a specific role in the narrative: they activate desire and allow the gazer to posit himself as the opposite and missing complement to her femininity" (*Ladies Errant* 49). Upon merely seeing the princess, her many admirers become aware of their own masculinity through their sexual arousal. They see her and automatically assume the role of her lover. Angelica's femininity is often made into spectacle, explicit in her treatment by the inhabitants of Hebrides who offer her as a sacrifice to the sea god Proteus:

> The harsh, inhospitable islanders
> Exposed the lovely maiden on the strand.
> So absolute a nakedness was hers,
> She might have issued then from Nature's hand.
> No veil or flimsiest of gossamers
> Had she to hide her lily whiteness and
> Her blushing roses, which ne'er fade nor die,
> But in December bloom as in July. (10.95)

The episode emphasizes Angelica's precarious position and status within the narrative, starkly illustrating the vulnerability that comes with being made the object of the male gaze. The princess's subjectivity is denied through the spectacle of her nakedness,

reducing her to an object of consumption both literally and metaphorically. For the women in the *Furioso* visibility is equated with vulnerability, which further explains the way that armour operates for the warrior maidens (aside from its practical function of offering protection on the battlefield). Bryce recognizes how armour facilitates the mobility of characters like Bradamente and Marfisa, noting: "armour is protective, not only in the obvious way, but also as a chaste screen from men's predatory gaze and attention" (42). Protection from the male gaze contributes to the freedom of agency that the female warriors are able to claim, and as the uniform of the dominant patriarchy armour imparts with it the freedom from constant scrutiny that the male characters enjoy.

The underlying violence of masculine scrutiny is made explicit in Canto 29, when in the throes of madness Orlando sees Angelica:

> And when Orlando, wild and witless, sees
> That delicate and lovely countenance
> And that sweet form which so delight and please,
> He is consumed with greed for them at once
> And, leaping up, he makes a rush to seize
> Her whom he'd cherished with such reverence.
> Devotion long forgotten, he gives chase
> Just as a dog after its prey would race. (29.61)

Insanity obliterates Orlando's veneer of civilization, which is revealed to be hollow pretense when the knight is reduced to a purely predatory state unfettered by social expectations. Orlando's madness is a raw expression of an unmediated masculine consumptive impulse directed at the female subject. In its most basic formulation, to be seen is to be prey.

The episode does make explicit the mechanisms at play in the viewing of Angelica for those who desire her. Even when her visibility is absolute – such as when

she is naked and chained to a rock – the knights who desire the wayward princess do not truly see her, but only their own desire reflected back at them. As Finucci puts it: "As object of desire, she is never really seen, since she needs to function as a tabula rasa on which each of her pursuers can inscribe his desire and then read himself in his creation" (120).[13] Shemek explores this phenomenon as well, and her Lacanian understanding of what is going on here is helpful. Shemek examines the underlying psychoanalytic process taking place and relates it to the poem's cultural context: "In a Symbolic order in which history and discourse have been officially male spheres, woman is defined from a male perspective: as a universal symbol for lost plentitude and thus for the promise of renewed completeness" (*Ladies Errant* 53). The knights who pursue Angelica are incapable of truly seeing her, and their privileged position in the patriarchal social organization that they perpetuate leaves them unable to recognize their lack. Physical desire becomes an unconscious expression of masculine anxiety, the need to assimilate or consume that will assuage feelings of incompleteness and, perhaps more importantly, lessen the threat of impotence. We can recognize a similar dynamic in imperial discourse, in which the drive to establish a hegemonic empire is motivated by the fundamental need to assimilate that which is separate or different in the hope of establishing an elusive completeness. It is the eradication of the menacing other through the consumption of it. To return to Angelica's troubles, that she can be seen and subjected to the male gaze implicates her in the poem's patriarchal social order, even though it denies her agency. The only way for her to

[13] Finucci's astute observation relates to how the knights themselves render Angelica into a romance device, as discussed on pages 24-25.

circumvent such appropriation is to eliminate the conditions that leave her susceptible to patriarchal claims upon her subjectivity. Angelica does so through magic.

When she is confronted by mad Orlando, Angelica uses a magic ring to become invisible and slip away. The artifact itself is significant to how the narrative develops and is given to the princess by the knight Ruggiero when he rescues her from the Isle of Tears in 10.107. Ruggiero gives the ring to the naked and bound princess to magically protect her while he battles the orc, and the incident is worth considering. After saving Angelica from being a human sacrifice Ruggiero, in keeping with most of the other male characters in the *Furioso*, decides to rape her, an attempt that the narrator excuses with the offhand comment, "He would be mad to forgo such a prize" (11.2.8). In all fairness there is an underlying irony in narrator's assertion, but nevertheless, the comment does exemplify the fundamental violence of the knight's cultural context. While the knight hurriedly fumbles with his armour Angelica recognizes the ring as magical and uses it to turn invisible: essentially, to remove herself from the patriarchal gaze and what Finucci aptly characterizes as the phallocentric economy of desire (121). Disappearing from view allows Angelica to reclaim agency, and Tracey Sedinger suggests that invisibility itself can be read as a metaphor for female autonomy in early modern culture: "The single woman disappeared since she avoided (temporarily or permanently) what was regarded as the standard modality of women's subjection: marriage" (172). The sudden ability to extract herself from her patriarchal context has an interesting effect on the princess, which she only realizes when she entertains the idea of enlisting a knight to help her return to Cathay.

When most of Charlemagne's paladins are trapped in the sorcerer Atlante's palace of illusion in Canto 12, Angelica decides to go in herself to fetch one of them to escort her home:

> She finds them vainly seeking her, dejected.
> She understands that victims they have been
> Of images deceptively projected. (12.26.4-6)

In the palace the knights pursue an image of Angelica, while the princess herself moves among them unnoticed. As Shemek explains: "Through the device of the ring … Ariosto effects a division of Angelica herself from the image the knights hold of her" (*Ladies Errant* 66). The episode illustrates the discrepancy between the real woman and the masculine fantasies that are projected onto her. Significantly, in the palace Angelica is invisible while the paladins pursue her simulacrum, but when she inadvertently reveals herself to all of the knights, she must again flee and use the ring to disappear. This final mass pursuit inspires a significant development in Angelica's character:

> When she set out upon her homeward track,
> Seeing them thus pursue her in a string,
> Such hostile feelings in her breast awake,
> To ask their help she finds she cannot bring
> Herself, for now to either she is loath
> To be obliged: better the ring than both. (12.35.3-8)

It takes the princess a couple of cantos to fully appreciate what the magic ring offers her – it enables her to circumvent masculine inscription and feminine dependence. As Finucci summarizes: "When invisible … she discovers that she has an 'I' and that this 'I' does not need to be subjugated to male authority and male fantasies" (121).

Angelica's initial failure to recognize her newfound freedom betrays itself in her efforts to find an escort; her attempt to do so is indicative of her inability to even

conceive of herself as having unfettered, unimpaired agency. The princess seeks a companion because at that point in the narrative she is unable to entertain the notion that she could enjoy mobility without being accompanied by a representative of the dominant patriarchy to protect her from other members of the dominant patriarchy. The princess unquestioningly assumes that she needs someone who upholds her cultural context to be able to effectively navigate it, an illusory bit of inscription that the ring disperses: "The ring allows Angelica to be herself, to narcissistically desire her own desire, which for the moment is paradoxically that of escaping the desire of others" (Finucci 120). Invisible and no longer subject to the male gaze, the princess is, for the first time in the poem, free to claim personal agency.

When the knights try to reassert Angelica's subordinate position within their hierarchy by giving chase, she finally realizes that she is not obliged to participate in their social determinism, an advent that the narrator is not entirely supportive of:

> Having regained possession of the ring
> Which formerly Brunello from her stole,
> Her arrogance was such that everything
> And everybody she disdained; the whole
> World was beneath her and, remembering
> The royal suitors at her beck and call,
> She goes her queenly way alone, unmoved
> To think that by Orlando she is loved. (19.18)

The narrator's censure is revealing: despite his often ironic engagement with the misogyny underlying his culture's social expectations and institutions, he himself does participate in it. The narrator's ability to define the poem's cultural context is reflective of his own privileged position within a patriarchal hierarchy. In the above-cited verse,

though, Angelica is moving away from such narratives, beginning to extract herself from the scope of the narrator's determinism and ready to enter into an alternative genre.

The realization that she does not need a male companion is an epiphany for Angelica, bringing with it the possibility of alternative narratives and contexts. Although the wayward princess is a romance figure navigating an epic narrative, while she is in the *Furioso*, she is interpellated by its imperial context. That explains why she does not immediately decide to travel on her own; having total, independent autonomy is simply not something that is afforded to her within the poem's imperial discourse and is a condition that is inconceivable to someone in her position. Angelica's choice to go her "queenly way alone" (19.18.7) opens up the possibility of alternative narratives:

> So she continued, angry and distressed.
> With careful choice of roads, she made her way
> In the desired direction of the East,
> Deciding to be visible one day,
> Invisible the next, as she thought best. (12.65.1-5)

By the time she reaches Canto 19, Angelica transitions from epic into pastoral, bringing along with her a fellow casualty of imperial discourse.

While walking through a forest in Canto 19, Angelica happens upon a wounded soldier and takes pity on him. Readers are told that he is the Saracen Medoro, who in an earlier canto is described in feminine terms:

> Medoro's cheek, so tender and so young,
> The lily and the rose displayed; in all
> That host there was no countenance among
> Their comely youth that was more beautiful.
> His eyes were black, golden his curling hair,
> As if a seraph from on high he were. (18.166.3-8)

The narrator feminizes Medoro through the use of established Petrarchan conventions to describe the young man and through the invocation of floral imagery, which in the *Furioso* is repeatedly associated with Angelica's maidenhead and genitalia. That he is injured also contributes to Medoro's feminization. In her analysis of the wounded soldier, Wells proposes: "The emphasis on bodily vulnerability and permeability suggests a clear connection between sexuality and violence, as well as between vulnerability and femininity; indeed … bodily vulnerability is in fact regarded as in some respects equivalent to (female) sexual availability" (11). In epic narratives bodily penetration is considered feminine, and such injuries are associated with those who are subordinated within imperial discourse and excluded from patriarchal hegemonies. Angelica's choice to be with Medoro is hugely problematic in an imperial narrative and contrary to genre expectations on several levels:

> The feminine in Medoro thus disrupts the military norm whereby the Christian captain should dispose of the pagan enemy. More importantly, it transgresses two aspects of the sexual norm; firstly, that of heterosexuality, and, secondly, that of woman as reward, whereby a woman's sexual favours form a prize received for ideal social achievements (Günsberg 18).

Although Angelica has had enough of knights and soldiers by this point, Medoro's wounds awaken empathy in the princess:

> Compassion, unfamiliar to her breast,
> Entered by portals now for long unknown,
> Melting therein her heart, so hard and cold,
> The more so as she heard his tale unfold. (19.20)

The narrator is ambivalent about Angelica's response and remains critical of what he characterizes as her haughty attitude towards the poem's heroes, revealing the poem itself to be not entirely free from misogynist attitudes. As Bryce points out, "The *Orlando*

furioso remains a canonic male text" (50). Medoro, however, whether due to his injuries or low social standing (he is a simple foot soldier), is not threatening to Angelica. He is not in a position to try to assert dominance, which leads to a transgressive relationship within the parameters of an epic narrative. In choosing for her paramour an injured soldier who is beneath her station, Angelica disrupts the gender and class assumptions underlying imperial discourse: "if the prize for a manly warrior is a woman, then Angelica's choice of an androgynous pagan youth over a Christian of unquestionable military might such as Orlando can only undercut cherished male assumptions about masculinity and manhood" (Finucci 141). Medoro's failure to conform to epic heroism is an affront to the patriarchal masculinity that the *Furioso*'s champions adhere to, and that the poem's narrator seems to advocate. That Angelica, the objectified trophy of homosocial coherence, should willingly choose a casualty of imperial discourse to be her partner destabilizes epic convention, asserting her disavowal of epic narratives in favour of the pastoral.

The princess's shift to pastoral is openly proclaimed by the misfit couple through the inscription of their own narrative context within the poem. When the lovers are not enjoying one another's company during Medoro's convalescence, they compulsively record their happy union throughout the shepherd's cabin and surrounding area:

> It was their joy, if a tall tree they saw
> Shading a fountain or a crystal stream,
> With a sharp-pointed knife or pin to draw,
> Or on a stone or rock which soft might seem,
> Their names entwined, according to love's law.
> Indoors as well, on every wall and beam,
> Medoro's name was read in divers spots
> Linked with Angelica's in lovers' knots. (19.36)

The carvings are an almost pathological testament to their newfound conjugality, and although Dennis Looney refers to the love-knots simply as Angelica's "coitograms" (19), Bateman recognizes in the amorous decorations an emblem for the poem itself: "A recurring metaphor in the *Orlando Furioso* for the bringing together of disparate elements is *il nodo*, the knot" (13). The love-knots as representative of the poem's indiscriminate mixing of literary genres is a seductive theory, certainly, but another way of reading the carvings that are all over the shepherd's hut and surrounding grove is as the site where literary genres collide. The knots are not necessarily emblematic of the successful integration of genres, but rather of Angelica's appropriation of her narrative context. On a more direct level, Angelica's love-knots function as a personal declaration, acting as the device through which she inscribes her own narrative onto the landscape, literally the poem's narrative context. Declaring herself to be consort to lowly Medoro refutes any attempt at epic assimilation through the very public announcement of her own sexual conquest, signaling her autonomy and agency in her own choice of sexual partners.

Such a radical position for a woman to assume is inconceivable to the poem's epic hero Orlando, who deliberately, even desperately, tries to misread Angelica's love-knots when he happens upon them in Canto 23.103, 104. He knows what the carvings signify, even though he tries to impose his own meaning onto them. Millicent Marcus points out: "When we recall that Angelica's wedding was a hasty and perfunctory affair, aimed more at legitimizing fornication … than at spiritually consecrating the union, we might conclude that for this bride, the loveknot has primarily carnal connotations" (39). Yes and

no: it seems both cynical and limiting to ascribe the union entirely to sex. At their most basic level the carvings indicate that Angelica has finally found someone she can be intimate with on her own terms (as opposed to suffering the constant threat of sexual violence) and celebrates the fact through decorative expression. In an immediate way, though, Marcus is irrefutably correct – the knots do connote sex. Those connotations are not lost on Orlando.

In Canto 23 the epic hero is confronted by Angelica's love-knots covering the pastoral grotto (106), and in a nearby cave stumbles upon Medoro's boast:

> O happy plants, green grass and limpid stream,
> O cave so cool and generous of shade,
> Wherein Angelica of whom men dream,
> To whom so many hopeless suit have paid,
> Lay naked in these arms, pressed limb to limb,
> Where in sweet dalliance we oft delayed,
> Humble Medoro here his tribute pays,
> Though he has naught to offer you but praise (23.108)

Medoro's lyrical indiscretion continues into 109, and interestingly, it is this boast that finally destabilizes Orlando; he is certainly not upset about Angelica having a traveling companion, but rather the loss of her sexual availability. His utter dissolution betrays the underlying consumptive impulse that animates the knight's infatuation and gives it urgency. The episode reveals Orlando's passion to be, in Günsberg's words, "clearly related to possession and power, rather than to some form of unrequited, romantic love … [W]hile he is searching for her, his major concern is for her virginity and chastity, which *he* wants to be the one to control" (32). The form of Medoro's boast is, as Looney points out, characteristic of pastoral poetry and phrased in Petrarchan blazons (23), introducing the problem of how those who are subjugated to imperial discourse are to express

themselves. Despite being the first character to appear in the poem Angelica is not given a voice for several cantos, and the sole instance of Medoro expressing himself is through his rather covert carvings hidden from view on a cave wall. Both instances are far removed from the poem's action, out of the way and marginalized. The question becomes how to claim a voice when confined to a narrative context that aggressively impedes those whom it excludes from its authority. The answer seems to be through other genres.

In Canto 8 when Angelica flees Rinaldo and then an overly amorous hermit, she finds herself on the coast of Gascony. Her horse is driven out to sea and leaves her stranded on a desolate stretch of rocky coast (8.35-37), and it is here that the Muslim princess delivers an extended lament:

> Because I wander homeless, men make haste
> To slander me and say I am unchaste.
> …
> For what in all the world is left to her
> Whose chastity is lost? That I am young,
> Or men should think me fair, whether they err,
> Or whether, after all, they be not wrong,
> This is no benefit the Fates confer. (8.41.7-8, 42.1-5)

This is the only instance in the *Furioso* where the reader "hears" Angelica's own voice as she decries her fortune, and it is an unmediated expression of her angst that is not paraphrased by the narrator. The princess's lament is significant on several levels: Angelica addresses the contestation over her sexuality, as well as her own diaspora within the epic narrative context. She complains of being homeless and reveals her intuitive understanding of how her pursuers attempt to interpolate her through the textual denial of the sole commodity that she has agency over: her chastity. The princess intuits that in denying her chastity through language, her defamers essentially erase that which affords

her autonomy. Angelica also recognizes in her detractors' charges against her chastity the attempt to devalue it, render it commonplace, and therefore not desirable. They attempt to verbally neutralize her sexual otherness and relegate her to the greater imperial context (even if those who make the charges are not the ones who will immediately benefit from directly assimilating the princess through carnal means).

Another significant aspect of Angelica's lament is that it happens when she is far away from anyone who could hear it. She is on a remote island coast away from the mainland, in essence away from the place where imperial discourses are enacted. Angelica's physical removal from patriarchal structures mirrors her exclusion from such narratives, and only while she is outside of such structures can she be heard. Safely beyond imperial discourse the *Furioso* assigns her a voice, one that interrogates the poem's underlying assumptions and narrative expectations. Angelica's lamentation is the expression of her desire for autonomy that will culminate in her and Medoro's inscription of their own narrative in the pastoral space of the shepherd's grove.

When Orlando enters the grove in Canto 19, he walks into another genre. Away from imperial epic and deep in pastoral, the knight is confronted by Angelica's declaration of autonomy through her own inscription on top of the narrative landscape of the *Furioso*:

> A hundred times the lovers' names are seen,
> 'Angelica', 'Medoro', intertwined.
> Each letter is a knife which, sharp and keen,
> Pierces his bleeding heart; his tortured mind,
> Rejecting what it knows these carvings mean,
> A thousand explanations tries to find (19.103.1-6)

Marcus notes: "When Orlando enters this landscape he is literally walking into a text" (42). The paladin also finds himself in an inverted relationship to a text in which he is marginalized instead of those who are traditionally alienated from the type of linear narratives that characters like him inhabit. Rather than enjoying a central role in an epic narrative Orlando is excluded from a pastoral one and tries to impose his own meaning onto Angelica's testament. At first he ascribes it to another 'Angelica,' then feebly reasons that Medoro is the princess's pet-name for him (19.102, 104). Angelica's alternative text and Medoro's lyric boast finally destabilize Orlando, who reacts with explosive violence:

> Drawing his sword, he slashed the offending rock,
> And heavenwards the splintered fragments flew.
> The cave, the trees, each bole or stem or stock
> He hacked, whereon those names still met his view. (23.130.1-4)

I agree with Marcus that what happens here is comparatively unambiguous in terms of critical analysis, and "can be reduced to a straightforward sequence of events: there is a writing, a reading, and an erasing" (34). Although his abandonment of Charlemagne's army for romance wandering undermines the poem's imperial linearity, when confronted by his own exclusion from an alternative narrative – one in which he has no authority – Orlando reverts to epic violence. But not, however, before trying to appropriate it through deliberate misreading. As Jane Tylus notes: "From a final, pathetic attempt at reading all signs as though they were his own—for Orlando first pretends that Angelica's 'Medoro' is but a pseudonym for himself—he comes to a recognition of the complete otherness of a discourse which is *not* his own and over which he can have no claims" ("Curse of Babel"

167). When he finally understands that Angelica is no longer sexually available Orlando demolishes the grove and kills the shepherds (34.6). Essentially, epic annihilates pastoral.

In the knight's destruction of the grove imperial violence is directed against an alien, subversive domesticity that rejects the hegemonic drive of epic narratives. Orlando's violence is an attempt at erasure, what Marcus cleverly refers to as "graphicide." She goes on to explain that Orlando "kills the writing, vainly hoping, by a kind of magical transference, to destroy the referents of the offending script" (43). The knight's destruction of Angelica's narrative inscription is an imperial attempt at denial that Tylus relates to the biblical story of Babel in Orlando's desperate attempt to suppress the proliferation of multiple discourses and assert epic singularity ("Curse of Babel" 157). The destruction of the grove enacts the attempted imperial obliteration of alternative discourses in the drive to assert an epic linearity that leads to its own realization in the establishment of a single, unified hegemony. The epic assertion performed by Orlando proves to be futile when he is unable to accomplish the erasure that would ensure the uninterrupted continuance of his interpellated subjectivity. Whether the grove exists or not Angelica is still with Medoro, a lowly foot soldier and casualty of the poem's imperial venture. The relationship thwarts the consumptive impulse underlying the epic drive to claim everything for its own and is a failure that Orlando will not recover from until much later when he is forcibly reclaimed by his epic peers in Canto 39. The union of Angelica and Medoro resolves several meandering romance plots and the fragmentation that they bring to the *Furioso*, clearing the way for epic resolution. Narrative closure can only be accomplished once Angelica, the embodiment of romance wandering, is removed

from the text. After spending most of the first half of the *Furioso* fleeing from unwelcome suitors, Angelica finally manages to leave the poem entirely. In Canto 30 the wayward princess elopes with her effeminate foot soldier and returns to India:

> And as to what, my lord, will now become
> Of fair Angelica, so timely flown,
> And how she will at last regain her home,
> Finding a well-found ship to travel on,
> And how she'll make Medoro India's king,
> A lyre more resonant than mine may sing.
> …
> I have so many other things to say
> That I no longer wish to follow her (30.16, 17.1-2)

So Angelica escapes the *Furioso*.

The advent of the pastoral in Cantos 23 to 29 and Angelica's disappearance are the sites of much critical discussion and speculation. Marcus notes that Canto 23 is located at the exact centre of the poem and coincides with the onset of Orlando's madness, as well as putting an end to Angelica's "generative force" in the narrative (33). Finucci reads the episode as the means for Ariosto to move towards the poem's underlying dynastic concerns, as represented by the eventual union of Bradamante and Ruggiero, pointing out that it also marks the move away from the fantastical and the emergence of the normative (113). Shemek asserts that Angelica's realization of herself as an autonomous, desiring subject necessitates the disappearance of her simulacrum – the projected desires and attempted interpolation of her pursuers – from the narrative (*Ladies Errant* 47).

These are all compelling interpretations that should be considered when approaching the text, but there is one reading that is particularly relevant to the argument

being developed here. Wells suggests that the princess's elopement with Medoro signals the conclusion of romance within the narrative and a return to Virgilian epic (20). Angelica must depart from the poem because the realization of her own subjectivity has rendered her epic narrative context redundant; it no longer has room for her. Orlando's violent attempt at erasure when he demolishes the woodland grove demonstrates the hostility of the imperial discourse that the princess refuses to participate in. The knight's violent destruction is an instance of epic narrative eradicating subversive modes such as romance and pastoral to forcibly demolish genres that refute or disrupt its linearity. My argument is in line with those of other critics who read Angelica's departure as a move towards epic resolution and narrative closure. Javitch, however, suspects that arguments for the *Furioso* becoming a proper Virgilian epic after Angelica's removal are somewhat misguided attempts to invest the poem with more seriousness and dignity than it would have if it retained its chivalric romance elements ("Reconsidering" 385). Although I do appreciate his affinity for romance, it must be recognized that the poem itself does indeed abandon chivalric meandering in favour of epic closure; in effect, the princess takes with her all of the poem's romance.

Angelica is the first fleeing figure in early modern heroic poetry. She is a character who recognizes that she has no place in the epic context that she finds herself in, is able to resist assimilation, and preserves her autonomy by successfully extracting herself from the poem. Her escape, though, does leave problems for epic poetry as a genre – Angelica's departure is an admission that there can be narratives that exist beyond

imperial discourse, a problem that Torquato Tasso tries to correct through his own fleeing damsel.

Erminia

Most critics recognize Ariosto's playful engagement with diverse literary genres in the *Orlando furioso*, and many propose that the poet deliberately conflates antithetical modes of narrative. Bateman recognizes in the *Furioso*'s female warriors hybrid figures who represent the ways that both epic and romance are "profoundly intertwined in the text." Bateman proposes that Ariosto signals his literary project of deliberately incorporating disparate literary modes in his discussion of Angelica's love-knots, suggesting that her carvings in the shepherd's grove are emblematic of the poem itself (8, 13). The success of Ariosto's engagement with traditionally disparate modes in a single text led to a more deliberate engagement with literary structure for those who followed. The *Furioso*'s inclusion of romance elements within an epic narrative underscores the ways that genre is invested with ideological significance, with each strand having its own unique assumptions and imperatives. As Javitch notes, "It was largely the *Furioso* itself, the best-selling Italian poem of the mid-sixteenth century even though it was gradually seen *not* to conform to classical epic models, that caused critical notions about epic and romance to emerge and come into opposition" ("Reconsidering" 389). Torquato Tasso pursues that intellectual engagement with literary modes in his *Gerusalemme liberata*, the Counter-Reformation epic romance published sixty-five years after Ariosto's *Furioso*.

The ways in which the *Liberata*[14] relates to the *Furioso* are still much discussed. Andrew Fichter examines Tasso's strict adherence to Aristotelian narrative theory, as well as the poet's ambivalence concerning the failure of his literary predecessors, Ariosto and Boirdo, to do so themselves (265-66). In Tasso's epic model, as outlined in his *Discorsi del poema eroico*, the *Furioso*'s continuous digression and narrative deferral demonstrates a lack of internal logic, compromising the poem's formal integrity and its moral purpose. Miranda Johnson-Haddad examines that sense of formal integrity in the *Liberata*, understanding the poem's strict twenty cantos to be a rejection of the "endless digressions and subplots" of chivalric romance in favour of a classically ordered poetic (215). McLucas suggests that what Jane Tylus identifies as the *Furioso*'s characteristic, genre-challenging multiplicity motivated Tasso to interrogate the authority of his poetic predecessor when giving form to his own artistic project (McLucas 46, Tylus, "Babel" 157).

Dennis Looney identifies a more pragmatic problem that Tasso had to come to terms with and reads in the poet's *Discorsi* a tentative plan to reconcile epic poetry's inherent neoclassicism with post-Tridentine Christianity "without forfeiting the fame and profit Ariosto's poem was accruing" (125). Looney's analysis calls attention to Tasso's cultural context and its impact on the *Liberata*. Günsberg also asserts that the greater prominence afforded to religion is the most striking difference between the *Liberata* and the *Furioso*, citing that as evidencing the "increasingly sombre and proscriptive Counter-

[14] Citations from *Gerusalemme liberata* are taken from *Jerusalem Delivered: Gerusalemme liberata*, trans. Anthony M. Esolen (The John Hopkins University Press, 2000).

Reformation years" (7). I agree; the definitive difference between Ariosto's *Furioso* and Tasso's *Liberata* is the cultural context in which each poem was written.

The *Furioso* was composed at the height of European humanism, amidst the intellectual upheaval of the Reformation and the consequent reassessment of inherited cultural, social, and literary assumptions throughout both Catholic and Protestant Europe. In Ariosto's disregard for differences in genre and playful engagement with reader expectations, we can find an underlying critique of institutionally prescribed modes of subjectivity.

Tasso, writing over six decades later, composed his epic during the Counter-Reformation. Beatrice Corrigan tends to dismiss situating the poem within any specific cultural movement, assuring us that: "It is of minor importance whether the age of Tasso is characterized as Baroque, Counter-Reformation, or merely Late Renaissance: in taste and expression it is so unmistakably different from the age of Ariosto that it must be considered as a new epoch" ("Mirrors" 165). Although I agree that Ariosto and Tasso lived in drastically different times, I do understand the *Liberata* to be a distinctly Counter-Reformation text and read it as a conservative response to the cultural upheaval of the Protestant break from the Roman church. Tasso's poem expresses the reassertion of institutional authority and a return to an earlier model of institutionally mediated subjectivity. As McLucas explains, "By the time Tasso was writing, the Counter-Reformation had cast a conformist and inhibiting shadow over the high culture of Italy" (45). The drive for conformity that McLucas identifies characterizes the *Liberata* specifically, and the epic genre in general.

Although humanist cultural expansion afforded Ariosto the freedom to blur the boundaries between literary genres and their accompanying protocols, such experimentation was suspect by the time Tasso was composing the *Liberata*. The institutions that humanism questioned responded by asserting their own authority, evident in the material being published at the time. In the Italy of the late 1500s there was a proliferation of religious conduct books reasserting women's subordinate place in a rigid patriarchal hierarchy. Gone was the humanist flirtation with assigning to women a more active participation in social structures that Ariosto advocates in the *Furioso*, replaced instead by treatises extolling the political economy of marriage and emphasizing the need for women's chastity, domesticity, and their necessary exclusion from the public sphere (Dialeti 21).

The difference between a sanctioned patriarchy and those that it subjugates is starkly illustrated through the *Liberata*'s attitude towards literary genres and its own poetic enterprise, where chivalric romance and its tropes are clearly antithetical to epic cohesion. Romance motifs are objects of derision for the narrator, as evident in his tempered introduction to one of the poem's mightiest paladins:

> Then Tancred: of all these men—except Rinaldo—
> none in the swordplay takes greater part,
> or is more handsome in his looks and manners,
> or is more fearless and sublime of heart.
> Only the folly of love can dull the luster
> which all his vaunted victories impart—
> a war-born love, of but a moment's sight,
> that feeds hardship and grows great in might. (1.45)

Romantic love, the primary motivator of chivalric adventure, is sneered at as a limiting failure that compromises Tancred's valour and undermines his military accomplishments.

In Tasso's *Liberata* romance wandering is indicative of a moral ambiguity that threatens the loss of purpose, which in turn impacts subjectivity. As Fichter notes, in Tasso's poem "It is where movement lacks moral direction, where Goffredo's knights pursue the lesser, phantom goals of their own cupidity … that we find ourselves in the confused, interior, and illusory regions of romance" (265).

The detrimental impact of indulging chivalric romance is evident when Tancred mistakenly pursues a figure he thinks is Clorinda in Canto Four:

> It is an aimless track she leads him over,
> wandering, weary, deluded, till at last
> he loses hope, as, having lost the trace,
> the hunter at fall of night gives up his chase (4.96.5-8)

In Tasso's poem romance wandering leads to existential futility, bringing with it a loss of direction and hope that is unbecoming of a representative of the imperial order. Tasso's Counter-Reformation context demands a clearly prescribed differentiation between that which furthers the patriarchy and that which compromises its integrity or its cohesion, calling for the more deliberate engagement with inherited sources that characterizes the *Liberata*. Looney asserts: "neither Boiardo nor Ariosto had to confront the issue of Christian poetry and its appropriate sources as fully as Tasso did. The contaminated source [classic literature] does not have the same profound moral implications for poets writing before the Council of Trent" (164). He goes on to say that there were deep concerns in choosing to include a suspect narrative mode like chivalric romance, and in the *Liberata* such contamination must be contained.

The presence of romance elements in the *Liberata* remains a topic of discussion in literary criticism. Walter Stephens, for example, examines ambivalent responses towards

its romance deferral and multiple subplots (170), while Sergio Zatti suggests that tension between epic and romance in the poem creates meaning (136). Generic anxiety is discernible in the *Liberata*, and in keeping with the epic theory outlined in the *Discorsi* Tasso rejects the fantastical elements that define the *Furioso* in favour of verisimilitude, privileging historic antecedents over imaginative conceits. Looney notes, "[Tasso's] main source is *Belli sacri historia*, an extensive chronicle written by the twelfth-century archbishop William of Tyre" (148). We can detect Tasso's insistence on Christian authority as well as historic accuracy in the poem's unequivocal denunciation of classical and chivalric literary exemplars when compared to the heroes of the *Liberata*:

> Silence, you Argonauts, silence, you wandering knights
> of Arthur's table—whose tales contain no dearth
> of empty dreams! Beside the glory of these
> let every memory of old champions cease (1.52.5-8)

Included in the poem itself is a literary hierarchy in which the imperial discourse of epic narrative subjugates its classical and chivalric elements. As Javitch asserts: "Tasso aims to show how one can truly fuse modern and Virgilian heroic poetry, in contrast to Ariosto's hybridization" ("Reconsidering" 401). Tasso accomplishes this fusion through the stern containment of his inherited sources, keeping any romance tropes secondary to the epic narrative. The privileging of epic cohesion over chivalric individualism is explicitly addressed in Canto Five, verse 37 through the discussion of imperial duty. At one point Godfrey admonishes: "From those in higher station … / let those beneath them learn how to obey" (5.37.1-2). The commander's directive is a terse reminder to his lieutenants of their shared patriarchal hierarchy and how imperial discourse structures its adherents. It must be noted that Godfrey does not situate himself at the top of the

hierarchy he advocates; he instead proposes himself and his peers to be examples of fidelity who are themselves obedient to the hegemonic structure that they all exist within (God and the Roman Catholic Church being higher). Godfrey's relativist position is almost immediately appropriated and reinterpreted by one of his lieutenants, who advocates the use of force in implementing a social structure: "Rule falls, and mercy aids the ruination, / when reverent fear is not its firm foundation" (5.39.7-8). In other words, tolerating narrative and social forms that deviate too much from epic linearity invites the dissolution of imperial discourse and must be dealt with severely.

As outlined in the *Discourses*, any divergent elements within a heroic poem must be made to support and further the overarching imperial structure that they exist within, and to that end the romantic love that Tasso finds suspect is appropriated and reconfigured. As Joanne Dempsey suggests, "Love, in Tasso's enlarged definition, is not only human passion (though that love is included), but also a high and noble motion of the will toward God" (324-25). The love that motivates Godfrey and his knights is not the same kind that leaves Tancred in existential despair. Theirs is rather a deep fidelity that reinforces institutional allegiance and subjugation. In Tasso's Counter-Reformation context, devotion to God is inseparable from the institution that reasserts its authority as the earthly mediator for such relationships. In Tasso's poem romance love becomes love of God, which in turn means fidelity to the institution that represents divine authority. We see the development of this argument along with an imperial ascendance over disruptive narrative forms in the account of the *Liberata*'s own errant princess: "Tasso's development of the figure of Erminia shows us his solutions to the problem of

harmonizing the conflicting demands of romance dispersion and epic convergence" (Murtaugh 12).

The reader can follow the epic assimilation of romance within *Gerusalemme liberata* through Erminia, first introduced in Canto Three:

> … beautiful Erminia who waits
> at Aladine's court, her Antioch forsaken,
> the king her father slain, and the town taken (3.12.6-8)

Erminia is immediately identified as a casualty of epic discourse in line with Quint's model, where the losers of an imperial enterprise are left dispossessed and relegated to romance meandering. Bereft of her own cultural context when her city of Antioch falls to the Christian invaders, the Islamic princess is consigned to displaced wandering. Erminia is thus excluded from patriarchal social organization and narrative linearity, much like Ariosto's Angelica. Both characters follow a similar narrative trajectory, and in Marilyn Migiel's concise summation:

> When Erminia flees in Canto VII, the dominant subtextual figure is the fleeing Angelica, of Canto I of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*; the pastoral episode in Canto VII and the scene in Canto XIX where Erminia heals the wounded Tancredi bring to mind the pastoral scenes in which Ariosto's Angelica discovers the wounded Medoro, tends to his wounds, [and] falls in love with him (*Gender* 76).

The similarities between the two princesses are an example of intertextuality on Tasso's part, his critique of Ariosto, and his effort to revise the earlier poet. I argue that Erminia represents the development of the fleeing figure trope through which Tasso tries to correct Ariosto's failure to adhere to Aristotelian models of epic poetry in allowing Angelica to resist imperial conscription and escape the narrative.

Despite their similarities, there are several notable differences between Angelica and Erminia, primarily in their respective attitudes towards Christians. In the *Furioso* Angelica is hostile towards Charlemagne's paladins, and although she does not express any objections to their religious ideologies, she nonetheless views all the Christian knights with disdain (I.49). Erminia, though, ignores ideological differences in her love for the enemy knight Tancred, an affection that "is inspired by moral virtues as well as physical comeliness" (Corrigan "Erminia" 332). Angelica would never be able to view one of her rapacious suitors as anything other than a threat and chooses a fellow casualty of epic to be her beloved. Erminia's infatuation with a representative of a successful imperial enterprise is in keeping with the expectations of epic, in which hegemony is established. Although both women are forced to negotiate conditions of a war brought about through conflicting ideologies, neither expresses any particular interest in what is happening beyond her own immediate concerns. In the *Furioso* Angelica simply wants to escape from her hostile context, and for most of the *Liberata* Erminia is preoccupied with her infatuation with Tancred. Their indifference to ideology is symptomatic of their exclusion from public events and lack of agency in determining the outcome of such things, betraying both Ariosto's and Tasso's relegation of women to the private sphere, a marginalized space beyond imperial discourse.

The other significant difference between the two characters is how each princess encounters desire and her subsequent relation to it. Angelica is an object of desire, whereas Erminia is a desiring subject. At first glance that differentiation may seem like Erminia is assigned a higher degree of agency in occupying the position of desiring

subject. In imperial discourse, however, desire – demonstrated in the *Furioso* to be the longing for an alien other in pursuit of an elusive personal wholeness – is a dangerous indulgence that compromises the integrity of imperial cohesion. Erminia's desire for an enemy invader "threatens the downfall of narrative and interpretive codes in the poem" (Migiel, *Gender* 59) through what I argue to be its disregard for imperial cohesion and ideological difference. In her unrequited love for Tancred, Erminia is a representative of chivalric disruption within an epic narrative.[15] Regardless of whether a person is an object of desire or a desiring subject, though, desire is feminized and disruptive to imperial discourse and thus something to be contained. As Wells reminds us, "Feminine desire and feminine will are alike suppressed by the masculine choice of epic" (25). Imperial cohesion denies Erminia that which she desires, but, unlike Ariosto's Angelica, Tasso's errant princess decides to enter wholly into epic in an attempt to attain her goals.

Erminia's desire for Tancred leads to an instance of psychomachia that reinforces the poem's gender-coded patterns of generic conduct. The forlorn princess is compelled to negotiate conflicting modes of subjectivity that Tasso renders into narrative terms: "Two potent foes began to duel within her— / Honor and Love—and doubtful which the winner" (6.70.7-8). Erminia's inner conflict mirrors the poem's critique of epic *ira* versus romance *amour*, with honour being the emotion motivating epic and romantic love being

[15] Melinda Gough identifies Armida as a representative of chivalric romance. Although it is true that Armida acts as a distraction to Geoffrey's knights, the sorceress does so at the behest of her uncle, the wizard Hydrotes (4.25-26). As such, I view her as an active participant in the poem's imperial narrative. Unlike Armida, Erminia is not a contributor or a competitor to the poem's epic enterprise.

characteristic of chivalric romance. Tasso gives voice to these underlying motivations, allowing them to engage in a debate over which narrative the individual should authenticate. Honor initiates the inner deliberation by berating the princess for her desire:

> Do you esteem the praise of honesty
> so lightly, and the fame of being chaste,
> that you'll go skulking to the enemy,
> nocturnal lover, and seek to be dispraised? (6.72.1-4)

Of particular interest is the outsider perspective in Honor's use of a second person address – the "you" of the first line. The voice does not belong to Erminia but is that of the patriarchal hegemony that she exists within. Tasso renders Honor as an alien, external mechanism, prescribing a mode of behaviour that reinforces the princess's subjugation by relegating her to roles that are deemed suitable for women in imperial discourses. Praise and fame, the approval of the masculine public sphere, are offered as rewards for adhering to the patriarchal economy of gender.

Love's rebuttal is prefaced with the narrator's implied disapproval: "On the other side the lying counselor / uses his pleasing flatteries to entice" (6.73.1-2). Honor's opponent implores the princess to give in to her desire and go to the Christian knight that she is infatuated with. The narrator's characterization of Love as a 'lying counselor' enticing his adherents into acting irresponsibly makes plain the narrator's disapproval of indulging in behaviour that is contrary to socially responsible conduct. There is an implied gender critique in Erminia's psychomachia as well; on one hand Honor, the voice of imperialist propriety and proponent of women's subjugation, advocates traits that reinforce epic masculinity by asserting patriarchal models of personal deportment. Love, on the other hand, is a whispering interloper from chivalric romance, encouraging the

princess to succumb to desire. Erminia's "lying counselor" argues for a course of action that subverts imperial cohesion, a self-indulgence that is reminiscent of Marc Antony's abandonment of epic heroism to follow Cleopatra. In accordance with Virgilian models of epic, such actions are decidedly un-masculine in the *Liberata*. The effeminacy of desire is revealed as such when Rinaldo is criticized for succumbing to a woman's charms and abandoning Godfrey's imperial enterprise. When confronted with his own reflection in Armida's bower, the knight:

> … saw himself for what he was, now tressed
> with dainty touches, reeking of perfume,
> his hair in curls and tassels on his vest,
> his dangling sword effeminate at his side,
> prettified – not to mention all the rest,
> for it's a dandy ornament he bore,
> not a ferocious instrument of war! (16.30.2-8)

This realization is important in demonstrating the *Liberata*'s unapologetic misogyny and how the poem privileges imperial duty over domestic bliss.[16] It should also be noted that

[16] There is a continuing critical dialogue regarding gender in Tasso's poem, and some notable studies include Naomi Yavneh's "'Dal rogo alle nozze': Tasso's Sofronia as Martyr Manqué," which examines the importance of female chastity to patriarchal culture; *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, edited by Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens examines authority through literary history. Stephens's contribution "Saint Paul Among the Amazons: Gender and Authority in *Gerusalemme liberata*" looks at the portrayal of women in Tasso's poem and the connections between forms of domestic, political, and literary authority. Marilyn Migiel's *Gender and Genealogy in Tasso's* Gerusalemme liberate (1993) examines the gender ideology of the poem from a woman reader's perspective. See also Maggie Günsberg's "*Donna liberata*?: The Portrayal of Women in the Italian Renaissance Epic," *The Italianist* 7 (1987), 7-35, and John C. McLucas's "Clorinda and Her Echoes in the Woman's World," *Stanford Italian Review* 10 (1990), 81-92.

in accompanying Godfrey's lieutenants Rinaldo chooses homosocial bonding over intimacy. The implied gendering of Honor and Love in Erminia's psychomachia – Honor as masculine and Love as feminine – proves to be detrimental to the princess in the way that it obscures the boundaries between the gender-coded behaviours the poem advocates.

Erminia's inner turmoil inspires critical introspection. As she thinks about Tancred, who has been wounded in a duel and lies recovering in the enemy camp outside the walls of Jerusalem, the princess intuitively deconstructs the limitations that have been imposed on her. Her insight is a result of a comparison that Erminia draws between herself and Clorinda, a female soldier reminiscent of Ariosto's Bradamante and Marfisa. When thinking of the woman warrior, the princess declares:

> How blest by fortune is this warlike lady!
> How much I envy her! and what I prize
> is not a woman's fame or boast of beauty.
> Petticoats never slow her where she flies,
> her valor's not pent in some jealous study,
> she straps her weapons when she wants, and goes!
> Fear and shame never hinder what she does. (6.82.2-8)

Erminia's characterization of Clorinda reveals her ability to articulate, then renounce prescribed feminine behaviour, and her subsequent realization of what it is that either hampers or facilitates mobility. In declaring that she does not prize "a woman's fame" or beauty, the princess rejects the gendered economy that is advocated by Honor, the voice of masculine inscription. The consequences of adhering to such prescribed roles, Erminia realizes, is "Fear and shame," interpellative moralities that hinder unfettered agency.

Even more significant is Erminia's deconstruction of how gender can facilitate or impede movement. "Petticoats," women's clothing, consign their wearer to immobility

and stasis, whereas armour allows freedom of movement in a sociological sense. Erminia understands Clorinda's armour to be a badge of patriarchal authority, a vehicle of agency and mobility much like Ariosto's errant princess possesses with her magic ring. In her critical (albeit melancholic) examination of Clorinda, Erminia realizes the possibility of female agency. Unlike Angelica, though, Tasso's princess does not have the option of a *deus ex machina* magical device to enjoy such freedom of movement. Erminia instead recognizes the physical signifiers that impart agency in her culture as being armour and sword, the necessary instruments of masculine imperialism.

Although Honor's admonishments reinforce prescribed modes of behaviour, Erminia's musings interrogate accepted gender norms. Günsberg's discussion regarding the limitations of differentiating between 'male' and 'female' characters in *Gerusalemme liberata* is helpful here; the critic rejects obvious gender identification – that is, identification that is determined biologically – as a limiting intellectual conceit that obstructs analysis. Günsberg separates gender differentiation from biology and assigns it instead to behavioural modes to better examine the problems that are inherent in such designations. For example, in the model that she proposes, Clorinda on the battlefield is masculine while Rinaldo in Armida's bower is feminine. Günsberg explains: "A conceptualization of the feminine and the masculine as distinguishable constructs … has the important effect of recognizing their actual mobility in the narrative," with gender within the poem an ideologically determined set of narrative constructs (8). Her model provides a productive lens through which to analyze Erminia's reasoning and actions. To fully realize her desire and go to Tancred in the Christian camp, Erminia understands that

she cannot be feminine, which in the *Liberata* is a behavioural mode that inhibits her movement. To enjoy the mobility needed to accomplish her goals the princess must be masculine. Or at least appear to be.

To satisfy her desire to go to Tancred, Erminia decides to borrow Clorinda's armour and sneak out of the besieged city:

> She buckled tight and hurt with hardest steel
> her neck so delicate, her golden hair.
> Her tender hand took hold of the great shield,
> a burden still too great for her to bear.
> So all decked out in iron she shone still,
> and conquered her sweet self, a soldier fair (6.92.1-6)

In keeping with Günsberg's model Erminia decides to become masculine and appropriate her culture's signifiers of patriarchal authority to claim agency. However, hers is a precarious autonomy that is predicated on the illusory imitation of masculinity/patriarchal compliance, and as such is unstable. Angelica's agency, although attained through magic, is her own. Ariosto's princess does not have to discard her own femininity to achieve unencumbered mobility (that she can only do so through imaginary means is, nevertheless, both problematic and telling). Erminia's pretense of agency, however, is based on deception – it is not so much reclamation as it is a sort of theft or borrowing. Although McLucas suggests that "Clorinda is almost a projection of Erminia's self rather than a confidante" (49), I have to disagree. It is tempting to view Clorinda as being such, but that reading invests the poem with an empathy towards both characters that is problematic in the way that it assigns women in general unconditional autonomy. Just as the armour is not truly Erminia's, neither is the mobility that it imparts, a truth that will be violently brought home to the errant princess.

It cannot be said that Erminia is confused about what gender roles are assigned to whom in her cultural context. Rather, the princess has an astute and expanded awareness of how gender operates in the *Liberata*, which she manipulates to further her own agenda. Where Tasso's princess does become confused, though, is in the question of what narrative genre she exists within. Disguised in Clorinda's armour Erminia leaves the walled city of Jerusalem and journeys to the Christian camp, the sight of which is cause for joy:

> How sweet the Latin tents are to my eyes!
> I draw near you and I am comforted,
> refreshed and heartened (6.104.1-4)

Erminia exists in a chivalric narrative and accordingly looks upon the enemy camp with delight. In her desire to go to Tancred the princess views the poem's epic discourse through romance. That proves to be a big mistake.

Erminia's imposition of chivalric romance upon imperial enterprise is a failure in reading and has a detrimental impact on her attempt to circumvent the hostilities between the opposing armies and go to Tancred, essentially, to create her own narrative. That failure results in the compromise of her borrowed agency when she is mistaken for Clorinda and pursued by murderous enemy soldiers:

> Unhappy Erminia fled, and eager to gallop
> over the earth the hooves of her war horse pounded;
> her maid fled too, and after the women followed
> the troops and their chief, whose furious wrath abounded (6.111.1-4)

Imperial dominance asserts itself, dispelling the illusion of chivalric adventure with the threat of epic violence. The errant princess's newfound agency is also revealed to be illusory when she loses control of her steed and goes charging through the night:

> … into the wooded, dark terrain
> Erminia is swept away on her thoroughbred.
> Her trembling hand no longer holds the rein (7.1.1-3)

Erminia's squire joins the chase, as does Tancred, who believes the fugitive to be Clorinda and sneaks out of the camp to follow her (6.114). The reader is tempted to view the entire episode as comedic as the frantic princess collects both Muslims and Christians alike in her wake. What the pursuit of Erminia does, though, is disrupt the poem's epic linearity. The romance that Erminia tries to bring into the narrative destabilizes epic cohesion through the incursion of objectives that do not further Godfrey's and the poem's imperial project, specifically the taking of Jerusalem and the assimilation of the alien other.

Much like Ariosto's princess, Erminia is also chased straight into pastoral. After being pursued all night and losing her horse, the failed romance figure finds herself immersed in an alternative genre:

> Raising her languid eyes, she looks upon
> a solitary haunt for shepherding,
> and amid the rustling leaves and waters hears
> sounds that recall her to her sighs and tears (7.5.5-8)

Many critics have discussed the advent of the pastoral mode in the middle of the *Liberata*. Fichter views it as a trap for both Erminia and Tancred (268) and Migiel suggests that the princess's entrance into the pastoral marks the point where desire is potentially fulfilled or negated ("Tasso" 66). Elsewhere she invokes Ariosto, drawing a comparison between Erminia's dressing herself in shepherd's clothing in Canto Seven and Angelica's own donning of pastoral costume (*Gender* 63-4). Murtaugh reads the episode as a transitory state of peace through which Erminia is given a glimpse into an

alternative to epic strife, which is much the same way the pastoral functions in the *Furioso* (17). I view the pastoral in both poems as representing exclusion from imperial enterprise, and the only significant difference is in the implied attitude towards such alternative spaces. In Ariosto's poem the entry into pastoral leads to stability and domestic bliss, but in Tasso's epic it is exile.

In escaping imperial epic and entering into pastoral Erminia avoids imperial assimilation, just as her predecessor did before her. The difference, though, is that Tasso's princess does so at the expense of her own desire. There is no injured paramour waiting for Erminia, only emptiness:

> But often, when the lambs lay in the shade
> to cool themselves from the hot summer rays,
> in the bark of laurel and oak she signed the name
> of her beloved in a hundred ways,
> carving about her strange, unhappy love
> a hundred sorrowing songs and roundelays.
> And when she read her words she could not speak
> without the prettiest tears to dew her cheek. (7.19)

In Ariosto's poem the pastoral is an alternative genre that subverts the poem's epic thrust towards imperial dominion and provides the site where Angelica is able to attain the autonomy necessary for her to escape the poem. In Tasso's reimagining of the episode, pastoral is still an alternative to imperial discourse, but a marginalized one that is defined more by absence – the absence of what one desires, the absence of culture, and the absence of a voice through which to participate in governance. Tasso's pastoral is really the lack of agency manifested, an absence that is made explicit in the princess's own carvings. Unlike Angelica, who literally inscribes her own narrative all over the grove

(*Furioso* XIX.36), Erminia carves vague lamentations that only reflect her desolation back at herself, reaffirming her own exile and loss.

Erminia is defined by loss throughout *Gerusalemme liberata*. She loses her home, her family, her beloved, and finally herself. The Muslim princess considers why this should be when she returns from her pastoral exile in Canto Nineteen:

> … I count the cost
> little, to lose the kingdom; with my throne
> I lost myself. And that I might be lost
> forever, I was foolish in my art,
> losing my senses, and my mind and heart. (19.92.4-8)

Erminia's musings reveal an introspective inquiry that reinforces Quint's relegation of romance to the losers of epic. For the princess the loss of cultural context equals the loss of self, leaving her adrift in aimless romance wandering and susceptible to desire, which in both Tasso's and Ariosto's poems is characterized as the sense of absence that seeks wholeness in the absorption of the alien other. Erminia's self-questioning indicates a reassessment of chivalric narratives and the existentialist loss of self that accompanies them in Tasso's epic model. Introspection also leads to the princess's final disavowal of romance narratives: "love took / all honor from me" (19.97.7-8). Erminia's morose admission encapsulates the ideological movement that occurs within the *Liberata* as a whole.

The Christian knights must also abandon chivalric conceits to overcome the stasis that had them locked in a seemingly insoluble stalemate at the siege of Jerusalem. As Looney puts it: "Only when Godfrey's peers willingly 'put themselves under' his leadership can the teleological machinery of the epic bring the plot to its close" (127).

Looney's observation draws attention to how subjectivity is enacted in both epic and romance narratives. Lacanian definitions of subjectivity are helpful to this particular line of investigation. According to Bruce Fink's paraphrase of Lacan, the subject is "a position adopted with respect to the Other as language or law" (12). More specifically, "the subject *is* a relationship to the symbolic order" (xi). Broadly speaking the Symbolic Order is made of the pre-existing social orders that we are all born into: the laws of our culture/society, and the particular language that we speak. Subjectivity is a residual effect of the Symbolic, especially in its guise of language: the subject is essentially a linguistically structured entity.[17] I will explore the importance of language to evolving forms of early modern subjectivity further through Milton's fleeing figures in Chapters Three and Four, but for now it is enough to say that subjects are determined through the discourses that they inhabit. Tracey Sedinger's understanding of how subjectivity operates in the Renaissance is rather literal: "For early moderns … the subject did not connote freedom; to be a subject was to embrace (or be defined by) a subjection both social and political in character." She goes on to say: "Subjection was total, since every member of the polity was subjected to someone else" (170, 171). In that formulation subjectivity means actual subjection, recognizing and accepting one's agreed-upon place in a multi-tiered social organization.

[17] For further discussion of Lacan's Orders, see Jacques-Alain Miller's seventeen volume transcription of Lacan's seminars. Although the Orders are referred to throughout the entire collection, I found Book 11, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* to be helpful. Bruce Fink's *The Lacanian Subject* is also instructive, particularly pages 24-30.

Although Sedinger's proposal is applicable to an extent, it implies a hierarchy that is not truly relevant to the advent of subjectivity. In Lacanian thought everyone who acquires language is "subjugated," interpellated into predetermined sets of behaviours and responses. Sedinger's model is nonetheless helpful in determining how subjectivity is negotiated through genre. In epic narratives a hierarchical social structure is put into place by those who enforce inherited modes of being. Epic enforces a distinctly classical Symbolic Order, and those who enjoy privilege in such narratives identify themselves with that which they represent. Rinaldo, for example, need only be reminded of his place to ensure his return, and when commanding him to do so Godfrey's lieutenants speak through the Order that they exist within, unconsciously conflating themselves (and the fugitive knight) with that which has interpellated them. Those who inhabit romance – in epic narratives the ones who are actually subjugated – are made to critically engage with the cultural context that they find themselves in. Erminia must first recognize Clorinda's armour as a signifier of authority before using it for her own ends. Subjectivity is a predetermined position within an inherited structure in either instance. In Tasso's poem chivalric engagement with inherited modes of subjectivity inevitably leads to epic assimilation. Rinaldo abandons Armida and asks Godfrey for forgiveness in the final cantos of the *Liberata*. After all the chivalric distractions are resolved, Godfrey and his army (with some heavenly assistance) successfully take Jerusalem and defeat the Muslim forces that opposed them.

The issue of subjectivity in competing generic modes leads into further questions about the purpose of romance in the *Liberata* – all it ever seems to lead to is despair, as

evident in Tancred's loud self-admonishment when his pursuit of Erminia causes him to neglect and forfeit a duel that could have resolved the conflict:

> … "I have not done
> my duty!" he cried in sorrow, "He'd [Tancred's Muslim opponent] be right
> to hold me up to scorn and smear my name.
> O my great fault! O my eternal shame!" (7.49.5-8)

Tancred's outburst says much about the nature of romance in the *Liberata*, why Tasso includes it, and what it contributes to the poem's imperialism. In ideological terms romance provides an example of subjectivity – in the sense of being subjugated – that is excluded from epic/social cohesion. To exist within romance is to be bereft of context, along with the sense of self that can be found therein. Fichter suggests that romance within the *Liberata* is a metaphor for spiritual privation. According to Fichter, in Tasso's conscientiously Counter-Reformation epic such narratives reenact the Fall (in Christian ideologies, the estrangement of humankind from divine grace) moving towards a distinctly epic Redemption (265, 267). Fichter's typological reading of genre productively situates fragmented romance wandering as being in need of redemption through epic certitude. Although useful in its recognition of movement from one generic mode towards another (in his argument, from romance to epic), I disagree with epic certitude being the inevitable destination for chivalric meandering. That outcome is Virgilian and therefore classical, which does not take into account the cultural context of Renaissance literature. My discussion follows the fleeing figure trope as it leads heroic poetry away from epic certitude and towards a fully realized autonomy.

Romance wandering as a metaphor for spiritual longing (rather than a need for political certainty) is relevant to both this chapter and my general thesis, and is indicative of an impulse that is further developed through Spenser's epic and fully realized in Milton's. Here, though, in Tasso's poem where the trope is still being developed, alternative narratives are simply those that are excluded from epic certitude. Narratives that deviate from epic linearity and cohesion are menacing to selfhood, be it through the aimlessness of romance or the despairing emptiness of pastoral. Tasso's imperial model does not entertain or even tolerate alternative narratives/genres the way that Ariosto's poem does, even if only to assimilate them in the end. The *Liberata* espouses a rigid patriarchal social organization that is fundamentally antagonistic towards those it subjugates. In Günsberg's summary, "despite the difference between [*Orlando furioso*] and [*Gerusalemme liberata*], both poems fundamentally reinforce the dominant ideology of fixed gender attributes and the subordination of the feminine" (34). Subordination means assimilation – the eradication of autonomy that, if need be, is to be accomplished through violence.

Epic linearity asserts itself through imperial violence as the *Liberata* progresses towards its close, a move that is signaled in Canto Twelve by the death of Clorinda when she is inadvertently slain. After Clorinda is run through with Tancred's sword, the narrator explains:

> But as she falls she speaks her life's last word,
> in a voice broken with extremity,
> and a new spirit in her proclaims that word,
> spirit of faith, and hope, and charity (12.65.3-6)

Epic linearity is asserted in two ways through the death of Clorinda: first, the woman who claims masculine agency through her appropriation of its signifiers, armour and sword, is destroyed by a representative of patriarchal order, and second, she accepts the imperial ideology of the invaders before the final surrender of her selfhood in death. In Günsberg's psychoanalytical reading: “The feminine, then, being made to stand for the socially-threatening id, is repressed by the masculine, or put another way, the pagan female character signifying the feminine is, via religious conversion, recuperated by the male, Christian character on behalf of patriarchal Christian society” (13). Although Clorinda’s death at the hands of her beloved is a tragic accident it nonetheless reinforces the ascendency of epic over romance. That beneath their respective armour the two are lovers does not matter; they are enemy soldiers first, and the imperatives of epic narrative demand that one of them falls.

Clorinda's death is a brutal expression of imperial dominance that anticipates the fall of Jerusalem in Canto 18, as well as the violence that accompanies it. Tasso is unflinching in his depiction of the theft, rape, and carnage that erupt when the city walls are breached. Though the poem is ambivalent regarding the Crusaders' actions throughout Canto Nineteen, the narrator steels himself to deliver the following proclamation:

> O justice of heaven! the more delayed,
> the heavier on that wicked race you fall!
> From the depths of your providence you made
> sternness and wrath awake in the merciful,
> and the blasphemous pagan washed in his blood’s rain
> the very temple he had made profane. (19.38.3-8)

Beyond simply dehumanizing Muslims as the menacing other, Tasso excuses imperial violence as the consequence of resisting assimilation and goes on to attribute the brutality

of the invading army to exterior motivations. Although those motivations are identified as heavenly in origin, heaven functions throughout the poem as the indicator of and justification for patriarchal social organization, the top of the hierarchy that Godfrey and his knights represent and assert.

Erminia's assimilation is not as violent as Clorinda's, nor is it as overtly brutal as the fall of Jerusalem. It is, nonetheless, unsettling. In Canto 19, when she meets a servant of Tancred's on the road, the wandering princess implores:

> Rather when you return to camp, I pray,
> take me back to the prison so dear to me.
> I pass a troubled night and a darkened day,
> miserable in my bitter liberty (19.83.1-4)

Erminia consciously rejects autonomy in favour of subjugation, recognizing that she is not afforded an existence beyond the poem's patriarchal structure. The threat of oblivion is reinforced in the *Liberata* through her very absence from the narrative from Canto Seven to now. Having been exiled and excluded from the social organization that is represented by Godfrey and Tancred, Erminia succumbs to the imperial discourse of the invaders and reappears in the poem, coming full circle as she does: “The dispersive, centrifugal, romantic energy of her adventures is resolved in a circular movement which achieves a final epic unity” (Murtaugh 23). The errant princess is led to Tancred, who has been severely wounded by Clorinda in their confrontation, thus resolving the narrative movement that had begun when Erminia donned armour and embraced romance. As Tylus explains: “In the poem’s penultimate canto, Erminia reverses her flight of Canto 6 and finally ministers to a wounded Tancredi in the way that she had intended to when she first set out toward ‘le tende latine’” (Tylus “Narrative” 56). Romance wandering is

resolved in the willing subordination of her autonomy, which is now revealed to be an instance of aspiring epic linearity. Corrigan views Erminia's desire to reunite with Tancred as similar to Godfrey's determination to win Jerusalem in their unswerving movements towards an unchanging goal ("Erminia" 331-32). Reading the princess's willing subjugation as the realization of an earlier goal is intriguing in its suggestion that Erminia's assimilation has always been inevitable. In Tasso's poem romance is epic unrealized, in search of linearity and coherence promised by imperial discourse. Elizabethan England's poet laureate had a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between chivalric romance and epic.

Chapter II: "To win so goodly pray"[18]:
Florimell from Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*

In the Italian epics, chivalric romance elements are distracting obstacles the heroes must overcome to accomplish their imperial objectives. Angelica from Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* is relentlessly pursued by Charlemagne's paladins, all of whom should be defending Western Europe from invading Saracens rather than chasing a wayward princess. To excuse their impulsive behaviour, the poet explains that love is a type of insanity that the hero Roland overcomes when his lost wits are restored to him (39.61). In Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* Princess Erminia of Antioch falls in love with the Christian knight Tancred, only to be chased by murderous soldiers when she disguises herself in armour to go to him. Her devotion is unwavering but unrewarded, even after nursing her fatally wounded paramour and converting to Christianity. Both Italian poems characterize the chivalric pursuit of love as destabilizing to the martial campaigns that the narratives are built upon. Ariosto and Tasso depict erotic desire as inconsequential and even frivolous in comparison to imperial enterprise. Edmund Spenser has a markedly different attitude towards love and its pursuit throughout his chivalric epic.

[18] *FQ* III.iv.46.

Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* retains all the allure and appeal of romance that traditional chivalric narratives invest in it. Love is not unequivocally portrayed as a comical distraction or debasement, but instead as something to be revered:

> Most sacred fyre, that burnest mightily
> In liuing brests, ykindled first aboue,
> Emongst th'eternall spheres and lamping sky,
> And thence pourd into men, which men call Loue (III.iii.1.1–4)

The poet goes on to disavow the type of rapacious desire that Roland succumbs to in the *Furioso*, characterizing such impulses as "brutish" and "filth" (III.iii.1). Spenser's differentiation between types of love reflects a larger post-English Reformation dialogue in which attitudes towards sex and sexuality were shifting. Patricia Crawford explains that in early modern England sexuality was socially constructed and defined through medical and theological discourses: "Sexuality and health were linked. Medical theorists believed that men and women needed sexual activity" (57). The general medical attitude towards sex as healthy impacted theological views and the understanding of intimate, heterosexual relations. Protestant religious authorities approved of and encouraged what William Gouge delicately refers to as "matrimoniall familiarity" (278).[19]

Spenser asserts true love's affiliation with moral virtue, celebrating it as a gift from heaven that has the capacity to ennoble humankind. Perhaps more significantly in

[19] See also William Perkins, *Christian Oeconomie* (London, 1609), p. 24; John Dod and William Hinde, *Bathshebaes Instrvctions to her sonne Lemvel: Containing a fruitfull and plaine Exposition of the last Chapter of the Proverbs* (London, 1614), p. 23; Levinus Lemnius, *The Secret Miracles of Nature* (London, 1658), p. 18.

an epic poem, love can inspire acts of lasting heroism: "Whence spring all noble deedes and neuer dying fame" (III.iii.1.9). In praising love the poet declares:

> Well did Antiquity a God thee deeme,
> That ouer mortall mindes hast so great might,
> To order them, as best to thee doth seeme,
> And all their actions to direct aright;
> The fatall purpose of diuine foresight,
> Thou doest effect in destined descents,
> Through deepe impression of thy secret might,
> And stirredst vp th'Heroes high intents,
> Which the late world admires for wondrous moniments. (III.iii.2)

In *The Faerie Queene* martial heroism and, more importantly, all that it can achieve is born of love. Romantic love is the divine impetus that inspires the poem's greatest knights and ladies, which is a radical departure from Spenser's Italian predecessors. Love and military conquest are mutually exclusive in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, where they are characterized as conflicting pursuits that represent the irreconcilability of chivalric romance and imperial epic.

The Italian poems' underlying genre-related tension is reflective of long-established literary assumptions. In discussing the different perspectives that characterize lyric and epic poetry, Lisa Celovsky notes that lyric is concerned with the fulfillment of individual sexual desire, which can be directly related to the emphasis on the individual in chivalric romance. Epic, however, "demands fulfillment of (masculine) obligations to society, maintaining stable lineage through marital alliances and creation of heirs, and performing martial deeds that create civil order" (Celovsky 218). The tension between individual-oriented genres and imperial epic is due to a fundamental contradiction between individual satisfaction and civic obligation. Early modern cultural producers like

Ariosto and Tasso present individual love as being antithetical to epic poetry, and such genre-related negotiation is evident in their poems. Throughout the Italian epic romances, when one genre is in ascendance, the other, opposing genre wanes; chivalric romance and imperial epic never achieve a satisfying synthesis in either *Orlando furioso* or *Gerusalemme liberata*. Spenser, however, reconciles these disparate genres by making one a prerequisite for the other. In *The Faerie Queene* chivalric romance anticipates imperial epic and virtuous love is a necessary precondition for imperial enterprise.

Spenser reconfigures chivalric romance and imperial epic into a single, unified progression, thus resolving the tension between the two genres that permeates the earlier Italian poems. In *The Faerie Queene* the individual meandering that is characteristic of chivalric adventure eventually settles into epic linearity, and both genres are reimagined as different stages of a single, coherent trajectory. An example of this progression is evident in Britomart's development. The exemplar Knight of Chastity begins as a carefree maiden, falls in love, sets out on a chivalric quest, and, we are told, will go on to establish a line of British monarchs. Britomart's path to imperial dynasty begins with a chivalric call to adventure when by chance she sees the face of her future husband in an enchanted mirror:

> The Damzell well did vew his Personage,
> And liked well, ne further fastned not,
> But went her way; ne her vnguilty age
> Did weene, vnwares, that her vnlucky lot
> Lay hidden in the bottome of the pot;
> Of hurt vnwist most daunger doth redound:
> But the false Archer, which that arrow shot
> So slyly, that she did not feele the wound,
> Did smyle full smoothly at her weetlesse wofull stound. (III.ii.26)

In her "vnguilty age" of adolescent innocence, Britomart does not immediately recognize the impact that seeing the unknown knight has upon her and is unable to understand physical attraction. The persistence of love eventually leads her to take up arms and set out on a chivalric quest to find her mirror knight. Love sends Britomart out into the world on an adventure, then love will lead her to marry and, in Spenser's mythopoeic account, establish the Tudor line of imperial succession (III.iii.21-24). Britomart progresses from errant virgin to the matriarch of a political dynasty, naturally transitioning from chivalric meandering to imperial enterprise. As Merlin explains to the young maid, "For so must all things excellent begin" (III.iii.22.1). Britomart and Artegall's courtship is not the only successful relationship in Spenser's epic romance and there are many positive examples of amorous unions throughout: The Redcrosse Knight and Una, Cambell and Cambina, Triamond and Canacee, and Calidore and Pastorella, just to name a few. Most of the exemplar knights (with the exception of Guyan) are married or are on their way to the altar, which indicates an important aspect of what I propose to be Spenser's model for an enduring nation.

Before continuing, what we now identify as diverse sexualities in *The Faerie Queene* should be briefly discussed. There are alternative sexualities and relationships throughout the poem, but they are always frowned upon. An early example of alternative sexual practices being rejected occurs when two naked damsels who "wrestle wantonly" (III.xii.63.8) in a fountain try to entice Guyon into joining them. The Knight of Temperance's reluctance to continue past the flirtatious maids elicits his companion's rebuke (II.xii.69.1-3). Hellenore's fully consensual polyamorous relationship with the

satyrs is characterized by the narrator as "that lewd / And loathsome life" (III.x.51.1-2), while Mirabella, who "was borne free, not bound to any wight, / And so would euer liue, and loue her owne delight" (VI.vii.30.8-9), is publicly shamed for her asexuality and punished with an impossible, never ending task (VI.vii.39, viii.22-24). The giant Ollyphant, who "surpassed his sex masculine, / In beastly vse all" (III.xi.4.3-4) pursues a young man before being chased away by Britomart (III.xi.3-6). Britomart's own accidental same-sex encounter with Malecasta results in the Knight of Chastity being wounded (III.i.65). Diverse sexualities in *The Faerie Queene* are represented as unacceptable, monstrous, or deserving of punishment. The poem's intolerance towards diverse sexualities could possibly be attributed to the poet's concern with establishing a lasting nation, an enterprise that takes generations to realize (the importance of procreation in the poem is examined below in the analysis of False Florimell). For whatever reason, the unions that are celebrated in *The Faerie Queene* are exclusively heteroromantic.

The Faerie Queene forwards a model of nationhood that is founded on the family, or, more specifically, the individual subject who marries and has children. To contribute meaningfully to the polity, the individual subject must eventually start a family. In Spenser's poem the aimlessness of chivalric meandering is a preliminary state of becoming that young adventurers are expected to outgrow. Renaissance thinkers such as William Gouge categorized the life of a man into four distinct stages: Childhood, Youth, Man-age, and Old age (525-26). According to Gouge's organization Youth lasted from the ages of 14 to 25 and after that, Man-age spanned from 25 to 50. As Celovsky points

out, "Youth and Man-Age are regarded as irreconcilable states" (226). Throughout *The Faerie Queene* the matrimonial partner provides most of the knights with a tangible goal as chivalric meandering naturally matures into epic linearity, just as Youth evolves into Man-age. To return to the idea of a coherent trajectory, the movement works thus: individual chivalric meandering (youth) > stable marital relationship (maturity) > family (lineage) > subsequent generations (nation). Entering into a familial relationship is not the figurative death that young chivalric wanderers avoid, as Marinell mistakenly does throughout Book III; on the contrary, to have a family is to enter into epic linearity through participation in the development of a common culture and social order. In Spenser's configuration youthful adventures give way to familial lineage and, in time, a lasting nation.

Some major studies have explored English nationhood in the early modern period. David Baker suggests England was able to become a nation through its often contentious relationship with the surrounding proto-nations of Ireland, Scottland, and Wales. Richard Helgerson considers how diverse genres such as poetry, mapmaking, and legal and theological discourses contributed to the formation of an English national identity, and Claire McEachern examines how language and different genres of writing create the imagined community necessary for nationhood. Andrew Escobedo argues that many early modern English authors understood their national identity temporally, engaging with a history they felt was lost and struggling to connect the national present to the medieval past. Philip Schwyzer investigates how Tudor era authors may have denigrated Englishness in favour of British nationalism through a nostalgic understanding of British

antiquity as represented in Welsh texts and traditions.[20] Spenser clearly references British antiquity in his own contribution to crafting a national identity.

What I propose to be Spenser's model of nationhood is considered in this chapter through a close examination of Florimell, a female character who spends much of Book III fleeing from hero and villain alike: "Still as she fled, her eye she backward threw, / As fearing euill, that poursewd her fast" (III.i.16.1-2). Florimell represents the next stage of what I identify as the early modern development of the fleeing figure trope, a marginalized character who seeks to escape from a poem's narrative context. Comparing Spenser's chivalric epic to its Italian predecessors reveals a steady progression and evolution of this trope. Angelica from *Orlando furioso* represents the absolute rejection of hegemonic authority. Despite being a princess she is an outsider in the poem's narrative context who is sexually objectified and commodified as war spoils. Erminia from *Gerusalemme liberata* is a Lacanian Other who desires assimilation. Erminia reconciles herself to the new authoritative structure that had displaced her but does so at considerable sacrifice. In both poems imperialism triumphs over the individual; Angelica and Erminia are incidental to the larger narratives that they exist within and are depicted as casualties of imperial enterprise. Florimell, however, is necessary to imperial enterprise, though in a limited way. As a young, unmarried woman in a patriarchal social

[20] David J. Baker, *Between Nations* (1997); Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood* (1992); Claire McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590-1612* (1996); Andrew Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss in Renaissance England* (2004); Philip Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* (2004).

system, she is the means for establishing lasting generations. Throughout *The Faerie Queene* – and specifically with Florimell – Spenser recognizes the importance of women to the imperial project of a lasting nation, but only in a narrow capacity.

Florimell and Britomart

The purpose of *The Faerie Queene*, as explained by Spenser in his letter to Walter Raleigh, is "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline" (714). Spenser's epic romance is an allegorical conduct manual for the gentry and those who would be able to contribute to the nation building impetus underway in Elizabethan England. Chivalric narrative conventions are called upon throughout *The Faerie Queene* to define character traits that would be appropriate for members of the nobility and, presumably, the ideal English citizen. Various knights and characters throughout the poem embody the virtues that the poet advocates. The Redcrosse Knight represents holiness, for example, while Guyon embodies temperance. The virtue of chastity has several representatives due to its complexity, but only two are relevant to this analysis: Britomart, the Knight of Chastity, and Florimell, whom I identify as a fleeing figure. These two characters are similar in their motivations and initial actions; both women are in love with young knights who are oblivious to their affections, and both leave the security of their homes to go in search of their respective paramours. The characters significantly differ in the ways they enter the public domain.

The public realm in early modern England was fraught with moral danger, and simply entering it risked exposure to insidious assaults on one's virtue. Juan Vives cautions:

> Holy wryters saye, that death goeth into the soule by the senses of the bodye like windows, except a man bee wisely wary. Folke be tolled and enticed with the pleasurs of the world: wherwith also the soule is caught and holden. Therfore a mayd should go but seldome abroad: because she neither hath any busines forth, and standeth euer in ieoperdy of her chastitie, the most precious thing that she hath. (89)

Although Vives's admonishment applies to both men and women, he makes a point of warning young maidens that traversing the public domain threatens the most precious thing they have, their chastity. In such potentially treacherous terrain problems could arise for women who did not exist within the safe confines of a dominant patriarchy – those not belonging to a household – but found themselves at large in the public domain.

Most early modern women were included in the patriarchal social organization through association rather than independent participation. Once a woman entered into marriage, she was considered part of the husband's household thanks to the common law of coverture. The Oxford English Dictionary defines coverture as "The condition or position of a woman during her married life, when she is by law under the authority and protection of her husband" ("Coverture"). This common law was established in the medieval era and lasted into the nineteenth century, and as Tim Stretton and Krista Kesselring explain, "Coverture held, most basically, that a husband's legal identity covered that of the woman he married" (7). Legally, a woman became a part of her husband upon marriage or, in Julian Ruff's blunt explanation "The principle of 'coverture' in English law … expressed the almost universal concept that the husband

subsumed the wife as a legal entity" (4). Marrying and becoming subject to coverture was an arrangement that most early modern women had to depend upon for their own well-being. The limited economic and social opportunities afforded women made marriage the most effective means to access patriarchal privilege and enjoy the protections that such a position offered. According to Tracey Sedinger: "in many contemporary representations of women's social position, marriage remained the primary definitive event" (167). Coverture, and its impact on women, is an important consideration in the critical analyses of both Florimell and Britomart.

Britomart first sees Artegall, the Knight of Justice and her future husband, in an enchanted mirror, and she determines to go in search of her mirror knight. Before setting out, her nursemaid Glauce recommends the young maiden don armour as a disguise to ensure their safety while traversing through the public domain:

> That therefore nought our passage may empeach,
> Let vs in feigned armes our selues disguise,
> And our weake hands (need makes good schollers) teach
> The dreadful speare and shield to exercize (III.iii.53.1-4)

Glauce's recommendation proves to be good advice despite it being a potentially subversive act. Clothing and how subjects represented themselves was important in Elizabethan England, where one's manner of dress reinforced or undermined accepted understandings of class and gender. In a patriarchal context a woman choosing to adopt masculine clothing is dangerously subversive. Susan Amussen suggests that in early modern England crossdressing had the potential to destabilize the social order: "inappropriate dress was one sign of the omnipresent threat to patriarchy, standing as it did for women's insubordination in general" (216). Mark Breitenberg explains exactly

how such practices can undermine patriarchal social organization: "By dressing as men, women take on the appearance of men. But … what is most threatening about this act is that it suggests that women can also be *like* men in the act of self-fashioning" (168). It should be noted that historian David Cressy is dismissive of what he identifies as a fixation on crossdressing in current criticism, declaring the attention that literary scholars give to the phenomenon is out of proportion with contemporary concerns ("Gender Trouble," 439). Cressy points out that instances of actual crossdressing in the early modern period were few, and cases that involved the legal system were handled in a mild manner (461). He nonetheless concurs that there was probably some social anxiety about people possibly misrepresenting their genders (460), and contemporary commentary does seem to indicate consternation regarding the possibility.[21]

To return to the poem, Britomart's decision to adopt masculine attire can be understood as subversive, and her armour is invested with meaning on multiple levels. Her plate and mail are appropriated signifiers of those who have authority in her culture, and in donning armour the young maiden presents herself as a representative of the patriarchy rather than as someone who is subjugated to it through familial relationship or marriage. Britomart's armour can also be viewed, however, as a metaphorical

[21] For example, Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses, STC* 23376 (London, 1583), sigs. E7v-F5v; *Hic Mulier: or, The Man-Woman: Being a Medicine to cure the Coltish Disease of the Staggers in the Masculine-Feminines of our Times, STC* 13378 (London, 1620); *Haec-Vir: Or, The Womanish-Man, STC* 12599 (London, 1620); *Muld Sacke: Or The Apologie of Hic Mulier, STC* 21538 (London, 1620); William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scovrge, or Actors Tragœdie* (London, 1633), pp. 171-72, 179-80, 182-83, 206-9.

representation of coverture and her association with a member of the patriarchy. The Briton Maid assumes the uniform of her mirror knight and all that it signifies, fashioning herself after her future husband by adopting his guise. Artegall is effectively present with Britomart through her plate and mail. Armour as an emblem of coverture ensures the maiden's safe passage through the public domain and spaces that exist beyond the confines of social governance. In the poem's narrative, Britomart's wearing of armour also aligns her with all the masculine youths engaging in knight errantry. Chivalric adventuring is traditionally the pursuit of young unmarried men, and in *The Faerie Queene* it primarily represents masculine adolescence: "For Spenser, knight errantry is in several senses a metaphor for masculine Youth. […] Like Youth, knight errantry depends upon autonomy and aggression" (Celovsky 219). The youthful knights' freedom to meander is emblematic of their independent, premarital state.

The Briton Maid's alignment with the poem's youthful knights suggests that even though she actively searches for her mirror knight, the maiden is not yet ready for marriage. Britomart's unpreparedness is evident in her initial disavowal of Artegall, even as she searches for him. In conversation with the Redcrosse Knight, she asks:

> But mote I weet you, right courteous knight,
> Tydings of one, that hath vnto me donne
> Late foule dishonour and reprochfull spight,
> The which I seeke to wreake, and *Artegall* he hight. (III.ii.8.6-9)

Britomart immediately regrets misrepresenting her beloved but continues to do so, and A. C. Hamilton characterizes her allegations against Artegall as slanderous (303n8,6-9). Although Britomart searches for her future husband, she is not yet mature enough to

admit attraction or even acknowledge the object of her quest. Florimell, it must be said, has no such reservations when it comes to her beloved.

The reader's first encounter with Florimell is sudden and brief: "All suddenly out of the thickest brush, / Vpon a milkwhite Palfrey all alone, / A goodly Lady did foreby them rush" (III.i.15). Florimell charges by the knights (and the reader), and Arthur and Guyon join the Forester in chasing after her. The harried maiden is an object of pursuit for hero and villain alike throughout Book III, objectified as "goodly meede" (III.i.18.8) and "goodly pray" (III.iv.46.9). In Spenser's allegory Florimell represents an aspect of chastity, specifically beauty. Most critics view Florimell in terms of how she relates to the poem's genre or the poet's concerns when composing it. Juliana Chapman sees Florimell as embodying Spenser's pursuit of a natural, decorous rhetoric while Donald Stump proposes the wayward maiden (along with Britomart and Snowy Florimell) is part of what he calls a fragmented representation of Queen Elizabeth. Critics such as Thomas Roche, Howard Bahr, Dwight Sims, Lila Geller, and Marie Buncombe view Florimell as a straightforward Neoplatonic representation of true beauty. Lesley Brill considers Florimell to be the primary source of comedy in the poem, thus undermining the idea of her as a second figure of chastity in Book III. Commentators like A. C. Hamilton and Patrick Cheney question traditional interpretations of Florimell as a simple allegorical figure while others suggest the possibility of seeing her as more than a philosophical abstraction. Maria Fahey argues that Spenser's use of similes when describing Florimell's terror as she is pursued invests her with a depth that the allegorical epic-romance context of the poem denies, agreeing with C. S. Lewis that what happens to Florimell in the poem

defines her as a character. My understanding of the maiden is more in line with this view. I do discuss Florimell in terms of genre and how her flight represents the tension between chivalric romance and imperial epic, but I also examine her as a woman whose social context is hostile to her well-being. What may be perceived as a lack of depth that traditional readings ascribe to her is due to the suppression of her voice rather than philosophical abstraction or narrative shallowness.

Like Angelica from *Orlando furioso* and Erminia from *Gerusalemme liberata*, Florimell is what I identify as a fleeing figure, a marginalized chivalric romance character in an epic poem who is at odds with the imperial narrative context. Fleeing figures actively try to escape from the action of the poem that they are trapped within. Such characters are not invested in the imperial project that the narrative furthers (as Britomart is by virtue of her importance to the future political dynasty that she and Artegall will author); rather, fleeing figures recognize imperial agents as hostile towards their self-interest and well-being. Florimell's awareness of her precarious position propels her charge across Faerie Lond.

Florimell immediately left the safety of Gloriana's court upon learning of the knight Marinell's life-threatening injury. As her abandoned dwarf attendant explains to Prince Arthur:

> Fiue daies there be, since he (they say) was slaine,
> And fowre, since *Florimell* the Court forwent,
> And vowed neuer to returne againe,
> Till him aliue or dead she did inuent. (III.v.10.1-4)

Much like Britomart in search of Artegall, Florimell is also determined to find her beloved. Her desire to do so is a natural compulsion arising from her devotion to

Marinell, indicative of her chastity and also the importance of marriage to early modern women. According to Sedinger, "Unlike the exceptional Queen Elizabeth, for many women virtue was defined primarily in relation to a married state that was … always in the future or in the past, if not the present" (167). Matrimony is an important component of Spenserian chastity and is perfectly in keeping with the model that the poet develops throughout his poem. As Jessica Murphy points out, in Spenser's allegory virginity is but one aspect of chastity, and not necessarily the best one (27). Florimell's compulsion to leave the court and seek Marinell abruptly situates her outside of any civil institutions that would protect a young woman in her vulnerable position. Unlike Britomart, Florimell does not have the literal or metaphorical protection of armour.

Both maidens leave the safety of their homes for the sake of marriage. Before setting out, though, Britomart readies herself for travel in the public domain and is confident in the security her signifiers of authority impart to her, travelling "With steadfast corage and stout hardiment; / Ne euil thing she feard, ne euill thing she ment (III.i.19.8-9). Florimell has no such assurance. Dressed in the finery of a lady of court ("Her garments all were wrought of beaten gold" [III.i.15]), her lack of any type of protection signals Marinell's complete absence. Florimell has no signifiers of authority or any indicators of belonging to a household. As Sedinger suggests, the single woman is not afforded the recognition and deference that married women are (172). Marinell's denial of the maiden leaves her unprotected and adrift beyond the assurance of any civil institutions that would give her security.

Marinell

Florimell's love for Marinell is unrequited. The young knight she has her heart set on is entirely unaware of the maiden and her chaste devotion to him. Florimell's unresponsive paramour is still engaged in knight errantry, avoiding amorous entanglements while challenging other meandering youths to combat. Indulging in interpersonal conflicts with other knights leaves little time for romantic entanglements, and Marinell is opposed to any type of intimate relationship with a woman. He is, in the words of the poet, "loues enimy" (III.iv.26.9). Marinell's antagonism towards having any concourse with women is a result of his upbringing; his sea nymph mother Cymoent raised him to be disdainful of female company:

> For thy she gaue him warning euery day,
> The loue of women not to entertaine;
> A lesson too too hard for liuing clay,
> From loue in course of nature to refraine:
> Yet he his mothers lore did well retaine,
> And euer from fayre Ladies loue did fly (III.iv.26.1-6)

Marinell's aversion to women and intimate relationships is an immature form of chastity, indicative of the state of arrested development that he is trapped in. Marinell's abstinence entirely denies any progress into maturity and does not accord with the virtue that the poem advances. Celibacy is unreasonably excessive in Spenserian chastity, as evidenced by Britomart's unhorsing of Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, in III.i.6. Marinell's abstinence is also indicative of his refusal to enter into adulthood. As Celovsky points out, many of the knights in *The Faerie Queene* are transitioning from Youth to Man-age. Marinell, Artegall, Scudamour, and Timias are all coming of age, on their way to becoming adult men with adult responsibilities. Marinell and many of his peers are

resistant, though, "unable to sacrifice youthful behaviours for mature responsibilities and the poem's demands for 'wedded love'" (Celovsky 212). This intermediate phase between youth and marriage is metaphorically represented by knight errantry in Spenser's allegory (217). Rather than marrying and starting a family, Marinell clings to the youthful freedom of unimpeded individuality, actively rejecting the responsibilities that would come with being the head of a household. That is not entirely his fault.

Beyond his mother's admonishments to avoid women, Marinell grew up without a father. Cymoent's lover Dumarin did not forgo knight errantry for the sake of his family, choosing instead to be an absentee parent who left his mistress "in a rocky caue as wight forlorne" (III.iv.20.3). The wandering Dumarin fails to provide an example of mature masculinity or husbandhood to his son, and it is conceivable that with proper guidance Marinell would have known that it was time to grow up before his devastating encounter with the Knight of Chastity.

When Britomart unhorses Marinell he is widely recognized as a formidable knight and renowned for his martial skills. He is financially independent as well:

> An hundred knights of honorable name
> He had subdew'd, and them his vassals made,
> That through all Farie Lond his noble fame
> Now blazed was, and feare did all inuade,
> That none durst passen through that perilous glade.
> And to aduance his name and glory more,
> Her Sea-god syre she dearely did perswade,
> T'endow her sonne with threasure and rich store,
> Boue all the sonnes, that were of earthly wombes ybore. (III.iv.21)

Reputation and the acquisition of prestige were paramount to early modern men (Thomas 6) and financial security was an important consideration before taking on a family and

estate: "Marriage, after all, meant establishing a new household, and that required the accumulation of at least a small amount of wealth, or the realization of an inheritance" (Ruff 160). After amassing fame and wealth Marinell is at the point in his life when he should be growing out of his youthful ways, maturing into proper manhood and taking on all the responsibilities that entails. According to contemporary sermons and advice literature, an unmarried man was considered suspect and characterized as "directionless, insensible, and out of control" (Shepard 74).[22] He is also incomplete – taking on a wife and family completed a man, and marriage was viewed as essential to the achievement of patriarchal manhood (74). In shying away from patriarchal manhood, the young knight also avoids the responsibilities that come along with it. Marinell's rejection of maturity is detrimental to Florimell in the way that it leaves her vulnerable to the unwanted attentions of every other knight or god in Faerie Lond. Furthermore, his aversion to marriage and refusal to grow up also threatens the future prosperity and continuance of the entire polity.

In economic terms Marinell is not contributing to the state through the spending it would take to maintain a household. The "threasure and rich store" (III.iv.21.8) gifted to him from his grandfather, the sea god Nereus, is stagnant. In not sharing his wealth and

[22] Alexander Niccholes, *A Discourse of Marriage and Wiving* (London, 1615), 13, 6; Henry Smith, *A Preparative to Mariage. The Summe Where of was Spoken at a Contract, and Inlarged After* (London, 1591), 4; Ester Sowernam, *Ester hath Hang'd Haman; or, An Answere to a Lewde Pamphlet Entituled, the Arraignment of Women* (London, 1617), 23; Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. Mary dewar (Cambridge, 1982), 76; Sir Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford, 1985), 25.

letting it circulate in the local economy, Marinell risks becoming another Malbecco, a miser who loses both his wife and estate due to his sterile hoarding (Celovsky 234). More importantly, Marinell's celibacy is a disavowal of paternity and the assurance of future generations. By being "loues enimy" (III.iv.26.9), Marinell is a threat to the lasting nation that is imagined in *The Faerie Queene*. The limited concept of chastity that the young knight adheres to is sterile and dangerously nihilistic, resulting from a stunted understanding of what matters. Errantry and the acquisition of fame that is the province of Youth concludes when a young man fully enters into Man-age by marrying. Such a transition can be perceived as a type of death or an ending for the one making it, and as Celovsky explains, "In the eyes of Youth the procreative duties of Man-Age are regarded as death in part because they signify an end to errantry: the medium for acquiring the fame on which youthful status depends" (231). That is a self-centred and myopic position, reflective of the knight's lack of maturity. The impetus to preserve individual status and remain in a state of youth is to deny the establishment of an enduring lineage. Marinell's reluctance to enter into a productive marriage consigns his descendants and any possible contribution to a lasting nation to oblivion. Marinell's reckless hostility towards matrimony leads him into battle with the representative of marital chastity.

Florimell's absentee paramour challenges Britomart to a joust and is seriously injured in the ensuing encounter. Such antagonism directed at the exemplar knight is indicative of Marinell's antipathy towards chastity, and suffering defeat at her hands is a rebuke of his adherence to a prolonged state of youthful irresponsibility:

> But she againe him in the shield did smite
> With so fierce furie and great puissance,

> That through his threesquare scuchin percing quite,
> And through his mayled hauberque, by mischaunce
> The wicked steele through his left side did glaunce;
> Him so transixed she before her bore
> Beyond his croupe, the length of all her launce,
> Till sadly soucing on the sandy shore,
> He tombled on an heape, and wallowd in his gore (III.iv.16)

Marinell's aversion to matrimony and unwillingness to accept the responsibility of family life leaves him fatally wounded, which in allegorical terms can be understood as the detrimental impact of his refusal to become involved in the mature, productive relationship that is advocated throughout the poem. The social implications of Marinell's abstinence also reveal an important aspect of the chastity that is forwarded in *The Faerie Queene*. Spenserian chastity is both a private virtue and a public one, acting as a personal characteristic that bridges the two civic domains. The virtues that Spenser advocates in Books I and II are more inward oriented; holiness and temperance are individual characteristics that a member of the nobility (and everyone in the citizenry as well) should do their best to cultivate. As such, they are qualities that are of most benefit to the individual. The virtues that Spenser promotes in Books IV, V, and VI are socially oriented; friendship, justice, and courtesy are contextual attributes that directly impact society. Chastity is an inward oriented virtue in how it pertains to the individual in terms of behaviour and personal values. For example, Florimell's unwavering devotion to Marinell, even in the face of adversity, denotes her chasteness:

> Eternall thraldome was to her more liefe,
> Then losse of chastitie, or change of loue:
> Dye had she rather in tormenting griefe,
> Then any should of falseness her reproue,
> Or loosenes, that she lightly did remoue. (III.viii.42.1-5)

Chastity, however, is also a socially oriented virtue in how it impacts the polity. For example, False Florimell's comparative lack of chastity causes violent discord among all the knights who court her: Paridell and Blandamour "With murdrous weapons arm'd to cruell fight" battle over her (IV.ii.16), and at the first tournament Satyrane, Blandamour, Eriuan, and Paridell "Each one profest to be her paramoure, / And vow'd with speare and shield it to maintaine" (IV.v.24). False Florimell's want of chastity is socially disruptive.

False Florimell

After escaping a lecherous forester and Prince Arthur, Florimell finds brief refuge with a witch and her "laesy loord, for nothing good to donne" (III.vii.12.3) son. The maiden must flee again when the good-for-nothing rustic aggressively courts her, and the witch determines to make another Florimell for her son. Throughout the poem, Spenser clarifies the virtues that he advocates by including characters who represent their opposite, thus providing a negative comparative example. The duplicitous Duessa is a distorted reflection of Una, for instance, just as proud Lucifera is a vainglorious parody of Gloriana. Florimell is one of the several representatives of chastity, embodying beauty and unwavering devotion. Her doppelgänger, False Florimell, is an example of an unchaste woman and a representative of carnal desire. As Murphy notes, "Paradoxically, to talk about chastity, the poet must talk about unchastity" (28). Florimell is uncompromising in her devotion to Marinell, whereas False Florimell elicits consumptive desire in the young men she encounters. False Florimell passively goes from one suitor to the next without complaint: Braggadochio claims False Florimell from the witch's son

(III.viii.12), then Ferraugh later takes her from Braggadochio (III.viii.16-19). What makes "that snowy Mayd" (IV.v.26.1) so attractive to these errant knights?

False Florimell is entirely made of Petrarchan conceits. Her body is composed of "purest snow" and "virgin wex, that neuer yet was seald"; her eyes are "two burning lampes," and her hair is "golden wyre" (III.viii.6-7). Florimell's doppelgänger is emblematic of false, beguiling beauty and a critique of the Petrarchan adoration that was fashionable among Elizabethan elites. In Petrarchan poetry women are idealized as distant objects of devotion by their literary paramours. The poetry is not about mature relationships, but rather indulging in fruitless admiration for an idealized object of desire who does not truly exist. As Amanda Taylor explains, "Spenser problematizes the courtly love tradition that employs stereotypical Petrarchan tropes, empty ideals of women, and desire that values appearance above character" (189). Courtly love as expressed through Petrarchan desire is antithetical to the marital chastity that is articulated through Books III and IV. Spenser's critique of Petrarchan adoration goes even deeper. In his analysis of how Petrarchan poetry relates to early modern nationalism, William Kennedy explains its associations with European culture: "At a time when England's elite was asserting the nation's own religious and political sovereignty, its literary avant-garde turned to models of Petrarchism and other cultural forms associated with the decadence, corruption, and depravity of Catholic Europe" (165). Petrarchan poetry has intentionally detrimental connotations in a poem meant to further English nationalism. In being composed of Petrarchan conceits, False Florimell can be read as representative of a false sense of

English nationality that is harmful to the imperial project and dangerous to those who are seduced by what she represents.

To lend her Petrarchan composition the semblance of life, the witch "put a Spright to rule the carcas dead" (III.viii.7.9):

> A wicked Spright yfraught with fawning guyle,
> And fayre resemblance aboue all the rest,
> Which with the Prince of Darkenes fell somewhlye,
> From heauens blis and euerlasting rest,
> Him needed not instruct, which way were best
> Him selfe to fashion likest *Florimell*,
> Ne how to speake, ne how to vse his gest;
> For he in counterfesaunce did excel,
> And all the wyles of wemens wits knew passing well. (III.viii.8)

False Florimell is, in essence, a male spirit housed within an idealized woman's body. As such, she is closely related to what can be identified as a crossdresser, a practice not unknown in early modern culture and considered suspect. According to David Cressy: "It was unconscionable that the sign should missignify, the costume deceive" (*Society* 442). He goes on to explain that the practice was viewed with a religious dread by contemporary moralists like Stephen Gosson and William Harrison because of its seeming disregard for tenets expressly outlined in the Christian bible: "Worst of all was the unnatural impiety involved, in violation of the law of God, since outward apparel intimated inward characteristics and the wearer of cross-sexed clothing trod the slope to monstrous degeneration. Was it not written in Deuteronomy that transvestism was an

abomination unto the Lord?" (Cressy *Society* 442).[23] Crossdressing was a cause of anxiety and fear to many contemporary writers who were unnerved by the prospect of people presenting themselves as what they were not (443). To add to the possible consternation, those who interact with crossdressers may not recognize them as belonging to a different gender. This hidden danger adds a further dimension to False Florimell, who seems beautiful and chaste, but compromises any possible virtue in those who find her alluring. False Florimell being animated by a male spright who "all the whyles of wemens wits knew passing well" (III.viii.8.9) also relates to her Petrarchism. Spenser's snowy Mayd is a representative of immature masculine beliefs about what femininity is: highly sexualized, available but remote, and a trophy to be won. As a comparison to the true Florimell, her doppelgänger is instructive:

> [B]oth ends of the spectrum of feminine virtue strive to socialize women into certain behavioral patterns. Portrayals of both 'good' and 'bad' women are used to construct the ideal of feminine virtue. Thus female characters who behave contrary to social prescriptions are just as important to those prescriptions as the female characters who follow them. (Murphy, *Necessity* 6)

Petrarchan idolatry is a harmfully reductive attitude that denies women their humanity, and the courtly object of desire it celebrates is not someone to enter into matrimony with. Such adoration belongs to men who are in the Youth stage rather than those who have matured into Man-Age.

[23] "The womā shall not weare that which perteineth vnto the man, neither shall a man put on womans raiment: for all that doe so, are abomination vnto the Lord thy God." (*Geneva Version*, Deut. 22.5)

Satyrane's Tournament

In keeping with its chivalric romance overtones, there are two formal tournaments in *The Faerie Queene*, one for Florimell's golden sash in Book IV and one in celebration of Marinell and Florimell's wedding in Book V. Michael Leslie recognizes the two tournaments as interrelated, contending the two episodes "present the discussion of knighthood in complementary halves" (177). The two tournaments and the differences between them is another example of Spenserian correspondence in which significant aspects of the allegory are represented through both positive and negative depictions. To relate the tournaments to the argument being developed in this chapter, their correspondence is linked to the maturation of the poem's young knights. Satyrane's tournament in Book IV presents a critique of youthful ideals and immature sexual desire, whereas the wedding tournament celebrates the realization of mature, marital chastity.[24] This discussion considers how the tournaments reinforce the poem's patriarchal social organization and how they function in its narrative context. Satyrane's tournament is an enactment of Petrarchan idolatry and an examination of individual honour. The corresponding wedding tournament is a commemoration of marital chastity and willing acceptance of civic responsibility.

[24] The tournaments – indeed, the poem itself – reflect a cultural interest in chivalry. Chivalry and its courtly ideals were in fashion for Elizabethan courtiers and encouraged by the queen: "Elizabeth's reign fostered a spectacular revival of chivalric ideals and practices. Her Accession Day and other state occasions were solemnly celebrated with tournaments and chivalric pageants" (McCoy 14-15). The reinstatement of chivalry was invested with political capital in Elizabethan England and reflective of the ruling class.

In *The Faerie Queene* tournaments are major celebrations that attract "Manie a braue knight, and manie a daintie dame" (IV.iv.13.8) from far and wide. They provide an opportunity for young knights to test their physical capabilities against their peers, and the appeal of participating in a tournament (both in the poem and in the contemporary, real-life context) is the chance to exercise one's military prowess to maintain or even enhance one's reputation. Partaking in a tournament also strengthens the bonds between all those who participate in it, solidifying aristocratic prominence in the social hierarchy. Violent competition can act as a form of interpersonal male bonding, and friendships formed through conflict are a prominent aspect of chivalric narratives. Richard Kaeuper notes that in major chivalric romance texts male friendship is possibly as important as the romantic relationships between knights and ladies. Kaeuper identifies the recurring pattern of brutal combat, respect, reconciliation, and eventual affection between two knights as a process of bonding, underscoring the importance of martial prowess to chivalry and fellowship (215-16). Chivalric conflict is a major part of male bonding in *The Faerie Queene* and Spenser's Knights of Friendship undergo the exact pattern that Kaeuper identifies. Cambell and Triamond, two of the exemplar knights who take part in Satyrane's tournament, fought ferociously before becoming inseparable companions and brothers-in-law (IV.iii). Any worthwhile competition has some manner of prize for the participants to strive for, and the trophy offered at Satyrane's tournament is emblematic of the most crucial requirement for Spenser's model of nationhood.

In Book IV the knight Satyrane hosts the first tournament, and the three-day event attracts knights and ladies from across the land. The prize is a golden sash that belongs to Florimell:

> Of that great turney, which was blazed brode,
> For that rich girdle of faire *Florimell*,
> The prize of her, which did in beautie most excell. (IV.iv.5.7-9)

Satyrane acquired Florimell's sash after arriving too late to save the harassed maiden in III.vii.31. The article of clothing acts as a signifier for Florimell herself and the ideal of feminine beauty that she represents to the knights of Faerie Lond. The festivities commence with a parade led by the host:

> Then first of all forth came Sir Satyrane,
> Bearing that precious relicke in an arke
> Of gold, that bad eyes might it not prophane (IV.iv.15.1-3)

Florimell's golden sash is displayed and coveted as an idolatrous object of Petrarchan desire. The girdle is housed in a golden ark, which is a typological reference to the Ark of the Covenant, the sacred chest housing the Ten Commandments described in the Book of Exodus (37.1-9). The golden sash is representative of Florimell and her beauty, and Satyrane's commodification of it is imitative of the Order of the Garter and its "idolatrous devotion to female chastity" (McCoy 134). The Order was established by Edward III in 1348 when, according to legend, he retrieved the Countess of Salisbury's fallen garter and spontaneously declared it to be an emblem of masculine honour. Florimell's golden sash, like the countess's garter, is recontextualized from an article of clothing to what Michael Leslie identifies as a *cingulum militare*, "a chivalric symbol of the highest honour and virtue" (175). For the young knights participating in the tournament, the

golden sash is emblematic of masculine honour. Such a reconfiguration erases the woman and replaces her with what the aristocratic young men fetishize. Florimell's personal attributes are thus appropriated and commodified to perpetuate the patriarchal social hierarchy that she exists within.

Spenser invests Florimell's golden sash with mythopoeic significance as well:

> That girdle gaue the vertue of chast loue,
> And wiuehood true, to all that did it beare;
> But whosoeuer contrarie doth proue,
> Might not the same about her middle weare (IV.v.3.1-4)

In true chivalric romance fashion, the enchanted sash gauges the worth of whoever can or cannot wear it. A properly chaste woman can easily fasten the sash around her waist, whereas an unchaste woman will be unable to do so, thus exposing her lack of virtue to all who are present. Rebecca Yearling asserts that Florimell's girdle reflects the development of Spenserian chastity through the poem, at first representing simple fidelity but later becoming emblematic of the complex socially oriented virtue:

> *The Faerie Queene* contains two images of chastity—the simple state of fidelity and virginity (essentially, the refusal of illegitimate sex) that characterizes most of the book's early relationships, and the more complex, inclusive, and socially weighted virtue that the poem later comes to consider as the ideal—and the development between these two concepts can be traced in the changing symbolic role of Florimell's girdle. (137)

At Satyrane's tournament the golden sash functions as a simple representation of virginity, befitting the youthful, premarital immaturity of most of the knights and ladies present. Along with being a fetishistic representation of feminine beauty, Florimell's golden sash is also a very public signifier of chastity, what Renaissance philosopher Juan

Vives calls "the Queene of vertues in a woman" (95). Florimell's golden sash is the site upon which the economy of chastity is enacted.

After three days of intensive, violent sport Britomart is declared the winner of the tournament in IV.v.8. Her victory is immediately followed by another contest to "yield the fayrest her due fee" (IV.v.9.9). In the poem the tournament trophy, Florimell's golden sash, comes with the maiden who is judged to be the most desirable, an exchange that the poet presents as perfectly natural:

> It hath bene through all ages euer seene,
> That with the praise of armes and cheualrie,
> The prize of beautie still hath ioyned beene;
> And that for reasons special priuitie:
> For either doth on other much relie. (IV.v.1.1-5)

All the ladies in attendance participate in a beauty pageant, indicating the cultural value invested in a woman's physical attractiveness. In early modern culture physical beauty is synonymous with moral virtue: "shee that is chaste is fayre, wel fauoured, rich, fruitfull, noble, and all best thinges that can be named: and contrary, shee that is unchaste is a sea and treasure of all illness" (Vives 92).[25] All the unwed women present are potential prizes for the worthiest knight, underscoring their subjugated status in the dominant patriarchal hierarchy. Although the poet extols the striking beauty of many of the contestants, False Florimell is "by doome of all" (IV.v.16.1) awarded the golden sash.

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[25] Baldassare Castiglione also conflates beauty with virtue in his influential conduct book *The Courtier*:

> But speaking of the beautie that we meane, which is onely it, that appeareth in bodies, and especially in the face of man, and moueth this feruent coueting which wee call Loue, we will terme it an influence of the heauenly bountifulnesse, the which for all it stretcheth ouer all thinges that be created (like the light of the sunne) (568-69).

Her victory reveals the immaturity of the knights who can only value their own, limited, Petrarchan ideals of beauty. The young men present are unable to recognize true virtue. False Florimell, however, is unable to fasten the belt around her waist: "For euer as they fastned it, it loos'd / And fell away, as feeling secret blame" (IV.v.16.6-7). Many other ladies present try as well, only to fail. This public humiliation greatly amuses the knights in attendance and is something that Vives warns readers about in his *Education of a Christian Woman* (1523): "For nothing is more tender, then is the fame and estimation of women, nor nothing more in daunger of wrong: in so muche that it hath ben sayde, and not without a cause, to hang by a copwebbe" (107).

When Britomart declines her prize and keeps Amoret as her companion, Satyrane allows False Florimell to choose her own paramour. His gesture causes consternation among the knights when she chooses the imposter Braggadochio: "She came of her accord, in spight of all his fone" (IV.v.26.9). Satyrane's tournament ends in utter failure, as an immature Petrarchan ideal is awarded to a false exemplar of masculine virtue. Both characters are shallow, insubstantial representatives of the aristocracy and a threat to the model that Spenser proposes in ways that will be explored in depth below. For now, it is enough to say that the knights present are unable to recognize true beauty/virtue. They are simply too young, and their immature, adolescent sexuality blinds them to the value of a truly virtuous, and therefore beautiful, spousal partner. Marinell, himself a youthful knight, is also unable to recognize feminine virtue.

Florimell's Lament

Florimell's harried charge across Fairyland ends in imprisonment when she is taken captive by the sea god Proteus (III.viii.41). In her dungeon cave, the distraught maiden laments her misfortune, and it is one of the few instances where the reader hears Florimell speaking directly (we also hear her in the witch's hut and the fisherman's boat [III.vii.8, III.viii.23-24]). While she is single, the maiden can only be heard in liminal spaces outside of the social hierarchy, much like Angelica from *Ariosto furioso*. When Florimell is in a patriarchal exchange the poet tells the reader how she responds, as in her confrontation with Proteus (III.viii.33-41). Florimell only has a voice when she is removed from society. Her voice is not recognized in her social context.

The forlorn maiden begins her complaint thus:

> Yet though he neuer list to me relent,
> But let me waste in woe my wretched years,
> Yet will I neuer of my loue repent,
> But ioy that for his sake I suffer prisonment. (IV.xii.7.6-9)

Florimell does not assign blame to Proteus for her captivity, accepting her condition as necessary for the happiness of the one she loves. After reflecting on her miserable condition, Florimell concludes her complaint with an insightful criticism of her beloved:

> But ô vaine iudgement, and conditions vaine,
> The which the prisoner points vnto the free,
> The whiles I him condemne, and deeme his paine,
> He where he list goes loose, and laughes at me.
> So euer loose, so euer happy be.
> But where so loose or happy that thou art,
> Know *Marinell* that all this is for thee. (IV.xii.11.1-7)

The maiden recognizes her beloved's arrested development and his unwillingness to evolve beyond the carefree independence of youth, wishing him "So euer loose, so euer

happy be." Florimell resigns herself to Marinell's refusal to enter into a familial relationship and his unwillingness to accept the responsibilities that come with being the head of a household, as signaled by the repetition of the word "loose" in lines 4, 5, and 6. The Oxford English Dictionary defines loose as being "[f]ree from bonds, fetters, or physical restraint" and the maiden's repeated use of the term calls to mind the freedom from responsibility that Gouge assigns to the age of Youth. Florimell realizes that the man she is in love with refuses to grow up. She also realizes and accepts that his choice to remain in a state of perpetual youth leaves her excluded from society. Florimell's complaint does not go unheard.

Proteus hosts a banquet for the pantheon of gods and immortals in celebration of the marriage between the Medway and the Thames rivers in Book IV. Cymodoce (formally Cymoent) brings her son Marinell who, being half mortal, cannot partake of the banquet. The young knight is left wandering around outside of the banquet hall, and by chance hears Florimell's complaint (IV.xii.5). In this context Marinell is not a member of the ruling patriarchy and is excluded from it. As such, he finds himself situated in a position similar to Florimell's and is finally able to recognize her: "His stubborne heart, that neuer felt misfire / Was toucht with soft remorse and pitty rare" (IV.xii.12.4-5). Marinell is moved by Florimell's lament and tries to figure out how to free her, but realizes he is powerless in this situation. Upon his return to Cymodoce's bower he succumbs to depression and grows increasingly unwell:

> That in short space his wonted chearefull hew
> Gan fade, and liuely spirits deaded quight:
> His cheeke bones raw, and eie-pits hollow grew,
> And brawny armes had lost their knowen might,

> That nothing like himself he seem'd in sight.
> Ere long so weake of limbe, and sicke of loue
> He woxe, that lenger he note stand vpright,
> But to his bed was brought, and layd aboue,
> Like ruefull ghost, vnable once to stirre or moue. (IV.xii.20)

Marinell's prolonged state of youthful liberty is detrimental and undermines his well-being. To remain in a state of Youth and disavow Man-Age unnaturally halts the progression of life, leaving the young knight sick from the unrealized love he has denied himself for so long. Refusal to accept the responsibilities of manhood is also detrimental to the future of the nation; perpetual bachelorhood negates the possibility of having children. To start a family is to establish a lineage that will grow exponentially through generations to come, bringing to fruition the lasting nation that Spenser envisions.

Cymodoce discovers that love is what ails her son, and after some initial resistance ("She gan thereat to fret, and greatly grieue" [IV.xii.26.2]) decides to advocate for Florimell's release. Marinell's traumatic entry into Man-Age and his mother's recantation are the climactic conflicts of Book IV. All the other Books conclude with some kind of traditional confrontation: in Book I The Redcrosse Knight battles a dragon, at the end of Book II Guyon confronts Acrasia, Book III concludes with Britomart's defeat of Busirane, in Book V Artegall slays Grantorto, and in Book VI Calidore captures the Blatant Beast. Book IV is unusual in not concluding with the exemplar knights of friendship combatting some allegorical embodiment of social discord. Instead, the climactic battle is a supporting character triumphing over his own arrested development and maturing into manhood. Marinell even realizes the futility of martial prowess in his situation when he considers how to free Florimell:

> Then gam he thinke, perforce with sword and targe
> Her forth to fetch, and *Proteus* to constraine:
> But soone he gan such folly to forthinke againe. (IV.xii.14.7-9)

Youthful solutions are not necessarily useful for adult problems. The absence of a physical confrontation in the conclusion of Book IV is appropriate and Celovsky notes that engaging in violence is associated with carefree youth whereas productive social relationships are associated with maturity. Productive social relationships are demonstrated through displays of hospitality, economic support, and political acumen, all of which are necessary for maintaining a good household (216). Social acuity can be seen in Cymodoce's appeal to Neptune when she cleverly complains of Proteus exercising authority that does not belong to him to secure Florimell's freedom (IV.xii.29). The problem of Florimell's imprisonment is not solved through chivalric prowess, but rather diplomacy and negotiation. At the end of Book IV youthful aggression and obstinance give way to more mature and fruitful social reciprocity.

The Wedding Tournament

Marinell and Florimell finally marry and host a tournament to celebrate their union. The wedding tournament is very different from Satyrane's contest, which is a venue to advance the personal glory of the knights in attendance and commemorate a masturbatory ideal of feminine beauty. Satyrane's tournament is a central event in the poem that spans three entire cantos of Book IV (iv through vi), a significant narrative investment reflective of the cultural value that the young knights place on accounts of

martial prowess. In contrast, the second tournament in the poem is a celebration of marital union and honours true feminine virtue as embodied by Florimell:

> And first of all issu'd Sir *Marinell*,
> And with him sixe knights more, which enterpriz'd
> To chalenge all in right of *Florimell*,
> And to maintaine, that she all others did excell. (V.iii.4.6-9)

The actual tournament is economically covered in nine verses (V.iii.4-12). Combat and knightly glory are simply not as important as the milestone that everyone gathers to celebrate. Satyrane's tournament perpetuates youthful individualism, whereas the wedding tournament marks the transition from myopic youthfulness to adulthood. As discussed above, a large part of adulthood in the poem's social context is awareness of one's position and responsibility to the polity. Marinell's adulthood and new social orientation is further underscored by his alliance with a group of knightly peers throughout the tournament (V.iii.4.6-7). The wedding tournament celebrates Marinell's readiness to enter into a mature relationship and establish his own household, which will contribute to the community and society in meaningful ways. Marrying and then starting a family is important in the effort to establish a nation, and the most significant contribution that a conscientious citizen and head of a household can make is having children. According to Jennifer Evans, "fathering children was important to male social standing and the fulfilment of their patriarchal roles" (311). In Elizabethan England having a family was recognized as a critical aspect of mature masculinity that impacted a man's reputation. Not having children left men open to criticism and derisive speculation: "men without children were, similar to women, unable to fulfill the status and duties expected of them; their 'honour, reputation and credit were open to question'" (313-14).

As an event that will be beneficial for generations to come, the marriage between Marinell and Florimell is worthy of joyful commemoration.

A central aspect of such a transition is the shedding of attitudes and ways of being that have been outgrown. A major obstacle to entering into mature adulthood for the young knights of Faerie Lond is immature sexuality, a detrimental characteristic that is embodied in False Florimell. Braggadochio's presentation of his "fayre Franion" (V.iii.22.7) after the marriage tournament causes mass consternation:

> With great amazement they were stupefide;
> And said, that surely *Florimell* it was,
> Or if it were not *Florimell* so tride,
> That *Florimell* her selfe she then did pas.
> So feeble skill of perfect things the vulgar has. (V.iii.17.5-9)

The syntax of the verse is disorienting; the repetition of the name applied to both positive and negative verb cases conveys the bewilderment of the knights. The reader goes through the same confused assessment in being made to quickly oscillate between the two maidens. Florimell's bridegroom is also at a loss:

> Which when as *Marinell* beheld likewise,
> He was therewith exceedingly dismayd;
> Ne wist he what to thinke, or to deuise,
> But like as one, whom feends had made affrayd,
> He long astonisht stood, ne ought he sayd,
> Ne ought he did, but with fast fixed eies
> He gazed still vpon that snowy mayd;
> Whom euer as he did the most auize,
> The more to be true *Florimell* he did surmise. (V.iii.18)

Marinell faces his final vestige of adolescent self-involvement in being confronted by the embodiment of immature, masturbatory sexuality. False Florimell is an illusory figure who reflects her viewers' shallow values and misconceptions about femininity back at

them, and as Marinell continues to gaze upon her, the more he is convinced that she is the true maiden. Aside from a brief lapse back into adolescent immaturity, however, there is a deeper danger that False Florimell represents.

As discussed above, False Florimell is a composite of Petrarchan tropes animated by a male spright. False Florimell is, in essence, a male spirit pretending to be a woman. Her/his malicious intent to deceive is stated at the inception of the snowy maid:

> Him needed not instruct, which way were best
> Him selfe to fashion likest Florimell,
> Ne how to speake, ne how to vse his gest;
> For he in counterfesaunce did excell (III.viii.8.5-8)

What would be the danger of such a figure in Spenser's allegory and the intended purpose of setting the foundation for a lasting nation? As a female impersonator, False Florimell does not have a womb. She is barren, unable to have children. Intimacy with False Florimell would only be self-gratifying and would not result in the authoring of future generations, and any type of liaison with her is antithetical to the project of establishing a lasting nation. Conversely, entering into a productive union is an affirmation of life and its continuance.

The confusion over who is the true maiden is resolved when Artegall places the two Florimells side by side, and the "snowy Mayd" promptly dissolves:

> Then did he set her by that snowy one,
> Like the true saint beside the image set,
> Of both their beauties to make paragone,
> And trial, whether should the honor get.
> Streight way so soone as both together met,
> Th'enchaunted Damzell vanisht into nought:
> Her snowy substance melted as with heat,
> Ne of that goodly hew remayned ought,
> But th'emptie girdle, which about her wast was wrought. (V.iii.24)

The illusory self-gratification of adolescent sexuality melts away when confronted with true virtue and the prospect of a mature, productive union. The only thing that survives False Florimell's disintegration is the golden sash that she was awarded at Satyrane's tournament, creating a narrative discrepancy that needs to be addressed. Earlier in the poem it is established that Florimell's golden sash cannot be fastened around the waist of an unchaste woman. As the poet reminds the reader:

> Such power it had, that to no womans wast
> By any skill or labour it would sit,
> Vnless that she were continent and chast,
> But it would lose or breake, that many had disgrast. (V.iii.28.6-9)

The girdle's magical property is publicly affirmed when False Florimell is given the enchanted sash at Satyrane's tournament, and she is unable to secure it (IV.v.20). And yet, when she disintegrates the poet says nothing of her was left "But th'emptie girdle, which about her wast was wrought" (V.iii.24.9). There is not much critical commentary on this discrepancy. Alfred Gough dismisses it as an example of the poem's frequent inconsistencies (201n216), while Hamilton chalks it up to False Florimell's dubious claim to virginity (528n24). Rebecca Yearling, however, suggests it is not a mistake on the poet's part but is the result of the snowy maid's fidelity to the paramour who claimed her first (139). I agree with Yearling that False Florimell's choosing Braggadochio is demonstrative of chastity in the limited sense of a public display, indicative of social perceptions regarding women's virtue. In the poem's allegory, the episode reveals how the appearance of virtue is enough for most people.

After False Florimell's dissolution Braggadochio is severely punished for falsely taking credit for Artegall's heroic performance in the tournament and disrespecting

Florimell. Braggadochio's cowardice and shameless pretense of knightly valour is a recurring theme throughout *The Faerie Queene*; his behaviour is most often met with amusement (IV.iv.11) or frustration (IV.iv.20). Boasting and taking undue credit for Artegall's actions, however, are transgressive acts of stolen valour that call attention to his own lack of courage and honour. Braggadochio fails to uphold the values that legitimate members of the aristocracy share, thus forfeiting his place among them. He is beaten and publicly shamed for his failure:

> But *Talus* by the backe the boaster hent,
> And drawing him out of the open hall,
> Vpon him did inflict this punishment.
> First he his beard did shaue, and fowly shent:
> Then from him reft his shield, and it renuerst,
> And blotted out his armes with falshood blent,
> And himself baffuld, and his armes vnherst,
> And broke his sword in twaine, and all his armour sperst. (V.iii.37.2-9)

The false knight's debasement begins with his beard being shaved off, which by itself would be recognized as a grievous loss of station to those who witness it. Eleanor Rycroft explains that in the early modern period a man's beard was a signifier of his masculinity, acting as a "marker and maker of manliness" (6) and invested with the power to "shape social identity" (12). Braggadochio is subject to ritual shaming in punishment for his inability to uphold the cultural expectations of a gentleman in his unwillingness to engage in violent sport. His disrespectful treatment of a peer and a newly established household is also disgraceful behaviour warranting disciplinary action that reinforces the social hierarchy. According to Courtney Thomas, the "hierarchy of status and rank also had a prominent role to play in early modern conceptions of violence. … The use of violence as a social corrective could be a way of bolstering, rather than destabilizing, the social

order" (27). The brutal shaming and expulsion of Braggadochio is necessary to maintain social order.

One aspect of Braggadochio's expulsion in particular is worth further examination. During the banquet Artegall remains quiet while Braggadochio, "that boaster, that all knights did blot" (V.iii.16.1), enjoys the accolades from all who are present. What finally angers the exemplar knight is the imposter's treatment of Florimell and the presentation of her doppelgänger:

> All which when Artegall, who all this while
> Stood in the preasse close couered, well aduewed,
> And saw that boasters pride and gracelesse guile,
> He could no longer beare, but forth issewed (V.iii.20.1-4)

Artegall's indignation is perhaps the most telling example of Florimell's new social status and her no longer being excluded from patriarchal protection. She is not a helpless maid being chased about the public domain anymore, but the wife of a well-established nobleman and member of a respected household. The maiden's days of having to fend off sexual assault (III.viii.20-27) and suffering captivity (III.viii.37-43) are behind her. In marrying Marinell, Florimell now enjoys coverture.

Hermaphrodite

The 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene* concludes with an image that is widely interpreted as emblematic of ideal matrimony in Spenser's allegory. In the last canto of Book III, Amoret and Scudamour are reunited after a long and fraught separation. The couple embrace, and the reader is told: "Had ye them seene, ye would haue surely thought, / That they had beene that faire *Hermaphrodite*" (III.xii.46.1-2). Amanda Taylor

calls Spenser's hermaphrodite "a blissful picture of sexual and spiritual mutuality" (193) and Ruth Gilbert states, "The reunited lovers are thus transformed into one seamless being" (17). Critics such as Thomas Roche, Donald Cheney, and Kyle Pivetti view the hermaphrodite image as representative of ideal marital and spiritual intimacy. Adding nuance to that approach, Melissa Sanchez understands the removal of the hermaphrodite image in the 1596 edition, which adds Books IV through VI to the first three books published in 1590, as indicative of how consent and parity are replaced by conquest and hierarchy (256-57).

The hermaphroditic image that concludes the original Book III is representative of the increasingly popular concept of companionate marriage. Cultural changes in the early modern period impacted attitudes towards matrimony, which was shifting from economically advantageous unions to ones based on personal preference. Companionate relationships are unions founded on love, acceptance, and friendship that recognize female value. In such a mutually reciprocal arrangement both parties are equal partners in the relationship, creating what Taylor describes as a more horizontal understanding of love instead of the traditional hierarchal arrangement (184). A companionate marriage recognizes that an intimate relationship should be based on choice and mutual attraction.

Spenser's intricate, multifaceted concept of chastity includes erotic desire. In *The Faerie Queene* marital desire is an expression of love and the full realization of Spenserian chastity. Erotic desire is foundational to a fruitful relationship, and the hermaphroditic imagery at the conclusion of Book III strongly suggests sexual intimacy. According to Gilbert:

> [F]or many renaissance philosophers and artists, the idea of heterosexual union (a potentially debased conjunction) was considered to be a form of 'androgynous hermaphroditism'. In its ideal form married love (a spiritually sanctioned eroticism) transformed the degraded hermaphroditic couplings of male and female into androgynous spiritual transmutations of the flesh. (13)

Spousal intimacy in a companionate marriage is joyful, celebratory, and, significantly, equal. In a reciprocal marital relationship youthful, immature individuality is overcome through entrance into chaste union with another. The early modern concept of companionate marriage echoes older ideas of interpersonal union and the mythopoeic creationist belief that humans began as dual beings who were somehow splintered. Because of this fracturing, each separate half is compelled to search for their missing counterpart to recover their lost sense of completion (Gilbert 15). Adam from the Book of Genesis is an example, as is Aristophanes from Plato's *Symposium*. Spenser's hermaphrodite personifies the concept of chastity that he cultivates throughout the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*. In the poet's allegory "True chastity is the desire for a marriage in which each individual plays a complementary, if not an equal, role" (Yearling 142).

Spenserian chastity itself matures and deepens through the course of the poem, all the way from virginity to marriage. The original conclusion of Book III is also the culmination of Spenser's entire theory relating to the formation of a nobleman to that point. The maturation and development of virtue throughout the 1590 version of the poem concludes with an emblem for companionate marriage. The emblem of companionate marriage, however, is erased from the 1596 edition of the poem. As Celovsky points out, Spenser "excises the hermaphroditic embrace of Amoret and

Scudamour that concludes the 1590 version, and the companionate marriage of mutual service that it signifies" (236). It must be noted that the removal of the hermaphrodite image from Book III of the 1596 edition is a practical authorial choice. The image concludes the 1590 edition and gives it a sense of completion, so editing it out is a necessary revision to continue the poem's narrative into Book IV. Perhaps it makes more sense to consider the excision as not so much an erasure as it is a deferral. In the 1596 poem the union that the hermaphrodite represents is postponed as the narrative continues. True companionate marriage, in which both parties enjoy equal standing, must be put off while there is still a nation to establish. What does the deferral of companionate marriage signify for Florimell?

Disappearance of Florimell

Early in Book V the Knight of Justice (along with the reader) departs from Marinell, Florimell, and their peers:

> There leaue we them in pleasure and repast,
> Spending their ioyous days and gladfull nights,
> And taking vsurie of time forepast,
> With all deare delices and rare delights,
> Fit for such Ladies and such louely knights (V.iii.40.1-5)

That is the last we hear of Florimell. Marriage to Marinell concludes her narrative and the maiden disappears from the poem. In the context of the poem's narrative, it is no longer necessary to give special attention to her story. This one-time chivalric romance fugitive has realized her desire to marry her paramour and is happily absorbed into the poem's imperialist ambition. Florimell's union with Marinell is not the companionate marriage

promised at the conclusion of the 1590 edition, but one of absorption. The subsuming of the female subject in marriage is even more explicitly illustrated through the narrative arc of Spenser's exemplar knight of chastity.

After entering into a relationship with Artegall, Britomart eventually abandons errantry and removes herself from the public domain. In Spenser's allegory the subjugation of a wife to her husband is indicative of her chastity and viewed as a natural domestic arrangement. Britomart advocates and actively institutes cultural values that are based on these prevalent early modern expectations. After rescuing Artegall from Radigund and her amazons in Book V, Britomart reorganizes local governance in accordance with traditional gender hierarchies: "changing all that forme of common weale, / The liberty of women did repeale" (V.vii.42.4-5). Reasserting patriarchal authority over women is an arrangement that is considered reasonable and just in the poem: "them restoring / To mens sujection, did true Iustice deale" (V.vii.42.6-7). After straightening out the amazons Britomart goes home and puts aside her armour, willing to take care of the household while Artegall continues questing. The former knight errant is "Full sad and sorrowfull" upon her beloved's departure to pursue further adventures but is dutifully more concerned about his honour "which she tendred chiefe" (V.vii.44). Britomart's final conformity to accepted gender roles reinforces contemporary social expectations and aligns Spenser's allegory with cultural assumptions regarding women's subjugation to masculine authority. Her capitulation is reflective of the poem's larger imperial project; the individual, chivalric wanderer is secondary to the nation and the realization of the imperial epic enterprise. The chivalric ideal of companionate marriage,

as represented by the hermaphrodite, is abandoned in favour of commitment to the realization of a lasting nation that is founded on the maintenance of a traditional gender hierarchy.

Spenser's model of lasting nationhood is built upon the family, but a family that is an extension of the male subject and adheres to contemporary configurations of the patriarchal household. Husbands had legal authority over their wives through coverture, and the ubiquity of male authority, according to early modern conduct literature, is based on natural order and divine injunction. In Anthony Fletcher's summation: "At the heart of social order was gender order" (167). The model of nationhood forwarded through *The Faerie Queene* does not recognize the autonomy of its female subjects. Women remain subjugated, expected to act as a foundation for the state through reproduction, without being allotted agency or voice to participate in governing. Half of the citizenry is denied an active role in shaping the developing nation though participation in political discourse, their voices subsumed by those of their husbands. Rather than true companionate union, Spenser's familial model of nationhood is predicated on the absolute absorption of the female subject.

Chapter III: "Whom thou fly'st, of him thou art"[26]: Eve from Milton's *Paradise Lost*

Eve from John Milton's *Paradise Lost* represents the next stage of development for the fleeing figure trope, a chivalric romance character who must negotiate an imperial epic context that is antithetical to her or his well-being. The trope enters early modern epic romance poetry in the form of Angelica, a Muslim princess at large in Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. Beautiful and inexplicably blonde, Angelica is a distracting obsession for Charlemagne's paladins during the Saracen invasion of Europe. The trope is further developed in Torquato Tasso's Counter-Reformation epic *Gerusalemme liberata* through the dispossessed princess Erminia, whose love for an invading Christian knight remains unrequited by the poem's end. The fleeing figure reemerges in Elizabethan England in the form of Florimell from Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. Florimell is excluded from patriarchal protection and chased across Faerie Lond by hero and villain alike. Each iteration of the fleeing figure develops and expands upon its immediate predecessor, forming a continually evolving negotiation with (and critique of) patriarchal nationalism and imperialism. Milton's use of the fleeing figure trope in *Paradise Lost* is not as literal as it is in his predecessors' poems. Eve does not have to escape murderous soldiers or the threat of sexual violence. In Milton's sophisticated handling of the trope the first woman's flight is her decision to separate from her husband

[26] *PL* 4.482.

in an effort to assert her individuality. In *Paradise Lost* Milton's heroine is determined to find her own place in a preestablished, restrictive social order.

Reading *Paradise Lost* through genre theory and the differences between epic and romance is a productive way to examine the underlying tensions in the relationship between Adam and Eve. The original couple in turn clarify how literary genres can relate to gender constructs. Heather James suggests that Adam, the male, can be read as a representative of heroic epic (121), which is evident in his assuming a position of authority in Eden as well as in his dogmatic adherence to a linear social organization – the Father, the angels, himself, Eve. There is also a certain rigidity in his attitude that is in keeping with imperial discourse, and the first man proves himself to be averse to anything that deviates from established patterns of behaviour. Adam's resistance to new experiences is most notable in his disinterest in discussing the constellations with his wife and his reluctance to diverge from their routine work habits (4.610-33, 9.265-69). Eve, however, embodies the open-ended adventurousness that David Quint ascribes to romance (*Empire* 9). Her affinity with that genre is most evident in her susceptibility to external influence and her openness to new experiences. The first woman's outgoing receptiveness is demonstrated at her awakening by the lake when she unquestioningly heeds the Father's directives and then Adam's (4.467-76, 489). More regretfully, Eve's willingness to journey into the unknown leads her to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (9.627-45). James suggests that the couple's opposing perspectives represent the dynamic harmony of a true marriage and goes on to propose that Eve is the romance in Adam's religious epic and represents the romance version of his nature (126). At their

best the first couple do complement one other, and each demonstrates characteristics that are not as prominent in the other, while enjoying a mutually beneficial relationship. In this chapter I explore the first couple as metaphoric vehicles through which to examine the dual nature of the epic-romance genre itself and analyze how one genre relates to its complementary genre within a single narrative.

Although I view Adam and Eve in generic terms similar to James's discussion, her generally positive reading of their marriage glosses over a number of crucial assumptions that are embedded in those genres, specifically, the hegemonic impulse that characterizes heroic epic and, more significantly, the meandering of chivalric romance. A purely epic narrative assumes certitude about one's place in a clearly defined social order and chronicles the active pursuit to secure a position therein. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, for example, Aeneas conquers Latium to establish the Roman Empire. Romance is relegated to restless wandering outside of such structures, and thus in the Middle English romance *Sir Orfeo*, a king himself must become lost in the woods to find and rescue his missing queen. Adam, as a representative of imperial discourse, enjoys hegemonic privilege. He represents the social norm. Eve, however, represents that which is excluded from hegemonic privilege and relegated to the lower rungs of an established hierarchy. As such, Milton's Eve can be read in terms of how she functions as Adam's Other.

Alterity

Alterity, the state of being different or an Other, is a central theme in *Paradise Lost*. Alterity defines Adam's interactions with the Father but is also a concern in his

relationship with Eve. Many critics assert that the first man's Othering of his wife is a direct cause for the Fall. Lee Morrissey, for example, argues that Eve's choice to separate in Book 9 is a rejection of Adam's attempts to turn her into an Other (328). Roberta Martin identifies repressed "gynetic energy" as the problem, suggesting Eve is intended to be a "deliberately limited and controlled other" (61). Claudia Champagne suggests that Adam defines himself against Eve (48), and although her analysis is insightful, I do not entirely agree that Eve is a straightforward Lacanian Other. I concur that alterity in general is what divides the first couple and ultimately leads to the Fall, but it is not the relatively simple matter of Adam positioning Eve as Other and relegating her to what in Lacanian thought is termed radical alterity. I suggest that it may be more accurate to say that Adam fails to recognize Eve as Other due to his limited understanding of what constitutes difference between them. Eve, however, is acutely aware of her status as Other in paradise and continually negotiates her experiences from that subject position. Before continuing I must clarify my understanding of alterity and how it applies to this argument.

My use of alterity is based on Jacques Lacan's concept of the radical Other, that which is different from the subject.[27] Lacan's construct includes two distinct types of difference, the *autre*, or the "little other," and the *Autre*, the proper Other. The *autre* is the other who is not really recognized as being such but is simply a narcissistic reflection and

[27] My discussion of Lacan's theories is based on *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller and translated by Alan Sheridan, and *The Lacanian Subject* by Bruce Fink.

projection of the ego. The *Autre*, however, denotes radical alterity that transcends illusory, narcissistic otherness and cannot be assimilated through identification (Evans 133). Following Lacan's usage, throughout this chapter and Chapter Four lower case will be used to indicate false or limited otherness (other, *autre*), while upper case denotes true alterity (Other, *Autre*). There can, of course, be more than one Other. For this discussion I will also be borrowing Lacan's concept of the Orders. In Lacanian psychoanalysis human experience is organized into three interrelated registers, or Orders: the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. The Imaginary Order relates to the ego and has connotations of illusion, fascination, and seduction. It is not simply synonymous with 'illusory' or something that is inconsequential but has a powerful effect on the subject (82). The Symbolic Order, which is most relevant to my argument, represents the social world as structured by the laws that regulate human interaction. As such it is a linguistic dimension but is not simply equated with language. It is more accurate to say that language is an effect of the Symbolic. The Symbolic Order is also the realm of the *Autre* or radical alterity, which in this discussion includes the Divine Other, the Father. The Symbolic is the primary Order, and structures both of the other registers. There does not seem to be a clear definition of the Real Order; indeed, there is a deliberate ambiguity in Lacanian psychoanalysis that makes including it in a literary analysis challenging. This third Order is not necessarily synonymous with external reality, but rather what is real for the subject. The Real is opposed to the Imaginary and is located beyond the Symbolic. It is often associated with trauma and asserts itself through experiences that are traumatic to the subject.

Lacan's Orders co-exist and intersect within the subject. It must be mentioned that using Lacanian constructs to discuss what are essentially theological concerns is a bit of an appropriation, considering that Lacan is of the "God is dead" camp (Lacan 121). However, the use of his constructs for this discussion is not entirely inappropriate – it is simply a matter of assigning a specific character to the big Other. As I said above, in this discussion the nebulous Lacanian *Autre* is also the Father, the Divine Other. Another important consideration is that in Lacanian psychoanalysis the Orders are interrelated but heterogeneous. The tripartite model is composed of radically divergent modes of experience that impact the subject in different ways. In prelapsarian Eden, though, there is no differentiation; where humankind has direct access to the Father, who defines law and morality, the Real and the Symbolic are unified. The Imaginary has no place in a unified Order, and it is Satan who brings it into paradise.

Adam has a clear understanding of the unified Symbolic/Real Order because he has unimpeded access to it and enjoys frequent conversations with the Father and His emissaries. In one such exchange, Adam admits to his creator:

> … To attain
> The height and depth of thy eternal ways
> All human thoughts come short, supreme of things;
> Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
> Is no deficience found (8. 412-16)

The first man understands the Father as the embodiment of what Lacan identifies as the Symbolic Order, which is accessible through language and constitutes the ideological structure that humankind exists within. Adam also recognizes the Father as big Other, or *Autre*. Lacan's concept of the *Autre*, however, also includes the radical alterity of the

different subject. I argue that Adam fails to recognize Eve as capital 'A' *Autre* and sees her instead as small 'a' *autre*, a reflection of himself. Eve, conversely, views everything – the Father, Adam, Eden itself – as *Autre* and occupying a position of radical alterity, to the point where she finally makes her exclusion from them absolute.

Adam's failure to recognize Eve's Otherness and his persistence in viewing her as a mere *autre*, an extension of himself, culminates in the obscuring of the Divine Other and the Symbolic/Real Order that he and his wife exist within. The first man's conversation with Raphael in Book 8 hints at the impending catastrophe. When discussing his wife, Adam confesses:

> All higher knowledge in her presence falls
> Degraded, wisdom in discourse with her
> Loses discountenanced (8.551-53)

It is a maudlin attitude that elicits the angel's censure. On an immediate level Adam's suggestion destabilizes proper channels of authority in Eden, "higher knowledge" being the province of the Father and his celestial representatives. On a deeper level Adam's denial of Eve as a uniquely different subject leads to a denial of radical alterity itself, which includes the Symbolic Order as embodied by the Father. Adam's viewing Eve as *autre*, a reflection of his own ego, and then allowing that reflection to supersede the higher knowledge of the Symbolic Order is a grievous cause for concern. The first man's off-hand musing is indicative of a dangerous narcissism and, as Champagne suggests, Adam's sentimental regard for his wife foreshadows "the very delusion that will later cause him to disobey the law of God" (54). To fully understand that delusion, we must delve deeper into the significance of alterity and the Other in Milton's Eden.

When Eve recalls her awakening in Book 4, she mentions a voice that directs her to seek out "he / Whose image thou art" (471-2). That designation defines Eve's relation to Eden and the social order that she is brought into, but it also leaves her bereft of herself, or at least of her own sense of individuality. The imperative to find the original that she is based on compromises Eve's autonomy by suggesting that her existence is dependent on something or someone that is unfamiliar to her, destabilizing her newly awakened sense of selfhood by locating it somewhere else.[28] Relegating Eve to "image" leaves her one step removed from herself and her surroundings and impacts how she relates to her cultural context (Morrissey 333). After being interpellated by the voice, Eve views everything from the perspective of the Other. Mary Jo Kietzman points out that in Book 4, where Adam and Eve first appear in the poem, the first woman frequently invokes Otherness to make sense of her surroundings and experiences (60). In conversation with her husband Eve assumes a position of alterity when referring to the past (4.449-52), for example, or discussing her unrealized self in the lake (4.460-66). Eve's awareness of her own alterity is important to her in how it contributes to the sense of selfhood that she is negotiating.

Eve's sense of Otherness is not necessarily detrimental, and alterity itself is often an educational tool in Paradise. The imparting of knowledge through productive

[28] Adam, conversely, intuitively recognizes himself as an individual subject upon waking:

> My self I then perused, and limb by limb
> Surveyed, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
> With subtle joints, and lively vigour led:
> But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
> Knew not (7.266-271)

engagement with the *Autre* is evident in Adam's conversation with the Father, in which the first man must clearly articulate his reasons for wanting a companion (8.364-451). Alterity and the ethical relation to it, Morrissey suggests, may well be one of the challenges that lead to mature subjectivity in Eden (327-28). A mutual development through the recognition of difference happens, for instance, in Adam and Eve's first encounter when each must negotiate the sudden presence of another being, or even in seemingly innocuous exchanges such as their domestic preparations for Raphael's visit when the couple must quickly adopt different social roles as their guest approaches. Theresa DiPasquale proposes that attaining wisdom, and thus self-knowledge, is made possible through human to human relations, and that we see ourselves more fully when confronted by "one's other self" (51). In *Paradise Lost* alterity and Otherness are crucial to self-actualization in general, but it is worth mentioning that the specific episode DiPasquale bases her observation on is Adam's explanation that it was the Father who told him Eve is "Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self" (8.450). DiPasquale's interpretation, though, assumes an ethical response in recognizing the "other self," as well as sensitivity to a shared subjectivity. That may not be the case in paradise.

To understand how Adam interprets the Father's proclamation, it is helpful to consider what the poet himself thought about marriage, which is clearly articulated in his 1643 pamphlet *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. In presenting his radical argument for divorce Milton defines what an ideal marriage is, asserting the "most sacred end to matrimony" (7) is to alleviate a man's loneliness: "For although God in the first ordaining of marriage, taught us to what end he did it, in words expresly implying the apt

and cheerfull conversation of man with woman, to comfort and refresh him against the evill of solitary life" (2). Throughout the argument Milton repeatedly characterizes a wife as a man's "help meet," eloquently explaining how she is to fulfill this role. The ideal marriage put forth throughout the pamphlet is one in which the man is the unequivocal master (19). Milton even argues that Rome's edicts against divorce infringe on men's inherent authority over their wives, "devest[ing] them of that right which God from the beginning had entrusted to the husband: by which means they subjected that ancient and naturally domestick prerogative to an external & unbefitting judicature" (44). Rather than recognizing alterity and responding in an ethical manner, Adam's attitude towards matrimony is more in line with the male-centric arrangement outlined in Milton's pamphlet.

Recognizing one's self through interaction with another demonstrates the dialectical nature of knowledge and its attainment in Milton's epic. Knowledge as imparted through colloquy is evident in Adam's retelling of his conversations with the Father in Book 8, in which he is guided through successive levels of realization through Socratic discourse rather than simply given explanations. In paradise Otherness, in the sense of an alterity that functions as an agent through which the subject attains self-awareness, is a dialectic position that can be used to advance knowledge. That discursive receptiveness is a position that would be beneficial to both Adam and Eve, especially in their conversations with one another, and recalls James's reading of their marriage as one of opposing but complementary genres. In such an ideal model of marriage, different forms of knowledge could be immensely beneficial to each partner in an equal system of

exchange. Eve accepts her Otherness and uses alterity as an empirical position from which to examine and understand her social and cultural context.[29] Such a position is perfectly in keeping with the Father's use of colloquy in educating Adam. The first man, however, does not recognize his own Otherness in relation to Eve, as he does with the Father and His emissaries, and instead claims her as an extension of himself: "I now see / Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself / Before me" (8.494-96).[30] Adam's inability to recognize his wife as an autonomous being negates the potential for knowledge that may have benefitted both of them. The first man's misreading of his own role in relation to Eve is one of a series of similar misinterpretations that lead to the Fall and is a mistake that alienates his wife even before the separation scene in Book 9.

To understand how Adam's attitude towards Eve contributes to their transgression, the nature of the first man's misinterpretation must be considered. Adam's inability to recognize his wife's alterity positions Eve as a small 'a' *autre*. She is made into a reflection of Adam's own ego with the potential to make him lose sight of the Symbolic Order of law and morality, which in the poem is embodied by the Father. The first man's displacement of the Symbolic Order onto his wife causes Raphael's discomfort, and after the Fall provokes the Son's censure.[31] Adam's denial of Eve's

[29] Eve's sense of alterity is evident in her preparations for Raphael's visit (5.321-30), her critique of labour (5.321-30), and her understanding of how the threat of an enemy limits their freedom (9.322-32).

[30] Other examples include: "Whom thou fly'st, of him thou art, / His flesh, his bone" (4.482-83), "Best image of my self and dearer half" (5.95), and "Daughter of God and man" (9.291).

[31] "For what admir'st thou, what transports thee so, / An outside?" (8.567-68); "Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey / Before his voice [?]" (10.145-46)

alterity effectively renders her into a small 'a' *autre*, a narcissistic reflection that deflects reason from the *Autre* of the Father and back upon himself. The first man's failure to recognize the mutual alterity between himself and his wife leads to his attempt to nullify the threat of alienation through his repeated efforts to interpellate Eve.

Adam's persistent attempts to interpellate Eve reveal his compulsion to reinforce his position as a representative of hegemonic authority. In essence, Adam repeatedly tries to govern his wife in a campaign that was initiated at the very beginning of her existence. In Book 4 Eve describes her initial aversion to Adam, as well as his response to her:

> … back I turned,
> Thou following cried'st aloud, Return fair Eve,
> Whom fly'st thou? Whom thou fly'st, of him thou art,
> His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
> Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart
> Substantial life, to have thee by my side
> Henceforth an individual solace dear;
> Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
> My other half (4.480-88)

The first man's address is uncomfortable to our post-feminist sensibilities; aside from the unequivocal command in the directive "Return fair Eve," there is the problematic position that Adam assumes in relation to his wife when he says: "Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim / My other half." He literally claims her for his own, immediately assuming a proprietary position in their relationship. In her study of women's devotional writing from the period, Susan Comilang asserts: "The continuation of patriarchy insists on the commoditization of woman as wife, daughter, or sister" (81-2). In this episode Eve is assigned a place in a hierarchal cultural context that views her in terms of equity. Morrissey is blunt in his incredulity: "Not only does Adam say that he gave Eve being,

but he also claims that his rib was *loaned* to her," (332) the inference being that the rib – and by extension Eve herself – belongs to him.

Adam's declaration positions Eve into a commoditized relationship in which he is the arbitrator of her actions. His proprietary attitude may have implemented a polarized relationship between the genders that did not necessarily exist prior to his claim, or at least not in such a rigid form. Mandy Green suggests that in *Paradise Lost* gender is complementary, and the difference between the sexes is a matter of degree rather than clearly separate roles: "Milton repeatedly unsettles the rigid binary of gender identity that his text habitually affirms" (190). For example, character attributes such as feminine 'softness' or masculine 'valour' are not exclusive to either man or woman before the Fall. Adam admits to softening upon meeting the first woman, bringing "Sweetness into [his] heart, unfelt before" (8.475), and Eve demonstrates valour when she is determined to "make trial of her strength" in the separation scene (Argument to Book 9). Prelapsarian gender is permeable, and what we would identify as assigned gender traits are complementary and mutually accessible subject positions. The thought of separate but permeable subjectivities calls attention to another disturbing aspect of Adam's initial address to his companion, specifically, his inability to recognize Eve as a separate, autonomous being: "Whom thou fly'st, of him thou art, / His flesh, his bone" (4.482-83). Adam's declaration is a direct reference to the biblical source material, specifically

Genesis 2. 22-23.[32] It must be noted that there is an ambiguity in the original episode that Milton maintains in his interpretation; God is silent in the first encounter between Adam and Eve. It is Adam who claims the first woman. Milton interrogates this instance of interpersonal colonization throughout *Paradise Lost*. In denying Eve's individuality, Adam fails to recognize alterity in his relationship to and with Eve.

Adam's attempted interpellation of Eve is motivated by his own memories of solitude, a condition that for him became so unbearable he was compelled to ask the Father for a companion (8.364-66). For the first man solitude carries with it the threat of alienation that has the potential to overwhelm his own sense of self, as evident in Adam's retelling of his first encounter with Eve when he greets her as: "Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself" (8.495). Reading the encounter with the Lacanian differentiation between *autre* and *Autre*, or ego reflection as opposed to true Otherness, reveals the potential for a detrimental form of narcissism in Adam's relationship with Eve right from its commencement. The first man's unconscious egocentricity is reminiscent of Satan's sexual attraction to his own daughter Sin, as recounted by her in Book 2. The rebel angel sees himself in his protégé, who recalls: "Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing / Becam'st enamoured" (764-65). Unlike Satan's lurid narcissism, though, Adam's attraction to Eve and his claim over her is motivated more by anxiety, even if it does prove to be almost as damaging. Adam's distress stems from his recollection of being

[32] And the rib which the LORD God had taken from man, made hee a woman, & brought her vnto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shalbe called woman, because shee was taken out of man. (*KJV* Gen. 2.22-23)

alone in a world full of socially incompatible beings and is lamented by him in Book 8: "Among unequals what society / Can sort, what harmony or true delight?" (383-84). My reading of the first man is similar to Champagne's, who sees Adam's appropriation of Eve as a result of "his primordial consciousness of a lack in his being" (48). The dread of being alone is evident in the underlying desperation in Adam's interpellation of the first woman, his anxiety about her turning away from him, and his urgency in seizing her hand (4.480-89). To have Eve is, for Adam, to have a fully intact sense of selfhood. That is why his efforts to assimilate her fail.

Adam's interpellation of Eve fails because he misunderstands their relationship, despite the initial success of his assimilative claims. Shortly after Adam's earnest seizure of the retreating Eve in Book 4, she submits to his authority and accepts his claims of authorship over her (recalling that borrowed rib that bothers Morrissey so much):

> To whom thus Eve with perfect beauty adorned.
> My author and disposer, what thou bid'st
> Unargued I obey; so God ordains,
> God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
> Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise (4.634-38)

Eve demonstrates a better understanding of alterity and how it operates in Eden than her husband does, which is a dubious advantage of her awareness of being an outsider and an Other. In the passage cited above Eve outlines a very clear system for the dissemination of knowledge and self-actualization, which in Eden is imparted through discourse. The discursive promulgation of knowledge originates with the Father. The Father withdraws after initiating the process in Adam, who in turn should serve a similar role for Eve. As explained by Elisabeth Liebert: "Received knowledge of spiritual reality … is conveyed

along the hierarchical lines of an established patriarchy" (156). In a similar manner as the Father converses with Adam, so should the first man converse with Eve, who recognizes and accepts her husband as the representative of Lacanian alterity through which she can dialectically fashion herself.

Colloquy

The first woman uses conversation to develop and grow, but the conversations that she has often do not allow her to fully engage in self-fashioning. Eve continually uses language to understand and further her sense of selfhood, actively doing so by recreating her experiences through discourse with her husband. Adam's authoritative explanations of her experience, however, discourage colloquy. A failure in communication is evident in Adam's response to Eve's retelling of her dream encounter with the Enemy. After waking from a fretful sleep, the first woman tells her husband that she has dreamt "of offense and trouble" (5.34). She goes on to candidly describe Satan's nocturnal seduction and her dreamt transgression against the Father's sole command (5.28-94). Eve is quite shaken by the encounter – the dreamt act of disobedience calls into question her sense of self and undermines her carefully constructed identity. Significantly, Adam fails to appreciate the unstated implications of her succumbing to someone other than her husband. While Eve's immediate response is to examine her dream through open discourse with her husband, Adam misinterprets Eve's distress, mistaking her urgent need to reassert agency in the crafting of her identity for simple disquietude. He gently dismisses Eve's dream as inconsequential: "Evil into the mind of

god or man / May come and go, so unapproved, and leave / No spot or blame behind" (5.117-19), then basically tells her to cheer up: "Be not disheartened then, nor cloud those looks / That wont to be more cheerful and serene" (5.122-23). The exchange is another example of their conflicting relationship to alterity – Eve recognizes the sudden assertion of otherness within herself, whereas Adam again fails to recognize the advent of Otherness. Aside from dismissing a serious threat to their well-being, Adam misses an opportunity to help his wife develop a more nuanced sense of self (one that would recognize the dangers of evil and its potential impact on identity).

As evidenced by Adam's encounter with the Father in Book 8, Adam and Eve are given autonomy in their personal development. Self-determination is a basic tenet of the free will that the Father so adamantly asserts in the council of heaven.[33] The first couple are free to develop themselves and have been invested with the discursive tools to do so. Language is one of the primary means through which both Adam and Eve develop their respective identities, and in prelapsarian Eden it is intact; signifier and sign are unified, just as the Symbolic and the Real Orders are. Language facilitates access to the Symbolic/Real Order and is the vehicle through which the first couple engage in self-fashioning. Adam's claims of having authority in interpreting Eve's experience, however, demonstrate how language is already being coerced into asserting hegemonic privilege. In her analysis of Eve's conversations with her husband in Books 4 and 5, Kietzman states: "When her attempts at exploration and interpretation are not simply dismissed, they are re-framed by or absorbed into authoritative explanations" (73). It is another way

[33] "I made him just and right, / Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (3.98-99)

in which Adam asserts authorship over Eve, not simply her physical being, but her experiences and what they signify as well. Adam's assertions have the detrimental impact of denying alterity and render Eve's own selfhood inaccessible to her.

Adam fails to recognize discourse as imperative to Eve's developing identity largely because he is reluctant to admit to her having a separate existence. He is usually dismissive of her interest in anything that does not relate to their shared experiences, such as her dreams or her interest in the cosmos. In Book 4 when night falls in Eden, the narrator tells us:

> … now glowed the firmament
> With living sapphires: Hesperus that led
> The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon
> Rising in clouded majesty, at length
> Apparent queen unveiled her peerless light,
> And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw. (4.604-09)

The description of the evening sky conveys the narrator's reverence for its sublime beauty, an attitude that is shared by the first woman. To Adam, though, it is merely the end of the day, and he tells Eve: "Fair consort, the hour / Of night, and all things now retired to rest / Mind us of like repose" (4.610-12). Upon witnessing the grandeur of the cosmos laid out before him, the first man says, "let's go to bed." Eve, however, is clearly moved by the evening stars, responding to them with the same wonder that she felt when seeing her reflection in the lake. Eve's enamourment is evident in how she relates her experience of seeing the night sky to her husband: "then silent night / With this her solemn bird and this fair moon, / And these the gems of heaven, her starry train" (4.647-49). Robert Doran defines the sublime as a transcendent experience with mystical and religious resonance (1), and looking up at the night sky Eve experiences a feeling of awe

that she wants to share with her husband. Eve's description is an example of the first woman utilizing alterity and her otherness to make sense of her experience, and in doing so fully appreciating it. She is eager to learn more about astronomy and asks her husband: "But wherefore all night long / shine these, for whom / This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?" (4.647-49, 657-58). A parent may recognize this as the tactic of a reluctant child asking questions to prolong bedtime; Eve is entirely taken with the night sky and would clearly like to admire it for just a little longer. Adam is not that interested, responding in an off-hand manner with: "Those have their course to finish, round the earth" (4.661). After some further cursory explanation, he reassures Eve that "These then, though unbeheld in deep of night, / Shine not in vain, nor think, though men were none, / That heaven would want spectators, God want praise" (4. 674-76). A parent may also recognize this calculated response, a quick, vague answer to the question before concluding the discussion in a way that decidedly excludes the person trying to stay up a little longer. In this brief episode Adam fails to recognize Eve's genuine interest in the night sky and her delight in its splendor, once again ignoring her alterity. Perhaps Adam intuits that helping further Eve's efforts at self-fashioning would compromise his own drive to assimilate her; each move towards knowledge and self-fashioning is a move away from him, which threatens the first man's own sense of selfhood. Champagne asserts: "Adam powerfully demonstrates Lacan's belief that for the human subject there is no self, no ego, without an other in which he can see himself reflected" (49). Adam defines himself against the *Autre* of the Father but denies Otherness in his relationship with Eve. In denying alterity in Eve, Adam effectively denies her right to autonomy.

Eve is initially compliant in the negation of her agency, accepting the story of her birth in Book 4 and incorporating Adam's interpellation claims into her process of self-fashioning. Kietzman notes that the first woman uses narrative to participate in the process of her own authoring, while at the same time including Adam's claims of authorship over her (57). Eve recounts how upon her meeting Adam, he greets her with the assertion "Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim / My other half" (4.487-88). The first woman reiterates what Adam declares to be her dependence upon him and includes that detail in the narrative that she is constructing in her efforts of identity formation. The insertion of Adam's assimilative claim hinders Eve's agency in forming a separate identity. The first woman's account of her awakening ends with the recollection of Adam taking her hand, and her "yielding" to him (488-89).[34] Eve's acceptance of the first man's claim upon her self-determination is evident in the way that she begins her narrative, hailing Adam as: "thou for whom / And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh" (440-41). Eve's address to her husband expresses compliance with being relegated to a subjugated position in a pre-existing hierarchy as her very being is made subordinate to one who does not fully recognize alterity. Eve's efforts to satisfy her husband's assimilative claim lead her into multiple levels of subjugation. Eve is not only subjugated by Adam's claims of patriarchal authority, but also through her compliance in accepting that authority. In essence, Eve surrenders herself, accepting Adam's claim over her being and his denial of her alterity. Adam's failure to recognize the value of alterity leaves Eve

[34] Hand-holding is a reoccurring motif in *Paradise Lost* that is used to signify where the first couple are in their relationship, and I will be discussing it further later in this chapter.

in the disconcerting position of having to be Other to herself. There is the woman who unquestioningly accepts assimilation, but also the woman who asks questions and continues in her efforts of self-authoring. Eve's awareness of the compromising position that Adam assigns to her is apparent in her postlapsarian defense of her actions: "Was I to have never parted from thy side? / As good have grown there still a lifeless rib" (9.1153-54). Postlapsarian Eve has had enough of her husband's continual reminders about his anatomy and what it is supposed to signify.

Eve engages in self-construction through language, and the early stages of that process are evident in Book 4 when she relates her very first impressions upon seeing her own reflection:

> As I bent down to look, just opposite,
> A shape within the watery gleam appeared
> Bending to look on me, I started back,
> It started back, but pleased I soon returned,
> Pleased 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, What thou seest,
> What there thou seest fair creature is thyself (4.460-68)

This passage is significant not only for the episode that it describes, but also for the description itself. Eve's encounter with herself echoes Ovid's tale of Narcissus, and it is tempting to dismiss it as evidence of the self-absorption that will lead to the Fall in a tidy, linear trajectory. It is not the narrator who relates the incident, however, but Eve herself. Maggie Kilgour suggests that narcissism in *Paradise Lost* is not necessarily a bad thing and can be imitative of God's pleasure in seeing His divine nature throughout creation. In Eden, what Kilgour calls the "creativity of divine narcissism" (197) is crucial to self-

development: "In the unfallen world, an originally divine narcissistic impulse becomes the basis for dynamic self-knowledge which produces a chain of continuing creativity" (212).[35] The first woman participates in divine narcissism by creating a narrative out of her memory, claiming an authorial position to examine and further develop her sense of selfhood. In her retelling of this incident Eve has already far surpassed the woman kneeling by the lake in demonstrating the ability to objectively consider her own naïveté.

The relationship between language and selfhood is well-traveled terrain in literary criticism, and in her study of private devotional practices of seventeenth-century women Susan Comilang investigates their writing as evidence of their deliberate self-construction. Comilang uses Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to determine how the self gains a subject position, a place within social and cultural contexts, through language. In Lacanian thought and in Milton's epic, language is the vehicle through which the subject negotiates her or his relation to the Symbolic Order. Selfhood is thus a dialectic construct, and the process is inseparable from the language that is used in the process of self-fashioning. We can discern the first woman's efforts at self-authorship in such episodes as the retelling of her encounter with her own image quoted above, in her curiosity about things outside of her experience (as in 4.657-58, for example), and in her retelling of her dreams (5.28-94). The frequent use of conversation in Eve's efforts at self-fashioning underscores the significance of colloquy in Milton's Eden. The importance of discourse as a means of education in paradise is demonstrated by Adam's conversations with the

[35] In Lacanian terms, prelapsarian narcissism can be understood as a recognition of the Symbolic Order within oneself.

Father (8.249-451), with Raphael (5.361-8.644), and finally with Michael (11.251-12.605). All these encounters are instructional, suggesting that discursive education is integral to the Edenic project of personal growth.[36] Engaging in colloquy demonstrates a beneficial understanding and use of Lacanian alterity, or what Philip Donnelly calls "peaceful difference" (73). Peaceful difference, the ethical relationship to alterity, is based on a mutual recognition of the other subject as *Autre*. In *Paradise Lost* language is used to negotiate and understand that which is different from the self. For that negotiation to happen, though, one subject must recognize the other subject as Other, as a being of radical alterity. Otherness is a subject position that Adam repeatedly denies his wife.

Adam's continual efforts to interpellate the first woman interfere with her own project of self-authoring, and his response upon meeting Eve for the first time is indicative of how his assimilative claim alienates her from herself. I have discussed above how Adam physically appropriates Eve, seizing her hand and telling her "thee I claim / my other half" (4.487-88). She is, in effect, torn away from herself and immediately assimilated into Eden's patriarchy. As Liebert explains: "Eve is denied the opportunity in the moments after her creation to pursue self-knowledge" (162). Adam's assimilative efforts disrupt his wife's negotiation of knowledge and selfhood by denying that she could attain these capacities beyond his influence. Eve is assigned a subject position as a mere extension of another subject, and in her naiveté, she obliges her husband, at least in the early stages of her development. Shari Zimmerman's reading is

[36] Kietzman points out, reasonably, "If Adam and Eve are expected to create or author themselves, surely they require discursive tools to do so" (66).

insightful in her assertion that in Eve "we find a woman who is in search of her identity, something she 'surrenders' almost from the outset and tries to regain throughout the poem" (247). I suggest Adam's inability or reluctance to understand his wife's need for autonomy results in his denial of Eve's alterity. Champagne explains: "Adam's tragic mistake with Eve is that he tries to make her be his fantasy, instead of allowing her to be herself" (53). The fantasy, I argue, is specifically a subjectivity that includes his wife. Adam's denial of their mutual alterity has a two-fold effect on Eve: it excludes her from the social and cultural discourse that he represents, while at the same time divesting her of her own unique subject position. The first man continually denies the subjective distance that should exist between him and his wife – Adam's viewing Eve as autre, a reflection of himself, has the inadvertent effect of making her occupy his own subject position, or, more accurately, render her an appendage to his selfhood. Needless to say, that is unstable ground to stand upon, and the natural response to being put in such a position is flight.

Solitude

In response to Adam's suffocating assimilative claims, Eve retreats to the state that she knew prior to interpellation: solitude. Unlike Adam, Eve's experience of being alone, such as her playful engagement with her reflection in the lake as she negotiates her new existence, is short-lived and rather pleasant. For Eve solitude represents a safe place that she immediately tries to return to upon meeting Adam. Mary Beth Long points out that interpreting Eve's desire to return to the lake and her image therein as simply

narcissistic overlooks a critical character trait: “She is alone, and she likes it” (105). While it could be argued that Eve has not been given enough time to grow weary of solitude before being assimilated into Eden’s hierarchy, the fact remains that she always remembers a time before being constrained to a limited, adjacent subject position. The memory of that time seems to haunt the first woman, as in Book V when Eve relates the dream encounter with her winged visitor:

> … Forthwith up to the clouds
> With him I flew, and underneath beheld
> The earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide
> And various (5.86-89)

The dream is from Satan, but, as Bernard Paris points out, the Enemy is an astute psychologist who recognizes Eve’s discontent with her inferior status (70). Understanding the first woman’s self-abasement, he creates a fantasy in which she literally rises above it. Away from her husband, away from the constraints of a denied mutual alterity and independent subject position, far above what to her is a limited, contained existence, Eve sees the world laid out before her. It is quite possible the memory of that prospect renders the limitations of her waking life all the more unbearable.

Adam finds completion in Eve, having never quite recovered from his own troubling sense of isolation when he was the sole human in Eden. To return to his interpellation of Eve at her awakening, the first man declares to his new companion: “Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim / My other half” (4. 487-88). Troubling political implications aside, there is nonetheless a touching sincerity in Adam’s address to Eve – he really does feel more whole when he is near her. Eve completes Adam, and as

Champagne explains: "He experiences in this harmony a primordial *jouissance*, Lacan's term for the ecstatic rapture of perfect harmony with an other that transcends sexual pleasure (*plaisir*), that characterizes the infant's joy in his mother, and that elevates Adam from his own fragmentation" (53). Adam's response to Eve is utter joy in her companionship, causing him to overlook the alterity that she should have as a different subject. Discontent with solitary existence prevents Adam from allowing what I call 'subjective distance' to exist between himself and his companion. He loses sight of their separateness. Long suggests: "Adam understands that Eve's purpose in life is to allay his involuntary solitude. Her existence, in his mind, marks the end of his experience of negative solitude; she is the solution to his problem of loneliness" (103). The advent of Eve has a strange effect on Adam, and the solitude that he could analyze objectively and discuss with the Father becomes retrospectively associated with trauma.[37] Adam remembers being alone with a sense of anxiety that he may not have felt while he was in such a state. Eve, however, has no such reservations about being alone; for her, it may actually be a respite.

The promise of solitude provides Eve with relief from the burden of her compromised alterity. Essentially, she needs the privacy of her own space beyond Adam's authoritative discourse. Critics such as Patricia Fumerton and Richard Rambuss have studied the impact of private interior spaces on subjectivity in the early modern period. Mary Thomas Crane examines early modern privacy as afforded by being

[37] "In solitude / What happiness, who can enjoy alone, / Or all enjoying, what contentment find?" 8.364-66.

outdoors, concluding the subject formation process is open-ended, flexible, and to an extent environmental. Comilang suggests that early modern women especially found in privacy a space of agency, integral to their self-fashioning and developing subjectivity (84). We intuit the corners of such a space in the first couple's bower, a domestic area that Eve claims through personal investment. The bower as Eve's personal space is evident when Raphael approaches and Adam excitedly starts issuing orders to prepare for their unexpected guest: "But go with speed, / And what thy stores contain, bring forth and pour / Abundance" (5.313-15). Eve, comfortable in her own home and her own space, reassures her husband as she carefully decides on what to serve their guest. Ann Torday Gulden notes that the episode demonstrates Eve's exceptional talents in husbandry, the art of running a home, which was a greatly respected skill in seventeenth-century England (138). More importantly, Eve's dinner preparations evidence her personal agency. Eve makes the domestic site of the bower her own through her labour, organizing and maintaining that space according to her own predilection. Milton's paradise reproduces his culture's gender division of spaces – female domestic, male public – and consequently Eve is afforded more agency away from the garden and away from the patriarchal interpellation that imposes limits upon her autonomy. Eve's need for privacy leads to the argument that prefaces their separation. Adam, unable to recognize Eve's alterity, is reluctant to afford her privacy, perhaps not quite understanding her need for it. As DiPasquale quips: "In Milton's Eden, the love of solitude is a gender-specific trait, and it belongs to the female, not the male" (60). Long also suggests: "based on past experiences, Adam considers solitude a test he has already endured, while Eve thinks of it

as a privilege she has yet to attain" (106). In essence, Adam never wants to be alone, whereas Eve never is. Privacy becomes a point of contention between the first couple and is the cause of their first disagreement.

Separation

The separation scene is recounted in Book 9 and is initiated by Eve when she suggests to her husband: "Let us divide our labours" (214). Adam resists, arguing that with Satan at large in the garden, Eve is safer by his side. Adam's reasoning reinforces Eve's secondary status in both their relationship and in their social context. The exchange is an instance in which neither man nor woman is speaking directly, and in this episode language is already moving towards postlapsarian ambiguity. Zimmerman notes that Eve initiates the exchange, and that Adam "in his usual misinterpreting fashion, does not recognize that Eve's request entails much more than a simple desire to be an efficient laborer" (257). The original couple is not simply talking about privacy or safety but negotiating what it means to have agency. Adam, not fully comprehending what is being discussed, initially tries to dismiss Eve's suggestion that they part. The first man asserts: "The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks, / Safest and seemliest by her husband stays, / Who guards her, or with her the worst endures" (9.267-69). Adam's response, as well as being an indirect way of denying Eve's request, also assumes a position of absolute authority in their relationship and in establishing social convention as well. In her analysis of Adam's response to Eve, Diane Benet suggests that despite the courteous phrasing it is a command that asserts Eve's subordinate position in the Edenic social

hierarchy and also renders the first woman a passive object in need of protection (131-32). Beyond the immediate concerns of safety or propriety, what Adam and Eve are really talking about is the first woman's status in paradise and how much mobility she has.

Questions about personal agency provoke the argument between Adam and Eve in Book 9, specifically what it means to have agency, how it is exercised, and most importantly, to whom it is available. The exchange is complicated by the threat of Satan's presence in the garden and uncertainty about the impending trial that the Enemy brings with him. Benet suggests that the disagreement between Adam and Eve does not arise from any hidden tensions in their relationship, but rather from their differing ideas about the threat that they will face and in what manner their fidelity to the Father will be tested (9.251-317). Although I clearly disagree about there not being any hidden tensions between the first couple, they do have differing ideas about the unknown threat. Adam views the menace as being directed at the two of them together, whereas Eve understands it to be individual in nature. A large part of their differing perspectives is a result of how each understands individuality. Adam, not recognizing alterity, views his own individuality as encompassing his wife's. Eve, fully conscious of her position of radical alterity, recognizes their separateness. After Eve suggests they separate, Adam tells her: "leave not the faithful side / That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects" (9.265-66). Adam again reminds Eve of that borrowed rib and proposes that her safety is conditional upon her remaining by his side. Adam's solicitous attitude is a direct result of his failure to recognize Eve's alterity, and his rationale betrays a fundamental proprietary

assumption that cannot admit to Eve's separateness. In Adam's rendering of Eve as mere *autre*, a narcissistic reflection of himself, she is obliged to remain by "the faithful side / That gave [her] being." Adam's exhortation is a reminder of his assumed authorship over her.

The miscommunication between the first couple arises from their different understanding regarding the danger that they face. Because he cannot recognize Eve as being a truly separate individual, Adam sees Satan as a threat that is directed at them as a couple. In Adam's collapsed model of alterity, that means the threat is directed at himself. Because Eve understands the nature of alterity as something that must be negotiated by the individual, she understands that Adam cannot decide the impending trial for her. In Benet's summation: "Clearly, Adam had indicated that he believes he can (and should) undertake the actual temptation for her and himself. Just as clearly, Eve understands trial and the qualities it will test to be strictly individual matters" (137). Before setting off the first woman even expresses eagerness to prove herself capable of meeting the Enemy's challenge on her own, demonstrating what David Quint calls the recklessness of a knight-errant (*Inside* 196). The difference in perspectives between the first man and first woman relates to a larger discussion of responsibility in the Fall and free will. If Eve is not made sufficient to stand without Adam – if her virtue is dependent on exterior support – then the Father has created in her a predisposition to sin, thus negating her having free will (McColley 147-48). Eve explains it to her husband thus: "And what is faith, love, virtue unassayed / Alone, without exterior help sustained?" (9.335-36).

Eve understands the implications of being invested with free will and its significance to an unfettered selfhood. Perhaps because of her awareness of her secondary status in Eden, Eve is genuinely hurt by what Kietzman characterizes as Adam's controlling language and how it reduces her to the status of a mere appendage (75). Although Adam tries to reassure his wife of his faith in her (9.293) he is not forthright about his need to have Eve by his side, possibly not quite understanding how she contributes to his sense of wholeness. Eve, however, sees his reluctance to let her go off by herself as a lack of confidence that she must disprove: "But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt / To God or thee, because we have a foe / May tempt it, I expected not to hear" (9.279-81). As Champagne suggests, "Adam's failure to admit his need for Eve sends her to the serpent and to her imminent fall" (56). It must be noted that Adam's reservations are (and prove to be) sound, and their safety would be more assured if they stayed together. However, he simply cannot admit his own security in remaining by Eve's side. Even when Adam comes close to professing his own reassurance in remaining with his wife, he does so in manipulative terms:

> I from the influence of thy looks receive
> Access in every virtue, in thy sight
> More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
> Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
> Shame to be overcome or over-reached
> Would utmost vigour raise, and raised unite. (9.309-17)

Although a seeming admission of dependency, Adam creates an imaginative scenario that denies Eve's capacity to act as an active participant in a life-defining confrontation; the first woman is cast as a passive spectator in the performance of virtue rather than a principal player. Adam's suggestion that he can only resist a challenge from Satan if his

wife is his audience is not a true acknowledgement of reliance, but rather clever cajolery. His reluctance to communicate in a forthright manner is indicative of the ambiguity that is creeping into prelapsarian discourse, a consequence of the Imaginary Order, in the guise of the Enemy, intruding upon the once pristine unity of the Symbolic/Real Order. The first man's reluctance to admit his dependency on his wife's presence ensures her withdrawal.

Adam's choice to argue from a proprietary position proves to be a miscalculation and has two detrimental effects: first, it makes Eve acutely conscious of her secondary status in their relationship and in Eden, calling to mind her own unacknowledged alterity; second, Adam's authoritative stance aggravates Eve's discontent with the limitations that her subordination imposes on her self-fashioning. Awareness of these two impositions compels Eve to separate. Liebert proposes that conceding to Adam's argument at this point would indicate Eve's acceptance of her implied inferiority (161). Compliance would also mean her acceptance of the collapsed, dependent model of identity that her husband continually tries to assert, effectively denying her alterity and, by extension, her selfhood. As Paris explains, "Eve's motives are clear. She wants to be tempted while she is on her own so that she can demonstrate her faith, love, and virtue and gain greater honor by defeating Satan without the aid of Adam" (75). Rather than surrender her autonomy Eve chooses to question the limitations implicit in Adam's solicitous attitude, asking him:

> … If this be our condition, thus to dwell
> In narrow circuit straitened by a foe,
> Subtle or violent, we not endued
> Single with like defence, wherever met,

How are we happy, still in fear of harm? (9. 322-26)

Eve offers some persuasive rhetoric in this passage, clearly articulating the consequences that Adam's assumptions put into place. Adam and Eve are deciding how to respond to a perceived threat and, in a larger sense, if they will allow such threats to determine how they will live. As McColley asserts: "Adam and Eve are discussing the crucial question whether human society is to be founded on fear and restraint or education and trust" (176). To what extent can human society allow itself to be limited by that which is hostile to its continuance?

Along with the larger problem of human society being negotiated, though, this episode also raises more intimate concerns about the ethical treatment of, and relationship to, alterity, and what freedoms are afforded to those who do not enjoy hegemonic privilege. Eve's retort to her husband questions not only the constraints imposed on her experience, but also those that constrict her selfhood (Kietzman 61, Zimmerman 259). In her attempt to negotiate the boundaries of her predetermined limitations, Eve uses discursive reasoning to further her argument. In the words of Liebert:

> She attempted to step out of the role of inferior, of acolyte, and into the role of equal by adopting elements of a more masculine discourse—formulation of rather than receptivity to ideas, and dissemination of rather than seeking of advice—and by appropriating those qualities characteristic of Adam's means of knowing: authority and reason. (159)

Liebert's reading is helpful in discerning the underlying tension in the argument, and for the most part I agree with her analysis of how discourse operates in the separation scene. The suggestion of appropriation, however, implies that discursive reasoning is exclusive to Adam and the social organization that he presumes to represent (the Symbolic Order).

The sophistication of Eve's rhetoric disproves such assumptions – she herself is fully capable of discursive reasoning, and in exercising the ability to contribute to a productive exchange between herself and Adam, Eve demonstrates how alterity can be used to further self-fashioning. Mutual Otherness, in Eden, can be educational rather than divisive.

Adam's mistake in not recognizing alterity between himself and Eve leaves him unable to engage in productive colloquy, which leads to the separation: "Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand / Soft she withdrew" (9.385-86). Milton includes here a surprising detail – the reader has not been given any indication that Adam was holding Eve's hand during their dispute. The mention of this detail recalls the instance from Eve's awakening when Adam forcibly takes her hand (4.488-89). Although there are times between that first encounter and the separation scene when the two could not possibly be holding hands, Eve's withdrawal here continues that narrative action which began much earlier, retrospectively significant in how it connects the two for the duration of the narrative up to this point. Adam and Eve have been metaphorically joined all this time, and the reader is made aware of the fact only by its discontinuance.[38] Eve withdrawing her hand is striking and adds weight to her unspoken claim to autonomy. The gesture is what Zimmerman calls an assertion of selfhood (257), and Diane McColley draws our attention to a certain heroism in Eve's insistence during the separation scene, praising it as "a decision not to let the Enemy win the victory of hampering their responses to their

[38] In what seems to be a reoccurring authorial strategy of Milton's, both characters and readers often understand something only once it has been forfeited. The absence itself becomes instructive.

callings, constricting their God-given freedoms and responsibilities, or substituting physical restraint for constancy of heart" (154). McColley's reading is reaffirming in how it invests Eve with a nobility that has been traditionally attributed to Adam alone. Lofty political gestures aside, though, the need to claim and assert autonomy is the primary motivation for Eve's decision to separate from her husband, and she is quite clear about that:

> Let us not then suspect our happy state
> Left so imperfect by the maker's wise,
> As not secure to single or combined.
> Frail is our happiness, if this be so,
> And Eden were no Eden thus exposed. (9.337-41)

Her subsequent decision to partake of the forbidden fruit, however, is both more basic and ambivalent.

Appetite

Appetite, both physical and metaphorical, is a dominant theme in *Paradise Lost*. Metaphoric appetite can have innocent, healthy connotations, such as Adam's efforts to develop his knowledge, or even the simple pleasure that Eve takes in preparing a meal. These types of hunger are easily gratified in paradise. There are also more detrimental forms of metaphoric hunger in Milton's epic, like Satan's desire for absolute authority in heaven and his obsessive need for revenge on earth (that "hot hell that always in him burns" [9.467]). The anamorphic figure who embodies the type of rapacious hunger that drives Satan is his son/grandson. In *Paradise Lost* Death is characterized as an insatiable, demonic appetite that only recognizes its own gratification and views everything else as

consumptive matter. A comparison between Edenic and demonic appetite in Milton's epic reveals the dual nature of hunger as either the drive for expansion, or self-interested gratification. The state of lack (called *manque* in Lacanian paradigms and related to desire) and how it is mitigated has moral implications and consequences. Depending on the severity of appetite that lack inspires, those consequences can be obscured, and Eve loses sight of them when she chooses to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Metaphoric appetite creates manque in the first woman, which is the target of the Serpent's persuasive rhetoric. Eve's seducer assures her that upon eating fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil:

> … to speculations high or deep
> I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind
> Considered all things visible in heaven,
> Or earth, or middle, all things fair and good (9.602-05)

The promise of knowledge that is equal to or possibly surpassing that of Adam proves to be irresistible to Eve, who is continually infantilized throughout the epic. The cunning of Satan's seduction is in how he appeals to her sense of lack, but it was Adam who instilled in his wife this detrimental manque by not recognizing her alterity and by not affording her the autonomy that is properly ascribed to the Other. As Jun Harada puts it: "Eve falls of herself … in order to satisfy her hunger both for wisdom and food at once, which indicates that her fall is originally from a motive to gratify her whole self" (221). Eve is both physically and intellectually famished.

Adam firmly believes he represents the social order that leaves Eve wanting. In conversation with the Father, the first man asks: "Hast thou not made me here thy

substitute, / And these inferior [animals] far beneath me set?" (8.381-82). The first man's provocative question reveals how Adam sees himself as the earthly representative of divine authority with all else situated beneath him. It must be noted that Adam's conversation with the Father cited here predates the creation of Eve, so she is not really counted among the inhabitants that the first man is referring to. But what is significant about Adam's query is how he situates himself as part of the social context of Eden and how it illustrates why he is unable to recognize alterity in anything other than the Father and angels. The only differentiation that he truly recognizes between himself and his context is a matter of degree, and in his thinking Adam exists within a linear social organization that situates him closest to the Symbolic Order as represented by the Father.

Eve never enjoys such assurance. The first woman is born into alterity and cannot escape from that subject position. Even though Otherness proves to be a beneficial perspective for her in many ways, it also alienates her. Adam, who is unquestioningly a part of Eden's political context – even a privileged extension of it – fails to recognize Eve as an autonomous being existing beyond her role as divinely appointed helpmate and fails to comprehend their mutual alterity. Although Champagne proposes that Adam's superior attitude towards Eve is an act to compensate for his own sense of lack (55), I do not entirely agree. Throughout most of *Paradise Lost* Adam sincerely views Eve as an extension of himself, as well as a part of the social order that they inhabit and that he rules over as a representative of the Father's authority. However, Adam's occasionally idealistic view of Eve, as surfacing in his conversation with Raphael, is far more

dangerous, exposing the idolatry of situating Eve in the position of autre, a narcissistic reflection of himself.

According to the Serpent, the fruit provides the means to gain immediate entry into the upper tiers of the hierarchy. Had Adam recognized Eve's alterity and viewed her as separate and individual rather than an extension of himself, Eve might not have been left with a sense of lack and her appetite. Knowledge, which in *Paradise Lost* is invested with an economy, is the means through which Eve can irrefutably claim and assert her position as Other. In a persuasive and not entirely misleading line of argument, she will no longer be a rib on loan but will inhabit a mutual alterity that is shared by both her and her husband, and in which she is finally afforded independent autonomy. In Amy Tigner's synopsis: "First in the dream and then more profoundly as the embodied serpent, Satan plays to Eve's desire for a kind of upward mobility in both social and cosmic terms" (247). The promise of having the knowledge to rise above her predetermined subaltern role brings the fruit to Eve's lips. Eating it, of course, proves to be a bad idea. Green characterizes Eve's partaking of the forbidden fruit as a kind of sexual betrayal of Adam (186),[39] and DiPasquale notes that it is Eve's first step towards a damaging

[39] There is an eroticism to the passage in which Eve contemplates partaking of the forbidden fruit:

> … and in her ears the sound
> Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregned
> With reason, to her seeming, and with truth;
> Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
> An eager appetite, raised by smell
> So savoury of that fruit, which with desire,
> Inclinable now grown to touch or taste,
> Solicited her longing eye (9.736-43)

psychological dependence on her husband (60). The knowledge that comes with the fruit also solidifies Eve's alienated alterity, bringing with it a "closed" form of subjectivity.

Soliloquy

In choosing to eat the fruit, Eve forfeits her alterity and becomes estranged from God, Adam, and creation. When the Serpent leads Eve to the forbidden tree, her natural inclination to obey the divine sanction against eating the fruit is circumvented through her own corrupt reasoning. After some coaxing, Eve slips into soliloquy:

> Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,
> Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
> Of virtue to make wise: what hinders then
> To reach, and feed at once both body and mind? (9.776-79)

This passage immediately precedes the terrible lines "So saying, her rash hand in evil hour / Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate" (9.780-781). Eve's use of soliloquy and its detrimental impact is examined at length by Harada, who observes that in *Paradise Lost* only those who have fallen practice the theatrical convention. Harada characterizes soliloquy as a "closed form [of dialogue] in which one pursues oneself, never finding a higher intelligence outside oneself," and suggests that by indulging in it, Eve is maneuvered into a selfhood that is really satanic appetence through her mimicry of Satan's "self-tempted, self-depraved" rhetoric (215-17). Rather than a healthy self-fashioning performed through discourse and active engagement with alterity, soliloquy is used to arouse and justify personal desire. As Kilgour succinctly puts it: "[s]oliloquy is the perfect form of conversation for the speaker who is both subject and object of his own desire" (181). The concept of a closed form of communication is helpful to the argument

being developed here. In my reading the fallen subject ceases to orient her or himself towards what I identify as the Symbolic/Real Order represented by the Father. Eve's use of soliloquy before the Tree of Knowledge denotes the intrusion of the Imaginary Order as represented by Satan. In *Paradise Lost* indulging in soliloquy indicates the forfeiture of the *Autre*, the Father, in favour of the *autre*, a narcissistic engagement with one's own ego.[40] By indulging in the self-beguiling vehicle of soliloquy Eve divorces herself from reason, the channel through which the subject enters into commerce with the Symbolic Order. William Walker explains that in order for human will to be free (as the Father insists it is), it must obey reason: "freedom remains tied to reason: the will is free on the condition that it obeys reason, but that obedience itself is either a voluntary act of faith in reason or an involuntary act" (149). Obeying reason must be a voluntary act of faith. Faulty or corrupt reason impairs the will, which in turn undermines faith. Eve not only divorces herself from reason, but in doing so she abandons faith. Motivated by her sense of lack and the appetence it awakens, the first woman participates in her own temptation and falls.

The examination of soliloquy in *Paradise Lost* invites a comparison with how colloquy functions in the poem. Kietzman suggests that the Fall is the result of the failure of human communication; Adam and Eve's inability to really speak to each other

[40] Eve's soliloquy by the Tree of Life is much different than the fleeting narcissism she engages in upon awakening, which is more about self-actualization. By the pond, Eve studies her own reflection to get to know herself. It is her first encounter with what Lacan would identify as the Real (IV.449-69). By the Tree of Life, Eve engages in soliloquy to justify her abandonment of the Symbolic Order of the Father and entrance into the Imaginary Order that Satan represents.

alienates them from one another, from the Father, and finally from paradise as well (55). It is a reasonable suggestion that supports the discursive nature of knowledge and self-fashioning in Eden as evident in the Father's use of conversation with Adam, as well as Eve's use of alterity to advance her own understanding. I suggest that colloquy also takes place within the individual. Reason, which in the poem is integral to free will, is the channel through which the subject is able to access the as yet uncompromised Symbolic Order of morality and law. As the Father explains to the Son:

> … I made him just and right,
> Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
> Such I created all the ethereal powers
> And spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;
> Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
> Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
> Or true allegiance, constant faith or love,
> Where only what they needs must do, appeared,
> Not what they would? what praise could they receive?
> What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
> When will and reason (reason also is choice)
> Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
> Made passive both, had served necessity,
> Not me. (3.98-111)

Through the divinely appointed capacity for reason, the Father communicates with humankind in a discursive exchange that can be illustrated like this:

SUBJECT ← → REASON ← → SYMBOLIC ORDER / THE FATHER

In prelapsarian Eden the first couple enjoy unimpeded access to the *Autre* of the Father. When they exercise reason, they enter into an open form colloquy with the Symbolic Order (rather than the closed form of soliloquy that generates the Imaginary) through which the subject participates in divine commerce. As Philip Donnelly explains: "Milton's view of human reason arises from his two-fold belief that Divine Reason, or

the Son, is the poetic gift of peaceful difference from the Father who enables creation's being, and that humans, in turn, are made in the image of God revealed in the Son" (73). This model of reason and how it operates, though, makes understanding Eve's prelapsarian choice to transgress challenging.

The Fall

Soliloquy obscures Eve's facility for reason, and her use of this closed form of dramatic speech, which falsely simulates exchange, is another consequence of Adam's inability to recognize her as Other. I have discussed above how Adam's denial of Eve's alterity leads him to infantilize her and deprive her of privacy, which in turn negates her efforts to become a fully autonomous subject. Eve tries to develop her selfhood through examination of her experiences, and she also tries to include Adam in the process through conversation. His inability to recognize Eve's alterity, however, stifles the potential for productive exchange, which in turn undermines her capacity to exercise reason and fully inhabit the Symbolic/Real Order. As Kietzman points out, Adam is usually dismissive of Eve, depriving her of meaningful conversation (71). The deprivation of mutually explorative discourse leaves her susceptible to Satan, who obliges Eve's need for discursive exchange in her dreams (5.48-80), in her conversation with the Serpent (9.532-732), and finally, within herself. In her soliloquy Eve assumes Satan's perspective and enters into the Imaginary Order, thereby closing the once open form of colloquy. To return to the issue of knowledge and its economy in Eden, Eve sees it as indicative of

status within the patriarchal hierarchy and its attainment as the means to claim autonomy. Eating the fruit would:

> … render [her] more equal, and perhaps,
> A thing not undesirable, sometime
> Superior (9.823-25)

She goes on to ask rhetorically: "for inferior who is free?" (9.825). Eve has internalized the idea of hierarchal social organization and has recognized her lower status within it.

Morrissey views Eve's decision to eat the fruit as a deliberate act of rebellion and a rejection of the otherness that Adam consigns her to (336). To reiterate, I am not convinced that Adam truly recognizes Eve's alterity, and it is his inability to understand her as being separate from himself that leads to her transgression. I argue that Eve's partaking of the forbidden fruit is an assertion of Otherness; the first woman's transgression is a misguided attempt to enter into a productive, meaningful alterity and reconfigure the hierarchal, "vertical" relationship with Adam into a more egalitarian, "horizontal" one. Russell Hellier points out that in eating the forbidden fruit and transgressing the Father's command, Eve disrupts the hierarchy of creation (135), and although her rationale for doing so is compelling it is mistaken; as McColley notes, "Eve's desire for wisdom is right, but she cannot achieve godly ends by godless means" (209). Eve, without realizing it, is rejecting the Symbolic Order, which infuses the world with meaning. The first woman's transgression has the tragic consequence of solidifying her estrangement, alienating her from Adam, from the garden, and from the Father/Symbolic Order. With the intrusion of the Imaginary, the Symbolic is dislocated from the Real. The once unified registers are fractured into Lacan's tripartite model of

three related but autonomous Orders, leaving the first woman susceptible to alienation. Upon realizing the enormity of her new separateness (while still managing to avoid any admission of wrongdoing via satanic reasoning) Eve, as Zimmerman puts it, "tries to recover her link with Adam" (247). Adam, of course, falls as well, but for much different reasons than his wife did.

Eve transgresses in an effort to assert alterity, but Adam falls due to his inability to recognize Eve as Other. When Eve meets with Adam after eating the forbidden fruit, his reaction is cold horror – his muscles go slack and he is speechless (9.891-94). After some cursory deliberation, though, he tells his wife:

> Our state cannot be severed, we are one,
> One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself (9.959-60)

Even though Eve has unquestionably assumed a position of radical alterity, Adam quickly talks himself into collapsing that distance. The first man reasserts his claim that he and Eve are one flesh, thereby maintaining her position as *autre* and narcissistic reflection of himself. Adam falls because, in his narcissism, he has already done so with Eve. Aside from Satan's influence, there is no clear consensus on what causes Adam to fall. Russell Smith has argued that the first man falls for the same reason his wife does, through ambition to elevate himself in the divine hierarchy. Fredson Bowers chalks up Adam's fall to his failure to properly exert his authority during the separation scene, while Vincent Di Benedetto contends that Adam deliberately makes the wrong choice between rational love and self-degrading passion. Kietzman's understanding of Adam's Fall is similar to Morrissey's and its assumption of Otherness. Kietzman proposes that the first man's reaction to the fallen Eve echoes his initial experience of her, and Adam is

confronted by a mysteriousness that is beyond his comprehension. As he puts it: "Adam seems newly aware of the distance that separates him from a very complicated Eve" (74). I do agree that Adam begins from such a position, but soon circumvents Eve's unknowable Otherness, as he did in their first encounter, to reclaim her once again as part of himself. Denied alterity is evident in the first man's "we are one / One flesh," in which the repetition of the singular is used to stabilize his claim. My understanding of Adam's transgression is more akin to Harada's proposal that "Adam falls against himself so as not to lose the fallen Eve, who, as he knows well, is no more a rational soul but a being of flesh and appetite, belonging to Satan." In Harada's eloquent summation: "She falls up to aspiration, while he falls down to desperation" (221).

Upon reconfiguring Eve's undeniable alterity, Adam, "after thoughts disturbed / Submit[s] to what seems remediless" (9.918-19). Adam's decision to participate in Eve's transgression obscures what I identify as the Symbolic/Real Order of Eden and what Hellier calls Edenic natural law. Edenic natural law is "a universal, inborn, unwritten moral law" (126) that is based on a "double love," love of God and love of one's neighbour (125). In Eden Adam and Eve could easily observe this natural law; they existed within the Symbolic/Real, just as it existed within them. Obedience to the Father was instinctual and love for one another was a natural response to their shared humanity. Hellier's understanding of Edenic natural law clarifies the depth of the first couple's transgression in their reckless disregard for subsequent generations and, more grievously, their renunciation of God. As Eve did before him, Adam turns away from the *Autre* of the Father in favour of the *autre* of Eve, of the projection of his own ego. He abandons the

Symbolic/Real for the Imaginary in an appalling act of idolatry that the Son exposes when he later demands: "Was shee thy God, that her thou didst obey / Before his voice" (10.145-46). In choosing to deny their alterity and share in his wife's transgression, Adam has, in essence, made Eve and what she represents his god (Champagne 54). Adam's self-directed idolatry has a disturbing effect on him, and the impact that it has on their relationship must be explored.

The loss of meaningful colloquy leaves in its place a sense of lack, which I have discussed above in terms of appetite. After glutting himself on the proffered fruit, Adam considers his wife:

> … Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,
> And elegant, of sapience no small part,
> Since to each meaning savour we apply,
> And palate call judicious; I the praise
> Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purveyed. (9.1017-21)

The passage is unsettling in a way that is not immediately identifiable. The two already enjoy intimacy (as in 4.492-502, for example), so what is wrong with Adam's desire for Eve in this episode? Adam's visceral pillow talk is couched in consumptive terms; Eve is "exact of taste," something to "savour," pleasing to the "palate." Adam uses images of consumption; Eve has become raw material to satisfy his newly awakened appetite. The passage calls to mind Satan's son/grandson and his insatiable hunger – Death is now present in Adam and Eve's relationship, and Eve is one rung lower on the food chain. To relate this reading to my developing argument, a hierarchy that positions the Other as lesser and therefore subordinate does so from a position of satanic appetence. The

relationship renders those who are Other into objects of consumption and consigns them to oblivion.

After Adam's carnal appraisal of Eve, "Her hand he seized" (9.1037). He proceeds to lead her off to a shady bank to sexually glut himself, but his initial seizure is the next step in a movement that is threaded throughout the narrative. In summary, Adam seizes Eve's hand upon her awakening (4.488-89), Eve removes her hand from his at their separation (9.385-86), and now he once again seizes it. Adam's physical dominance puts a definitive end to her bid for self-determination and asserts his own dominion over her. Adam and Eve are both trapped in separate closed forms of alterity, alienated from the Father and from each other.

The Fall obscures the Father and fractures human experience into separate Orders, which in turn leads to despair and nihilism. Upon waking from their postlapsarian coitus later in Book 9 Adam and Eve are confronted with the terrible absence of the Divine Other. Their estrangement is cause for devastation and turmoil:

> … but high winds worse within
> Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
> Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
> Their inward state of mind, calm region once
> And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent (9.1122-26)

The never before experienced emotional turbulence leaves the first couple susceptible to an even deeper trauma. The passage continues:

> For understanding ruled not, and the will
> Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
> To sensual appetite, who from beneath
> Usurping over sovereign reason claimed
> Superior sway (9.1127-31)

Reason, the channel that once facilitated unimpeded colloquy with the Father, is usurped by appetite, which in *Paradise Lost* is characterized as a demonic lack that subordinates the subject to its demands. The forfeiture of divine reason is a devastating loss that cannot be mitigated, and McColley cautions against believing that there is any kind of nobility in the actions of either Eve or Adam. She asserts: "In both, the rich covenant of trust is usurped and spoiled, and glorious goodness is twisted and debased" (188). The loss of Reason, which is understood here as the human capacity that facilitates colloquy with the Symbolic Order, is a debasement that leaves Adam and Eve utterly alienated. Their bereavement culminates in Adam's desperate outburst:

> … How shall I behold the face
> Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
> And rapture so oft beheld? those heavenly shapes
> Will dazzle now this earthly, with their blaze
> Insufferably bright. (9.1080-84)

The first man voices the horrible loss of the Divine Other and the obscuring of the Symbolic Order. Adam finds himself confronted by the trauma of the Real as torn from the Symbolic, and now defined through its irrefutable manque. This overwhelming loss/lack is unbearable and cause for lamentation:

> O conscience, into what abyss of fears
> And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which
> I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged! (10.842-44)

Green identifies the narcissism behind Adam's anguish, suggesting that he is trapped in his own guilt, despair, and "appalled sense of self-judgment" (194). Adam is locked in the closed form of reasoning indicative of the sudden intrusion of the Imaginary. In his

narcissism Adam directs his anger towards his *autre* in a diatribe that commences with "Out of my sight, thou serpent" and goes on:

> … O why did God,
> Creator wise, that peopled highest heaven
> With spirits masculine, create at last
> This novelty on earth, this fair defect
> Of nature, and not fill the world at once
> With men as angels without feminine,
> Or find some other way to generate
> Mankind? (10.888-95)

As Shannon Miller points out, Adam's disavowal of Eve and women in general is a particularly ugly passage and quite possibly Milton's imitation of the 'anti-feminist' tracts that were being printed and disseminated at the time (61). Miller also points out that Adam as a character is at his most repugnant here, blaming Eve for his own fall. In *Paradise Lost* misogyny is a consequence of postlapsarian despair, giving rise to Adam's misdirected anger in the loss of reason and the unified Order of Edenic experience. In Milton's poem such attitudes are demonic. Harada coins the term *imitatio Satani* to convey how soliloquy functions in *Paradise Lost*, and the phrase denotes a line of self-serving reasoning that has divorced itself from morality (281).[41] *Imitatio Satani* is a useful concept that can be applied to the patriarchal subordination of anyone who does not enjoy hegemonic privilege (those who are excluded through gender, class, orientation, and so on), and, quite possibly, to imperial epic as well. What constitutes epic heroism is under negotiation in Milton's poem, with surprising conclusions.

[41] The Messiah's use of soliloquy in *Paradise Regained* is much different and will be discussed in Chapter 4.

In *Paradise Lost* classical heroism, with its overtones of xenophobia and militant colonialism, is located squarely among the demonic. The infernal nature of classical heroism in Milton's epic is evident in Book 1 when Satan rallies his troops in their new abode:

> All in a moment through the gloom were seen
> Ten thousand banners rise into the air
> With orient colours waving: with them rose
> A forest huge of spears: and thronging helms
> Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
> Of depth immeasurable: anon they move
> In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mode
> Of flutes and soft recorders (544-51)

The military procession of the rebel angels has no real parallel in heaven.[42] Considering the circumstances, their parade is an expression of might that is really just empty bluster, an indulgence to assuage the shaken confidence of the demonic horde and their leader. The spectacle is nonetheless alluring as a large-scale demonstration of the admittedly compelling heroism that Satan exemplifies in the early books of Milton's epic. As Richard Ide points out, though: "Satan's singular epic grandeur in Books I and II … proclaims his defiance of God's just punishment; this defiant, impenitent, epic hero is, in reality, a tragic sinner heaping on himself damnation" (125). What at first glance seems to be rugged valour is petulant narcissism and a steadfast refusal to admit having transgressed. What is presented as epic heroism and military valour is summarily dismissed later in Book 5. When the rebel angels gather in preparation for the attempt to

[42] When the "powers militant" of heaven get into formation at 6.59-78, it is an organized response to the rebel angels' imminent attack rather than self-aggrandizing spectacle.

conquer heaven, the omniscient Father knows, of course, and playfully mocks the Enemy's hubris, telling the Son:

> Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
> Of our omnipotence, and with what arms
> We mean to hold what anciently we claim
> Of deity or empire (5.721-24)

The Son is equally derisive in his response: "Mighty Father, thou thy foes / Justly hast in derision, and secure / Laugh'st at their vain designs and tumults vain" (5.735-37). Epic heroism and military grandeur that the rebel angels will bring to heaven is laughable to the Father and the Son, who view such pomp and circumstances as a noisy, pointless exercise in self-aggrandizement. Military heroism has no place in the presence of the Father and is antithetical to the ethical relationship to alterity – the peaceful difference – that characterizes the Symbolic Order. As Michael sternly admonishes Satan on the battlefield: "Heaven the seat of bliss / Brooks not the works of violence and war" (4.273-74). The epic heroism that the Enemy ascribes to is a disavowal of the Symbolic Order, and his adherence to notions of military grandeur ensures his damnation. Yet another factor that contributes to Satan's exile is his implication in a social system that eradicates individual agency.

The rebels' use of the classical Hoplite formation, where each soldier's shield guards his companion to form an impenetrable, rectangular block, provides a handy metaphor for how patriarchal social organization operates. The security of one's position is dependent on the protection of another, and the effectiveness of the phalanx lies in its interdependence. Essentially, one's survival is reliant on the complicity of everyone participating in the formation. Individuality is subsumed for the benefit of the whole. The

understanding that one's security is conditional on the collective support of an entire system is highly effective in keeping anyone outside of its parameters at bay. Through its reliance on interdependence, the phalanx subordinates its participants to the maintenance of the whole, and to keep the formation intact no individual can extract himself from its ranks. The fundamental interdependence of the phalanx is metaphorically enacted in *Paradise Lost* when Satan deliberately decides to persist in his exile because of his comrades. Although he briefly considers recanting, Satan dismisses the thought of admitting his error in challenging the Father, musing: "Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame / Among the spirits beneath, whom I seduced" (4.82-84). Despite being another exercise in demonic reasoning used to circumvent any admission of guilt, the Enemy's insight into his own motivations is also an example of how the phalanx mentality obliterates autonomy.[43] Satan's actions are determined by the group that he is a member of, rather than being an expression of individual choice. Reading the hoplite formation as a metaphor for imperial discourse is also pertinent in how it relates to exclusion and violence. A soldier is covered by his comrade's shield as long as they are facing a menacing Other that acts as an obstacle to the progression of the spear-wielding whole.

[43] What I identify as the phalanx mentality is very different from the relationship between Adam and Eve. The phalanx absorbs individuality for the preservation of the whole as each member is subsumed into the larger formation. In marriage, each party enters the relationship as an autonomous individual. The codependency of a married couple is not the same as the interdependence of soldiers participating in the phalanx formation. Prelapsarian Adam, however, does not fully appreciate that nuance.

The archangel Michael, Heaven's fiercest warrior who "smote, and felled / Squadrons at once, with huge two-handed sway" (6.250-51), is himself disdainful of militant heroism, telling Adam that in human history:

> To overcome in battle, and subdue
> Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
> Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
> Of human glory, and for glory done
> Of triumph, to be styled great conquerors,
> Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods,
> Destroyers rightlier called and plagues of men.
> Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth,
> And what most merits fame in silence hid (11. 691-99)

Michael rejects the vanity of imperial assertion for a merit that will not be immediately recognizable, nor clearly articulated in *Paradise Lost* (although it will be in Milton's subsequent brief epic *Paradise Regained*). The narrator is similarly dismissive of heroic enterprise, and as the epic progresses, he is careful to distance the narrative from the traditional fare of epic poetry:

> Not sedulous by nature to indite
> Wars, hitherto the only argument
> Heroic deemed, chief mastery to dissect
> With long and tedious havoc fabled knights
> In battles feigned; the better fortitude
> Of patience and heroic martyrdom
> Unsung (9.27-33)

The "tedious havoc" of classical heroism is discounted, and in its place the narrator proposes patience and martyrdom to be demonstrative of "better fortitude." In *Paradise Lost* patience and fortitude are characteristics belonging to Eve.

In Milton's epic, classical heroism is rejected in favour of the ethical relationship to alterity. When Adam and Eve awake from their postlapsarian stupor, Adam

immediately launches into his misogynist rant against his wife and femininity in general, blaming her entirely for their mutual loss of grace (10.137-43). Although he has finally recognized her as *Autre* and representative of radical alterity, it is from a position that is in keeping with a member of the phalanx. The first woman is now viewed as a threat and a menacing Other, someone on the wrong side of shield and spear. Eve's response to her husband is much different:

> … but Eve
> Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing,
> And tresses all disordered, at his feet
> Fell humble, and embracing them, besought
> His peace (10.909-13)

The narcissism that came with the eating of the fruit is dispelled as Eve once again recognizes their mutual alterity and responds to it responsibly. In her study of early modern English plays Kathryn Schwarz suggests that feminine roles are usually associated with social stability (11), and in this exchange the first woman is the one who makes the effort to move beyond mutual recrimination and towards peace. When Eve finally realizes the enormity of her transgression against the Father and her husband, she promises Adam:

> There with my cries [I will] importune heaven, that all
> The sentence from thy head removed may light
> On me (10.933-35)

Upon returning to her awareness of mutual alterity, Eve's first impulse is to protect her husband from the consequences of their transgression. She accepts all the responsibility for their actions herself. DiPasquale points out that Eve's humble acknowledgement and willingness to shoulder the blame for their plight is the first break in the "destructive

cycle of mutual blame that has enveloped the fallen pair" and applauds the first woman's "hopelessly heroic gesture" (65-66). Daniel Doerkson admires Eve's response to Adam's vehement misogyny as well, also deeming it heroic (126). The first woman's willingness to shield her husband from harm is indeed courageous, but not at all like the classical valour that Satan ascribes to and Michael is so contemptuous of. Eve's offer to sacrifice herself is more like the heroism demonstrated by the Father's successor.

Eve's ethical alterity is imitative of the Son's. In her seminal defense of Eve Mandy Green traces the similarities between the first woman and the Son and assigns theological significance to the correspondence. Green suggests that the Son represents "the feminine principle" in heaven and that his disposition towards mercy is in dramatic contrast to the Father's uncompromising masculinity (197). Green's proposal is significant for my argument in two major ways. I argue that Milton's Jesus, the protagonist of *Paradise Regained*, is the final fleeing figure in epic romance poetry and concludes the genre. These resistant or seceding characters that precede Milton's Messiah, though, are all women: Angelica, Erminia, Florimell, and Eve. This sudden shift in gender can seem jarring and possibly inconsistent, considering that a lineage of women characters leads up to a masculine one. The Son and Messiah, however, represent the fully realized disavowal of epic heroism, an ideology that is founded on the rapacious disregard for and obliteration of the Other. Considered in this way the principles that the character embodies predate the later dissenting characters of epic romance, representing a theology that was put in place long before Ariosto's Angelica absconded from Charlemagne's camp. Although the epic romance poems I discuss are in chronological

order and move forward in time, the dissenting characters are actually racing backwards towards the advent of what Green identifies as the feminine principle entering into human existence.

Green's observation that the Son represents "the feminine principle" in heaven is also relevant to my argument in that the comparison between the Father and the Son works with the genre theory model this discussion is based upon. The Father, with his insistence on strict adherence to predetermined principles, represents the linearity of imperial epic. The Son, who readily forgives transgression and is willing to brave personal sacrifice, represents the essence of chivalric romance in his relinquishing of self-determination and willingness to accept different narratives.[44] Green points out that the Son's willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of humanity in Book 3 is reenacted by Eve in Book 10 when she proposes taking full blame for her and Adam's disobedience (206-7), a gesture Quint rightly identifies as Christological (*Inside* 214). Eve transcends the Imaginary Order that had her enthralled and once again enters into colloquy with the Symbolic Order of law and morality. She reclaims her position as *Autre* and is fully prepared to enact responsible alterity for the benefit of another. McColley notes that such

---

[44] O Father, O supreme of heavenly thrones,
First, highest, holiest, best, thou always seek'st
To glorify thy son, I always thee,
As is most just; this I my glory account,
My exaltation, and my whole delight,
That thou in me well pleased, declar'st thy will
Fulfilled, which to fulfil is all my bliss.
Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume,
And gladlier shall resign, when in the end
Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee
Forever, and in me all whom thou lov'st (6.723-33)

a change in demeanour reveals Eve's (and by extension humanity's) "renewed capacity for goodness" and calls the first woman "a forbearer of grace" (215). Eve's willingness to sacrifice herself is an act of peacemaking that has significant consequences in the poem.

Sacrifice

Eve's heroism not only saves Adam but ensures the continuance of humanity as well. Adam's misogynist diatribe traps him in a state of stasis that perpetuates his alienation from both Eve and the Father. Adam's comment on his own behaviour gives the reader pause: "Beyond all past example and future, / To *Satan* only like both crime and doom" (10.840-41). The first man recognizes that he is in a precarious position by indulging in the same disavowal of personal responsibility that Satan espouses, yet he is unable to escape from anger and despair. Eve's offer to accept full responsibility releases Adam from his state of angry denial:

> … and her lowly plight,
> Immovable till peace obtained from fault
> Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
> Commiseration; soon his heart relented
> Towards her, his life so late and sole delight,
> Now at his feet submissive in distress,
> Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,
> His counsel whom she had displeased, his aid;
> As one disarmed, his anger he lost,
> And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon. (10.937-46)

The first woman's willingness to sacrifice herself momentarily dispels the Imaginary Order and saves her husband from stasis and desperation. Following the example set by Eve, Adam is ready to engage in responsible alterity. Eve's heroism frees Adam from his own hostility towards his wife's alterity and the narcissistic concern for himself. Green

notes the popular critical reading that the reconciliation between man and woman anticipates the ensuing reconciliation between humanity and God (187), and Champagne asserts that Eve's humility leads Adam back to the Divine Other as he submits himself, once again, to the authority of the Father (57). Adam remembers and reaffirms his position in an ethical relationship to radical alterity and is shown mercy (11.45-47).

Eve demonstrates a form of heroism that transcends the ego assertion of imperial discourse, and in doing so opens the possibility for redemption. In Doerkson's words: "Although the victory that results is not showy, as in military conquests, it is far-reaching in its efforts, opening the way to reconciliation with God and a new lease on life for Adam, Eve, and the human race" (126). Quint also views the reconciliation of the original man and woman as a heroic triumph that may well be the goal of the poem: "[t]he restoration of the marriage of Adam and Eve in book 10, after their fall and mutual recriminations in book 9, is the dramatic climax of *Paradise Lost*, the event that brings them back to each other and to God" (*Inside* 12). The first woman's victory is not to be measured by epic conquest or in the human glory-through-battle that Michael frowns upon, but through the sustaining of life itself and the continuation of humanity through generations to come. Adam and Eve reconcile with each other and, of course, with the Father through the Son. When they depart from the confines of paradise:

> The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and providence their guide:
> They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow,
> Through Eden took their solitary way (12.646-49)

In this chapter I have been tracing hand-holding throughout *Paradise Lost*, and here the motif completes its trajectory. It commences with Adam seizing Eve's hand upon her

awakening and leads to her withdrawal of it at the separation scene. From there we have Adam's postlapsarian, consumptive seizure of his Eve's hand, and finally, when the first couple depart from the garden, they are "hand in hand." The holding of hands has become mutual, even equal. Having gone through Adam's repeated attempts at forceful appropriation and Eve's tentative assertion of autonomy and privacy, the couple are finally joined together in the ethical negotiation of mutual alterity.

To trace the movement of my discussion of fleeing figures in early modern epic poetry so far, we began with Angelica's flight from Ariosto's epic romance and followed the developing motif through Tasso's Counter-Reformation epic with its reassertion of imperialist discourse and the assimilation of radical alterity, as represented by Erminia. From there my discussion traced the trope's arrival in Elizabethan England with Spenser's Florimell, who, like Tasso's wandering princess, is also absorbed by her patriarchal context and departs from *The Faerie Queene* altogether. Although these fleeing figures disappear from the narrative contexts that are hostile towards their autonomy, their departures are not quite escapes. Angelica and Florimell marry, and Erminia willingly returns to the Christian camp. All three are somehow assimilated into a patriarchal structure and only afforded choice in the manner in which they will be assimilated. In the same way, Eve's own movement away from the imperial narrative context of Milton's *Paradise Lost* cannot be called successful. Her departure in the separation scene is a failed attempt to circumvent the imperial context that Adam mistakenly perpetuates and is an interrupted movement that, much like the hand holding, is only resolved at the end of the poem. In Milton's handling of the fleeing character,

though, instead of a lone figure turning away from the imperial discourse that she finds herself in, we now have the companionate married couple that Spenser excised from the 1596 version of his poem. Adam joins Eve, entering into the harmonious difference of mutual alterity and abandoning the closely guarded phalanx of patriarchal inscription that views Otherness as hostile and something to be conquered. Together the first couple abandons the satanic dissolution of autonomy that results from participating in systems that deny ethical alterity.

The Fall, however, obscures the Father and fragments the Orders that define human experience. The first couple's transgression corrupts language, which in prelapsarian Eden is the channel that accommodates colloquy with the radical alterity of the Divine Other. In McColley's eloquent summation: "The divorce between the tongue and the heart occurs at the Fall" (168). Before the Fall Adam and Eve enjoy unimpeded colloquy with the Father, a Lacanian *Autre* and embodiment of the Symbolic Order. The relationship is literal, and in Book 8 Adam relates having actual conversations with his creator (296-451). More often, though, discourse with the Divine Other takes place through humankind's capacity for reason, which is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "The power of the mind to think and form valid judgements by a process of logic" and "the guiding principle of the mind in the process of thinking" ("Reason"). Reason is the faculty through which humankind enters into "conversation" with the Father to receive guidance in acting as a responsible, ethical subject. Discourse with the Divine Other, which occurs through the exercise of reason, is facilitated by language. Language acts as the channel through which the subject inhabits the Symbolic Order in a

process that is made literal in Adam's conversations with the Father and His divine emissaries. To borrow the words of Champagne, "The Edenic sign system is … natural" (51). In prelapsarian Eden sign and signifier are whole. After the Fall, though, the Symbolic Order is fractured from the Real as the channel of language is corrupted and diverted to accommodate the Imaginary. The *Autre* that human Reason converses with is rendered into a small 'a' *autre* that reflects the subject back upon him or herself. What was once productive colloquy with the Divine Other becomes a "closed-form" of soliloquy, creating narcissism and a dangerous idolatry that leaves the subject wandering in a labyrinth of fragmented signifiers. As Steven Goldsmith puts it, "language has been punctured critically and the gap between signifier and signified becomes an immediate source of doubt in the fallen world" (127). To be more concise, the loss of a unified sign system is detrimental to the subject.

In *Paradise Lost* an unstable relationship with the Divine Other undermines true autonomy, compromises free will, and facilitates the phalanx mentality. In Book 12 Michael explains to Adam:

> Since thy original lapse, true liberty
> Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
> Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being:
> Reason in man obscured, or not obeyed,
> Immediately inordinate desires
> And upstart passions catch the government
> From reason, and to servitude reduce
> Man till then free. (83-90)

A subject's free will is a consequence of reason, and as such is dependent on it. What Michael calls "upstart passions" such as desire and appetite enslave the subject, instilling a consumptive form of compromised, alienated individuality that creates hierarchal

modes of being. In such systems everything in existence is organized into a food chain, which is the demonic perspective of Satan's son/grandson Death. The idolatry of a self-reflective relationship with the *autre* eradicates true autonomy, leaving the subject prone to imperial discourse and patriarchal social organization. Subjects who participate in such systems are interpellated into an unstable subjectivity that is determined by external forces.

All the fleeing figures examined so far seek to escape social orders built on exclusionary structures that prove to be impenetrable and assimilative discourses predicated on a consumptive model of governance. These fleeing figures all try to circumvent the linearity of imperial discourse and free themselves from the patriarchal food chain, where anyone who is on the wrong side of the phalanx is fair game. The recovery of true autonomy requires a heroic move away from institutional inscription and imperial discourse, what I have termed the phalanx. To attain true autonomy the subject must overcome the closed form of postlapsarian linguistic constructs to engage once again in an unfettered, direct relationship with the Symbolic Order through unimpeded reason. For that to happen, the channel through which the subject exercises reason and enters into colloquy with the Divine Other must be cleaned up and "re-routed" around the debilitating narcissism of immature concourse with the *autre*. In other words, for free will to be possible language itself must be redeemed.

Chapter IV: "Thought following thought, and step by step led on"[45]: Jesus from Milton's *Paradise Regained*

In *Paradise Regained* John Milton's Messiah concludes the movement away from imperial discourse initiated by Ariosto's Angelica, then developed through Tasso's Erminia, Spenser's Florimell, and Milton's own depiction of Eve. These characters chronicle the increasingly subversive influence of romance within traditional epic poetry. Milton's Jesus is significant to the trope in two major ways: the character brings with him the possibility of narratives that exist beyond imperial epic, and he conscientiously rejects imperial discourse and its inscription – what I characterize as the phalanx – to successfully claim independent subjectivity. *Paradise Regained* begins after Jesus is baptized but before his ministry, when he withdraws into the desert for forty days of fasting and prayer. Milton's depiction of Jesus is the typological fulfillment of the fleeing figure trope and concludes its evolution. His retreat into the wilderness echoes the journeys of earlier fleeing figures, representing the escape from an oppressive social context that the other fleeing characters have been moving towards. Milton's Messiah is the site where the ethical relationship to radical alterity is negotiated and exemplifies how the subject attains autonomy.

Domesticity is introduced into epic poetry in *Paradise Lost* as an alternative space within imperial discourse and is further developed in *Paradise Regained*. Timothy

[45] *PR* 1.192.

Dykstal recognizes the utility of differentiating between the public and private spheres but nonetheless questions if boundaries should really be drawn between them (23). Such permeability yet separation between political and domestic domains was a natural part of Edenic life in Milton's earlier poem and is present in his brief epic as well. Although domestic space in *Paradise Regained* remains important to the formation of the subject, it is situated in a more explicitly binary relationship with the public domain than it is in the earlier poem. As such, it is not free from imperial discourse, which encompasses both public and private domains. The intrusion of imperial discourse into domestic space is evident in the account of Jesus's meditations as he reflects upon his childhood longing to embrace traditional epic heroism and "rescue Israel from the Roman yoke" (1.217). His recollection of this early military ambition is closely followed by the memory of his mother urging him to instead: "By matchless deeds express thy matchless sire" (1.233). In his thoughts Milton's Messiah sifts through the tensions existing between public and domestic domains to decide how to commence his ministry, what the Father calls his "great warfare" (1.158). Jesus recalls how he once considered enacting imperial discourse himself through direct military action, and how through the private counsel of his mother he pursued a different path. Jesus's meditations in Book I illustrate the radical alterity of the *Autre* negotiating its political context. At this point in the poem Jesus has yet to fully assume his identity as Messiah, and he and his mother Mary occupy a subjugated social position in an imperial culture that is violently hostile towards anything that threatens its continuance. As Joan Curbert Soler explains:

> The physical event of the incarnation has situated mother and child at the centre of human experience, entailing not only their exposure to natural dangers, but

> their direct encounter with political conflict; their family life has to be constantly protected from the gaze of the dominating powers of their time and their aggressive intent. (37)

Jesus and Mary exist in the everyday world, living under the watchful eye of a state that has subjugated their family and community. In situations where the state is antagonistic towards the individual, public and private domains are necessarily polarized, and domesticity, which Ronald Huebert considers to be closely related to the private domain (9), can provide a sheltered space within the dictates of imperial discourse.

The potential for tension between public and private domains leads to an interesting question: if the state is fundamentally antagonistic towards individual subjectivity and identities that are not in keeping with the hegemonic ideals it perpetuates, how does it relate to the private domain? It is possible that the stability of the public sphere is dependent on the solidity of the private domain. Peggy Samuels, in her study of seventeenth-century households, examines the relationship between public and private domains and explores the possible political motivations for maintaining domesticity. She suggests that the domestic became an expedient space for governments to divert potential political instability, and the state's emphasis on ruling oneself and one's family distracted from the impulse to participate in political governance.[46] The

[46] For further discussion of the state's relationship to the private domain in the early modern period, see Lawrence Stone, "The Rise of the Nuclear Family in Early Modern England: The Patriarchal Stage." *The Family in History*, edited by Charles E. Rosenberg, p. 29; Phillipe Aries "Introduction" and Roger Chartier "The Practical Impact of Writing," *A History of Private Life: Passions of the Renaissance*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer, edited by Roger Chartier, Harvard University Press, pp. 1-11, 111-60; Norbert El *The Civilizing Process*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott, Oxford, 1994, pp. 441-524; James R. Farr "From the Cloister to the Street." *Authority and Sexuality in Early Modern Burgundy, 1550-1730*. Oxford University Press; pp. 33-58.

domestic thus became a way to redirect and subdue any potential threats away from the state (Samuels 155). The two domains form a binary relationship – the public and the private are opposite polarities on a continuum where each is crucial in defining the other. In *Paradise Regained* the private domain, with its inverse relationship to its public counterpart, is the necessary point of origin for the independent subjectivity that Jesus embodies.[47] The private, though, is still situated on the opposing pole to the public and is dependent on that discourse. In such a model domesticity is a necessary component of imperial discourse that validates the phalanx. The private domain exists as the space behind the phalanx and is defended by shield and spear. To attain a fully independent subjectivity uninhibited by any political constructs, the subject must completely extract him or herself from such interdependent structures as public and private domains. The subject must go into the wilderness.

In Milton's brief epic the desert represents the liminal space beyond imperial discourse and the lure of the *autre*, characterized in Lacanian thought and this argument as the debilitating, narcissistic imposition of one's ego onto other subjects and systems.[48] Removal from the patriarchal context – the phalanx – invites the subject to become

[47] For further discussion of Milton's understanding of public and private domains see Eric Song "'Unspeakable desire to see and know': *Paradise Regained* and the Political Theology of Privacy." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2013, pp. 137-160. Pp. 143-45.

[48] In Chapter 3 I argue that the phalanx, a representation of hegemonic social cohesion, is antithetical to the *Autre*. See pages 123-24 for my understanding and use of the Lacanian *Autre* and pages 170-71 for my discussion of the phalanx.

receptive towards radical alterity. Immediately following his baptism and very public debut, Milton's Messiah enters the wilderness:

> Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
> He entered now the bordering desert wild,
> And with dark shades and rocks environed round,
> His holy meditations thus pursued (1.192-95)

After being raised in obscurity and enjoying a private, studious life Jesus enters the public domain at his baptism, where he is proclaimed to be the Father's "beloved Son" (I.32). Instead of immediately commencing his ministry, though, Jesus's thoughts lead him away from his social context and into the desert. The wilderness is an unusual setting for an epic, which is traditionally concerned with the establishment of a people and a hegemonic social order. In Stuart Curran's words: "The wilderness comprises a field defined by what it is not, as Milton's [*Paradise Regained*] is placed against an epic tradition that it will not recreate" (219). Milton's decidedly anti-classical choice to situate his brief epic in the desert is more in keeping with biblical conventions established in the Hebrew Testament, where the wilderness is invested with metaphoric significance. Regina Schwartz suggests the wilderness represents the temporal and physical space that precedes salvation, where the ancient Israelites are tested and made strong in faith before being led to the Promised Land (37). Such is the desert that Milton's Messiah enters, untethered from specific geography to become the space that exists beyond social systems and the demands that they place on the subject. Jesus abandons the interdependent public and private domains as his "holy Meditations" – the interior colloquy he enters into – lead him away from human systems of exchange. And for the first time in epic poetry, readers get to follow along.

The reader is usually left tagging along after traditional epic heroes while characters like Angelica and Florimell go their own way. Brief pastoral respites such as that in which Erminia finds herself are normally depicted as a type of exile while we hear the noise of battle somewhere beyond the glade. Even Adam and Eve leave us behind as they go out into the world. This time, though, the reader follows the fleeing figure away from imperial discourse. In her examination of *Paradise Regained*, Emilie Babcox notes the allegorical significance of the desert space in literature, its associations with emptiness and, more importantly, with potential. The desert wilderness is the place where heroes of quest and legend are forced to refine their sense of self and develop fortitude (Babcox 40). Romance wandering parallels biblical movements into the wilderness, and the comparison complicates the notion that such journeys lack clear objectives. The goal of the wandering quest does not lie in the physical geography often contested in epic narratives, but rather in the unexplored interiors of the self, however much they may be allegorically or metaphorically externalized. Jesus's choice of wilderness is incidental, and the actual place is not as important as what that place affords him: absolute privacy. His desert is merely a physical expanse that allows him to pursue the more pressing work of revelation. The wilderness that Milton leads the reader into is a place of becoming, free of human social orders that are bound to time and place.

In his brief epic Milton draws upon biblical history to position the desert as the realm of the *Autre*. The narrative movement through the wilderness denies the narrow progression of epic linearity and instead posits romance wandering as the means of circumventing the *autre* and the Imaginary Order to realize the Divine Other and attain

unimpeded access to the Symbolic Order. After explaining to the archangel Gabriel how the Son will redeem humankind, the Father announces:

> … But first I mean
> To exercise him in the wilderness,
> There he shall first lay down the rudiments
> Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
> To conquer Sin and Death the two grand foes,
> By humiliation and strong sufferance:
> His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength (1.155-61)

The Father's declaration presents a problem to the reader – after the careful and repeated insistence on human free will in *Paradise Lost*, how do we understand the Father's admission of direct involvement in this passage from *Paradise Regained*? Phrases such as "I mean / To exercise him" and "ere I send him forth" seem contradictory to the divine impartiality asserted in the earlier epic. To better understand the Father's intentions the significance of the desert must be considered beyond its role as a place removed from human systems of interaction and governance. Milton's desert is the space that dominates biblical history and is invested with similar metaphoric resonance. Wandering in the desert is symbolic of human estrangement from God, where migrancy and exile are conditions of faith that denote the rejection of human systems of governance and interpellated subjectivity. In the Hebrew Testament the desert journey is a quest for salvation (Keeble 89-90).[49] In other words God is in the wilderness, waiting patiently "far from the track of men" (1.191) and the confines of imperial discourse. Alison Schofield explains that the wilderness is a place of revelation and reconciliation (44), and the move

[49] Israel's forty year journey through the desert to the Promised Land is recounted in the Book of Exodus and the Book of Numbers.

into the desert can be understood as a rejection of the alienated idolatry that accompanies the limited alterity of the *autre* in which the ego is reflected back at the subject. The movement away from ego-centric constructs that deny Otherness is a move towards the radical alterity of the *Autre*, which in Milton's epics is represented by the Divine Other. In the Hebrew Testament the desert journey anticipates reconciliation and in Miltonic typology the wilderness is the place of redemption (Schwartz 37).[50] Unlike biblical accounts of collective salvation, though, redemption in the brief epic takes place in privacy and solitude.

Privacy and Solitude

In both of Milton's epics solitude is the necessary precursor to meaningful self-fashioning, regardless of the outcome. In *Paradise Lost* Eve understands better than her husband the necessity of individual choice in determining how to exercise agency. During their argument in the separation scene the first woman asks Adam: "And what is faith, love, virtue unassayed / Alone, without exterior help sustained?" (9.335-36). Eve points out that virtue is meaningless if it is dependent on one's society. True self-fashioning can only occur in privacy, and the individual subject must negotiate possible directions of growth her or himself. Mary Beth Long also acknowledges the need for privacy in beneficial identity formation in *Paradise Lost*, as well as the importance of human

[50] For discussions of the metaphoric significance of wilderness space in Hasidic and Christian thought, see Jefford Clayton's and Won W. Lee's essays included in *Israel in the Wilderness: Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, edited by Kenneth Pomykala.

potential: "This openness of possibilities renders solitude, while fraught with temptation, a space that is necessary to moral development" (108).[51] In *Paradise Regained*, however, privacy is not easily come by – it requires anonymity.

Milton introduces the Son of God as someone who is "Unmarked, unknown" (1.25), describing his life as "Private, unactive, calm, contemplative, / Little suspicious to any king" (2.80-81). Before his baptism and the revelation of his messianic identity Jesus avoids the public domain, pursuing his studies rather than engaging in politics. Even Satan mocks Jesus's lack of public esteem:

> These godlike virtues wherefore dost thou hide?
> Affecting private life, or more obscure
> In savage wilderness, wherefore deprive
> All earth her wonder at thy acts (3.21-24)

Satan equates personal virtue with public glory, and in his estimation self-worth is contextual, dependent on the recognition of the majority. Huebert suggests Milton valorizes privacy (26) and Jesus's anonymity and solitude are indeed contrary to traditional epic heroism, which is defined by the glorious advancement of imperialist hegemony through physical prowess. Classical heroism also entails the subjugation or eradication of the Other, those who are excluded from the phalanx of epic discourse. Such heroism, though, negates an ethical relationship with the radical alterity of the *Autre*.

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[51] Andrew Lau makes a compelling argument for Milton's Jesus as an antitype of Eve from *Paradise Lost* (rather than Adam) in how they both represent moral autonomy. See Kau's "The Eve Function in *Paradise Regained*." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 76, no. 1, 2013, pp. 161-179. See also Emily Griffiths Jones "Milton's Counter-Revision of Romantic Structure in *Paradise Regained*." *Huntington Library Quarterly* vol. 76, no. 1, 2013, pp. 59-81, p. 71, and David Quint's *Inside* Paradise Lost, p. 170, 216.

Aside from its hostility towards the *Autre*, classical heroism is antithetical to the work that Milton's Messiah is preparing himself for. In her study of devotional writings from seventeenth-century women, Susan Comilang asserts the need for solitude in developing moral subjectivity, proposing that private devotion "is the technology by which the soul becomes a subject" (81). Keeble too asserts the importance of forgoing society for theologically oriented modes of subjectivity: "religious dedication and desert journeys are so interconnected in the Old Testament that wilderness landscapes, and journeys through them, become the context in which spiritual destinies are fulfilled" (89). In biblical narratives and religious practices solitude is a prerequisite condition for attaining independent subjectivity. Removing oneself from the distractions of the public domain allows the subject to circumvent the glittering allure of the *autre*, a narcissistic reflection of the ego, and come face to face with the radical alterity of the Divine Other. The poem's emphasis on the Messiah's solitude makes use of dialectical words and phrases to describe the move into the desert:

> One day forth walked alone, the Spirit leading,
> And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
> With solitude (1.189-91)

Milton's phrase "converse / With solitude" is as striking as it is provocative and introduces the idea of colloquy into Jesus's private meditations.

In Chapter 3 I consider how soliloquy in *Paradise Lost* indicates a fall from grace and note that only corrupted characters in Milton's earlier epic indulge in self-directed monologues. When characters engage in soliloquy as a "closed form," in which the subject is in dialogue with him or herself, reason is obscured by ego projection, and the

subject's desires and appetites are simply reflected back upon him or her.[52] The closed form of soliloquy obscures the Symbolic Order as the subject loses him/herself in the Imaginary. This model is readily identifiable in *Paradise Lost*, where Satan's self-directed eloquence only perpetuates his damnation, and Eve's faulty rationalization brings about the Fall (9.745-79). The only soliloquy in *Paradise Regained*, however, is delivered by Jesus (1.196-293). Milton's Messiah breaks the closed form of soliloquy in preparation for colloquy with the Divine Other.

In *Paradise Regained* the Messiah does not use the theatrical convention to justify appetence, but rather to continue and complete a process of self-revelation that began when he was a child visiting the Temple:

> … straight I again revolved
> The law and prophets, searching what was writ
> Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
> Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
> I am (1.259-63)

Jesus's identity as Messiah is revealed to him through careful study, listening to his mother tell the story of his birth, and his deliberate, conscientious engagement with sacred texts. His self-actualization continues into adulthood and leads him away from the limited constructs of public and private domains:

> And now by some strong motion I am led
> Into this wilderness, to what intent
> I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;
> For what concerns my knowledge God reveals (1.290-93)

[52] Chapter 3, pages 158-59.

The progression of the Messiah's development is worth noting – it begins with his study of the law and prophetic texts, is confirmed through a very public outing at his baptism, and finally culminates in his move into the wilderness. To relate this process to the genre theories that this discussion is based upon, Jesus's becoming has more in common with romance wandering than epic linearity. Rather than the single-minded pursuit of a predetermined goal, Jesus's nature is revealed to him through seemingly "aimless" searching. Jesus's passivity, which David Schmitt characterizes as radical (106) and Emily Griffiths Jones celebrates as heroic (*Right Romance* 131), allows him to be receptive to the *Autre* of the Father, who confirms what unimpaired reason has told Jesus about himself. Passivity and receptiveness are evident in the concluding lines of the Messiah's monologue cited above: "For what concerns my knowledge God reveals" evokes the aimlessness of romance wandering and the willingness to allow personal goals and objectives to be defined by external influence.[53] It also evidences his circumvention of the closed form of soliloquy, with such speech becoming instead an openness to colloquy with the Divine Other.

Negotiation of Language (the Battleground)

The invitation to colloquy brings with it the negotiation of language in Milton's brief epic. Leonard Mustazza observes that in *Paradise Regained* Satan and the Messiah

[53] Emily Griffiths Jones suggests that human history itself can be viewed as romance wandering and the faithful demonstrate heroic subjectivity in their willingness to leave plot development to divine providence (*Right Romance* 131).

"go about their work in exactly the same way"; that is, they both use language, but they do so in radically different ways (199). Satan uses language to create confusion, beguiling both himself and his audience into narcissistic idolatry. One such example of Satan's ability to confound those who listen to him is his salutation to the rebel angels in Book 2:

> Princes, Heaven's ancient sons, ethereal Thrones,
> Demonian spirits now, from the element
> Each of his reign allotted, rightlier called,
> Powers of fire, air, water, and earth beneath (2.121-24)

Satan's lofty recognition of his fellow outcasts is false in a number of ways. As defeated insurrectionists, they have no claim to the titles that Satan cites when commencing his address. Beyond the misappropriated honorifics, assigning the rebel angels rule over the four elements overlooks the Father's authority over His own creation. The invocation of lost titles and irrational claims of sovereignty is empty flattery, used by Satan to ingratiate himself with his followers while also grossly exaggerating his own diminished station. Satan beguiles those who listen to him by obscuring reason, which is accomplished through an appeal to appetence and the Imaginary Order. Jesus, however, uses language to clarify his identity through the exercise of reason, such as in his response to Satan's first temptation. When the "tempter" (4.2) suggests ending his forty day fast by turning stones into bread, Jesus replies:

> Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written
> (For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
> Man lives not by bread only, but each word
> Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed
> Our fathers here with manna? In the mount
> Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank,
> And forty days Eliah without food
> Wandered this barren waste, the same I now.
> Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,

Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art? (2.347-56)

Jesus draws upon his knowledge of the scriptures to rebuke Satan and assert human reliance on holy writ. The dialectic need to provide a retort also gives Jesus the opportunity to compare his own situation to similar biblical accounts, which is an exercise of reason that leads to an unequivocal assertion of faith and further confirmation of his identity. Even though this assertion happens through dialogue with another, it nonetheless continues the inward movement that Jesus embarked upon when entering the desert:

> The while her [Mary's] Son tracing the Desert wild,
> Sole, but with holiest Meditations fed,
> Into himself descended (2.109-11)[54]

Jesus goes deeper into himself to clear the channel between humanity and the Symbolic Order and enter into productive colloquy with the Divine Other, which is a large part of his role as saviour of humanity. To that end, the first problem that the Messiah addresses is that of genre.

E. M. W. Tillyard unequivocally rejects the idea of *Paradise Regained* as being an epic (316), and his disavowal seems to have cleared the way for some creative readings of the poem. Louis Martz credits Tillyard as being the first to identify *Paradise Regained* as a georgic poem, but despite offering his own compelling argument for viewing the poem as such he is not bothered by others calling it a brief epic (8). Emily Griffiths Jones situates the poem in the romance genre, as do Annabel Patterson and

[54] As Mary Silcox pointed out to me in conversation, at this initial stage of development Milton emphasizes Jesus's humanity by referring to him as Mary's son.

Colin Lahive. William Coulter persuasively argues that *Paradise Regained* can be understood as a masque while Thomas Festa suggests the poem is a continuation of the New Testament (30). Joseph Wittreich views *Paradise Regained* in similar terms, noting its biblical structure (739). Wittreich also understands the poem to be a continuation of *Paradise Lost* (740) and David Urban sees the two works as creating a singular epic vision (399). David Quint has called *Paradise Regained* "the sequel epic" ("Disenchanted" 182) and follows the convention of referring to it as Milton's brief epic. As far as the poem's genre goes, I would suggest that Barbara Lewalski's opinion on the matter remains conclusive.

Lewalski notes the far-reaching discussion concerning the classifications of *Paradise Regained* before revisiting a passage from Milton's *Reason of Church Government* from 1642. After bemoaning the inadequacies of "monks and mechanics" in properly recording England's "noble achievements" (668), Milton goes on to consider how he may do so himself when the time comes through a meditation on literary genres:

> Whether that epic form whereof the two poems of Homer and those other two of Virgil and Tasso are a diffuse, and the book of Job a brief model […] or whether those dramatic constitutions, wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation. The scripture also affords us a divine pastoral drama in the Song of Solomon, consisting of two persons and a double chorus, as Origen rightly judges. And the Apocalypse of St. John is the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies: and this my opinion the grave authority of Pareus, commenting on that book, is sufficient to confirm. Or if occasion shall lead to imitate those magnific odes and hymns wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter more an end faulty. But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable. (*CPMP* 668-69)

In this passage Milton categorizes the biblical Book of Job as a brief epic, situates it alongside the works of Homer and Tasso and identifies it as a possible model for his own imagined attempt at contributing to the genre. Lewalski does acknowledge the validity of skepticism in connecting this short passage to the epics that Milton composed more than twenty-five years later. However, she cautions against dismissing it as irrelevant considering Milton's subsequent references to such models/comparisons, including the Messiah's own critical comparison of Greek lyric poetry to scripture (4.331-47). Lewalski concludes it is not unreasonable to think of *Paradise Regained* as Milton's effort to write a brief epic based on the Jobean model (8). I consider *Paradise Regained* to be an epic as well, and along with critics such as Quint, Urban, and Wittreich, I also understand the poem to be a continuation of *Paradise Lost* (so much so that this discussion was originally the conclusion for my chapter on that poem. When the conclusion was nearing thirty pages, I realized I was writing a whole new chapter). *Paradise Regained* is the epic poem that puts the entire genre to rest.

Jesus's colloquy with the *Autre* commences with a deconstruction of heroic epic. Milton's Messiah recalls being enamoured with military valour as a young boy, but also how he quickly grew out of it. He reflects upon his one-time interest in epic narratives in his opening monologue:

> … victorious deeds
> Flamed in my heart, heroic acts, one while
> To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
> Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
> Brute violence and proud Tyrannic power,
> Till truth were freed, and equity restored (1.215-20)

He looks back on boyhood ambitions of military glory and the childish attraction to "heroic acts" that he was outgrowing even then:

> Yet held it more humane, more heav'nly, first
> By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
> And make persuasion do the work of fear (1.221-23)

Milton's Messiah does not reject epic heroism outright, but instead relegates it to childhood ambition. He comes to view it as an immature impulse to assert one's will over that of another, what this discussion characterizes as unethical engagement with radical alterity and the Other. As a boy Jesus realizes that it is "more humane" and "more heav'nly" to enter into dialogue with the Other, and that engaging with radical alterity in a responsible, ethical manner (rather than subjugating those in such a position) is in keeping with the will of the Father. Samuels relates Jesus's determination to act responsibly towards alterity as integral to his later ministry: "The Son moves into the public space not as a finished knower but as one who will draw on and interact with others, proposing, not pronouncing, engaged in a mutual but not identical search for truth" (166). Milton's Messiah eschews the illusionary certitude of the *autre* and its closed form of communication, recognizing himself as Other and engaging with that subject position to define his relationship to the radical alterity of the Symbolic Order. Jesus's receptiveness to alterity is unlike traditional heroes of epic poetry who commandeer public space for the hegemonic systems that they champion. In his reflections the Messiah is also negotiating concepts of heroism that are available to him and determining exactly how to best fulfill his divinely appointed office.

"unknown, unfriended, low of birth"

A significant aspect of Milton's re-imagined heroism is Jesus's anonymity and his exclusion from the upper tiers of the social organization that he exists within. In the epics discussed in this study, and in the genre in general, the heroes are all representatives of the ruling class; Orlando, Geoffrey, Arthur, Adam, and even Satan all enjoy privileged positions in their social context.[55] Instead of being a champion of imperialism, the hero of *Paradise Regained* is relegated to the margins of his cultural context, occupying the position of Other. The Messiah's lack of social influence is a frequent point of contention for his demonic adversary:

> Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
> A carpenter thy father known, thyself
> Bred up in poverty and straits at home (2.413-15)

As David Loewenstein notes, "the hungry and solitary Jesus, depicted in the process of discovering his ministry, hardly qualifies as an aristocratic epic hero, let alone a traditional monarch surrounded by regal splendor, power, and riches" (70). Lowenstein's observation calls attention to the emphasis on the Jesus's passivity and receptiveness in *Paradise Regained* as characteristics that are conducive to colloquy with the Divine Other. Jesus's obscurity also makes explicit his removal from temporal systems of governance. Such systems represent an economy of privilege inherent in hierarchal organizations that are irrelevant to re-establishing unfettered access to reason and the

[55] Satan has a privileged position both before and after his expulsion: he is chief among the seraphim, and then leader of the rebel angels. His entire rebellion is a failed epic negotiation of power.

radical alterity of the Father. In Milton's brief epic subjectivity is not dependent on one's social context.

Jesus's deconstruction of traditional notions of valour in Book 1 is the site where classical epic heroism matures into Christian responsibility, moving from antagonism towards the *Autre* to a position of receptive engagement. To revisit 1.215-23:

> … victorious deeds
> Flamed in my heart, heroic acts, one while
> To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
> Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
> Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
> Till truth were freed, and equity restored:
> Yet held it more humane, more heav'nly, first
> By winning words to conquer willing hearts,
> And make persuasion do the work of fear (1.215-23)

Annabel Patterson reads this process as reflective of Milton's growing ambivalence towards epic romance as a literary genre that adequately portrays heroism and suggests his poems are: "two last attempts to reform and reconstitute the genre according to higher standards than his predecessors" ("Last Chance" 199). The model of Christian heroism that Milton defines throughout *Paradise Regained* is radically different from the classical paradigms that precede it. In some ways, though, it does conform to established patterns of development. As with classical models of heroism, Christian fortitude must also be tried against that which threatens to undermine it. In Milton's epics Christian fortitude is measured against satanic appetence.

Temptations

All of Satan's temptations in *Paradise Regained* are based on an appeal to appetence and follow a definite progression. The tempter begins with a straightforward proposition to satisfy bodily hunger, then expands the breadth of appetence to include political ambition, and finally, human systems of knowledge. After Jesus has been in the wilderness for more than a month, Satan commences his temptation of the Messiah with the promise of nourishment, suggesting that he turn the stones that surround them into bread:

> But if thou be the Son of God, command
> That out of these hard stones be made thee bread (1.342-43)

Underneath the suggestion is an invitation for ego assertion that would conclusively prove to both Satan and Jesus that he is indeed what he has been proclaimed to be. Jesus is dismissive of Satan's appeal to bodily appetite:

> Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written
> (For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
> Man lives not by bread only, but each word
> Proceeding from the mouth of God (1.347-50)

The Messiah's admonishment is a direct rejection of appetence in favour of colloquy with the Divine Other. Jesus's retort locates true sustenance in the relationship with radical alterity and an unimpeded access to reason, which in this argument is understood as the mediating faculty between the subject and the Symbolic Order. Jesus also ignores the suggestion to claim a subjectivity that must be demonstrated and proven.

Appetence in *Paradise Regained* starts out much the same as that which motivated Eve in *Paradise Lost* to eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and

Evil: physical hunger coupled with a deeper sense of lack. For Eve that troublesome Lacanian manque was what she perceived to be her capacity for knowledge, along with its economy in a patriarchal social order that her husband propagated (*PL* 9.745-79).[56] For Adam, that lack was in his inability to recognize Eve as *Autre* and an independent subject inhabiting a position of radical alterity, which ultimately undermined his own sense of self and led to his transgression. Babcox proposes that the Incarnation addresses this postlapsarian lack, and that the Messiah represents the satisfaction of a hunger that began in paradise (36). The nature of the hunger that Milton's Messiah satisfies is what I interpret here to be the loss of unimpeded discourse with the Divine Other.

When Satan realizes and accepts that physical hunger will not serve his purposes, he expands what constitutes appetence. His subsequent temptation is more subtle, and Satan appeals to Jesus's childhood ambition and one-time admiration for epic heroism:

> … or wert thou sought to deeds
> That might require th' array of war, thy skill
> Of conduct would be such, that all the world
> Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
> In battle (3.16-20)

The tempter suggests that the Messiah use military means to establish the kingdom of God, and in the words of Samuel Smith, "It is an admirable strategy on Satan's part: to seduce Jesus into becoming an Antichrist holding temporal power in order to prevent the eternal kingdom of God, which has been ordained to be obtainable only by suffering" (69). In *Paradise Lost* the Father explains that Adam and Eve's transgression can only be redeemed through sacrifice. By divine decree the sins of humanity cannot be rectified

[56] See page 155 in Chapter 3.

through military subjugation but by the willing sacrifice of the Son, and sincere human contrition.[57] The Father reasserts the necessity of suffering for absolution in *Paradise Regained*, promising to send forth the Messiah: "To conquer Sin and Death the two grand foes, / By humiliation and strong sufferance: / His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength" (1.159-61). The kingdom of God is not to be won through epic conquest, nor can humanity be forcibly brought to its gates. Any attempt to do so would be in direct opposition to the will of the Father. Satan's second temptation is an appeal to political ambition, which can be characterized as appetite for temporal power. The lack of, or contestation over, power certainly motivates the heroes of traditional epic narratives, all of whom seek to conquer and subdue those who exist outside of their own systems of social organization.

Satan is also offering Jesus the hierarchal comfort of inclusion in the phalanx, a position from which he could indulge and sate the hunger for power, should he so choose.[58] Accepting such a position, though, would mean entering into a consumptive relationship with alterity. The Messiah's response is that of a patient teacher:

> They err who count it glorious to subdue
> By conquest far and wide, to overrun
> Large countries, and in field great battles win,
> Great cities by assault: what do these worthies,
> But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
> Peaceable nations, neighboring, or remote,

[57] "He with his whole posterity must die / Die he or justice must; unless for him / Some other able, and as willing, pay / The rigid satisfaction, death for death" (*PL* III.209-12); "To prayer, repentance, and obedience due, / Though but endeavoured with sincere intent, / Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut" (*PL* 3.191-93).

[58] See Chapter 3, pages 170-71 for my discussion of the hoplite formation as analogous to patriarchal social organization.

> Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
> Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
> Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove (3.71-79)

In a response that echoes Michael's disavowal from Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, the Son of God is critical of imperial discourse in general, as well as the reckless, consumptive relationship to alterity that it is based upon. The rapacious political appetite that Satan is unable to see beyond is what led to his expulsion from Heaven in the earlier epic and motivated his drive to colonize earth. Satan's single-minded adherence to imperial discourse in both of Milton's epics has only ever been detrimental to his own well-being. The Messiah, however, has removed himself from any and all constructs of public and private domains that reinforce the limited subjectivity of the phalanx, wherein the subject is subsumed by the system that it upholds and perpetuates.

Jesus's retort exposes epic narratives as predicated on the unethical engagement with alterity in its drive to obliterate Otherness and establish hegemonic uniformity. We are reminded of the "narrow circuits" that Eve was so leery of in *Paradise Lost*, the limitations of what this discussion identifies as epic linearity and the pursuit of a single objective at the expense of all other possibilities. In his discussion of *Paradise Regained* Stuart Curran suggests that all of Satan's temptations are predicated on "narrowing one's spiritual and psychological range to accord with an already structured and external pattern" (218). Steven Goldsmith's reading is similar, and he asserts: "The temptation in *Paradise Regained* is to choose a path, and by doing so limit oneself to the identity forged by that particular path" (133). Both critics identify the underlying offer of comfort in clearly defined limitations, once again the 'narrow straits' from *Paradise Lost* that

Adam found so reassuring (9.290-341). Such comfort relates to the certitude of epic progress and inclusion in the phalanx, prospects that proved to be irresistible to the Enemy himself. All of Satan's temptations are based on the glittering allure of the Imaginary Order.

Satan tries to coax Jesus into entering the Imaginary Order by privileging appetite and personal desire over colloquy with the radical alterity of the Symbolic Order. If successful, the choice would reinforce consumptive social organizations and perpetuate a closed form of narcissism. The idolatry of the Imaginary Order would permanently impede reason and continue to alienate humanity from the Divine Other. Having failed in his attempt to corrupt the Messiah with sustenance and the promise of earthly glory, the tempter appeals to yet another potential form of appetence – knowledge:

> … Be famous then
> By wisdom; as thy empire must extend,
> So let extend thy mind o'er all the world,
> In knowledge, all things in it comprehend. (4.221-24)

The attainment of knowledge is perhaps the most subtle of Satan's temptations and worked quite well for him in the Garden of Eden when he took advantage of Eve's insecurity (*PL* 9.679-732). Recognizing Jesus's great learning Satan appeals to his studious nature, then goes on to raise questions concerning how the Messiah will be able to communicate with "Gentiles," those from a different culture (4.229-32). Schwartz points out that "In each of his temptations, Satan is giving Jesus a way to understand redemption," or suggesting ways for the Messiah to fulfill his ministry (30). The temptation shifts away from temporal power and military might to rhetorical power and the ability to persuade. In what critics such as Thomas Festa and John Rumrich refer to as

the Temptation of Athens,[59] the tempter questions how it will be possible to communicate with those who do not necessarily share Jesus's cultural background – basically, how will he talk to them? Satan is constructing Otherness, but in the anticipated failure to communicate it is an alterity as understood from the phalanx. Jesus's response may be as surprising to the reader as it is to Satan:

> … many books
> Wise men have said are wearisome; who reads
> Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
> A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
> (And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek)
> Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
> Deep-versed in books and shallow in himself,
> Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
> And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
> As children gathering pebbles of the shore (4.321-30)

According to the Messiah learning in and of itself is of no value. What makes it valuable is how it contributes to one's capacity for reason and judgement, as well as what I will call the subject's response to radical alterity. Ryan Netzley argues that Milton's Messiah does not reject reading outright, but rather in the paradigm that he gestures towards, "wise readers are themselves self-sufficient and do not gain anything from reading […] reading, it seems, can only function as reconfirmation and reaffirmation of what one already knows and possesses" (146). Intelligent readers do not really gain anything from reading because the practice can only reaffirm what one already knows. Milton's Jesus, for example, finds confirmation of his identity as Messiah through his studies (1.204-07).

[59] See Thomas Festa's "The Temptation of Athens and the Variorum *Paradise Regained*," and John Rumrich's "Milton's Theanthropos: The Body of Christ in *Paradise Regained*" (64).

In this discussion, learning is the means to develop the ability to engage in colloquy with the Divine Other. Knowledge is only useful if it facilitates reason and is how the subject gains access to the Symbolic Order of law and morality, which I suggest is embodied by the Father. Without that, no matter how "Deep verst in books" one may be, the subject will remain lost in the Imaginary Order, hopelessly confined to a limited, alienated subjectivity and "shallow in himself." Indiscriminate study for its own sake is pointless, and when one is able to know and adhere to the Symbolic Order reading becomes redundant. As Comilang suggests, "The desired relationship with God produces knowledge, a mind that can conceive 'true intelligence,' and a self beloved of God" (88).

Examining the different motivations behind studying and reading calls into question what forms of knowledge are available to the subject and what is the nature of knowing. Babcox differentiates between two types of understanding: *scientia* is worldly knowledge, whereas *sapientia* is divine wisdom (39). In this discussion *scientia* is narcissistic, essentially information that renders experience into psychological mirrors that reflect the subject's ego back onto him or her. Opposed to that is *sapientia*, the heavenly knowledge that is attained through reason, which recognizes radical alterity and relieves the subject from the burden of "closed form" subjectivity. Satan only understands the former, while Jesus is only interested in the latter. As Michael North puts it, "To tempt Christ with learning is finally to ask him to become a receiver instead of being part of the source, auditor instead of the message itself" (279). The Messiah instead chooses to enact divine wisdom through his absolute obedience and faith.

Passivity

Jesus's disinterest in the ego-centric *scientia* of classical learning is an expression of his transcendent humility and is based on a passage from Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. Paul advises the Philippians to emulate Christ:

> Who being in the forme of God, thought it not robbery to bee equall with God: But made himselfe no reputation, and tooke vpon him the forme of a seruant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himselfe, and became obedient vnto death, euen the death of the Crosse. (KJV 1611, Philippians 2:6-8)

In his discussion of Milton's use of this passage, David Whitford explains that the Son of God puts aside his glory in assuming human form (151), which he does to serve as the redemptive sacrifice that the Father's justice requires. The Messiah's willingness to take upon himself "the forme of a seruant" is demonstrated in his unquestioning acceptance of divine providence:

> What if he hath decreed that I shall first
> Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
> By tribulations, injuries, insults,
> Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
> Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
> Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
> What I can suffer, how obey? (3.188-94)

The doctrine of satisfaction demands that Adam and Eve's original transgression be atoned for, and the Son of God will pay this debt through his own suffering and death in what Schwartz calls an act of "radical passivity": "Christ can do nothing. He must suffer everything" (38).[60] Jesus's radical passivity, which Emily Griffiths Jones and David

[60] For further discussion of the doctrine of satisfaction, see Chapter 3 from Eleonore Stump's *Atonement*, "The Anselmian Interpretation of the Atonement: Love, Goodness, Justice, and Forgiveness."

Schmitt have identified as heroic in refusing to enact salvation through actions such as establishing an empire or pursuing all human knowledge (*Right Romance* 131, 106), is antithetical to what I have identified as the phalanx mentality and exists on the other end of the spear. The phalanx subsumes the individual into a closed system of governance that is designed to perpetuate itself and is detrimental to the subject in the way that it obliterates alterity and compromises autonomy. Radical passivity, however, is the conscious abandonment of a limited, postlapsarian subjectivity in favour of receptive colloquy with the Divine Other. Through radical passivity the subject can enter a relationship that satisfies the fundamental lack that Satan deflects back upon the subject as unstable appetence. The type of appetite that Satan relies upon and exploits is absent in Jesus, for whom what we identify as human subjectivity is secondary to his resolute – even heroic – obedience to divine will. An appeal to the ego, or an invitation to the Imaginary Order, is entirely ineffective against the Messiah, who has emptied himself of such impediments to the Symbolic Order of the Divine Other.

The hunger that Jesus experiences in the wilderness is not for food, nor for power, nor for knowledge, which in Milton's epics are states of lack that reinforce an alienated sense of individuality. Jesus's hunger is the physical embodiment of his emptying himself of all forms of appetence in preparation to receive the will of the Father; as Babcox points out, Milton's Messiah "finds fulfillment in being emptied of self in order to be filled with God" (40).[61] Jesus is dismissive of his bodily hunger, only addressing it when Satan

[61] Babcox goes on to suggest that this spiritual emptying is enacted through the form of the poem itself, which has been described as "bare, colorless, and cold" by some critics, and has a remarkably low percentage of adjectives.

brings it up in conversation or, in one instance, noting it to himself in passing (1.347-51, 2.302-91). Patterson suggests the Messiah has learned to be an intelligent reader of his own experience and understands the new Christian narrative even as it unfolds (201). The bodily hunger that Jesus is dimly aware of is merely part of that new narrative as he patiently waits for it to develop. By extracting himself from preexisting narratives and the circumstances that motivate them, Milton's Messiah creates a new one. In the desert he is removed from the things that generate appetence in all its forms: there is no food, no political context, no books. The move into the wilderness strips away these strata of appetite layer by layer until all that is left is Satan, the father of alienated subjectivity and narcissistic disavowal of radical alterity – the foundational source of human discontent.

The self-emptying that Jesus undergoes frees the individual from the narcissism of the Imaginary Order, what is described here as a "closed form" subjectivity, and allows colloquy with the Divine Other. When Satan commences the Temptation of Athens in Book 4, he offers classical knowledge as the means to attain a self-contained subjectivity. The tempter promises the Messiah: "These rules will render thee a king complete / Within thyself, much more with empire joined" (283-85). Satan's offer is a demonic parody of Michael's promise at the end of *Paradise Lost* when the archangel assures Adam that humankind will eventually discover a paradise within (12.585-87). Before going on to devalue the limitations of human knowledge, Jesus begins his critique by creating a rhetorical model for the relationship between *scientia* and *sapientia*, human knowledge and heavenly wisdom:

> Think not but that I know these things, or think
> I know them not; not therefore am I short

> Of knowing what I ought: he who receives
> Light from above, from the fountain of light,
> No other doctrine needs, though granted true (4.286-90)

The first part of Jesus's response is almost playful in its offhand but rigorous deconstruction of the classical logic that Satan advocates. The first three lines of this passage are complex and circular, bordering on confusing. The second part of Jesus's response, though, beginning in line 288 after the colon, is simple and direct. This passage dramatically breaks free from the circumlocutory, serpentine logic of the first part, creating an ascending movement towards the source of true wisdom. Joan Curbert Soler's understanding of Jesus's development is helpful in clarifying the significance of the rhetorical movement mapped out here. After asserting that the Son is an example of transcendent selfhood, she proposes "he is able to fit into a universal system, integrating himself, through a process of maturation, into a wider totality determined entirely by the Father" (Curbert Soler 46). To rephrase Soler in the vocabulary I use here, Jesus rejects the narrow limitations of egocentric narcissism to fully enter into the Symbolic Order. The closed form "horizontal" subjectivity playfully alluded to in lines 286 to 288 is emptied, allowing the "vertical" movement towards the Divine Other. Jesus's speech is indicative of what Rumrich identifies as him being *Theanthropos*, simultaneously human and divine (51).[62] The Messiah assumes his divinity through his absolute emptying of appetence and subjectivity:

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[62] James Pearce eloquently explains Milton's use of shifting perspectives in his depiction of the Messiah: "Milton was obliged to shift the argument from the proposition that Christ is God to the proposition that Christ is man and back again; in this manner a composite picture is created in which A equals B and C. Christ does not 'cross and

> And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
> Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
> And count thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles (2.389-91)

By participating in the radical alterity of the Divine Other, "The Savior becomes a living sacrifice to God, relinquishing his will until he, as human, speaks only God's Word" (Samuels 170).

Corruption of Language

Satan fractures signifier from signified to take up residence in the gap between, thus obscuring the signified and obstructing the unified sign. The fractured sign and intrusion of the Imaginary Order creates conditions that are conducive to the rise of imperialism, a project that is often aided and abetted by the imagined need for unity to defend against an imagined enemy/other. We have arrived at the underlying drive for epic linearity – the need for unity in a chaotic world. The rupture of signifier from sign is reflected in large scale societal and cultural fragmentation, which in turn perpetuates the imagined need for imperial cohesion and the alienation of the individual subject.

Satan's seduction of Eve in *Paradise Lost* is predicated on his ability to cloud her capacity for reason, which he accomplishes by corrupting language and disrupting discourse with the Symbolic Order. It is a strategy that William McCarron identifies as *catachresis*, "the wrenching of a word from its proper application to another not proper" (19). Satan's sophism has the effect of deflecting language back upon the subject and

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recross' anything; rather, he is depicted, often in rapid succession, from shifting points of view" (287).

creating a closed form of narcissistic soliloquy. The passage that best demonstrates such corruption is from Book 4 of *Paradise Regained*; growing increasingly frustrated in his confrontation with Jesus, the Enemy declares:

> Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
> And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
> In what degree or meaning thou art called
> The Son of God, which bears no single sense;
> The son of God I also am, or was,
> And if I was, I am; relation stands;
> All men are sons of God; yet thee I thought
> In some respect far higher so declared (4.514-21)

The sophist rationalization in the latter part of this passage is an example of how Satan disrupts the relationship between signifier and that which it signifies. In an effort to diminish the Messiah's divinity Satan tries to deflect language itself away from the radical alterity of the Divine Other. He inserts the Imaginary, with its appeal to the ego, in place of the Symbolic, that which properly exists beyond the subject. McCarron explains Satan's sophisticated but corrupt use of language thus: "He [Satan] is constructing a false sorites, i.e., an argument based on a chain of enthymemes whereby the last term of one series becomes the first term in the next" (16). In the above-cited passage the Enemy begins his corruption by adding multiplicity to the designation "Son of God," compromising the singularity and unity of the sign while verbally creating divergent channels of meaning. North points out that throughout the confrontation in Milton's brief epic, Satan repeatedly attempts to separate Jesus from his own words, to "drive a wedge between prophecy and identity." He goes on to say that all the Enemy's attacks on the Messiah begin with language "as a way of destroying the messenger by distorting his message" (274). Satan's claim to also be a "son of God" continues the attempted

degradation, not only by diminishing the force of the unified sign, but also by trying to create a narcissistic reflection that diverts meaning – those channels that Satan fabricates and deflects – back onto the subject. His rhetoric effectively extracts the truth of the Symbolic Order from the equation to the point where language becomes diffuse, meaningless, and empty: "All men are sons of God."

The confrontation between Satan and the Messiah is a contest over the space between signifier and sign, and is the climactic battle that will determine the nature of language – whether it will continue to perpetuate a closed form of soliloquy that leads the subject back to him or herself and forever alienates him/her from the Symbolic Order, or once again becomes a channel through which he or she is able to access reason and engage in colloquy with the Divine Other. In this way language becomes both weapon and battleground for the struggle between satanic multiplicity and divine coherence. In the introduction to the theme of his brief epic, the narrator states:

> … Victory and triumph to the Son of God
> Now ent'ring his great duel, not of arms,
> But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles (1.173-75)

The language of imperial discourse is appropriated by Milton to announce the disavowal of traditional epic heroism. Instead of classical military prowess, wisdom is put forth as the means to overcome demonic subjugation, an enslavement that is perpetuated through the absence of meaning in postlapsarian discourse.

Satan's own explanation of his relationship to humankind clarifies the violence that he performs on, and through, language. In Book 1 he tells Jesus:

> Men generally think me much a foe
> To all mankind: why should I? They to me

> Never did wrong or violence, by them
> I lost not what I lost, rather by them
> I gained what I have gained, and with them dwell
> Copartner in these regions of the world,
> If not disposer; lend them oft my aid,
> Oft my advice by presages and signs,
> And answers, oracles, portents and dreams,
> Whereby they may direct their future life (1.387-96)

The tempter states that his will is conflated with human systems of understanding and knowledge. Satan's chilling claim of partnership is a clever bit of misdirection that glosses over human subjugation to social systems that facilitate satanic appetence. The Enemy proposes to have no malice towards humankind and calls himself "Copartner," suggestive of a mutual, equitable relationship. He goes so far as to call himself "disposer," which is a provocative designation with several possible meanings. According to the Oxford English Dictionary a disposer is one who regulates or governs, but also one who distributes or dispenses ("Disposer"). Satan's use of the term is unsettling in several ways; first, despite the earlier claim of partnership it is an assertion of kingship. Secondly, Satan suggests that the world is his and is something that he has bestowed upon humankind. Using the term disposer is an example of satanic ambiguity in language that obscures meaning, as well as a monstrous usurpation of the Father. He does, however, act as disposer in bequeathing to humankind an alternative mode of experiencing reality in asserting the Imaginary over the Symbolic. Most disturbing of all, though, is Satan's oblique claim of residency in language itself by inhabiting the gap that he created between signifier and sign.

In *Paradise Lost* Satan appropriates human language, but in *Paradise Regained* language is used by the Messiah to reestablish the connection between humankind and

the Divine Other / Symbolic Order. In this way language is the battleground upon which the fate of humankind is to be determined, as well as the weapon through which that battle will be decided. Jesus is perfectly aware that the fracture between name and thing that characterizes postlapsarian language is due to Satan's influence, not the Father's, and is a consequence of the intrusion of the Imaginary onto the Symbolic. The battle between the Messiah and the Enemy becomes a question of language as presence versus language as absence, truth and lie. As Steven Goldsmith explains:

> The Son emerges from this interaction as the Logos, an expression of divinity where no discrepancy exists between vehicle and tenor. At the same time, he identifies Satan as the lie. The adversary's speech actually proves the negation of speech—a vehicle empty of substance, a void. (129)

In other words, true meaning is to be found in the unified sign, not in the satanic emptiness in language. Jesus identifies this difference in the initial stages of their contest in his denouncement:

> The other service was thy chosen task,
> To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
> For lying is thy sustenance, thy food (1.427-29)[63]

The Messiah relates language to sustenance and hunger; the emptiness of satanic discourse, in which signifier is divorced from signified, generates an appetence that cannot be satisfied through the narcissistic, ego reflective system of discourse inhabited by Satan. In *Paradise Regained* the narcissistic emptiness of satanic discourse is

[63] "Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together about foure hundred men, and said vnto them, Shall I goe against Ramoth Gilead to battell, or shall I forbeare? And they said, Goe vp, for the Lord shall deliuer it into the hand of the king" (1 Kings 22:6). The "lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets" (1 Kings 22:22) led Ahab to his destruction.

superseded by Jesus sustaining himself on the word of God. This linguistic shift relates to the Son of God's revelatory use of language (that assent identified earlier) in which the Messiah moves beyond the labyrinthine misdirects of human discourse to clear a channel between the subject and the radical alterity of the Divine Other. Jesus's escape from epic linearity is both physical and linguistic; his withdrawal into the wilderness is the bodily removal of himself from his imperial context, and that escape is also enacted through his use of language as he moves beyond the shadowy limitations of the Imaginary Order. In doing so Jesus exposes the emptiness that underlies Satan's discourse and indeed is Satan:

> Deservedly thou griev'st, composed of lies
> From the beginning, and in lies wilt end
> …
> Ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned,
> A spectacle of ruin or of scorn
> To all the host of Heav'n; the happy place
> Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy,
> Rather inflames thy torment, representing
> Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,
> So never more in Hell than when in Heav'n (1.407-08, 414-20)

As Goldsmith observes: "the Son steadily speaks at greater length and in the process of debate consistently renders Satan mute until the adversary's final silence is the emblem of nonexistence, spiritual substancelessness" (125). Satan himself seems to be aware of the differences between the postlapsarian discourse he has corrupted and the more rigorous, coherent use of language the Messiah employs:

> I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
> What best to say canst say, to do canst do;
> Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
> To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart
> Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape (3.7-11)

It is a startling instance in which Satan, for the first time in either epic, speaks directly and with precision – Jesus's use of language diminishes satanic discourse, even from the Enemy's own tongue. For the Messiah word and action are simultaneous, freely arising from the Symbolic Order and leaving no room for the Imaginary. The entire exchange gestures towards a more subtle aspect of Jesus's ministry – how he will accomplish the reconciliation between humankind and the Father. The work of redemption begins with the repair of language itself. In *Paradise Lost* language evidences reason, the capacity through which humankind enjoys unimpeded commerce with the Father. Satan corrupts language in the earlier poem to confound reason and obscure the Symbolic Order of law and morality. [64] Satan insinuates his presence in human discourse through the advent of the *autre* and the intrusion of the Imaginary, which is detrimental to the subject. The subsequent alienation is a wound that the Messiah must heal through Christian eloquence, the harmonious relationship of word and truth and the reorientation of human reason with the Symbolic Order. Through the exercise of pure Christian eloquence, the unification of signifier and signified, Jesus fully enters into his messianic identity. Language is used to enter into the radical alterity of the Divine Other. North summarizes: "In the very process

[64] As the archangel Michael explains to Adam after the Fall:

> … Yet know withal,
> Since thy original lapse, true liberty
> Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
> Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being:
> Reason in man obscured, or not obeyed,
> Immediately inordinate desires
> And upstart passions catch the government
> From reason, and to servitude reduce
> Man till then free. (*PL* 12.82-90)

of arguing and asserting himself against temptation, Christ clarifies his identity, using as his basic assumption the unity of language and character" (274). Milton's Messiah uses language to reassert the *Autre* of the Father and the Symbolic, and in so doing diminishes the rupture between sign and signifier that facilitates the Imaginary (North 273, Goldsmith 132).

In their first encounter Satan and Jesus discuss oracles and how the devil speaks through them to influence the development of humanity. The motif can be read as analogous to language itself, and how it is corrupted through Satan's residency within it. The Messiah is critical of Satan's influence and his modus operandi:

> Yet thou pretend'st to truth; all oracles
> By thee are giv'n, and what confessed more true
> Among the nations? That hath been thy craft,
> By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
> But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
> Ambiguous and with double sense deluding,
> Which they who asked have seldom understood,
> And not well understood as good not known? (1.430-37)

Although in the poem itself Jesus targets classical prophecy, the episode translates quite well to a discussion of linguistics and the postlapsarian rupture between word and thing. As North explains: "There is a direct correspondence between God's words and Christ's character, and thus between Christ's own words and holy truth" (276). Milton's Messiah deconstructs the process of misinterpretation, exposing the dislocation between signifier and signified that obscures not only meaning but reason as well, the human capacity that facilitates discourse between the subject and the Symbolic Order. Jesus's critique continues:

> Whoever by consulting at thy shrine

> Returned the wiser, or the more instruct
> To fly or follow what concerned him most,
> And run not sooner to his fatal snare? (1.438-41)

Satanic discourse can only establish a false exchange between the subject and an immature *autre*, an alterity that is reconfigured into a narcissistic reflection of the ego to the detriment of the individual. It was such a closed-form discourse that ensnared Adam, who was unable to recognize Eve as Other and accepted his fall even before the fact.[65]

Silence

Every exchange between Jesus and Satan in *Paradise Regained* ends with the silencing of the Enemy as he is struck speechless when confronted by the absolute coherence of the Messiah's unified language.[66] Silence is a reoccurring pattern in the poem, from the metaphoric stillness of the desert space to the quietude that follows each exchange between the Son of God and the Enemy.[67] Silence is deeply significant in

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[65] See Chapter 3, pages 163-64.

[66] See Goldsmith, 128, Mustazza, 205.

[67] "It was the hour of night, when thus the Son / Communed in silent walk" (2.260-61), "So spake the Son of God, and Satan stood / A while as mute confounded what to say" (3.1-2), "So spake the Son of God; and here again / Satan had not to answer" (3.145-46), "Perplexed and troubled at his bad success / The tempter stood, nor had what to reply" (4.1-2). Perhaps the most striking moment of silence occurs when in anger and frustration Satan unleashes a violent storm upon the Messiah, and the narrator addresses him directly:

> O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
> Unshaken; nor stayed the terror there;
> Infernal ghosts, and hellish furies, round
> Environed thee, some howled, some yelled, some shrieked,
> Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
> Sat'st unappalled in calm and sinless peace (4.420-25)

Milton's brief epic and is crucial in the reestablishment of open-form dialogue with the Divine Other. Satanic discourse is a torrent of words and multiplicity that ensnares the subject in a whirlpool of lost meaning as it doubles back upon itself to alienate the individual. Divine discourse, however, is discursive, and the only way to hear what the Divine Other has to say is to listen quietly. In Ken Simpson's eloquent summation: "To retain his kingdom, Satan attempts to separate words from the Word but is reduced to empty silence, while Jesus demonstrates that he *is* the Word and allows the silence of the Father to speak through him" (187). The silence of the Messiah and the silence that the poem itself moves towards is what lies beyond the constraints of postlapsarian subjectivity. Silence circumvents the alienated construct of subjectivity built upon fragmented signifiers that lock the subject within him/herself and creates space for divine colloquy. As Henry Laskowsky asserts, the Son of God uses language to miraculously assert selflessness, and in Milton's poem the Word Incarnate is representative of "a linguistic miracle in which language, the primary sign of personality, becomes the means by which personality is extinguished" (11). The fracture of signifier from sign creates space for the intrusion of the Imaginary Order, which has the detrimental effect of creating an imagined need for imperialism and a corresponding impetus to eradicate autonomous subjectivity. The reunification of signifier and sign eliminates that space, thus removing an obstruction that impedes reason and, through it, divine colloquy.

The episode echoes 1Kings 19:11-13, in which the prophet Elijah recognizes Yahweh in the silence that follows a storm, an earthquake, and fire. In Milton's poem, the silence of God is within.

Language becomes the means through which the narcissistic *autre* is deconstructed to make room for the Symbolic Order of the Divine Other.

Redemption

In *Paradise Regained* the Messiah commences his ministry with the redemption of language, a transformation that necessitates the move away from imperial discourse. Jesus goes into the liminal space of the desert to learn who he is and discern the nature of his great work:

> Musing and much revolving in his breast,
> How best the mighty work he might begin
> Of savior to mankind, and which way first
> Publish his Godlike office now mature,
> One day forth walked alone, the Spirit leading,
> And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
> With solitude, till far from track of men,
> Thought following thought, and step by step led on (1.185-92)

Jesus goes into the wilderness to figure out what his purpose is and how to accomplish it. The reader is privy to this process in witnessing the confrontation between the Messiah and the Enemy. When Satan tries to seduce him with the promise of worldly power, in this discussion understood as epic heroism, Jesus is once again dismissive:

> Much ostentation vain of fleshy arm,
> And fragile arms, much instrument of war
> Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
> Before mine eyes thou hast set (3.387-90)

On an immediate level the Messiah rejects military conquest as futile and self-perpetuating, dismissing it as vain, inconsequential political ambition. He also compares martial displays to performance or a court masque: “Much ostentation” and “Before mine

eyes thou hast set" are phrases that suggest theatre and reveal the pomp that reinforces hierarchal social organization in the minds of the spectator. Underlying Jesus's offhand abolishment is a critique of imperial discourse itself, and his curt "soon to nothing brought" asserts the pointlessness in pursuing hegemonic assimilation. His appraisal also targets the emptiness of satanic discourse that fractures signifier and sign, creating a chasm that threatens the absolute obliteration of the subject.

In both of Milton's epics the abuse of language leads to the negation of individual agency, and when the Messiah identifies the existential oblivion that satanic discourse is founded upon, he also signals the work that redemption entails: the Messiah redeems language itself, closing the gap between signifier and sign. Leonard Mustazza notes the appropriately discursive nature of the confrontation between Jesus and Satan, pointing out that just as language was used to bring about the Fall of humankind, it will now be used to bring about reconciliation (203).[68] John Rumrich views Jesus as the unification between human signifier and divine meaning, reminding us that in *Christian Doctrine* Milton asserts the primordial existence of the Son as the Word, or Logos (56). In the unified sign there is the realization of true deity, just as language is redeemed through the unification of signifier and sign.

[66] In comparing the use of language in both endeavours Mustazza recognizes the underlying typology Milton's poems are built upon, a point I will return to.

The Pinnacle

In *Paradise Regained* the unified sign, as represented by the Messiah, triumphs over satanic ambiguity and the rupture between word and thing. Language can once again accommodate the Symbolic Order. The confrontation between humankind's Enemy and its Redeemer escalates to the point where Satan, angry and frustrated, resorts to physical violence to try to assert dominance over Jesus. The tempter seizes the Son of God and sets him atop the highest pinnacle of the Temple, taunting:

> There stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
> Will ask thee skill; I to thy Father's house
> Have brought thee, and highest placed; highest is best;
> Now show thy progeny; if not to stand,
> Cast thyself down; safely if Son of God:
> For it is written, 'He will give command
> Concerning thee to his angels, in their hands
> They shall up lift thee, lest at any time
> Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.'

The Messiah's response is simple:

> To whom thus Jesus: "Also it is written,
> 'Tempt not the Lord thy God,'" he said and stood. (4.551-61)

The Son of God's divinity is revealed while Satan is ignominiously cast down in an instance of intertextual typology. Laskowsky notes the poetic parallel between Jesus's triumph in *Paradise Regained* and Eve's fall in *Paradise Lost*, specifically in how both actions are conveyed through four terse syllables: "she pluck'd, she ate" (*PL* 9.781) is typologically echoed in "he said and stood" (12). The 'movement' of the earlier action is paralleled as well; Eve falls whereas Jesus stands, and in doing so inverts the original usurpation. Goldsmith declares: "Jesus stands by an act of verbal expression" (136). The Messiah's triumphant gesture is not only an act and declaration of obedience, but also the

final revelation of the unified sign. Action, language, and meaning all dramatically unite, leaving the Imaginary mute and ineffectual. Jesus's steadfast posture is the culmination of a movement that began with Eve's original transgression.

The revelation of the Messiah atop the temple in *Paradise Regained* also represents the culmination of the centuries-long development of the fleeing figure in early modern epic poetry and its fulfillment. The motif began with Ariosto's Angelica and was further developed through Spenser's Florimell, and Milton's own depiction of Eve. Each figure moves one step further away from narratives that perpetuate the phalanx (a move Tasso's Erminia was unable to make) and deny alterity and also moves one step closer to the phalanx's antithesis – the ethical relationship with alterity, with Otherness. Each fleeing figure from an earlier epic is a typological anticipation of Milton's Messiah, who ceases to flee, and instead stands.

High atop the temple the Messiah closes the gap between signifier and that which it signifies, revealing himself to be the unified sign. North asserts that Jesus standing atop the pinnacle is the definitive "I am," dispelling the conditional ambiguity and negation that Satan tries to impose upon Jesus's divinity. The episode demonstrates the "absolute congruence between word and action" (281). Goldsmith too asserts: "The near simultaneity of saying and standing recalls the instantaneous bond between language and action characteristic of the original act of speech, that of the Father in Genesis: God said, … and there was" (136). Standing atop the pinnacle is an eloquent refutation of Satan's demand that Jesus test his divinity. Rather than casting himself down (falling) the Messiah stands up, secure in the faith that he will come to no harm in doing so. Jesus

standing asserts the difference between demanding evidence of the Divine Other, and simply accepting it. In accepting the Divine Other the Messiah also reveals it, much to Satan's dismay.

Throughout *Paradise Lost* and in most of *Paradise Regained* Satan is incapable of recognizing the radical alterity of the Divine Other as *Autre*. He makes the grievous mistake of viewing the Father, and then the Son, as small 'a' *autre*, narcissistic reflections of himself (which is an error that Adam repeats in his inability to recognize Eve's autonomy and accept her as something other than a mere extension of himself). That misconception prompted Satan's attempted usurpation of Heaven and motivated his need to develop sophisticated, self-directed rhetoric to sustain his own sense of self-worth (*PL* 1.242-58). In Satan's reasoning the Father is no different from him but simply has better weapons. The Enemy also uses sophistry to relieve himself of responsibility for his own actions (*PL* 1.637-42). The Father deceived him into attempting the throne. Such instances are examples of Satan's fragmentation of language and his ability to create and ever-widen the gap between signifier and sign. He does so to preserve his own ego and insulate himself from acknowledging the radical alterity of the Father and the Symbolic Order. High atop the temple Satan is confronted by the *Autre* and for the first time recognizes the Divine Other. It is a traumatic revelation for the Enemy – his hollow sophistry dissipates and leaves him dumbstruck. As Michael Byron explains, "What has Satan smitten with amazement is the profound depth of his misunderstanding and miscalculation about his own nature and the origin of all things" (112). Satan falls as alienated emptiness is confronted by absolute cohesion and is dispelled. As the

Incarnation of the Word and Theanthropos, the Messiah represents the reunification of the Symbolic with the Real, which is antithetical to the Imaginary:

> It is the mystery of the Son's identity as incarnate Word which 'amazes' Satan, an identity clarified through Jesus' refusal to limit his self-representation to satanic or even verbal expression and through Jesus' resolute dependence on both parts of his identity throughout the poem. (Simpson 181)

Simpson notes the resonance of the ensuing silence, which in this discussion can be understood as the successful move beyond language and the attainment of divine colloquy. In Milton's epics silence is indicative of the presence of God.

To relate this episode to the argument being developed in this study, Milton's Messiah follows the same trajectory as all the fleeing figures before him. In the earlier epics Angelica, Erminia, Florimell, and Eve flee imperial discourse in an attempt to escape from their narrative contexts. For these characters imperial discourse is relentless in its pursuit and continues unabated regardless of what happens to the fleeing figure. Angelica and Florimell marry while the knights that once pursued them continue on their respective campaigns and quests. Erminia surrenders to those who have invaded her homeland, and the archangel Michael explains the inevitability of human subjugation to Eve and her husband. Milton's Messiah, though, calmly extracts himself from his imperial context and waits while epic narrative pursues him in the guise of the Enemy. Satan is the embodiment of imperial discourse and the phalanx, and as such he is driven to assimilate the fleeing figure back into the hegemony that he represents. Essentially, he tries to absorb and consume the *Autre*, the radical alterity that threatens the cohesion of the phalanx. This time, though, the fleeing figure confronts its imperial context/pursuer, which proves to be incapable of withstanding a deliberately subversive narrative.

Patterson suggests Satan is in part defeated by his own generic expectations (206). The Enemy exists within an epic narrative that Jesus flatly rejects. In Milton's brief epic the fleeing figure asserts its alterity, and in so doing reveals the hollowness of imperial discourse.

Satan falls as the Son of God enters into language and closes the gap between signifier and sign. As mentioned above, the discussion of oracles in *Paradise Regained* can function as an allegory for how Satan and Jesus use language and is indicative of how language itself relates to the larger truth of the Symbolic Order. In closing the gap between word and thing, Jesus displaces the satanic "oracles" that inhabit that space, eliminating the multiplicity that creates a closed form soliloquy by reflecting the subject back upon him/herself:

> [The Messiah] will silence the oracles, who derive their inspiration from Satan, and will replace them with internal oracles which dwell only in the hearts of the pious. Hence, language takes on an even newer dimension here, for in addition to its function of conveying truth outwardly, it will also dwell within the faithful. (Mustazza 203)

David Quint also discusses the inward oracle as the reestablishment of divine colloquy ("Disenchanted" 182), which is related to what David Schmitt calls religious interiority (117) and Elizabeth Skerpan-Wheeler and Michael Byron link to revelation (55, 109). The Messiah as living Oracle reestablishes the human relationship with reason and the Symbolic Order of the Father. In the first book of *Paradise Regained* Jesus explains the Incarnation through a comparison with oracles and soothsayers to assert the truth of the Word Incarnate:

> God hath now sent his living oracle
> Into the world, to teach his final will,

> And sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell
> In pious Hearts, an inward oracle
> To all truth requisite for men to know (1.460-64)

In entering into human discourse, the Symbolic Order is once again accessible to the subject, and the Incarnation reinstates the possibility for divine colloquy through the human capacity for reason.

At the end of *Paradise Regained* the narrator asserts the reclamation of paradise and the reconciliation of humankind with the Father:

> A fairer Paradise is founded now
> For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou
> A savior art come down to reinstall (4.613-15)

The potential for humankind to enjoy once again unobstructed, direct access to reason and thus with the Symbolic Order, what I have been calling here "divine colloquy," is the "paradise within" promised at the end of Milton's earlier epic. Language can once again bridge the gap between the subject and the Divine Other. It is a holy communion that overcomes the satanic emptiness in postlapsarian discourse and the multiplicity of meaning that leads to estrangement from the Symbolic Order. Divine colloquy also satisfies the appetence that results from the hollowness of imperial discourse and the alienated, stunted subjectivity that it imposes on the individual. As Comilang explains:

> The Lacanian construct of desire and its figuring of lack as the motivator for the obtainment of the Other again has similarities to what theology maps. However, the 'lack' driving the devout does not find satiation in object after object. Its fulfillment is met by one object, the Divine Other. (86)

In Lacanian terms an immature relationship to alterity, the small 'a' *autre*, is a form of narcissism that leaves the subject in an unfulfilled state of manque, or lack, whereas recognition of the *Autre* and the Symbolic Order has the potential to alleviate alienation

and bring the subject fulfillment. North reminds us that in Christian theology the Gospels and Jesus himself are typologically related to the manna that sustained the Israelites in the desert (274). The Word enters the individual to satisfy her/his hunger and create the promised paradise within. This paradise is open to everyone who is willing to discard the assimilative, closed-form subjectivity of imperial discourse that is encouraged by the phalanx. In Miltonic theology communion with the body of Christ is not restricted to the signifier of the communion host. Communion is not subject to spatial or temporal limitations and includes people from different cultures and from all ages (Fiore 52). In the unification of the Symbolic and the Real, the Incarnation subverts the limited, privileged inclusivity of imperial discourse and its patriarchal systems of social organization. All those who are marginalized by such systems are now included in one that is not limited to time and place, as alterity becomes the condition for a renewed relationship with the Symbolic Order. The fleeing figures who reject their epic contexts have somewhere to flee to and are able to complete the movement away from imperial discourse. The pursuit of imperial narratives that are sustained through absolute assimilation of the subject breaks like an ocean wave hitting a mountain as the fleeing figure reclaims unequivocal autonomy, a triumph that is celebrated by a "fiery Globe / Of Angels" (4.581-82):

> True Image of the Father whether thron'd
> In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
> Conceiving, or remote from Heaven, enshrin'd
> In fleshly Tabernacle, and human form (4.596-99).

Conclusion: "The world was all before them":[69] Epic narratives after Milton

This entire study is based on David Quint's discussion of imperial epic poetry and its relationship to chivalric romance. In *Epic and Empire* Quint suggests imperial epic is linear and the characters in such a narrative are (or should be) focused on the establishment of a unified nation, whereas chivalric romance is non-linear as characters in these types of stories meander through their narrative context preoccupied with personal concerns. Quint identifies Cleopatra from Virgil's *Aeneid* as a chivalric romance character who flees from the imperial contest she was dragged into (*Empire* 39) and suggests Angelica's flight in Ariosto's *Furioso* is modeled after Cleopatra's retreat (*Empire* 35). Building upon Quint's theoretical model, I suggest Virgil's depiction of the Egyptian queen is the prototype for other epic romance characters as well. The fleeing figure is a marginalized character in an imperial epic poem who tries to escape from their narrative context and can be viewed as a literary trope that reoccurs throughout early modern epic romance poetry.

To summarize, the fleeing figure enters early modern epic romance poetry in the form of Angelica, the blonde-haired Saracen princess from Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. The poem commences with the princess unwittingly creating discord among her Christian captors, all of whom regard her as an irresistible object of desire. Angelica is

[69] *PL* 12.646.

further objectified when Charlemagne, fed up with his lieutenants, declares she will be awarded to whoever proves himself to be the greatest knight in the war against the Saracen invaders. After escaping from the Christian camp, Angelica spends most of the poem running away from enamoured knights and persistent threats of sexual violence before exiting the poem altogether. In Ariosto's handling the fleeing figure is a chivalric romance distraction from imperial enterprise and a disruption that impedes the realization of epic closure.

The fleeing figure reappears in Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, where the poet tries to solve the problem of alternative genres and ways of being that the trope represents. Erminia, a displaced Muslim princess caught up in the first Crusade, becomes enamoured with one of the Christian invaders and decides to go to him disguised in the armour of a female Saracen knight. Erminia's chivalric romance escapade fails when she is mistaken for the knight and must fly from enemy soldiers. By the end of the poem Erminia converts to Christianity and is content to join her beloved's household as a servant, thus submitting to the imperial epic narrative that is antithetical to her identity. In the *Liberata*'s reimagining of the trope Tasso "corrects" Ariosto's authorial indiscretion in letting the fleeing figure retain her faith and escape the epic enterprise.

The fleeing figure trope is further developed in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* through Florimell, a beautiful maiden who is pursued by heroes, villains, peasants, and gods as she charges across Faerie Lond for the sake of the young knight she is devoted to. The young knight's aversion to any romantic entanglement alienates Florimell from the patriarchal social system that would offer her protection, leaving her

vulnerable to the unwanted attention of pretty much everyone she encounters. Florimell eventually marries her knight and disappears from the narrative, assimilated into the generational nation-building impetus that the poem celebrates and becoming a part of her husband's household. In Spenser's iteration the fleeing figure is absorbed into the imperial project as autonomy is sacrificed for the relative security of subjugated belonging within a patriarchal marriage.

The fleeing figure reappears in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* in the form of Eve, the first woman. Eve is created to be a companion for the first man in the Garden of Eden, but her husband is unable to recognize her individuality, leading her to feel increasingly confined by the oppressive social system she exists in. In Milton's more subtle handling of the fleeing figure, Eve is not chased by malevolent paramours and does not fear for her personal safety. Rather, "fleeing" is her decision to separate from her husband in an effort to assert and develop autonomy. Despite the lack of physical threat, Eve is nonetheless responding to the same consumptive impulse that is enacted in other poems by representatives of imperial discourse. Her need for independence leads to disastrous consequence: the alienation of humanity from moral certitude and the implementation of oppressive social systems. Milton's Eve sacrifices her resistance to such systems for the sake of reconciliation and the promise of future posterity.

Milton offers us the full typological realization of the fleeing figure in his depiction of Jesus in *Paradise Regained*. The Messiah removes himself from his imperial context and enters the liminal space of the wilderness to escape from the oppressive social and political systems that the marginalized subject exists within. Jesus's victory

high atop the pinnacle represents the triumph of the individual subject over consumptive imperial narratives and concludes the trajectory of the fleeing figure's development in early modern epic romance poetry.

Viewing early modern epic romance poetry in terms of generic lineage (Quint's epic continuity) reveals the fleeing figure trope and its steady development through each successive major poem. Ariosto's Angelica disrupts the epic narrative taking place, and her removal from *Orlando furioso* clears the way for the successful realization of imperialism. In *Gerusalemme liberata* Tasso's Erminia unsuccessfully attempts to bring chivalric romance into her imperial narrative context before eventually submitting to it. Spenser's Florimell suffers unwanted attention throughout *The Faerie Queene* until she is absorbed into its imperial enterprise through matrimony. In *Paradise Lost* what should be an idyllic companionate marriage for Milton's Eve is soured by her husband's inability to recognize her as an individual, but she must abandon resistance to absorptive institutions for the sake of reconciliation. Milton's Jesus walks away from all the social systems that infringe upon the subject in *Paradise Regained*, overcoming imperial discourse to reclaim individual autonomy. Each iteration of the trope grows a little closer to attaining freedom from oppressive social contexts, until the fleeing figure finally stops fleeing and stands instead, leaving imperial discourse to collapses into oblivion.

There have been attempts at epic poems since Milton, of course, but works like Francisco Xavier de Menezes's *Henriqueida* (1792), Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock's *Der Messias* (1748-1773), and Robert Southey's *Roderick, the Last of the Goths* (1814) were unable to attain the lasting cultural impact that the early modern heroic poems have

achieved. The three poems that come closest are Voltaire's *La Henriade* (1726), William Morris's *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), and Alfred Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (1859-1885). Although Morris's and Tennyson's narrative poems are often referred to as heroic epics, they have more in common with the romance genre. Voltaire's poem about Henry IV is intended to be an epic celebrating the French king, but history remembers its subject as more of a capable politician than a traditional epic hero. Voltaire's other attempt at a heroic poem, *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (begun in 1730), is a mock epic that was never finished. Epic poetry limped along after Milton's Messiah dismissed heroic narratives, but the genre has proven to be unable to reach the lofty heights it once did.

This study identifies the fleeing figure in early modern epic romance poetry as a site of resistance against imperial discourse and explores how its development eventually undermines the epic genre. The retreat of marginalized, chivalric romance characters from their epic narrative contexts can be understood as a rejection of consumptive narratives that are hostile to the individual subject. The literary conventions from chivalric romance that made their way into early modern heroic poetry create tension within their narratives that destabilizes the genre. That tension is generated by the conflict between the values and objectives that the epic and romance genres represent. Epic poetry celebrates the establishment of a monolithic hierarchical nation, whereas romance narratives are oriented around the individual. This state versus subject binary led to the gendering of the genres in the earlier Italian poems that persisted in the later English works. Epic is forwarded as masculine, its heroes being predominantly male representatives of imperialism. Endeavours that are more at home in chivalric romance

narratives and do not further imperialism are viewed as feminine by its proponents. Such divisive gendering is the underlying cause of tension between the epic and chivalric romance genres. This tension is negotiated and eventually resolved throughout the development of early modern heroic poetry until the limitations of the epic/romance polarity are finally dismissed in Milton's brief epic. Building upon Quint's theory of epic continuity, in which each major heroic poem is seen as expanding upon its immediate predecessor, this research identifies and traces the generic mediation of imperial epic and chivalric romance through early modern heroic poetry. As each successive poem moves further away from polarizing gender constructs, the evolving feminist critique of heroic narratives that movement represents leads to the absolute rejection of imperial discourse.

This research is far from comprehensive and does leave many questions unanswered. One of the literary/critical concerns it points towards is the significance of other embedded genres within epic poetry, such as pastoral and georgic. There are questions concerning gardens within imperial epic as generative and feminine, as well as the hostility that proponents of imperialism bring to such spaces. Other avenues of investigation could explore what narratives accommodate the autonomous subject and further the conditions that are conducive to her/his development. Larger, more abstract questions, such as how alterity is or can be enacted within an imperial context, also arise. The most urgent question that this research raises for me is how imperial culture situates the female body as a contested space. The most uncomfortable insight this study offers may be how the womb has been a battleground throughout human history, and how the unending war over it has led to the perpetual siege of female agency.

I believe that literature provides us with a space to think about things as a culture and share the stories that define us. Through literature we are able to reflect upon our history and our values, as well as where our narratives may be taking us. The fleeing figure trope is an example of a collective consideration of the individual's relationship with the imperial narratives that we are asked to participate in and make sacrifices for. The steady move away from imperial discourse and the corresponding ascent of the individual mark a shift in cultural values and a willingness to question those who claim power at the expense of those who are marginalized by the narratives we inherit.

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