

THE MEDIATION OF PARADOX: PARADISE LOST AS MYTH
AND EVE AS MYTHIC ARCHETYPE

A Thesis

Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of English
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Judy Louise Wolfe

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Although John Milton would not have called Paradise Lost myth, he realized that myths convey essential truths which transcend the specific cultural manifestations through which such truths are revealed. As a poem based on the Judeo-Christian account of creation, Paradise Lost exhibits motifs and functions common to creation myths, the narrative accounts which express the beliefs of a culture concerning the creation of the universe and the basis of cosmic and human existence. As myth, Paradise Lost functions to answer ontological questions concerning the nature of existence and on a human level to explain why man lives as he does rather than as he was originally created. Yet, Paradise Lost involves questions that are paradoxical and unanswerable by normal means of explanation, and to answer these questions Paradise Lost functions as myth to mediate or resolve the paradoxical conflicts by demonstrating that the opposing halves of the paradoxes are complementary rather than antithetical.

In Paradise Lost paradox is manifested on two levels. On the cosmic level, paradox arises from the co-existence of good and evil in a universe created by a God that is totally good. On the human level, paradox is inherent in the combination of life and death in man's fallen mode of existence, mortal life.

Eve, in Paradise Lost, as a human manifestation of the Archetypal Female Principle, a three-fold archetype composed of two opposing parts, the

Good Mother and the Terrible Mother, and a third part, the Great Mother, in which the two opposing parts are combined and their opposition resolved, is both the source of the human level of paradox and the source of its resolution. Eve's archetypal nature in Paradise Lost is enhanced by Milton's use of allusions to characters from classical mythology who represent various phases of the Female Archetype in his presentation of Eve.

The paradox of life and death in Paradise Lost arises from Eve's correspondence to the two opposing parts of the Female Archetype. The un-fallen Eve, as the Good Mother, is the source of un-fallen fertility. In the Fall, however, Eve becomes the Terrible Mother, the means by which mortality enters man's mode of existence. Yet, in her reconciliation with God and Adam and in conjunction with Mary, the second Eve, Eve becomes the Great Mother, the source of the resolution of paradox.

On a physical level, Eve's seed provides the means by which the human race will be continued. On a spiritual level, through Mary, the second Eve, Eve's womb becomes the eventual source of Christ, through whom death is transformed from the end of life into a means by which man can attain immortal life. Christ, born of the womb of Mary, the second Eve, provides an essential step in God's plan to allow man to overcome death and attain immortal life.

Milton's Paradise Lost, in its embodiment of myth and in its incorporation of mythic archetypes, transcends its cultural relevance as a

narrative poem based on the Judeo-Christian account of creation and becomes universal in its application to all humanity. As an expression of human truth, Paradise Lost explains and resolves the paradox inherent in man's mortal mode of existence and, through Eve's archetypal nature, provides for man the hope of renewal and rebirth, a means for overcoming the death implicit in mortal life.

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CHAPTER I

A MYTHIC APPROACH TO PARADISE LOST

In the course of three centuries, John Milton's Paradise Lost has been examined and evaluated from many critical perspectives; yet, primarily, criticism has been preoccupied with the ideas and themes expressed in the poem. Thematic studies, most of which have stressed the theological content of Paradise Lost and regarded the epic as a statement of Protestant Christian belief,¹ have concentrated on Milton's narrative treatment of such concepts as free will, God's omnipotence, the composition of the Trinity, Satan's rebellion, the relationship of Adam and Eve, God's mode of creation, and the causes and consequences of the Fall of Man.

A relatively new approach to Milton's epic is to consider it as myth, as have such critics as Maude Bodkin, Northrop Frye, Arnold Stein, Isabel MacCaffrey, and Wayne Shumaker.²

¹ Although Milton's epic reflects Christian belief, it does not conform totally to orthodox Christian dogma, particularly in its presentation of the Trinity.

² The application of the term "myth" in literary criticism is less precise and differs somewhat from the usage of the term "myth" in a technical sense by mythologists. The above critics who have examined Paradise Lost as myth vary in the technical accuracy with which they apply the term. Wayne Shumaker demonstrates the greatest familiarity with the technical consideration of myth. In this thesis, the term "myth" in its application to

Although approaching Paradise Lost as myth employs relatively new critical methods, which came into being only with twentieth-century advances in psychology and anthropology, as early as 1934 Maude Bodkin devoted a section of her Archetypal Patterns in Poetry to a study of the mythic nature of Paradise Lost and Eve as a manifestation of archetypal woman.³ Maude Bodkin's study was followed in 1953 by sections in Arnold Stein's Answerable Style,⁴ in 1957 by a section in Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism,⁵ in 1959 by Isabel MacCaffrey's Paradise Lost as "Myth",⁶ in 1965 by an essay in Northrop Frye's The Return of Eden,⁷ and in 1967

Paradise Lost is not used in its primary technical sense to mean an unsophisticated narrative produced by a primitive culture. Paradise Lost represents a later stage of myth which utilizes the content and structure derived from myth in its primary stage, and through the individual conscious creativity of the poet forges the raw mythic substance into the aesthetic form of epic poetry. Paradise Lost might be called a mythic poem. Yet, because the story it relates is myth and because it incorporates mythic elements into the poetic rendering of its story, Paradise Lost is at once myth and poetry, a blending of poetry and myth in which the features of neither are compromised although combined.

³ Maude Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 153-170.

⁴ Arnold Stein, Answerable Style: Essays on Paradise Lost (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1953), pp. 52-162.

⁵ Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 210-218.

⁶ Isabel G. MacCaffrey, Paradise Lost as "Myth" (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

⁷ Northrop Frye, The Return of Eden: Five Essays on Milton's Epics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 3-31.

by another essay by Northrop Frye entitled "The Revelation to Eve,"⁸ and by Wayne Shumaker's Unpremeditated Verse.⁹ Although these scholars and critics have provided critical precedent for studying Paradise Lost as myth and Eve as mythic archetype, their scholarship has concentrated on certain specific aspects of myth in Paradise Lost.

In the Anatomy of Criticism, Northrop Frye explored the relationship between myth and literary criticism and asserted the validity of the application of the methods of literary criticism in examining Biblical stories as mythic literature without special consideration for their canonical status.¹⁰ Similarly, in The Return of Eden, Frye stated: "When a literary critic says that the story of the fall of man is myth, he is not making any statement about the truth of its content, merely that it is a certain kind of story. . . . The story of Paradise Lost is a myth in the sense that the action . . . is provided by a divine being. . . ." ¹¹

Isabel MacCaffrey's Paradise Lost as "Myth," the first full-length critical study devoted to the mythic nature of Paradise Lost, provided

⁸ Northrop Frye, "The Revelation to Eve," in Paradise Lost: A Tercentenary Tribute, ed. Balachandra Rajan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 18-47.

⁹ Wayne Shumaker, Unpremeditated Verse: Feeling and Perception in Paradise Lost (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

¹⁰ Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 54.

¹¹ Frye, The Return of Eden, p. 29.

valuable insight into Milton's attitude toward myth. Mrs. MacCaffrey demonstrated that Milton's use of figures from classical mythology in creating his images was based on the seventeenth-century view that the pagan myths prefigured the truth of Christianity. Mrs. MacCaffrey examined the mythic qualities of Milton's basic structural pattern, his use of language, and his imagery. She linked Paradise Lost with "the threefold mythical scheme of loss, quest, and return."¹² In the Christian myth of Paradise Lost, the loss is loss of innocence, the quest is man's life-long desire to be reunited with the Divine, and the return is man's reunion with God through immortal life, the salvation promised by Christ.

In Answerable Style, Arnold Stein discussed the mythic nature of Paradise Lost and Milton's presentation of archetypes in depicting the paradisial state. Stein called attention to Milton's use of mythic allusions in describing Eden and presenting Eden as an archetype of Paradise. "Milton's Garden represents," Stein contends, "an archetypal state that can be known only through the metaphorical creation of an image; therefore, his Garden is an image of the archetype, a symbolic image in a dramatic situation that helps create the image and protect it . . . from the naive and sentimental by consciously maintaining the ultimate impossibility of the image of the real archetype."¹³

¹² MacCaffrey, p. 207.

¹³ Stein, pp. 62-63.

Wayne Shumaker's Unpremeditated Verse has provided the most detailed, technically accurate, and perhaps the most valuable examination of Paradise Lost as myth. Shumaker, who demonstrated expertise in applying technical concepts of myth to Paradise Lost and in examining the mythic mode of consciousness as the basis of much of Milton's imagery, began his analysis with a general discussion of Paradise Lost as myth, in which he explained that the variety of reader responses to Paradise Lost results from its psychological appeal as myth. Paradise Lost, Shumaker explained, produces its effect as a mythic poem through its unique manner of combining rational presentation with mythic archetypes and imagery based on mythic modes of perceiving.

In Unpremeditated Verse, which consists primarily of a detailed analysis of the sensory basis of Milton's imagery, Shumaker discussed in detail the "affective overtones" of Milton's images, whereby Milton's images appear to be visual but really convey qualities associated with the objects described, rather than external appearance.¹⁴ Shumaker also explained the animistic quality of Milton's images, whereby inanimate objects are attributed with volition, feeling, thought, or mood, even to the extent that "objects qua objects are shown acting with self-generating energy."¹⁵

¹⁴

See also MacCaffrey, p. 102.

¹⁵

Shumaker, p. 79.

Shumaker discussed Milton's use of synecdoche and metonymy, poetic extensions of polyonymy and homonymy, which are basic to the mythic mode of consciousness, as well as his visual, sound, and somatic images.

Shumaker found that Milton's visual images reflect his concern with mythic archetype, for in describing the unfallen and individually undifferentiated world of Paradise Lost, Milton's "descriptive method . . . does not aim at acquainting the reader with precise details of space and shape and size and peculiarity. . . . Milton is intent on . . . the archetype, rather than on variations from it."¹⁶ In discussing the sound images in Paradise Lost Shumaker noted the mythic chanting tone of the narrative voice as well as Milton's effort to fit the sound of the verse to his description. Milton, Shumaker explained, "responds to the acoustic quality of his own words," and his images "have the character rather of acoustic metaphor than of simple mellifluence or onomatopoeic imitation."¹⁷ What Shumaker referred to as Milton's somatic perception is the basis of the imagery which acknowledges physical manifestations of "states of consciousness." Paradise Lost contains many such images, characteristic of mythic perception, in which "the realms of the mental and of the physical interpenetrate. . . ."¹⁸

¹⁶ Shumaker, p. 115.

¹⁷ Shumaker, p. 165.

¹⁸ Shumaker, p. 193.

Wayne Shumaker's treatment of Paradise Lost as a "tell-me-why" story acknowledges the aetiological nature of the poem, and his recognition of certain "mysteries" which cannot be rationalized implies the need for Paradise Lost as a myth to mediate these mysteries or paradoxes.¹⁹ The focus in Unpremeditated Verse, however, is on the basis and specific functions of Milton's imagery, rather than on the function of myth to explain man's mode of being in the world or to mediate the mysteries or paradoxes within the poem as a whole.

Maude Bodkin's Archetypal Patterns in Poetry, Northrop Frye's "The Revelation to Eve," and Isabel MacCaffrey's Paradise Lost as "Myth" provide examinations of Eve as a mythic archetype. In Archetypal Patterns in Poetry, Maude Bodkin applied Carl Jung's concept of universal archetypes to poetic instances to demonstrate that such archetypes occur and recur in literary works. She explained that man returns over and over to universal themes and archetypes, and successively rediscovers and embodies them in literary forms which reflect his cultural milieu. In her study of Eve as archetypal woman, Maude Bodkin linked the unfallen Eve with Proserpine,²⁰ a manifestation of the archetype of feminine innocence

¹⁹ Shumaker, pp. 4, 46.

²⁰ Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities, ed. Harry Thurston Peck (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1962), p. 1204, lists "Persephone" as the Greek and "Proserpina" as the Roman spellings

violated, and described the fallen Eve as an archetypal temptress. "Paradise Lost . . . presents," she says, "the figure of Eve in several different aspects having affinity with different type-figures powerful and deep-seated in men's minds. Among these, one is the Proserpine-figure of virginal youth, lovely in its doomed transience."²¹ In the Fall, Eve "appears in the type-character of temptress, betraying man, . . . through her charm, and his need. . . ."²²

Similarly, Isabel MacCaffrey in Paradise Lost as "Myth" noted Milton's allusions to mythical archetypes in portraying Eve, such as the "reference to Ceres, with its submerged allusion to Eve in Proserpina, pointing forward both to the Ceres/Eve analogy (ix.395-96), and to the image of Eve as 'fairest unsupported Flour' (ix.432),"²³ and the comparison of Eve's loveliness and goddess-like demeanor as surpassing that of Delia and Wood Nymph.²⁴

In his essay "The Revelation to Eve," Northrop Frye stressed Eve's link with the natural universe as a mother goddess, in which she shares

of the goddess' name. Paradise Lost in John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957) used in the preparation of this thesis, exhibits varied spellings, as in IV 269, "Proserpin," and in IX 396, "Proserpina." Spellings in critical references vary as well.

²¹ Bodkin, p. 166.

²² Bodkin, p. 169.

²³ MacCaffrey, p. 121.

²⁴ MacCaffrey, p. 122.

attributes with other archetypal goddesses such as Venus, Proserpina, and Amalthea. Frye analyzed Eve as a female archetype, a mother figure, in whom are embodied fecundity, terror, and salvation as a source of life, death, and the promise of eternal life. In relating Eve to the archetypal mother-figure, Frye clarified the importance of Eve's multiple and contradictory attributes and related these attributes to her thematic significance in Paradise Lost. Her thematic significance as an archetype, Frye explained, is manifested in her relationship to the natural universe as a mother-goddess, in her relationship to Adam, her lover/victim, and in her relationship to all mankind, as at once a potential source of life, death, and the promise of eternal life. Frye also called attention to the significance of the relationship between Eve and Mary as the second Eve, whereby the prophetic revelation to Eve is fulfilled.²⁵

Previous studies have established the validity of approaching Paradise Lost as myth and have examined both the mythic features of Paradise Lost and the archetypal nature of Eve; however, these studies, in their concentration on specific elements of myth and mythical archetypes in Paradise Lost, have neglected to draw conclusions concerning the functions of myth and mythic archetypes in Paradise Lost. The present study will demonstrate that myth and Eve as mythic archetype explain man's mortal

mode of existence and mediate or resolve paradoxes arising from the explanation.

Although a study of Paradise Lost as myth and Eve as mythic archetype is concerned with many of the same concepts and questions which have been considered in traditional analyses of theme, a mythic approach to Paradise Lost is ultimately concerned with answering questions which arise in Paradise Lost involving paradoxes such as why evil exists in a world created by a good God and why man was created immortal, made subject to death, and given immortality again. In approaching Paradise Lost as myth, these questions are examined from a mythic and intuitive rather than from an intellectual, logical, or theological point of view. Instead of rehearsing the answers supplied by three centuries of criticism or employing religious dogma to explain the paradoxes and logical conflicts in the poem, a mythic approach to Paradise Lost functions to explain through the perspective of myth the puzzling questions and resolve the logical conflicts or paradoxes which are basic to Milton's Paradise Lost and inherent in the story of the creation and the Fall of man. Although theology provides a valid approach to the explanation of the paradoxes of Paradise Lost, a theological approach is limited to the poem's relevance to Judeo-Christian culture. A mythic approach, however, demonstrates the relevance of Paradise Lost for all mankind.

A study of Paradise Lost as myth and Eve as mythic archetype requires

a method of examination which differs from the more traditional methods of literary criticism frequently used in analyzing Paradise Lost. Psychology and cultural anthropology, rather than theology, and traditional methods of thematic analysis furnish the tools for this approach to literary criticism. Approaching Paradise Lost as myth involves following what has become a common practice in contemporary literary criticism, the utilization of techniques and principles from disciplines such as psychology and anthropology in the study of literature. The application of psychology to mythic literature reveals the psychological bases of myth and archetypes, recurring phenomena by which man embodies manifestations from the human unconsciousness in images.²⁶ The application of anthropology to mythic literature reveals the fact that, through myth, man places the archetypal images into a particular cultural context and allows the myth and its archetypes to function sociologically to explain the basis of human and cultural existence.²⁷

Two functions of myth, aetiology and the mediation of paradox, are revealed by the application of anthropological concepts to myth and mythic

²⁶ C. G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, Vol. 9, Part 1, The Collected Works, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1959), pp. 4-5.

²⁷ Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 6; Bronislaw Malinowski, Myth in Primitive Psychology (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1926), p. 19.

literature.²⁸ Myths arise from man's sensing unconscious and preternatural power in objects or phenomena and are manifested through his tendency to embody this mode of consciousness in narratives, in an instinctive effort to give form to his experience of the phenomena through himself.²⁹ Although myths arise from psychological phenomena, myths result in sociological phenomena that can be explained by anthropological theory.

Anthropology reveals how myths perform the two related functions of aetiology and the mediation of paradox. On a sociological level, myths explain the basis of man's existence, both as a finite human being and as a member of society. Myths answer questions about how the universe came to exist, how man was initially created, and how man came to exist in his present mode of being, both as mortal man and as a member of a particular cultural unit. Yet, on a metaphysical level, the mythic explanation of how man came to exist in his present state frequently reflects contradictory elements at the basis of life itself which, within the myth, are

²⁸ Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," Journal of American Folklore, 68 (1955), rpt. in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed. Myth: A Symposium. Bibliographical and special series of The American Folklore Society, 5 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 65; Eliade, p. 11 and Malinowski, p. 19.

²⁹ Ernst Cassirer, Mythical Thought, Vol. 2, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), pp. 5-15; Richard Chase, Quest for Myth (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), pp. 78-81.

presented in the form of paradoxes. Although the paradoxes inherent in human existence defy rational explanation, they can be mediated or resolved intuitively through the narrative of the myth. Such mediation shows that the paradox is only seemingly self-contradictory and that the two halves of the paradox are compatible and can be combined into a unity. Thus, in Paradise Lost the fundamental paradox of good and evil is mediated by demonstrating that God in the Christian myth brings good out of evil. The means of the mediation of the paradox of good and evil is Christ, for through Christ God brings good out of evil, and thus transforms apparent evil into ultimate good. Similarly, on the human level of myth in Paradise Lost, the charter myth, that is, the portion of myth concerned with changes in man's state of being, mediates the human paradox of life and death. God created man to live; yet, man, tempted by woman, fell, and became subject to death.

Ironically, the human paradox of life and death, both arises from and is mediated by Eve's archetypal nature in Paradise Lost. Eve, in Paradise Lost, corresponds to a phase of the Archetypal Female Principle, a three-fold archetype which is divided into the Good Mother, the source of life, the Terrible Mother, the source of death, and the Great Mother, in whom are combined and resolved the apparently irreconcilable opposites of life and death.³⁰ In the unfolding of the myth of Paradise Lost, Eve successively

³⁰ Erich Neumann, The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, 1955), p. 21.

embodies each phase of the archetype until, as the Great Mother in conjunction with Mary, the second Eve, the cosmic and human levels of mythic mediation are united, as woman, the source of mortal life, becomes the source of Christ, the means by which mortal man regains eternal life.

In subsequent chapters of this thesis, Paradise Lost will be examined as a creation myth which exhibits mythic motifs. Objections to the consideration of Paradise Lost as myth will be examined in an effort to justify the consideration of Paradise Lost as myth. The functions of myth and Eve as mythic archetype in Paradise Lost will be examined and described in detail, and Eve's function as mythic archetype will be shown to parallel and complement the function of myth in Paradise Lost.

CHAPTER II

PARADISE LOST AS MYTH

Paradise Lost as a Creation Myth

Because it tells the story of the origin of man and the universe, Paradise Lost is a creation myth. Creation myths, narrative accounts of the creation of man and the universe, which reflect the beliefs of a culture about its creation and about the basis of its existence, are acknowledged by mythologists to occur as virtually universal phenomena.¹ Mythologist Mircea Eliade, in Myth and Reality, describes myth in terms of the creation myth:

Myth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial Time, the fabled time of the 'beginnings.' In other words, myth tells how, through the deeds of Supernatural Beings, a reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, the Cosmos, or only a fragment of reality. . . . Myth, then, is always an account of a 'creation'; it relates how something was produced, began to be.²

Basically, creation myths are of two complementary types:

¹ Mircea Eliade, "The Yearning for Paradise in Primitive Tradition," Diogenes, No. 7 (Summer 1953), rpt. in Daedalus, 88 (Spring 1959), 255; Clyde Kluckhohn, "Recurrent Themes in Myths and Mythmaking," Daedalus, 88 (Spring 1959), 268-269; and Wayne Shumaker, Unpremeditated Verse: Feeling and Perception in Paradise Lost (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 12-15.

² Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 5-6.

cosmogonic myths, which tell of the beginning of the existence of the universe, and origin myths, which tell of the origin of man and his world.

Charter myths, a subdivision of origin myths, tell how man's world was changed from its initial state of being and has come to be as man knows it.³ Paradise Lost, in relating the Judeo-Christian account of God's creation of the universe, God's creation of man, and the Fall of man, contains a cosmogonic myth, an origin myth, and a charter myth. As a cosmogonic myth, Paradise Lost tells how existence began; as an origin myth it tells how man and his environment were created; as a charter myth, it tells how human existence came to be as it is, why man no longer lives in paradise and why man is mortal.

Creation myths exhibit homogeneity and share regular features known as mythic motifs. Many creation myths are based on a paradise motif. Mircea Eliade divides myths which present the initial mode of creation as a paradisiacal state into two types: "first, those concerning the primordial close proximity between Heaven and Earth; and second, those referring to an actual means of communication between Heaven and Earth."⁴ Similarly, creation myths exhibit motifs arising from two primary "types

³ Eliade, Myth and Reality, p. 21; Bronislaw Malinowski, Myth in Primitive Psychology (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1926), p. 89.

⁴ Eliade, "The Yearning for Paradise," p. 255.

of mythic plot: the plot of innocence and the plot of cleverness. . . ."⁵

Creation myths usually contain a Father-creator, an androgynous first human, a man and a woman derived from the androgynous first human, an association between the woman and earthly fertility, and a paradisaical garden, which contains a tree of unusual power.⁶ Creation myths present first man as blessed, spontaneous, free, able to communicate with Heaven, able to talk with animals, and able to travel between Heaven and Earth.⁷ Joseph Campbell describes a basic motif of creation myths as an age of innocence interrupted by a "'mythological event' par excellence, which brought to an end its timeless way of being and effected a transformation of all things. Whereupon death and sex came into the world as the basic correlates of temporality."⁸ Although these motifs appear in different combinations and variations in myths of different cultures, man is consistently portrayed as having lost the initial powers and privileges of his creation as the "consequence of a primordial event,"⁹ a fall which "may

⁵ Jerome S. Bruner, "Myth and Identity," Daedalus, 88 (Spring 1959), 353.

⁶ Shumaker, p. 14.

⁷ Eliade, "The Yearning for Paradise," pp. 255-256, 259.

⁸ Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology (New York: The Viking Press, 1959), p. 182. It might be noted that Milton portrays the angels as sexless.

⁹ Eliade, "The Yearning for Paradise," p. 256.

be interpreted equally well by an ontological mutation in his own state as by a cosmic rupture."¹⁰ Thus, creation myths portray man as suffering a loss resulting from a transgression, often presented as a theft of some forbidden object, by which man is reduced from his initial state of creation, and his mode of being in the world is permanently worsened.¹¹

Paradise Lost, which combines the cosmogonic, origin, and charter phases of creation myth, exhibits the basic mythic motifs common to creation myths.¹² As a creation myth based on a paradise motif, Paradise Lost includes remnants of the motif of a physical connection between Heaven and Earth in the golden chain by which Earth is suspended from Heaven (III. 1005), in Jacob's ladder,

The Stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw
Angels ascending and descending, bands
Of Guardians bright,
.
Each Stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to Heav'n sometimes
Viewless,
(III. 510-518)¹³

¹⁰ Eliade, "The Yearning for Paradise," p. 256.

¹¹ Shumaker, pp. 14-15.

¹² See Stith Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books and Local Legends, rev. ed., vols. 1-4 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), especially numbers A401.1, A652, A878, A878.3.1, A1234.1, A1234.1.1, A1275.1, A1331.1, B217.8, C621, C621.1, C937, C937.1, D551.1.1, and J165.

¹³ Quotations from Milton's Paradise Lost used in this thesis are from John Milton: The Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957).

and in Uriel's traveling between Heaven and Earth on a sunbeam (IV.555-556). Paradise Lost, however, by presenting Raphael and Michael as messengers of God who warn and instruct Adam and Eve, more clearly exemplifies the type of paradise myth which includes a direct means of communication between Heaven and Earth.¹⁴ Paradise Lost exhibits motifs arising from both types of mythic plots. Satan's rebellion and scheming to ruin God's creation by effecting the Fall of man exemplify, although foiled, the plot of cleverness. Within the human sphere, the actions of Adam and Eve, in their initial state of creation, typify the plot of innocence. Paradise Lost presents God as the Father-creator; Adam, as the androgynous first human;¹⁵ Eve, derived from Adam as linked with earthly fertility; Eden, as the paradisiacal garden; and the Tree of Knowledge, as the tree of unusual power. Adam, as the masculine progenitor of the human race, corresponds to other patriarchal archetypes, and Eve, as the feminine source of life, linked with images of earthly fecundity, corresponds to other female and mother archetypes. Adam and Eve are presented in Paradise Lost as blessed by God, created free and spontaneous, able to communicate with the animals (VIII.373), with Raphael, who promises that if

¹⁴ See John R. Knott, Jr., "The Visit of Raphael: Paradise Lost, Book V," Philological Quarterly 47 (1968), 37, who notes Biblical and hexameral precedents for communication between Heaven and Earth.

¹⁵ Although Adam is not physically androgynous, he is androgynous in the sense that Eve is created out of him.

"body up to spirit work" (V.478), they may move up to Heaven, and with Michael, who reveals to them God's future plans for fallen man. Adam and Eve suffer a great loss, resulting from their transgression of God's will by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, and by their Fall they are reduced, changed from potentially immortal beings created in perfect harmony with all the other parts of the universe, to mortal beings who must constantly strive and toil and who must experience pain and death.

Justification of the Consideration of

Paradise Lost as Myth

Paradise Lost, as a narrative account of the creation of man and the universe which exhibits creation myth motifs, can validly be called a creation myth. Yet, the term "myth," because it is frequently associated with primitive, irrational, and pre-literate thought, carries negative connotations. Thus, its application to Paradise Lost must be justified.¹⁶

Objections to the designation of Paradise Lost as myth stem from

¹⁶ See Lord Raglan, "Myth and Ritual," Journal of American Folklore, 68 (1955), rpt. in Thomas A. Sebeok, ed., Myth: A Symposium. Bibliographical and special series of the American Folklore Society, 5 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 76-77; cited hereafter as Sebeok, ed. Myth: A Symposium. See also E. O. James, Christian Myth and Ritual, New York: The World Publishing Company, 1965), p.viii; and Shumaker, p. 7-8. Although any objections can be ignored or disposed of by stating that scholars have long regarded the Judeo-Christian account of creation a myth, and that considerations of literature as myth have become common, such a statement acknowledges as valid the assumption that myths are inherently false, and inferior to literary art.

two common assumptions about myths: myths are considered inferior to poetic art and myths are considered inherently false. Because of its association with the irrational, myth is frequently used as a synonym of untruth. Because of its association with pre-literate primitives, myth is regarded as the uncultured product of ignorance. The pejorative connotations associated with myth have both resulted from and have in turn perpetuated the misunderstanding, prejudice, and patronizing condescension that surrounds the term "myth."

The attitude of intolerance held by the Christian tradition toward "the pagan religious scriptures" has been largely responsible for the connotation of myths in western civilization as "discredited and incredible narratives."¹⁷ Myths were regarded by the Christian tradition as dangerous, and openly suppressed as false accounts which rivaled true Christian beliefs. Thus, as a term to describe ideas, myth acquired the connotation of falsity and was frequently used as the hyperbole of untruth. According to some mythologists, explains Henry Murray, "the linkage of 'myth' . . . with 'falsehood,' as well as the linkage of 'gospel' with 'truth,' was hammered in by generations of Christian writers for reasons that are quite obvious. In short, 'myth' became a prejudicial term to be applied to the

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David Bidney, "Myth, Symbolism, and Truth," in Sebeok, ed., Myth: A Symposium, p. 1.

beliefs of men with whom we disagree, never to our own beliefs."¹⁸

In their association with falsity, myths have also been ridiculed as ignorant, naive explanations of natural phenomena. Writers such as the French scholar Fontenelle regarded the myths as ignorant or naive philosophy,¹⁹ emanating from primitive man's need to explain natural phenomena. Voltaire, in his Dictionnaire Philosophique and his Essai sur les Moeurs, compared Christian and pagan myths in an attempt to discredit Christianity. "When he speculates on the mythopoeic psychology, Voltaire arrives," Richard Chase comments, "at the common opinion of materialists and rationalists . . . : that myth and religion originate in terror at the overpowering operations of nature. . . ."²⁰

Philologists also contributed to the pejorative connotations of myth by introducing the theory that myth was a "disease of language." This attitude toward myth was dominated and shaped by Max Müller's philological theory of the origin of myth.²¹ For Müller, philology was the key to

¹⁸ Henry A. Murray, "Introduction to the Issue 'Myth and Myth-making,'" Daedalus, 88 (Spring 1959), 218.

¹⁹ Harry Levin, "Some Meanings of Myth," Daedalus, 88 (Spring 1959), 226.

²⁰ Richard Chase, Quest for Myth (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), pp. 13-14.

²¹ Richard M. Dorson, "The Eclipse of Solar Mythology," in Sebeok, ed., Myth: A Symposium, pp. 16-27.

mythology, and mythology was "'the dark shadow which language throws upon thought. . . .'"²² Müller theorized that after the dispersal of the Indo-European groups, over a long period of time, although mythical proverbs and metaphorical phrases remained in the languages, their meanings were forgotten and stories were introduced to explain their meanings. According to Müller's theory, "[f]rom this 'disease of language' myths were born."²³

Although orthodox Christianity regarded the myths as worthless and dangerous, in Milton's century the interest of Renaissance humanists in Greek culture and myths was tolerated so long as such interests were not allowed to compete with Christianity. Milton's contemporaries viewed the myths ambivalently as repositories of incipient, although distorted, philosophical truth. Although they were not encouraged by orthodox Christianity, writers such as Sir Francis Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, Giles Fletcher, Henry Reynolds, and Sylvester in his translation of DuBartas, interpreted the myths as allegorical presentations of Christian truth.²⁴

²² Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, trans. Susanne K. Langer (New York: Dover, 1946), p. 5, quoting Max Müller, "The Philosophy of Mythology," appended to Introduction to the Science of Religion (London, 1873), pp. 353-355.

²³ Dorson, pp. 19-20.

²⁴ Isabel Gamble MacCaffrey, Paradise Lost as "Myth" (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959); pp. 11-13.

Similarly, Milton's use of classical mythology in creating images to describe the Judeo-Christian concept of the prelapsarian world reflects his acceptance of the ambivalent seventeenth-century attitude that classical mythology prefigured, although in a distorted manner, Christian truth.²⁵

Basic to the derogatory connotations of myth as various degrees and manifestations of untruth is the association of myth with the primitive and irrational mentality. Because myths have been regarded as naive, false ideas perpetuated in ignorance upon the unsuspecting and gullible, they have not been tolerated in the history of western civilization except in the emasculated forms of "primitive" and classical mythology, viewed by western culture with patronizing condescension. Thus, to label a poem based on Christian belief as myth is objectionable to those who understand myth only in its popular sense and who regard calling Paradise Lost myth tantamount to calling Christianity a naive deception and its adherents ignorant.

Mythologists have attempted to eradicate the negative connotations and misconceptions surrounding mythology, particularly those which link myth with falsity and irrationality. Some mythologists regard the truth of myth as innate in its validity as psychological phenomena. Ernst Cassirer regards myth, the recreation in the mind of perceptual reality stimulated by objective reality, as true in the sense that all experienced phenomena

²⁵ Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, new rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1963), pp. 287-288.

are true.²⁶ Similarly, Eric Dardel describes myth as a "'reaction to reality'" initiated by the "'pang" which comes upon man in the midst of things."²⁷ The question of the relationship of myth to truth and falsity ultimately becomes the question of why, if myths are either true or false, man has created a special designation for them. The term myth, however, does not signify truth or falsity, but, rather an attitude of belief that fluctuates with time. From the point of view of the culture in which a myth is born and lives, the myth "is taken with religious seriousness, either as historic fact or as a 'mystic' truth."²⁸ Only from the point of view of an alien culture with different standards of truth, are such narratives labeled as myths.

Belief or disbelief rather than truth or falsity determines whether a narrative is to be called a myth. "Tales are not taken seriously by natives because they are myths; they are evaluated by us as myths because they are, or were, taken seriously by those who recount them."²⁹

²⁶ Bidney, "Myth, Symbolism, and Truth," pp. 5-6.

²⁷ Bidney, "Myth, Symbolism, and Truth," p. 11, quoting Eric Dardel, "The Mythic," Diogenes, No. 7 (Summer 1954), 35-36.

²⁸ Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art, 3rd. ed. (1957; rpt. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 175.

²⁹ David Bidney, "The Concept of Myth and the Problem of Psychocultural Evolution," American Anthropologist, 52 (1950), 22.

Modern man labels primitive stories as myths because a culture once seriously believed the tales and because modern man no longer believes them in a literal sense. Belief, however, is a subjective attitude and is in no way indicative of truth or falsity.³⁰ Thus, the word "myth" cannot be considered to indicate truth or falsity, but only disbelief in the literal authenticity of a story that was once believed. "Myth, like any other belief, can be false, but it is not false because it is a myth."³¹

Modern man's conception of truth is severely limited by his dependence on logic, particularly scientific logic, as his primary accepted means of ascertaining truth. Logic and myth are both ordering devices which man superimposes on reality to make it comprehensible. Claude Lévi-Strauss, in The Savage Mind, contends that although primitive thought differs from civilized logic, it is nonetheless "a method of approaching nature that is only other than, not less than, the one employed by modern science."³² Myth, like science and logic, functions in human life "to make our experience intelligible."³³

³⁰ Bidney, "The Concept of Myth," pp. 22-23.

³¹ Rubin Gotesky, "The Nature of Myth and Society," American Anthropologist, 54 (1952), 530.

³² Robert L. Zimmerman, "Lévi-Strauss and the Primitive," in Claude Lévi-Strauss: The Anthropologist as Hero, ed. E. Nelson Hayes and Tanya Hayes (Cambridge: the M. I. T. Press, 1970), p. 216.

³³ Mark Schorer, "The Necessity of Myth," Daedalus 88 (Spring 1959), 360.

The truth value of myth does not depend on an arbitrary designation of truth or falsity on the basis of belief or non-belief or even on a correspondence to truth criteria which vary from culture to culture. The truth value of myth depends, instead, on the myth's being "value-charged" or possessing a humanly perceived "value-significance."³⁴ The real truth or value-significance of myth is transmitted directly through value-charged images suffused with the intense mythic perception of reality. Myths are humanly valid "demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life."³⁵ According to contemporary mythologists, the truth value of myth transcends a correspondence limited to logical truth and resides in a correspondence to reality as perceived by man. To treat Paradise Lost as myth is not to label its content as false, but rather to declare it humanly valid as an account of man's beginning.

Objections to calling Paradise Lost mythic may also arise from the erroneous linking of myth exclusively with pre-literate, primitive societies. Paradise Lost is traditionally ranked among the world's finest achievements in literary art. Thus, designating this epic as myth, with the connotation of artistic inferiority, is thought to equate Milton's poem with the narratives produced by primitive societies. Although mythologists and literary

³⁴ Gotesky, pp. 525-526.

³⁵ Alan Watts, Myth and Ritual in Christianity (New York: Vanguard Press, 1953), p. 7.

critics acknowledge a relationship between myth and literature, they vary widely in their opinions of the nature of the relationship.³⁶ Those who view myth and literature as separate entities do so on the basis of distinctions between the modes of thought by which they are generated, or on the basis of differences in manner in which myth and literature transmit their meanings.

Susanne Langer and Ernst Cassirer distinguish between literature, produced by a self-conscious, literal mode of thought; and myth, produced by an unself-conscious, non-literal mode of thought.³⁷ Although literature as aesthetic creation may be mimetic, it is known by its creator to be totally independent of the object of its imitation. Myth, conversely, is not produced by conscious imitation, but rather arises spontaneously as an expression of the imagination in response to the perception of intense

³⁶ Philip Wheelwright, "The Semantic Approach to Myth," in Sebeok, ed., Myth: A Symposium, pp. 95-96, explains that differences of opinion among mythologists concerning the relationship between myth and literature arise primarily from the failure of mythologists to distinguish among the different phases of myth. Wheelwright states "that Chase, who takes myth as a species of literature, and Langer, who follows Cassirer in distinguishing between myth and art as separate categories, are not working from the same initial definition." Langer and Cassirer, in their distinction between myth and literature, refer to myth in its most primary and elemental form. Chase, on the other hand, in equating myth and literature, refers to a more sophisticated phase of myth, myth in the form of an individual creation by a poet or author.

³⁷ Ernst Cassirer, Mythical Thought, Vol. 2, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), pp. 24-25; Langer, pp. 200-202.

vitality in an object or event.

Claude Lévi-Strauss distinguishes between myth and poetry on the basis of differences in the manner by which they communicate their respective meanings. "Poetry is a kind of speech which cannot be translated except at the cost of serious distortions; whereas the mythical value of the myth remains preserved, even through the worst translation."³⁸ Poetry, if paraphrased, loses part of its meaning and becomes ineffective, but myth, if paraphrased, is not changed in meaning. The value of myth remains the same because the value is dependent on the story itself, rather than on how the story is told.

Richard Chase, however, sees no distinction between myth and literature and defines myth in terms of literature: "the word 'myth' means story: a myth is a tale, a narrative, or a poem; myth is literature and must be considered as an aesthetic creation of the human imagination."³⁹ Chase explains that "myth is an aesthetic device for bringing the imaginary but powerful world of the preternatural forces into a manageable collaboration with the objective facts of life in such a way as to excite a sense of reality amenable to both the unconscious passions and the conscious mind."⁴⁰

³⁸Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," in Sebeok, ed. Myth: A Symposium, p. 52.

³⁹Chase, p. 73.

⁴⁰Chase, p. 97.

Although Cassirer and Langer distinguish myth from literary art, their distinction anticipates rather than precludes the combination of myth and literature into a unique form of art. According to Cassirer, through the common bond of language, myth and literature are inherently linked.⁴¹ Susanne Langer calls "the embodiment of mythology in poetry . . . its perfected and final form."⁴² Myth, as the raw material for epic poetry brings to that form a unique vibrancy and freshness of expression. As myth is transformed into epic poetry, it is subjected to "the clarifying and unifying medium of conscious composition, the discipline of the compact metrical verse, which inevitably sets up standards of coherence and continuity such as the fragmentary dream-mode does not know or require."⁴³ Jerome S. Bruner refers to this process as "the containment of terror and impulse by the decorum of art and symbolism."⁴⁴ The transformation of myth into epic poetry represents the perfect union of the intense unself-conscious perception of reality with the self-conscious aesthetic discipline of artistic creation. Myths, thus transformed, do not lose their vitality and dynamic qualities, but rather communicate these qualities through the artistic structure. Myth through art

⁴¹ Cassirer, Language and Myth, pp. 8-13.

⁴² Langer, p. 200.

⁴³ Langer, p. 200.

⁴⁴ Bruner, p. 350.

"connects the daemonic world of impulse with the world of reason by a verisimilitude that conforms to each."⁴⁵

Regarding Paradise Lost as mythic poetry does not degrade either its form or its content, but rather emphasizes the idea that by combining myth with poetry, Paradise Lost embodies a unique and vibrant unself-conscious apprehension of mythic reality in a self-conscious and highly refined aesthetic form. Viewing Paradise Lost as myth expands the meaning of the poem to reveal a universally human and cosmic significance which transcends its importance as a reflection of a cultural tradition. Paradise Lost as myth portrays its universal significance in terms of cultural tradition and gives to that cultural tradition universal meaning. To consider Paradise Lost as myth, then, is not to detract from its magnitude as epic poetry or to deny its validity as a statement of Protestant Christian belief. Rather, to consider Paradise Lost as myth is to reveal the poem as not only relevant to the Judeo-Christian cultural tradition, but as possessing universal human significance.

The Functions of Myth in Paradise Lost: Aetiology

and the Mediation of Paradox

Although the term "myth" conveys negative connotations, mythologists have discovered that myths perform positive functions in the lives of

⁴⁵ Bruner, p. 352.

men. Among the interrelated and overlapping functions performed by myth, myth has been described by mythologists Susanne Langer and Ernst Cassirer as a means by which man apprehends reality,⁴⁶ by Mircea Eliade and Bronislaw Malinowski as a means for explaining the sociological basis of man's existence,⁴⁷ and by Claude Lévi-Strauss as an intuitive means by which man can resolve or mediate many of the logically insoluble problems of human existence.⁴⁸

In Paradise Lost, myth functions as aetiology and as a means of mediating paradox. By providing a means by which man apprehends reality and by providing a sociological basis for man's existence, myth in Paradise Lost functions aetiologically to explain both on a psychological and on a sociological level man's mode of being in the world. By providing, on a metaphysical level, an intuitive means for resolving logically insoluble problems, myth in Paradise Lost mediates paradox.

Milton's choice of subject gave him scope to develop the essential paradoxes of man's nature—his dignity and his depravity, his grandeur and his misery, his strength and his frailty, his original worth and his sole dependence on the merits of Christ. It permitted him to portray three states or conditions of man—his original innocence, the state of sin, and the state of grace; the action of Paradise Lost

⁴⁶ Cassirer, Mythical Thought, pp. 4-7; Langer, pp. 201.

⁴⁷ Eliade, Myth and Reality, pp. 18-19; Malinowski, p. 19.

⁴⁸ Claude Lévi Strauss, p. 65.

comprehends man unfallen, man fallen, and man regenerate.⁴⁹

In the first twenty-six lines of Paradise Lost, Milton, although not in the technical terms of mythologists, acknowledged aetiology and the mediation of paradox as the two primary functions of his poetic telling of the Judeo-Christian creation myth. His stated purpose in writing Paradise Lost was to tell or to explain how man came to exist in his present mortal state, and to mediate or to justify the paradoxical "ways of God to men."

Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,
In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: Or if Sion Hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's Brook that flow'd
Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous Song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme.
And chiefly Thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all Temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss
And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;

⁴⁹ John M. Steadman, Milton and The Renaissance Hero (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 192.

That to the highth of this great Argument
 I may assert Eternal Providence,
 And justify the ways of God to men.
 (I. 1-26)

Although aetiology is a function of myth in Paradise Lost, the type exhibited by Paradise Lost is not the superficial variety associated with naive pre-scientific explanations of natural phenomena. Rather, in Paradise Lost, myth functions to explain man's mode of being in the world. Modern mythologists no longer consider aetiology in its limited or simple sense as naive explanations of natural phenomena to be a major function of myth, for beyond this superficial function, which is incidental rather than elemental to myth, myth has been found to function as a means of explaining the basis of human existence. Yet, even in the cosmogonic and origin myths which exhibit inherent aetiology, myth does not reflect man's "desire to explain," so much as his desire to recapture the authenticity of the primordial beginnings. Myths ask not "'why?'" but 'whence?'" in an effort to substantiate and establish man's mode of existing in the world.⁵⁰ "Studied alive," Malinowski explains, "myth . . . is . . . a direct expression of its subject-matter; it is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions,

⁵⁰ C. Kerényi in C. G. Jung and C. Kerényi, Essays on a Science of Mythology: The Myths of The Divine Child and the Divine Maiden, rev. ed., trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 6.

even practical requirements."⁵¹ Thus, myths function to explain by demonstration complex human phenomena such as why men are mortal, sexed, and live in a social environment.⁵²

Myth, in its explanation of the sociological environment, in a sense provides the "charter" or the basis of the establishment of the sociological unit.⁵³ Myth in its sociological function "comprises 'the explanations a society offers its young of why the world is as it is and why we do as we do. . . .'"⁵⁴ Myth, as the basis of sociological structure, both mirrors and explains the basis for social organization, establishing periodically the authority for institutions, customs, and beliefs.⁵⁵

Man's existence in the present is a product of the past. Man returns, through myth, to primordial time in order to reestablish sociological and psychological order in the present. Myth accomplishes its socio-aetiological function through the mythic reestablishment of primordial time. Myth narrates the "primeval reality" and brings primordial time and the present into direct contact, causing primordial reality to live in the present and serve as an

⁵¹ Malinowski, p. 19.

⁵² Eliade, Myth and Reality, p. 6.

⁵³ Malinowski, p. 89.

⁵⁴ Bruner, 351, quoting Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1942), p. 180.

⁵⁵ G. S. Kirk, Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures (Cambridge: The University Press, 1970), p. 256.

explanation, justification, or precedent for sociological structure and order.

"Moral values" are established and maintained through the narrative of the myth, which "codifies belief" and directly or by implication "contains practical rules for the guidance of men."⁵⁶

Implied in the reestablishment of primordial time is the concept that the present does not exist in and of itself, but in relation to the past or a beginning. By recalling the past in myth, man brings primordial time into the present, which is legitimized by its association with the primordial past. The past, as the primordial beginnings, enters the present through myth. "It is not enough to know the 'origin,' it is necessary to reestablish the moment when such-and-such a thing was created."⁵⁷ In thus recovering the primordial or sacred time of the beginnings, man, in response to the constant problem of maintaining order, periodically renews the charter of the cosmos, society, and human life itself.

The socio-aetiological function of myth in Paradise Lost follows the same pattern as that discussed in myths of other cultures. Milton recalls primordial time in order to reestablish the conditions of existence which constituted man's initial state of creation. The aetiology exhibited by Paradise Lost functions both sociologically and psychologically to explain

⁵⁶ Malinowski, pp. 19, 30, 91.

⁵⁷ Eliade, Myth and Reality, p. 37.

man's state of being in the world. In the first five lines of Paradise Lost, Milton's words reflect the aetiological purpose of his intent to write of the Fall, the event which explains why man no longer exists in his original physical and psychological state of creation and why man lives as he does; its cause, the eating of the forbidden fruit; and its effect, mortality and the loss of paradise.

Paradise Lost is both implicitly and explicitly aetiological. Explicit instances of aetiology include Adam's explanations to Eve, dialogue between the Father and the Son, the dialogue between Raphael and Adam, and Michael's revelation to Adam after the Fall. In Book IV. 411-439, Adam's explanation to Eve serves both to instruct Eve in the conditions and prohibitions by which their mode of life in the unfallen state is governed and to explain to the reader the original state of being in which man was created. The passage, dominated by Adam's realization of the supreme power of God and of his dependence upon his Creator, demonstrates for the reader unfallen man's understanding of and attitude toward the prohibition of the Forbidden Tree. Similarly, in Book V. 95-128, Adam's explanation to Eve concerning her dream of temptation functions as explicit aetiology to explain man's psychological mode of existence in the prelapsarian state as well as to demonstrate for the reader that evil, if rejected, may pass blamelessly through

an innocent mind.⁵⁸ This passage, by demonstrating to the reader that temptation does not contaminate since evil lies only in assent, clarifies the exact human circumstances which constitute sin.

The dialogues in Heaven between the Father and the Son (particularly those in Books III and XI) are explicitly aetiological in their detailed explanation of the exact conditions which govern man both in his prelapsarian and postlapsarian states of being. In these passages, the primary condition of man's creation, free will, is emphasized as well as man's possession of reason, the means by which man is created capable to withstand temptation. God's omnipotence and omniscience is presented as coexisting with man's free will and the presence of evil in the universe.⁵⁹ These passages explain to the reader not only the conditions governing man's existence, but the conditions governing existence throughout the universe.

⁵⁸ Eve's dream foreshadows her actual temptation and fall. A. B. Chambers, "Three Notes on Eve's Dream in Paradise Lost," Philological Quarterly, 46 (1967), 186-187; William B. Hunter, Jr., "Prophetic Dreams and Visions in Paradise Lost," Modern Language Quarterly, 9 (1948), 277; and "Eve's Demonic Dream," ELH, 13 (1946), 256-265; Jon S. Lawry, The Shadow of Heaven: Matter and Stance in Milton's Poetry (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 195; note Milton's use of demon-lore and elements of witchcraft in his portrayal of Eve's dream. Chambers, pp. 191-193 and J. M. Evans, Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 255, point out the inverse parallelism between Satan's address of temptation to Eve and Gabriel's address of annunciation to Mary. See also Thompson, G.303.3.2.2. and G.303.3.3.7.1.

⁵⁹ See Allan H. Gilbert, "The Problem of Evil in Paradise Lost," JEGP, 22 (1923), 175-194; and Dennis H. Burden, The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of Paradise Lost (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p.21.

The dialogue which results from Raphael's visit to Adam functions as explanation and to remind Adam and the reader of the conditions, responsibilities, and prohibitions of unfallen human existence. "The purpose of Raphael's visit to Adam was both to warn him against Satan, and to provide him with essential knowledge."⁶⁰ Raphael, careful to discourage Adam from seeking after unessential knowledge such as explanations of natural phenomena which were unnecessary to his performing adequately within his own situation, "urged man that he . . . not meddle with secrets proper to God. . . ."⁶¹ Although Raphael's purpose was to warn Adam of the danger of temptation, he did not do so by literally predicting the assault of Satan upon the innocent pair,⁶² or by threatening Adam directly with punishment. Rather, Raphael's warning takes the form of aetiological explanation, stressing the importance of Adam's understanding and acceptance of his place in God's creation. "The intention is not to create fear of God but fear of a choice against self, future man, nature, and the God whom Adam had worshipped that same morning."⁶³ Adam's response to Raphael demonstrates

⁶⁰ Grant McColley, Paradise Lost: An Account of Its Growth and Major Origins, with a Discussion of Milton's Use of Sources and Literary Patterns (1940; reissued New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), p. 68.

⁶¹ McColley, p. 90.

⁶² William Empson, "Adam and Eve," The Listener, 64 (1960), 64-65, insists that Raphael's warning is inadequate for this reason.

⁶³ Lawry, p. 212.

to the reader both Adam's joy in the wonder of his newly created existence and the danger inherent in his failure to understand or realize the importance of the warning and explanation provided by Raphael.

Michael's revelation to Adam in Books XI and XII provides an aetiological parallel to Raphael's warning to Adam in Books V-VIII. Just as Raphael explained the conditions governing man in his prelapsarian state, Michael explains man's mode of existence in his postlapsarian state. In contrast to the pleasant and potentially perfect conditions portrayed in Raphael's dialogue with Adam, Michael's revelation stresses mortality, violence, pain, and destruction as characterizing man's mode of existence in the fallen world. The purpose of Michael's revelation to Adam, however, "is to mitigate his grief, to instruct him in the beliefs essential for his justification by faith, and (by demonstrating the final triumph of supernal grace over sinfulness of man) to 'assert Eternal Providence, And justifie the wayes of God to men.'" ⁶⁴

Implicitly, as an origin and charter myth, Paradise Lost functions to explain man's initial state of creation, and show how man was changed from that initial state and came to be mortal, conscious of good and evil, obliged to work, feel pain, and suffer. Paradise Lost establishes man's

⁶⁴ John M. Steadman, Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), pp. 72-73.

condition in the world as a sexed, mortal creature, living in a society wherein he is governed by mores and codes of mortal human behavior. J.B. Broadbent refers to the Judeo-Christian account of creation as "an aetiological myth."⁶⁵ Similarly, according to J. M. Evans, the Christian creation myth adapted by Milton in Paradise Lost "began as a straightforward aetiological myth, designed to explain why a man cleaves to his wife and why he is the senior partner in the union, why he has to labour in the fields and she in childbirth, why we wear clothes, why we dislike snakes, and why they crawl on their bellies."⁶⁶

As an origin or charter myth, Paradise Lost narrates and explains the origin of man and the rest of creation and explains why man no longer lives in his original state of creation. Paradise Lost tells how man and woman were created, how they were given dominion over the earth, and how they were forbidden to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. The Fall, caused by man's eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree, constitutes the mythic aetiological explanation of why man was changed from his prelapsarian state of being as potentially immortal into his postlapsarian state of being as mortal man. By telling of the origin or creation of man and his Fall, whereby man was changed from his initial state of potential immortality

⁶⁵ J. B. Broadbent, Some Graver Subject: An Essay on Paradise Lost (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), p. 253.

⁶⁶ Evans, p. 9; see Sir James George Frazer, Folk-lore in The Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend, and Law, I (London: Macmillan, 1919), 45-77.

to become mortal and to live in a social environment with other mortal men, Paradise Lost establishes or charters man's psychological and sociological mode of existence, providing him with an image of himself and of human culture.

Myth functions aetiologically to explain the explicable; yet, when myths contain paradoxes, myth functions as a means of mediating paradox to resolve intuitively the logically irreconcilable realities perceived in human existence. In Paradise Lost, myth functions aetiologically to explain man's mode of being in the world. Yet, Paradise Lost involves paradoxes that cannot be logically explained. When paradoxes are encountered, the function of myth in Paradise Lost shifts from aetiology to the mediation of paradox in order to resolve the logically irreconcilable conditions and situations which man observes in the universe and in human existence. According to anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, a major function of myth is to provide a means of overcoming apparent contradictions or a means of "mediation between two polar extremes"⁶⁷ that lie at the very basis of human existence. By expressing the paradoxes or polar extremes in narrative rather than problematically logical form, myth mediates or attempts to close the gaps between the paradoxical opposites.⁶⁸ By transposing

⁶⁷ Kirk, p. 44.

⁶⁸ Lévi-Strauss, p. 65.

problematic relationships of opposition into metaphorical or anthropomorphical relationships, the problems and paradoxes of cosmic magnitude can be restated and brought into focus on a human level, where they can be solved and the paradoxes mediated by means of analogy.⁶⁹ Thus, within a mythic narrative paradoxes which constitute the mysteries of human existence can be understood to exhibit apparent dichotomy, yet actual unity.

Paradox permeates Paradise Lost, but the fundamental underlying paradox of Paradise Lost resides in Milton's presentation of God, and is derived from a paradoxical dichotomy inherent in Milton's Biblical source. Genesis i.1-ii.4, called the "Priestly document," presents God as a concept, characterized by benevolent dignity. Genesis ii.4-iii.22, called the "Jahwist document,"⁷⁰ presents God as a physical entity, jealous and fearful of man's gaining too much power. "The theology implicit in P [the Priestly text] is correspondingly elevated. . . ."⁷¹ In the Priestly document, God "alone is the author of the universe, which He creates not with His hands but merely by the expression of His will. He is very clearly omnipotent, and everything that He brings into being is 'very good.' Most important of all," Evans continues, "He is well disposed towards Man, for whose sake He

⁶⁹ Kirk, p. 259.

⁷⁰ Evans, p. 11.

⁷¹ Evans, p. 11.

appears to have made the world and everything in it. Nor is man himself presented any less idealistically. God makes him in His own image, appointing him as master of all the other creatures and binding him only by the command to propagate his kind."⁷²

In contrast to the dignity and spiritual quality of the Priestly document, the Jahwist document has an earthy quality. The God of the Jahwist text is no longer "a concept (Elohim) but a person (Jahweh),"⁷³ and his creation is accomplished physically rather than through his will or word. In contrast to the Elohim of the Priestly text, "Jahweh is not merely described anthropomorphically; his very nature is revealed by his shortcomings to be more human than divine. . . . [H]e appears to be jealous in denying his creatures knowledge; he is not omniscient, . . . he is envious and fearful in his desire to prevent them from eating of the tree of life and so becoming like him."⁷⁴ He is, in fact," Evans states, "the complete antithesis of the benevolent and omnipotent Elohim of the Priestly document. And just as P's perfect man reflected the perfection of his Creator, so J's

⁷² Evans, pp. 11-12.

⁷³ Evans, p. 14.

⁷⁴ Northrop Frye, The Return of Eden: Five Essays on Milton's Epics (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 81, notes that God's decision (Paradise Lost, XI. 93-96) to make the tree of life inaccessible to Adam is an act of kindness to insure that man will not have to endure eternal life in his fallen state.

is made in the image of the primitive Jahweh."⁷⁵

The combination of these two representations of God in Milton's God is a major source of paradox in Paradise Lost. On the cosmogonic or cosmic level of myth in Paradise Lost, the existence of evil in a universe created by a God that is totally good, is the fundamental underlying paradox out of which all the other paradoxes are subsequently born. The need for Paradise Lost to mediate the paradox that stems from the contradictory Judeo-Christian concept of God is expressed in the last two lines of the first verse paragraph, when Milton states that he wishes to "justify the ways of God to men." This statement implies that the ways of God are not clear to man—that man, unless he views the ways of God in the perspective of the whole creation, may not see that the ways of God are just—and reflects the need for Paradise Lost as myth to mediate the paradox inherent in the ways of God. The ways of God, as revealed through the poem, are paradoxical, and viewed in part, God's ways may seem unjust. Yet, through the narrative of the myth, Paradise Lost demonstrates the mediation of the paradoxes inherent in man's view of God, particularly the paradox of God's allowing evil to exist, by showing that the halves of the paradoxes, rather than being irreconcilable, fit together to form a greater unity.

The paradox of the co-existence of good and evil enters the human

⁷⁵ Evans, p. 14.

level of myth at the moment of the Fall, through the shift in man's psychological and spiritual as well as physical mode of existence. Before the Fall man was aware only of God's ultimate goodness and perceived no dichotomy of good and evil in the universe. Similarly, before the Fall, man did not know death. At the moment of the Fall, death coupled with life to constitute man's altered mode of existence, mortal life. Mortal life, composed of life and death, is a physical manifestation of the cosmic dichotomy of good and evil.

Before the Fall, man perceived reality as a unity, and that unity was reflected in man's experiencing of paradise. The Fall split man's perception of reality, and the unity of his perception split into duality which gave rise to his apprehension of reality as composed of paradoxes. Man no longer perceived reality as a unified whole, but as duality, dominated by the primary paradox of the universe, the co-existence of good and evil. Thus, paradox arose from the condition that after the Fall man could know good only in its relation to evil, that nothing could be known in terms of itself alone but in contrast with its opposite.

In Paradise Lost, God had created for Adam and Eve a spiritual internal paradise as well as a physical external paradisaical garden. Along with the physical and spiritual paradise God gave Adam and Eve sufficient knowledge to sustain their paradisaical state. They were not created to know as infinite beings know, for they were not created capable of withstanding the burden of

of knowing good through evil and still of being able to apprehend reality, composed of good and evil, as a unity rather than as split into opposition and duality. Yet, because they did not accept themselves as they were created, in response to Satan's temptation, they aspired to know as gods.⁷⁶ Ironically, after eating the fruit, they found that Satan had not lied—that the fruit did indeed make them capable of knowing as gods by producing in them a state of consciousness whereby they apprehended reality through the contrast of apparent opposites rather than as a unified whole. Yet, because they had been created as human beings rather than as infinite creatures, they were inadequate to sustain the burden of being as gods and to possess such a state of consciousness. Their paradise, their enjoyment of the level of being for which they had been created, collapsed when, in their Fall, they forfeited their paradisaical state for a privilege they were incapable of enjoying.

Paradoxes, constituted by the juxtaposition of logically irreconcilable opposites, are formed by viewing a phase of reality as split into opposing elements. Frank L. Huntley refers to the pattern of duality, by which the paradoxes of Paradise Lost are expressed, as "systasis," and describes

⁷⁶ See Burden, p. 103; and Roland Mushat Frye, God, Man, and Satan: Patterns in Christian Thought and Life in Paradise Lost, Pilgrim's Progress, and the Great Theologians, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 51-52.

the systatic pattern as "a division into two universal terms; these terms are opposites; at the outset one of them is usually given a higher value than the other; and they must be of such a kind as to allow their combination to produce an ideal, a tertium quid which is greater than the mere sum of the two parts."⁷⁷ In Paradise Lost, such units of opposition include God/Satan, Light/Dark, Male/Female, Goodness/Evil, Life/Death, Obedience/Sin, Love/Lust, Immortality/Mortality, Creation/Expulsion, Reason/False Logic, Satisfaction with place/Ambition, Upholding responsibility/Not fulfilling responsibility.⁷⁸ The mediation of these opposites is accomplished in a variety of ways. "Sometimes," Huntley maintains, "the best of each opposite is taken to form a third; at other times the lower term is the means to the end of higher; at still other times what initially appears to be all bad, like culpa, is gradually shown to be the cause of a good effect, which makes of it a felix culpa."⁷⁹

Stanley Fish refers to "the analytical intellect," by which man recognizes distinctions, the mode of consciousness that Adam comes to possess

⁷⁷ Frank L. Huntley, "Before and After the Fall: Some Miltonic Patterns of Systasis," in Approaches to Paradise Lost: The York Tercentenary Lectures, ed. C. A. Patrides (London: Edward Arnold, 1968), p. 2.

⁷⁸ Marjorie H. Nicolson, "Milton and the Conjectura Cabbalistica," Philological Quarterly, 6 (1927), 3, notes in the Zohar "the theory of sygyzies, or pairs of opposites, expressing at once opposition and reconciliation."

⁷⁹ Huntley, p. 2.

in the Fall, as "an instrument of perversion and the child of corruption because it divides and contrasts and evaluates where there is in reality a single harmonious unity."⁸⁰ Similarly, Cleanth Brooks regards the result of the Fall of man in Paradise Lost as a shift from unself-conscious acceptance of self and the unity of reality to the self-conscious perception of self as an object and of existence as composed of paradoxical duality.⁸¹ The shift in Paradise Lost from the prelapsarian mode of consciousness to the postlapsarian mode of consciousness is evidenced in man's sudden development of a painful sense of self-awareness quite different from the essential self-knowledge necessary to man in the unfallen state. This painful self-awareness manifests itself as shame.⁸²

Eve first experiences shame immediately after eating the forbidden fruit, and her shame is reflected in her attempt to quell her fear that perhaps her act is immediately known in Heaven. "With the sense of secrecy," Northrop Frye says, "comes the sense of resentment, because God is no longer inside her as a part of her own conscience, but somewhere outside

⁸⁰ Stanley Eugene Fish, Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), p. 143.

⁸¹ Cleanth Brooks, "Eve's Awakening," in Essays in Honor of Walter Clyde Curry (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1954), pp. 291-293.

⁸² Lawry, p. 256; Joseph H. Summers, The Muse's Method: An Introduction to Paradise Lost (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), p. 106. C. S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost (1942; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 118-120, explores the difference between prelapsarian modesty and postlapsarian shame.

her watching her with a censorious eye."⁸³ After Adam and Eve emerge from the intoxication of the immediate effects of the Fall, shame, born of the consciousness of the self through the eyes of others, manifests itself in their attempt to cover their nakedness.

The mode of consciousness exhibited by Adam and Eve as a consequence of the Fall is not intrinsically evil. Indeed, it is the mode of consciousness manifested by Milton's God. Yet, it destroys Adam's paradise, because Adam's attainment of this mode of consciousness represents a violation of his proper place in the scale of God's creation.

God is self-conscious, but that self-consciousness applied to God does not carry the implications that self-consciousness must carry for a limited being. As perfect omniscience—as creator and not creature—as a limitless being endlessly contemplating his own virtues, God is self-conscious indeed. . . . But Adam is not prepared to assume this burden of consciousness. . . . Adam cannot assume the obligations and responsibilities that go with the Creator's self-knowledge.⁸⁴

The mediation of the paradox of the cosmic level, good and evil, is demonstrated through the mediation of paradox manifested on the human level. Paradox on the human level is exhibited both psychologically and spiritually in the dichotomy of man's perception of reality and physically in his fallen mode of existence, mortal life. On a physical level, the myth

⁸³ Northrop Frye, p. 78.

⁸⁴ Brooks, pp. 296-297.

of Paradise Lost mediates between life and death through procreative regeneration, symbolized by the seed of woman, contained in the womb of Eve. On a spiritual and psychological level, Paradise Lost mediates the paradox inherent in the dichotomy of man's perception of reality by depicting as valid both the unity of perception exhibited by man before the Fall and the restoration of the unity of man's perception through his recognition of the meaning of the felix culpa.⁸⁵ Paradise Lost as myth reveals God's capacity for bringing good out of evil. The poem reveals that in God's universe good and evil are only apparently in opposition and in reality form a unity encompassed by God's will.⁸⁶

The means by which God brings good out of evil and reunites the halves of the dichotomy of good and evil into the unity of ultimate good is Christ, who combines justice and mercy⁸⁷ in the redemption of mankind.⁸⁸ Through Christ, God transforms evil as it enters man's physical world in the form of death into a means by which man can escape his fallen mode of existence and be restored in the unity of being. Paradise Lost as myth

⁸⁵ See Kester Svendsen, Milton and Science (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 236.

⁸⁶ Ben Gray Lumpkin, "Fate in Paradise Lost," Studies in Philology, 44 (1947), 56-68, examines the correspondence of Fate to God's will.

⁸⁷ Roland Frye, p. 78.

⁸⁸ Maurice Kelley, This Great Argument (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), pp. 160-165, notes Milton's specific references to Christ's role as mediator in Paradise Lost III. 226 and X. 59-61.

reveals to man the solution to the paradox of human existence, that although man is mortal, through woman he is physically reborn and through Christ he is spiritually reborn into eternal life. On both the cosmic and human levels of myth in Paradise Lost, God brings good out of evil through Christ, and Christ, as the means of mediation of paradox in Paradise Lost, unites the cosmic and human levels of myth. Within the human level of myth the spiritual and physical levels are linked together and in turn united with the cosmic level of mediation through the relationship of Eve to Christ. Christ is the means of mediation in the cosmic sphere. He enters the human sphere through the womb of Mary, the second Eve. Thus, the seed within the womb, the means of physical regeneration, and Christ, the means of spiritual regeneration, unite, implementing God's plan to restore man to eternal life, God's ultimate means of bringing good out of evil.⁸⁹

Further discussion of the mediation of paradox in Paradise Lost will develop Eve's function as an archetype. It will demonstrate that as an archetype Eve in the human level of myth is ironically both the source of the paradox of man's existence and the source of its mediation. Eve's function as the means of mediation within the human sphere parallels Christ's function

⁸⁹ C. M. Bowra, From Virgil to Milton (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), p. 210, comments: "Milton's solution to the Fall of Man is that out of it a new kind of goodness is born and that man can show heroic qualities by doing his duty in the face of great obstacles." See also A. O. Lovejoy, "Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall," ELH, 4 (1937), 161-179.

as the means of mediation within the cosmic sphere. The relationship between the two means of mediation links the human and cosmic levels of myth in Paradise Lost.

CHAPTER III

EVE AS MYTHIC ARCHETYPE: A SOURCE OF THE MEDIATION OF PARADOX

In Paradise Lost Eve is not merely an individualized character, but a manifestation of the mythic archetype of Woman.¹ According to C. G. Jung, archetypes are the contents of the unconscious. "The archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived. . . ."² The archetypal content of man's unconscious is not unique to the individual. Rather archetypes remain basically unchanged and recur in the minds of men from generation to generation.³ Archetypal images are a means of communication between the unconscious and the conscious in man. The contents of the unconscious mind, manifested on a conscious level as archetypal images, appear in myth, art, and literature, and provide man with a conscious means of expressing what lies at the depths of his being. Myths as stories which recreate the first time—the beginnings—of the world, of man, and all that exists, are

¹ C. G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, Vol. 9, Part 1, The Collected Works, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1959), pp. 24-32, relates the archetype of woman to the concept in psychology of the anima.

² Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, p. 5.

³ Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, pp. 42-43.

particularly rich in archetypal content. Their characters, as ultimate examples of creation, are portrayed, not in individualized terms, but as images which are manifestations of the unconscious archetypes. Although the characters of primitive myths and the gods and goddesses of classical myths may bear different names and appear in different situations, there are similarities in their significance within their individual stories which result from their being based on the archetypal contents of the mind of man. The continuity of form and function of mythological characters who exhibit corresponding archetypal significance illustrates the homogeneity of man's unconscious mind.

In Paradise Lost the archetype to which Eve corresponds is a three-fold archetype, the human aspect of the Archetypal Female Principle, composed of two opposing parts and a third part in which the two opposing parts are combined and their opposition resolved. The Archetypal Female Principle is an all-encompassing archetype which includes not only woman, but all which is regarded as feminine in the animate and inanimate world.⁴ Eve is the human manifestation of the Archetypal Female in Paradise Lost, but other manifestations of the female creative principle

⁴ Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954), pp. 14-15.

include the Abyss ruled by Chaos and Old Night,⁵ the earth,⁶ and Milton's muse. Milton's muse represents the female creative principle in its purely spiritual form, whereas Eve is associated primarily with physical creativity. Linking the female creative principle of the cosmic level of myth of Paradise Lost to that of the human level of myth, Milton depicts the Abyss of Chaos and Old Night as the primordial womb from which the earth is produced, "The Womb of nature and perhaps her Grave" (II. 911), and the earth as a womb from which comes all living things including Adam and Eve, "The Earth. . . / Op'ning her fertile Womb teem'd at a Birth / Innumerable living Creatures, perfect forms" (VII. 453-455). As the source of human life, Eve is the human manifestation of the female creative principle. Although the Archetypal Female is usually associated with life-giving creativity, there exists within the archetype, the aspects of death, dissolution, and destruction. This negative aspect is illustrated in Milton's designation of the Abyss of Chaos and Old Night as the womb from which Earth is born and perhaps her grave. Similarly, as an archetypal image, the Earth, signifies both life and death because of its function as the source of vegetative life, its association with the grave, the

⁵ Walter Clyde Curry, Milton's Ontology, Cosmogony, and Physics, (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1957), pp. 63-65.

⁶ Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, "Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden," in New Essays on Paradise Lost, ed. Thomas Kranidas (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 107.

receptacle of death, and its association with the process of decomposition, which renders the earth fertile again.

In its human aspect the Archetypal Female Principle is manifested as a three-fold archetype, that of the Good Mother, associated with fertility and fecundity, the Terrible Mother, associated with death and destruction, and the Great Mother, in whom are paradoxically combined and mingled the good and terrible aspects of the mother archetype.

Carl Jung, explaining the mother or human aspect of the Female Archetype, divides the archetype into its positive aspect, associated with fruitfulness and fertility, and "all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility,"⁷ and its negative aspect associated with "anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable. . . ."⁸ Together, however, the benevolent and malevolent aspects of the mother archetype are combined and mediated to form the archetype of the Great Mother.⁹ Similarly Erich Neumann explains that the Great Mother combines the devouring Terrible Mother and

⁷ C.G.Jung, The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung, ed. Violet S. De Laszlo (New York: Modern Library, 1959), p. 334.

⁸ Jung, Basic Writings, p. 334.

⁹ Jung, Basic Writings, p. 353.

the affection-lavishing Good Mother. The Good Mother is characterized by her function of protecting, nourishing, and nurturing, as the source of happiness and life. The evil or Terrible Mother combines the sweet lure to death with her bloody aspect as the goddess of death, devouring, destruction, and dismemberment.¹⁰ Neumann, in his description of the Female Archetype, stresses that "the Archetypal Feminine is not only a giver and protector of life but, as container, also holds fast and takes back; she is the goddess of life and death at once."¹¹

The archetype through which Milton created the character of Eve is truly a universal mythic archetype which cuts across time and culture to reappear again and again as the symbol of man's conception of the ultimate paradox of his existence—the paradox of the cyclical relationship of life and death, or the paradox of mortality and immortality inherent in the procreative continuation of human life. In her prelapsarian state and in the Fall, Eve manifests the two opposing parts of the Female Archetype. In her role as the means of mediation, primarily in the human sphere, but ultimately as the vehicle by which Christ, the means of uniting the human sphere with the cosmic sphere comes into being, Eve represents the

¹⁰ Neumann, Origins, pp. 39-40.

¹¹ Erich Neumann, The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, 1955), p. 45.

synthesizing aspect of the archetype in which the opposing aspects, life and death, are combined and reconciled.

In Paradise Lost Eve's archetypal nature is inherent in her position as first woman, the female prototype. Milton was indebted to various sources in his presentation of Eve,¹² and utilized various elements present in previous depictions in his characterization of Eve as "representative of humanity, with the attributes of attractive perfection. . . ." ¹³ Although there was a tendency in the seventeenth-century concept of the Fall to regard Eve as a prototype of the evil temptress,¹⁴ an instrument of Satan and the cause of the Fall of man, Milton's presentation of Eve deals only briefly with her role as temptress. Before the Fall, "Milton's Eve is the epitome of 'sweet attractive grace,' . . ." ¹⁵ and innocence. As first

¹² Sister Mary Irma Corcoran, Milton's Paradise with Reference to the Hexameral Background (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1945); and Grant McColley, "Paradise Lost," Harvard Theological Review, 32 (1939), 181-235, examine influences from the Biblical commentaries and the hexameral tradition. Edward C. Baldwin, "Some Extra-Biblical Semitic Influences Upon Milton's Story of the Fall of Man," JEGP, 28 (1929), 366-401; and Denis Saurat, "Milton and the Zohar," Studies in Philology, 19 (1922), 136-151, link Milton's presentation with the cabbalistic tradition; Kester Svendsen, "Milton and Malleus Maleficarum," Modern Language Notes, 60 (1945), 118-119; and John M. Steadman, "Eve's Dream and the Conventions of Witchcraft," Journal of the History of Ideas, 26 (1965), 567-574, relate Milton's portrayal of Eve to seventeenth-century superstitions concerning women.

¹³ Dudley R. Hutcherson, "Milton's Eve and the Other Eves," Studies in English, 1 (1960), 18.

¹⁴ Roy C. Flannagan, Jr., "Milton's Eve," Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1966, p. 174.

¹⁵ Hutcherson, p. 18.

woman, and specifically as unfallen woman, Eve embodies all the qualities associated with chaste femininity. She was created for Adam as the perfect helpmeet, beautiful and devoted, the embodiment of all feminine superlatives.¹⁶ In his presentation of Eve in her prelapsarian state, Milton illustrated the joys of a perfectly harmonious and ideal marriage.¹⁷

In Paradise Lost, Milton was faced with the unique problem of describing the superlatives of existence, Eden the paradise to which by comparison all the other paradises seemed pale, and Adam and Eve the first unfallen human couple to whom by comparison even the classical gods and goddesses seemed diminished. Yet, in depicting Eden and its inhabitants, Milton, although careful to stress that the unfallen state of existence could neither be accurately described or perceived by man in the fallen state, turned to classical mythology to provide metaphorical analogies to man's initial state of creation. "Though Milton never doubted the literal, historical truth of his narrative, he acknowledges the quality of myth in the story of Adam and Eve when he joins the names of other Happy

¹⁶ Hutcherson, pp. 15-17.

¹⁷ Paul N. Siegel, "Milton and the Humanist Attitude Toward Women," Journal of the History of Ideas, 15 (1950), 53. See also Dorothy Durkee Miller, "Eve," JEGP, 61 (1962), 542-547.

Gardens to that tended by our first parents."¹⁸ Milton used mythological allusions to add a larger-than-life dimension to his images. In Paradise Lost such mythological allusions suggest "degrees of magnitude, power, horror, beauty, above human and natural limits. . . ."¹⁹

Among the many elements Milton employed in his presentation of Eve, one of the most effective is his use of parallels from classical mythology to reflect Eve's character. Milton's use of myth in his characterization of Eve reflects the seventeenth-century view that classical mythology provided prototypes of Christian truth. Myths were regarded by seventeenth-century writers as veiled allegories of Christian moral teachings and truths, and Milton, like others of his century used the classical myths to present the valid human truths that Christianity fully illuminated. Isabel MacCaffrey noted that in the seventeenth-century the myths were viewed as dim distorted reflections, mimetic of Christian truth.²⁰ Douglas Bush also noted the seventeenth-century tendency to regard

¹⁸ M. M. Mahood, Poetry and Humanism (1950; reissued Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1967), p. 181.

¹⁹ Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, new rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1963), p. 290. See also, Douglas Bush, "Notes on Milton's Classical Mythology," Studies in Philology, 28 (1931), 259-272; and Davis P. Harding, Milton and the Renaissance Ovid (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1946).

²⁰ Isabel Gamble MacCaffrey, Paradise Lost as "Myth" (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 11-17.

"classical myth and Biblical history as a single body of material, the former a distorted version of the latter. . . ." ²¹ Thus Milton in Paradise Lost mixed references from classical myth with Biblical and hexameral sources in his effort to transmit the spirit of man's creation and Fall. ²²

In portraying Eve, Milton used mythological allusions to describe and foreshadow Eve's character and actions. ²³ Milton's use of mythological allusions added dimensions to the character of Eve that reflect and reinforce the more obvious means of her characterization such as through action and speech. By means of mythological allusion, Milton very subtly foreshadowed Eve's characteristics before they surfaced in her actions and projected Eve's character into a broader archetypal dimension. Through myth, Milton presented Eve as multifaceted and dynamic, and achieved a unique characterization that combines her archetypal quality with progression

²¹ Bush, Mythology, p. 287.

²² Charles Grosvenor Osgood, The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1900), pp. xlv-xlvi, in describing Milton's use of myth, stressed the fact that Milton never used allusion to myth for mere decoration or display of learning. His allusions were always germane to his story and thematically essential to his meaning.

²³ It should be noted in examining Milton's use of mythical allusions that Milton was concerned with conveying significance and meaning rather than with cataloguing accurately the details of mythical stories. As a poet, Milton exercised the liberty of molding the details of the myths to fit his poetic purpose. Thus Milton's allusions to classical mythology frequently fail to conform precisely to the accounts of the myths provided by scholars.

and change.

Milton, in his portrayal of Eve, alludes to both situations and characters from classical mythology. Although Eve is frequently portrayed by Milton in Paradise Lost as a goddess or as goddess-like, specifically she is compared to a nymph, a wood nymph, an oread, a dryad, and individual characters from mythology including Flora, Delia (Artemis, Diana), Juno, Hera, Pales, Ceres, Pandora, Venus (Aphrodite), Athena, Pyrrha, Pomona, Circe, Daphne, and Helen.²⁴ Many of Milton's allusions to myth in his portrayal of Eve are in the form of metaphors or similes, comparing Eve to specific mythological characters, but others take the form of paralleling events of the Christian account of creation with events in classical mythology without allusions to specific persons.²⁵ According to Charles Osgood, "Milton adapts certain mythological events or features by removing from them the persons and localities with which they are connected in his sources, and substituting his own persons and localities."²⁶ In his portrayal of Eve, the most significant instance of Milton's paralleling an event from classical mythology to an event in Eden is his paralleling Eve's

²⁴ Hutcherson, pp. 12-13, provides a similar list.

²⁵ John M. Steadman, Milton and the Renaissance Hero (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 114, notes parallels between Eve and Dido, Circe, Armida, and Helen.

²⁶ Osgood, p. xxi.

reaction to seeing her reflection in the water to that of Narcissus (IV.453-467).²⁷

The characters from myth to whom Milton alludes in his presentation of Eve are themselves archetypal, and through the allusions their archetypal significance is transferred to Eve. Eve's archetypal nature is amplified by the parallels between Eve and similar archetypal figures from classical myths to whom she is compared. The goddesses to whom Milton alludes in his portrayal of Eve exemplify different phases of the Archetypal Female Principle. The aspects of archetypal feminine nature present in Eve's character and portrayed through mythological allusions include vulnerability and innocence associated with Persephone, Daphne, and the nymphs; stateliness and majesty associated with Juno and Hera; beauty associated with Venus (Aphrodite); curiosity and beauty as a potential snare associated with Pandora; and fertility associated with Ceres, Juno, Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena. The use of mythical allusions in the characterization of Eve accentuates her archetypal significance by linking her with manifestations of various phases of the universal Female Archetype. Eve's correspondence to the various phases of the Female Archetype allows her significance to transcend the limits of Judeo-Christian culture and to

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All references to lines and quotations from Milton's Paradise Lost used in this thesis are from John Milton: The Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957).

have universal meaning.

In Paradise Lost, through her correspondence to the three-fold Female Archetype, evidenced directly in her own actions and character and indirectly in mythical allusions comparing her to archetypal figures from classical mythology, Eve functions both as the source of and the means of mediation of the paradoxical opposites, good and evil, as they are expressed in the human sphere of myth as life and death combined in mortal life. This mediation, in turn, reunites the human and cosmic levels of myth. The paradox of the combination of life and death in mortal life arises from Eve's correspondence to the antithetical parts of the Female Archetype. In her prelapsarian state she embodies the Good Mother phase of the archetype as the source of life; in her fall, the Terrible Mother phase as the source of death. In her reconciliation with Adam and through Adam with God, she becomes the Great Mother, the means of mediation, as at once the source of life and death in mortal life, but eventually through Christ, the vehicle for man's regaining the promise of immortal life. Milton portrays the unfallen Eve through images of earth, flowers, and fruit associated with fertility and fecundity. Milton's description of Eve's awakening after her creation: "I first awak't, and found myself repos'd / Under a shade on flow'rs. . ." (IV.450-451), and his description of her preparation of the nuptial bower: "With Flowers, Garlands, and sweet-smelling Herbs / Espoused Eve deckt first her

Nuptial Bed," (IV. 709-710) link Eve with softness, beauty, and fertility. In IV. 500-501, Milton's allusion parallels Juno with Eve, "as Jupiter / On Juno smiles, when he impregns the Clouds / That shed May Flowers. . . ." and links the love of Adam and Eve in paradise with majesty and fertility.

In V. 303-305, Milton links Eve with fruit in her feminine capacity as nourisher: "And Eve within, due at her hour prepar'd / For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please / True appetite, . . ." and in describing Eve's gathering of the fruit links her with earthly vegetative fertility:

. . . , and from each tender stalk
 Whatever Earth all-bearing Mother yields

 . . . fruit of all kinds, in coat
 Rough, or smoothrin'd, or bearded husk, or shell
 She gathers
 (V. 337-343)

Raphael's greeting to Eve: "Hail Mother of Mankind, whose fruitful Womb / Shall fill the World more numerous with thy Sons / Than with these various fruits the Trees of God / Have heap'd this Table" (V. 388-391),²⁸ also links Eve to vegetative fecundity, and accentuates Eve's role as the source of human life.

Later Milton describes Eve's leaving Raphael and Adam to their conversation as she "Rose, and went forth among her Fruits and Flow'rs, / To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom, / Her Nursery; they at her

²⁸See John R. Knott, Jr., "The Visit of Raphael: Paradise Lost, Book V," Philological Quarterly, 47 (1968), 39.

coming sprung / And toucht by her fair tendance gladlier grew" (VIII. 44-47), emphasizing her aspect as a mother who protects and nurtures. In the last moments before her fall, Milton describes Eve tending the garden alone and links her fragile vulnerability with that of the flowers:

. . . , oft stooping to support
 Each Flow'r of slender stalk, whose head though gay
 Carnation, Purple, Azure, or speckt with Gold,
 Hung drooping unsustain'd, them she upstays
 Gently with Myrtle band, mindless the while,
 Herself, though fairest unsupported Flow'r,
 From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
 (IX. 427-433)

Similarly, Milton characterized the unfallen Eve through parallels to characters from classical mythology who are associated with fertility, fecundity, and innocence. Throughout his portrayal of Eve in her prelapsarian state, Milton used allusions to goddesses from classical mythology to depict Eve both in her majesty as unfallen woman and in her capacity as the source of human fertility. Yet, at the same time, these allusions ironically emphasize her vulnerability, and foreshadow her fall. In the lines just preceding Milton's introduction of Adam and Eve, Milton uses a cluster of mythical allusions that on one level describe Eden in terms of mythical gardens, but on a deeper level parallel the inhabitants of the gardens:

The Birds thir choir apply: airs, vernal airs,
 Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
 The trembling leaves, while Universal Pan
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance
 Led on th' Eternal Spring. Not that fair field
 Of Enna, where Proserpin gath'ring flow'rs
 Herself a fairer Flow'r by gloomy Dis

Was gather'd, which cost Ceres all that pain
 To seek her through the world; nor that sweet Grove
 of Daphne by Orontes, and th' inspir'd
Castalian Spring might with this Paradise
 of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian Isle
 Girt with the River Triton, where old Cham,
 Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Lybian Jove,
 Hid Amalthea and her Florid Son,
 Young Bacchus, from his Stepdame Rhea's eye;
 Nor where Abassin Kings their issue Guard,
 Mount Amara, though this by some suppos'd
 True Paradise, under the Ethiop Line
 By Nilus head, enclos'd with shining Rock. . . .
 (IV. 264-283)

In this cluster of images Eve is linked with the graces and the hours, Proserpine and Ceres, Daphne, Amalthea, and Rhea. The graces,²⁹ associated with feminine love and beauty, and the hours, associated with vernal fertility, together with Pan, the god of nature, portray Eden as a state of eternal spring. The references to Proserpine, Ceres, and Daphne link Eve with violated innocence and fertility and foreshadow her fall. The references to the nymph Amalthea hiding Bacchus, her child, from Rhea, the jealous wife of the child's father, links Eve with illicit sexuality and jealousy and further foreshadows her fall.

Similarly, in the last few moments before Eve's fall when she takes her hand from Adam's and goes off to work alone,³⁰ Milton uses another

²⁹ Purvis E. Boyette, "Milton's Eve and the Neoplatonic Graces," Renaissance Quarterly, 20 (1967), 341-344.

³⁰ See Anthony Low, "The Parting in the Garden in Paradise Lost," Philological Quarterly, 47 (1968), 30-35.

cluster of mythical allusions which describe Eve:

Thus saying, from her Husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and like a Wood-Nymph light,
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's Train,
Betook her to the Groves, but Delia's self
In gait surpass'd and Goddess-like deport,
Though not as shee with Bow and Quiver arm'd,
But with such Gard'ning Tools as Art yet rude,
Guiltless of fire had form'd, or Angels brought,
To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorn'd,
Likest she seem'd, Pomona when she fled
Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her Prime,
Yet Virgin of Proserpina from Jove.

(IX. 385-396)

Here Eve is compared to a wood nymph, an oread, a dryad, a nymph of Delia's train, Delia, Pales, Pomona, and Ceres.

There were various types of nymphs, and Milton refers to two types, Dryads (wood-nymphs) and Oreads (mountain nymphs) in his characterization of Eve in Paradise Lost.³¹ In IX. 386-388, Milton in describing Eve uses the terms Dryad and Wood Nymph, ironically linking Eve with trees. These allusions present Eve's character in the moment before her fall as a combination of innocence, naiveté, linked sinisterly with the foreshadowing of trees. In IX. 387, Milton refers to Eve as an Oread or mountain nymph, also associated with trees, and as a nymph "of Delia's Train." "Diana (Artemis) is called Delia from her birthplace, Delos. Milton thought of her," Merritt Hughes explains, "with her traditional

³¹ Osgood, p. 64.

bow and arrows, leading her nymphs in the hunt."³² Here, too, there is perhaps ironic significance in Milton's portraying Eve, having just uttered her inappropriate argument from Areopagitica,³³ as a vulnerable nymph, venturing forth in a hunt, unsuspecting of the danger in which the hunter becomes the prey. Similarly, the references (IX. 393-396) to Pales, Pomona, and Ceres accentuate Eve's soon-to-be-lost innocence, by linking her with abduction, fertility, and ironically with fruit trees.

The goddesses to whom Milton alludes in his portrayal of Eve are associated with innocence and abduction as well as with fertility and fecundity. The theme of abduction, rape, and loss of innocence is recurrent in Milton's classical allusions in portraying Eve. Allusions to Proserpina and Ceres, Daphne, Flora, Pomona, and Pales blend the positive concepts of beauty and fertility with the negative associations of pursuit, abduction, and metamorphosis which foreshadow the violation of paradise and the shift from the unfallen to the fallen state of being.

As previously noted, Milton in his description of the garden refers to Eden as such a place where Proserpine was abducted by Dis (IV. 268-273), and alludes to Ceres' search for her abducted daughter, Proserpine (IV. 271). Proserpina (Roman) or Persephone (Greek) has dual significance

³² Merritt Y. Hughes, ed., John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, footnote 1. 387, p. 387.

³³ See John S. Diekhoff, "Eve, the Devil, and Areopagitica," Modern Language Quarterly, 5 (1944), 429-434.

as violated innocence and a fertility goddess. "Her life exemplifies the cycle of the seasons, thus she is goddess of death and resurrection."³⁴ Ceres (or Demeter), the mother, and Persephone, the daughter, represent "two phases of the vegetative powers of the soil, the mother standing for the entire power, latent or active, at all seasons, the daughter for the potency in its youthful aspect."³⁵ Thus, Milton, in his reference to the virgin Ceres (IX. 395), links Eve with both virginity and fertility, balanced in the precarious moment before her fall.³⁶

Although Daphne was "a priestess of Mother Earth,"³⁷ and associated with fertility, Milton's allusions to Daphne in Paradise Lost seem related to pursuit and metamorphosis. In IV. 272-273, Milton compared Eden to the "Grove of Daphne," where Daphne was saved from Apollo's pursuit by being turned into a laurel tree. Similarly, in IV. 480-485, Adam's pursuit of Eve, when she first sees him and runs, parallels Apollo's pursuit of Daphne, and Apollo's words: "From whom thou fly'st, thou know'st not" are echoed in Adam's: "whom thou fli'st, of him thou

³⁴ Gertrude Jobes, Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore, and Symbols (New York: The Scarecrow Press, 1961), II, 1257.

³⁵ Jobes, II, 1257.

³⁶ See John E. Parish, "Milton and the Rape of Proserpina," English Studies, 48 (1967), 332-335.

³⁷ Robert Graves, The Greek Myths (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955), I, 78.

art" (IV. 482).³⁸

A further allusion to abduction occurs in V. 16, in Milton's reference to Flora, who is linked also with fertility. Eve has just awakened from her dream of temptation. Adam's whisper to awaken her from her troubled sleep is described as a "voice / Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breaths" (V. 15-16), providing a reference to the abduction in which Zephyrus stole Chloris.³⁹ Adam's words to awaken Eve parallel Satan's greeting to Eve in the dream. Milton's using parallelism between the words of Satan and Adam accentuates an inverse relationship between Adam as Eve's proper guide and Satan as a false guide.

References to Pomona the "Roman fruit tree goddess,"⁴⁰ have a dual function of linking Eve with fertility and, on an ironic level, with fruit. In Book V. 378, Eve's bower is compared to "Pomona's Arbor," making a dual reference to the beautiful fruit of the garden as well as foreshadowing the forbidden fruit. Pomona was traditionally portrayed as bearing fruit in much the same manner as Eve carried the bough of fruit to Adam. In IX. 393-394, Milton again recalls the story of Pomona, and links her significance

³⁸ See Douglas Bush, "Ironical and Ambiguous Allusion in Paradise Lost," JEGP, 60 (1961), 638.

³⁹ Osgood, p. 35, states: "The story of Zephyrus and Flora, to which Milton alludes in P.L. 5.16, is really the story of Zephyrus and Chloris. . . ."

⁴⁰ Jobes, II, 1285.

as a fruit goddess with the motif of abduction. Thus, Milton writes of Eve: "Likest she seem'd, Pomona when she fled Vertumnus," and foreshadows Eve's fall by linking her with Pomona, who yielded to the tree-god, Vertumnus.⁴¹ In IX. 393, Milton also linked Eve with Pales, who, as a goddess associated with fecundity and feeding, "presided over agriculture and the fruitfulness of flocks."⁴²

In V. 383, Milton compares Eve to Juno, Venus, and Athena, the "three that in Mount Ida naked strove," This allusion would seem to be an ultimate hyperbole, associating the unfallen Eve with feminine strength, charm, and beauty, for it carries the implication that Eve combines the qualities among which Paris had to choose. Yet, Milton's allusion to the bestowing of the apple to the most beautiful becomes an ironic linking of Eve to the forbidden fruit, and an ironic foreshadowing of Adam's reaction to Eve's beauty. "Emblematically, there is a marked resemblance between the picture of Eve extending the fruit of knowledge to Adam and the portrait of Venus receiving the apple of discord from Paris."⁴³

In his comparison of Eve to Venus/Aphrodite, Juno/Hera, and

⁴¹ The motif of disguise in the reference to Vertumnus' seduction of Pomona is paralleled by Satan's disguise in his seduction of Eve.

⁴² Jobes, II, 1228.

⁴³ Steadman, Milton and the Renaissance Hero, p. 124.

Athena, Milton emphasized Eve's role as the feminine source of life and her link with human fertility. Aphrodite was "worshiped as earth mother, goddess of fruitfulness and vegetation, goddess of the moon. . . .

Probably originally she was an Oriental goddess of vegetation and of the reproductive forces of nature."⁴⁴ Ironically, she is the goddess who bestowed beauty on Pandora. Among the many symbols attributed to her are the apple, the mirror, and the moon.⁴⁵ Juno came from Etruscan mythology as a Great Mother in whom was personified the female power of procreation.⁴⁶ She was a patron of women. "In later Roman mythology she is represented as the passive productive principle and as an earth goddess with attributes of both Ceres and Cybele."⁴⁷ She is connected with all phases of womanhood. "As Juno Callestis, she was a moon goddess resembling Astarte. . . . As Juno Lucina, goddess of childbirth, protectress of women in labor. . . . As Juno Sospita, she was savioress. As Virginensis, she was a virgin goddess, protectress of the chastity of maidens."⁴⁸ Hera, the Greek counterpart of Juno, was "[o]riginally a pan-Hellenic divinity of weather and fertility; later a goddess of

⁴⁴ Jobes, I, 108.

⁴⁵ Jobes, I, 109.

⁴⁶ Jobes, II, 895.

⁴⁷ Jobes, II, 896.

⁴⁸ Jobes, I, 896.

childbirth."⁴⁹ Hera was "worshiped as a moon goddess and as an earth mother,"⁵⁰ and she, too, was connected with marriage, childbearing, and virginity. "A great matriarchal goddess, things emblematic of fertility were sacred to her. . . ."⁵¹ Like Eve, Hera was jealous. While the jealousy of Hera or Juno caused the fall of Troy, Eve's jealousy was the dominant factor in her decision to tempt Adam. Athena who sprang forth fully formed from the head of Zeus is usually associated with purity, bravery, and wisdom. Yet, she, too, is associated with agriculture and with earthly fertility.⁵²

In her prelapsarian phase as the Good Mother or the good aspect of the Female Archetype, Milton presents Eve through her relationship to Adam as the perfect wife or perfect lover and through her relationship to nature and mankind as the nurturing Good Mother, the source of life, fertility, and nourishment. Eve in her prelapsarian state is a perfect wife. She realizes her relationship to Adam, and fulfills the role for which she was created. Before Adam finds her, she has no sense of who she is or why created, but after Adam claims her as his wife, her role becomes immediately clear and she accepts Adam as her mate. The episode in which

⁴⁹ Jobes, I, 752.

⁵⁰ Jobes, I, 752.

⁵¹ Jobes, I, 150-151.

⁵² Jobes, I, 150-151.

Eve like Narcissus admires and is enchanted by her own reflection in the pool, is usually cited to exemplify Eve's potential moral weakness or her already fallen nature.⁵³ Yet, this episode might also be said to illustrate Eve's initial lack of direction and understanding of her role in contrast to her quick, although at first frightened, acceptance of her role as wife when Adam claims her.⁵⁴ In the prelapsarian state, Eve's feelings toward and relationship to Adam illustrate the Puritan ideal of woman and marriage.⁵⁵

⁵³ Millicent Bell, "The Fallacy of the Fall in Paradise Lost," PMLA, 68 (1953), 863-883, contends that Adam and Eve, because they exhibit "imperfections" in the prelapsarian state are "fallen" before the Fall. Those who support Mrs. Bell's view include E. M. W. Tillyard, Studies in Milton (1951; rpt. London: Chatto & Windus, 1955); and A. J. A. Waldock, Paradise Lost and its Critics (1947; rpt., Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959). Those who disagree with the idea that Adam and Eve are "fallen" before the Fall include H. V. S. Ogden, "The Crisis of Paradise Lost Reconsidered," Philological Quarterly, 36 (1957), 1-19; Stanley Eugene Fish, Surprised by Sin: the Reader in Paradise Lost (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967); Jon S. Lawry, The Shadow of Heaven: Matter and Stance in Milton's Poetry (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968); Arnold Stein, Answerable Style: Essays on Paradise Lost (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1953); Joseph H. Summers, The Muse's Method: An Introduction to Paradise Lost (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962). Wayne Shumaker and Millicent Bell, "The Fallacy of the Fall in Paradise Lost," PMLA, 70 (1955), 1185-1203, debate the issue.

⁵⁴ Douglas Day, "Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost, IV," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 3 (1961), 370-372, offers a negative interpretation of this episode.

⁵⁵ See Siegel, pp. 42-53; and Flannagan, p. 14, who regard Milton's presentation of the unfallen relationship of Adam and Eve as a reaction against the woman worship of the courtly love tradition.

She is submissive, and although inferior to Adam, she is a perfect helpmeet. Milton portrays the unfallen Eve as knowing her proper sphere and fulfilling her potentiality in her role as wife. As unfallen woman, Eve functions in relation to all future mankind as the potential source of unfallen life. Her function as the source of life, which complements her relationship with Adam as the 'perfect wife', is emphasized in Paradise Lost through images that link Eve with fertility such as flowers, fruit, and the earth as womb, as well as through allusions that link her with goddesses from classical mythology also associated with human fertility and procreation.

Milton foreshadows Eve's fall through mythical allusions such as the reference paralleling Eve's infatuation with her reflection in the water with Narcissus' similar reaction and the allusion to Pandora, whose beauty became a snare for man. Although, until the Fall in Book IX, Milton carefully reiterates, through the voice of the narrator, that Eve is yet unfallen, and presents her in terms of her unfallen fertility as the Good Mother, he is careful to make her fall in Book IX psychologically and dramatically plausible by foreshadowing. Thus, while depicting Eve in her unfallen state as the positive aspect of the Female Archetype, he also introduces images through mythological allusion which foreshadow her fall by illustrating character traits that could, and, as the reader knows, will become not flaws but potential weaknesses which, if misused or misapplied by

humankind—either Adam or Eve—could and do create a situation in which the Fall becomes possible.

In identifying Eve with Narcissus, Milton is emphasizing her beauty, and her love of beauty which she, like Narcissus, finds in her own reflection. Although the allusion to Narcissus does indicate the potentiality in Eve's character to be attracted to sensuous beauty, her tendency to be swayed by external appearance, and the propensity of her mind to be dominated by fancy rather than by reason, the allusion does not, as some Milton critics have insisted, present her as already fallen or even as imperfect. Paradoxically, the flower into which Narcissus was changed is a "Christian symbol of the triumph of divine love over sin, eternal life over death, sacrifice over selfishness."⁵⁶

In IV. 714, Milton, in describing Eve's beauty as she approaches the bower, introduces the correspondence between Eve, the first woman of the Judeo-Christian creation story, and Pandora, the first woman of Greek mythology.⁵⁷ Milton describes Eve as "More lovely than Pandora whom the Gods / Endow'd with all thir gifts, and O too like / In sad event, when to the unwiseer Son / of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnar'd / Mankind with her fair looks, to be aveng'd / On him who had stole Jove's

⁵⁶ Jobes, II, 1155.

⁵⁷ Jobes, II, 1232.

authentic fire" (IV. 714-719), establishing Eve's beauty, but at the same time accentuating its potentiality as a snare for Adam.⁵⁸ Pandora's "name means all-gifted, i.e. gift of all the gods, and suggests her origin was a form of the earth goddess, i.e. giver of all gifts including death and disease."⁵⁹ Like Pandora, Eve, a gift to man, combines beauty and potential danger, for it is through Adam's taking Eve's external beauty as evidence of her total superiority and his subsequent abandonment of his proper role in the hierarchy of their relationship that the circumstances surrounding the Fall occur. Like Pandora in her curiosity, Eve in her credulity unleashes death, disease, and all the problems that plague mortal man upon the world. Yet, a further parallel between Eve and Pandora can be seen in the significance of Pandora's closing the box in time to keep hope from escaping,⁶⁰ and the significance of Eve's role as the initiator of repentance and the vehicle of redemption through Christ, a source of hope in the fallen world.

A final foreshadowing occurs in IX. 522, when Milton links Eve with Circe in an allusion used to describe how the animals respond to her call:

⁵⁸ Milton's identification of the son of Japhet with Epimetheus exemplifies the seventeenth-century linking of prototypes from classical myth with Biblical figures.

⁵⁹ Jobes, II, 1233.

⁶⁰ Jobes, II, 1233, notes two versions of the story.

"more duteous at her call, / Than at Circean call the Herd disguis'd" (IX. 521-522). This allusion foreshadows Eve's tempting Adam and his subsequent change from his unfallen state to join her in a gluttonous fallen state aptly associated with swine.

Although the hexameral tradition and the seventeenth-century attitude toward the Fall emphasized Eve's role as temptress, in Paradise Lost, Eve's role as temptress is brief. Only in the moments immediately after her fall, in her temptation of Adam, and in the orgy following Adam's fall, is Eve depicted by Milton as a temptress.⁶¹ The temptation scene is erotic, and Eve is attracted by the sensuous beauty and movements of the serpent.⁶² Sin accepted Satan in an incestuous union as her mate,⁶³ and Eve, as the Terrible Mother, accepts the phallic serpent as her consort

⁶¹ Flannagan, p. 140; Steadman, "Eve's Dream and the Conventions of Witchcraft," 567-574; and Svendsen, 118-119, point out Milton's use of seventeenth-century witchlore in his depiction of Eve as temptress.

⁶² David S. Berkeley, "'Precieuse' Gallantry and the Seduction of Eve," Notes and Queries, NS 196 (1951), 337-339, regards the seduction of Eve as a parody of courtly love. See also John S. Diekhoff, Milton's Paradise Lost: A Commentary on the Argument (1946; rpt., New York: The Humanities Press, 1958), p.43.

⁶³ Edmund Leach, "Lévi-Strauss in the Garden of Eden: An Examination of Some Recent Developments in the Analysis of Myth," Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences, 2nd Series 23 (Feb. 1961), 386-396, examines the mythic resolution of the problem of incest in the Genesis account of creation.

and her guide:⁶⁴

Circular base of rising folds, that tow'r'd
Fold above fold a surging Maze, his Head
Crested aloft, and Carbuncle his Eyes;
With burnisht Neck of verdant Gold, erect
Amidst his circling Spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant: pleasing was his shape,
And lovely, never since of Serpent kind
Lovelier, not those that in Illyria chang'd
Hermione and Cadmus, or the God
In Epidaurus; nor to which transform'd
Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline was seen,
Hee with Olympias, this with her who bore
Scipio the highth of Rome.

(IX. 498-510)

Throughout Paradise Lost, Eve is portrayed in her correspondence to goddesses from classical mythology who signify fertility. Fertility goddesses were frequently associated with serpents as phallic consorts.⁶⁵ Eve's erotic temptation by Satan parallels the impregnation of "Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great . . . by Jupiter Ammon . . . in the form of a serpent. . . ." and of "the mother of Scipio Africanus . . . by the Capitoline Jupiter."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1964), p. 85. According to Hebrew myth Satan and Eve copulated and from their union Cain was conceived. See Stith Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Medieval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books and Local Legends, rev. ed., Vols. 1-4 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), numbers A63.5.1, A63.6, A1355.1, A1355.1.1, and G303.12.7.1.

⁶⁵ Neumann, Origins, pp. 48-49.

⁶⁶ Hughes, footnote 11. 507-510, p. 390.

At the moment of her fall, Eve is transformed from the positive aspect of the Feminine Archetype, the Good Mother who manifests unfallen fertility, love, and nourishment, into the negative aspect of the Feminine Archetype, the Terrible Mother who manifests death, devouring, and destruction. Her relationship with Adam in this phase shifts from devoted good wife to temptress, seductress, and the source of death. Immediately after her fall, Eve considers herself the possessor of knowledge that renders her superior to Adam and this episode allows some of the tension inherent in the underlying conflict between matriarchy and patriarchy in the poem to surface.⁶⁷ Eve in her fallen state believes herself superior. Adam, in her mind, is reduced to the adolescent lover, prey for the sexually proficient mother goddess turned temptress. Out of jealousy that, perhaps, if she should be subject to death, God would provide another woman for Adam, Eve decides to share the fruit with Adam instead of using her power to reign supreme over him. Eve's words (IX. 816-833) reflect the change in her attitude toward Adam and the perversion of her love into selfish greed:

But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appear? shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake

⁶⁷ See Myth, Religion, and Mother Right: Selected Writings of J. J. Bachofen, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 69-120.

Full happiness with mee, or rather not,
 But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power
 Without Copartner? so to add what wants
 In Female Sex, the more to draw his Love,
 And render me more equal, and perhaps
 A thing not undesirable, sometime
 Superior: for inferior who is free?
 This may be well: but what if God have seen,
 And Death ensue? Then I shall be no more,
 And Adam wedded to another Eve,
 Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct;
 A death to think. Confirm'd then I resolve,
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:
 So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
 I could endure, without him live no life.
 (IX. 816-833)

In myth, the terrible aspect of the Archetypal Female is frequently depicted as the Gorgon mask, associated with masculine destruction in its phallic tongue surrounded with teeth representing a vagina dentate.⁶⁸ Adam, "overcome with Female charm" (IX. 999), is in a sense emasculated by Eve in the Fall. He surrenders to her, not out of love,⁶⁹ but out of weakness,

⁶⁸ Neumann, Origins, p. 87.

⁶⁹ Albert H. Daehler, "Adam's Motive," Modern Language Notes, 31 (1916), 187-188, contends that Adam in his fall was unselfish and noble. Waldock, pp. 51-52, and Tillyard, p. 28, agree that Adam exhibited unselfish love. Dennis H. Burden, The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of Paradise Lost (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 90-91, and C. S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 122, attribute Adam's fall to uxoriousness. See also Elliott A. White, "Adam's Motive," Modern Language Notes, 30 (1915), 229-231; Paul Turner, "Woman and the Fall of Man," English Studies, 29 (1948), 1-18; and Patrick Murray, Milton: The Modern Phase: A Study of Twentieth-century Criticism (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967), pp. 102-110.

and in the Fall is transformed from the potential perfection of his unfallen state and rendered subject to death and destruction. After the Fall, IX. 1037-1045, Milton parallels Adam and Eve in their sexual excess with similar episodes in the Iliad concerning Zeus and Hera and Helen and Paris.⁷⁰ In IX. 1060, Milton, in reference to Adam's weakness, parallels Adam to Sampson, who like Adam, was seduced by a woman and sacrificed his strength. The orgy following Adam's fall presents Eve as an evil enchantress "whose Eye darted contagious Fire" (IX. 1036). According to witchlore, witches cast spells with their eyes.⁷¹ Later, in X. 885, Adam, in blaming Eve for the Fall calls her "a Rib / Crooked by nature," referring to the belief expressed in the Malleus Maleficarum that woman was inherently evil and linked with witchcraft.⁷²

As the Terrible Mother aspect of the Archetypal Female, Eve, in her relation to mankind, shifts from her role as the source of unfallen life to become the source of mortal life. In her unfallen state as Good Mother, Eve was the source of fertility, but in her fallen state as Terrible Mother, she becomes the source of death. In this phase, Eve's function is linked

⁷⁰ Bush, Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry, p. 284.

⁷¹ Flannagan, pp. 50, 209.

⁷² Svendsen, pp. 118-119.

with that of Sin. Sin as an allegorical figure literally gives birth to Death; Eve by eating the fruit, likewise brings death into the world. In eating the fruit, Eve, in the tradition of the terrible devouring Mother Archetype, is devouring all her progeny. Her mouth becomes the maw of death, as "Greedily she ingorg'd without restraint, / And knew not eating Death" (IX. 391-392).

Mythologically, the evil phase of the feminine archetype is represented by Hecate, the terrible goddess of death and witchcraft.⁷³ This phase of the archetype presents the seduction of the young male by the goddess which culminates in castration, dismemberment, and devouring.⁷⁴ Eve in her role as Terrible Mother corresponds to "the goddess who drives mad and fascinates, the seducer and bringer of delight, the sovereign enchantress. The fascination of sex and the drunken orgy culminating in unconsciousness and death are inextricably combined in her."⁷⁵ Although Milton does not mention Hecate specifically, much of the imagery in the episode of Eve's fall, her temptation of Adam, and their orgy following Adam's fall is drawn from witchcraft and presents Eve as the terrible

⁷³ C. G. Jung and C. Kerényi, Essays on a Science of Mythology: The Myths of the Divine Child and the Divine Maiden, rev. ed., trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 110.

⁷⁴ Neumann, Origins, p. 58.

⁷⁵ Neumann, Origins, p. 60.

devouring female. Eve's frenzied state of intoxication produced by eating the fruit corresponds to the frenzied orgiastic rites associated with the Terrible Mother archetype.

The paradox of mortal life, which arises from Eve's correspondence to the antithetical parts of the Female Archetype as the Good Mother and the Terrible Mother, is resolved and mediated in Eve's final correspondence to the synthesizing part of the Female Archetype as the Great Mother. The human and cosmic levels of mythic mediation are linked through Eve's role as Great Mother, as Christ, the means by which God brings good out of evil in the cosmic sphere, becomes incarnate and is born into the human sphere through the seed of woman, Mary, the second Eve.⁷⁶

As Great Mother, within the human level of myth, Eve provides an impetus for Adam's reconciliation with God and a means for the physical regeneration of the human race. In her repentance and reconciliation with Adam, and through Adam, with God, Eve is transformed from the terrible aspect of the Female Archetype into the Great Mother, in which are combined the positive qualities of the Good Mother and the negative qualities

⁷⁶ The tradition of the second Eve is explained and traced by E. O. James, The Cult of the Mother-Goddess (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959), pp. 192-260. Mother Mary Christopher Pecheux, "The Concept of the Second Eve in Paradise Lost," PMLA, 75 (1960), 359-366, notes parallels from the tradition in Milton's presentation of Mary as the second Eve. See also Lawry, p. 121. .

of the Terrible Mother. As the Great Mother, Eve in her repentance cannot simply revert back to her original goodness. The Fall has occurred, and, although its effects can be mitigated by the grace of God and the repentance of man, they cannot be totally obliterated. Although paradise in the form of reunion and reconciliation with God can be obtained through Christ, paradise in the form of Eden and the unfallen state is lost forever. Eve's aspect as Terrible Mother can be mitigated by repentance and she can thereby be transformed into the Great Mother, but she can never within herself alone regain her unfallen state as the Good Mother, the source of unfallen life. Although she remains the source of life, having eaten the apple she has become the source of mortal life, thereby bringing death into the world and linking it inextricably with human fertility.

In Book X, through her contrition, Eve provides Adam with an example that shakes Adam out of his despair and enables him to penitently approach God and be reconciled to God's will. Milton presents Eve in her sorrow and humility as being catalytic in their reconciliation with God. Appropriately, Eve, who was created for God in Adam, does not address her first feelings of penitence to God, but to Adam, an indication that the Fall, despite its evil effects, jarred their relationship back into focus. Adam, in his reconciliation with God, realizes that Eve, although altered by the Fall, will still be a source of fertility in the physical world. Yet, although Adam has been told that the woman's seed will bruise the head of

the serpent, he does not understand the full meaning of this prophecy. Milton, in XI. 12, compares Adam and Eve in their repentance to Deucalion and Pyrrha, the pair from Greek mythology who after the deluge consulted the oracle of Themis and became the source of the restoration of the human race. The allusion to Pyrrha provides a mythical parallel for Eve's attitude toward God—her resolution to fulfill her part in the accomplishment of God's will for man. Eve's words reflect her realization of the irony of her situation as the source of both life and death: "That I who first brought Death on all, am grac't / The source of life . . ." (XI. 168-169).

On a physical level, Eve's seed provides the mediation of life and death. Through the fallen Eve, life and mortality are interlocked inextricably in human existence, for through Eve's fall and the fall of Adam the mode of human existence becomes mortal. Yet within Eve the vehicle for the mediation of the paradox of mortal life is present, for within her womb lie the seeds of all future generations of mankind. Although Eve in her own physical existence has caused herself, in her fall, to be subject to mortality, through her seed, the earthly continuation of life becomes possible in an eternal cycle of life and death. Death is transcended and life passes into the future generation through the seed, as the mother dies in herself only to be reborn in her children. Thus, on the human level of myth, in Paradise Lost, Eve, as the Great Mother, by means of her seed,

mediates the polar extremes of life and death through physical procreation.

Eve's function as the source of physical regeneration is parallel to the function of the Ceres/Proserpina or Demeter/Kore archetype in its relation to vegetative regeneration symbolized by the grain. "The grain-figure," according to C. Kerényi, "is essentially the figure of both origin and end, of mother and daughter; and just because of that it points beyond the individual to the universal and eternal. It is always the grain that sinks to earth and returns, always the grain that is mown down in golden fullness and yet, as fat and healthy seed, remains whole, mother and daughter in one."⁷⁷

Transcending the purely physical means of regeneration, Eve as Great Mother links the human and cosmic levels of myth by providing, through her human fertility, the means for reconciliation between mankind and God and the means which leads to man's spiritual regeneration in Christ. In Paradise Lost, the opposites, life and death, and good and evil, are manifested on two interlocking levels. On a human level, the source of mediation between life and death, and good and evil is the seed of Eve. On the cosmic level, God mediates good and evil by causing good to come from evil by thwarting Satan's efforts and turning evil back upon itself to produce good. Linking the cosmic level and the human level, Christ,

⁷⁷ Kerényi, p. 117.

born of the womb of Mary, the second Eve, is the means by which God brings good out of evil and life out of death. Just as Christ operates in Milton's concept of God's creation as a demiurge, Christ also operates as the mediator of good and evil, and life and death, as the vehicle—the means—by which death and evil are overcome in bringing immortal life out of death.

Mythically, Eve, as an embodiment of the Female Archetype, corresponds to the Ceres/Proserpina or Demeter/Kore figure. Milton twice alludes to the Ceres/Proserpina relationship in his description of Eve. In both allusions, by treating Ceres and Proserpina as one unit, Milton demonstrates his realization that they cannot be separated because they are aspects of the same mythical figure.

The daughter portion of the mythical figure, Proserpina or Kore, corresponds in form and function to the Good Mother, the potential source of fertility, characterized by innocence and fruitfulness as manifested in the unfallen Eve. Yet, the innocence of the Proserpina (Kore) is violated in her abduction by Dis, who takes her into the underworld, where, as an aspect of death, she is manifested as the Hecate.⁷⁸ In this form, she corresponds to Eve who falls deceived, her innocence violated, and who, by the entry of death into her being through her eating of the fruit, as the

⁷⁸ Kerényi, p. 110.

Terrible Mother, transmits death to all generations. Yet, while in her rape Proserpina (Kore) has been transformed temporarily by the violation of her innocence into Hecate, the goddess of death, ultimately, as Ceres (Demeter), through the fruit of her womb she regains herself by giving birth to the Proserpina (Kore). "The goddess becomes a mother, rages and grieves over the Kore who was ravished in her own being, the Kore whom she immediately recovers, and in whom she gives birth to herself again. The idea of the original Mother-Daughter goddess, at root a single entity, is at the same time the idea of rebirth."⁷⁹

Similarly, although Eve is transformed by the violation of her innocence into the Terrible Mother aspect of the Female Archetype, eventually through her fruitfulness and repentance she is transformed into the Great Mother. Through Mary, the second Eve, the seed of woman becomes not only a means of physical rebirth, but a means of spiritual regeneration.

In her role as Great Mother, Eve cannot be separated from Mary as the second Eve. Alone, Eve is merely the source of physical fertility, and alone her seed provides only for the physical continuation of the human race. Viewed as a unit, Eve and Mary are the source of physical regeneration that culminates in spiritual regeneration whereby man through the incarnation of Christ is reunited with God, and, in a spiritual sense, regains the paradise that was lost in the Fall.

⁷⁹ Kerényi, p. 123.

Although in Book X. 989-1006, before their reconciliation with God, Eve suggests sexual abstinence and suicide to divert the curse of death from future generations, Adam rejects her suggestion and reminds Eve of the prophecy that the seed of woman "shall bruise / The Serpent's head" (X. 1031-1032). Yet, it is not until Michael's revelation to Adam in Book XII that Eve's role as Great Mother through her seed and through her relationship to Mary as the second Eve becomes clear, and the importance of Eve's role as Great Mother becomes truly meaningful, a source of hope, both for Adam and for all mankind:

O Prophet of glad tidings, finisher
Of utmost hope! now clear I understand
What oft my steadiest thoughts have searcht in vain,
Why our great expectation should be call'd
The seed of Woman: Virgin Mother, Hail,
High in the love of Heav'n, yet from my Loins
Thou shalt proceed, and from thy Womb the Son
Of God most High; So God with man unites.
(XII. 375-382)

Thus, Adam's hope and the hope of all mankind is restored in the prophecy that through the seed of woman (Eve/Mary) Christ will become incarnate, uniting man with God in Christ. Through Christ, Satan will be defeated, his evil will be turned to good, for through Christ death becomes not the destruction of man, but man's bridge to eternal life. Christ, Michael explains, through death and resurrection fulfills the law and "Annuls thy doom, the death thou should'st have di'd" (XII. 428). Thus, Christ, through his sacrifice, "Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his

strength / Defeating Sin and Death" (XII. 430-431), and transform death from man's doom to a means of transition from mortal to immortal life.

Man's conception of redemption through Christ, the ultimate unfolding of Eve's role as the Great Mother in conjunction with Mary, the second Eve, corresponds to the conception of regeneration transmitted through the Ceres (Demeter)/Proserpina (Kore) figure in the Eleusinian mysteries. The Demeter/Kore archetype conveyed a sense of the unity of life; "the universal principle of life, which is to be pursued, robbed, raped, to fail to understand, to rage and grieve, but then to get everything back and be born again."⁸⁰ The initiate's discovery of the meaning of the Demeter/Kore figure in the Eleusinian mysteries parallels Adam's realization of the ultimate meaning of Eve's function as the embodiment of the seed, which is revealed to him by Michael. In the Eleusinian mysteries, "[o]bjectively, the idea of the goddess regaining her daughter, and therefore herself, flashed on the experient's soul. Subjectively, the same flash of revelation showed in his own continuity, the continued existence of all living things. The not-knowing," Kerényi maintains, "the failure to understand that attached to the figure of the grieving Demeter, ceased. The paradox contained in the living idea—that, in motherhood, death and continuity are one in the losing and finding of Kore—is now resolved."⁸¹ Similarly

⁸⁰ Kerényi, p. 137.

⁸¹ Kerényi, p. 142.

when Adam hears of the birth of Christ through Mary, the second Eve, he realizes, in a flash of wonder, which causes him to exclaim that perhaps the Fall was fortunate, the full importance of Eve's seed, not only as a means of physical regeneration, but ultimately through Christ, as the source of man's spiritual regeneration, man's means of regaining paradise lost.

In Paradise Lost, God, by thwarting Satan's evil and turning evil to good, mediates cosmic good and evil. Christ is the link between God's mediation of good and evil on a cosmic level and Eve's mediation of good and evil, in the human form of life and death, on a physical level. Christ's mediation brings good out of evil by bringing immortal life out of death, thereby linking the human and cosmic levels of mythic mediation. God, through the incarnation of Christ, enters the human sphere and carries His mediation of good and evil into man's sphere of existence, coupling the spiritual mediation of good and evil with the earthly mediation of good and evil, manifested in mortal life. Thus, through the seed of Mary, the second Eve, God brings forth the Christ Incarnate, who mediates between the cosmic and the human spheres. Christ is the means by which God brings good out of evil in relation to man, and the means by which death is truly overcome. Through Christ, death becomes not the end of life, introduced into man's world by Satan in his attempt to thwart God's will and fill Hell with the new race, but a bridge by which man can transcend mortality, and

attain immortal life. Thus Christ ultimately unites the cosmic and human levels of myth in Paradise Lost by mediating both the human paradox of life and death, and the cosmic paradox of good and evil by bringing immortal life out of death and out of apparent evil ultimate good.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Although Milton would not have called Paradise Lost myth, Milton realized that myths convey essential truths which transcend the specific cultural manifestations through which such truths are revealed. "Paradise Lost," Isabel MacCaffrey comments, "does not represent Milton's, or anyone else's, ordinary manner of thinking about the truths of Christianity. . . . What the poem does is to allow us, temporarily, to share a manner of seeing that will capture accurately the outlines of a peculiar kind of reality. . . ." ¹ Milton believed the essential truth of the Genesis account of creation. Yet, as H. R. MacCallum states, Milton "developed a doctrine of scriptural accommodation which held that the Bible adapted eternal and hidden verities to the imagination of man through the symbolic use of images. Believing in the high office of the Christian poet, he concluded that his poetry was also a revelation through sensible images of the truth of God." ²

¹ Isabel G. MacCaffrey, Paradise Lost as "Myth," (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 42.

² H. R. MacCallum, "Milton and Figurative Interpretation of the Bible," University of Toronto Quarterly, 31 (July 1962), 411.

Milton knew, without possessing the technical data that contemporary mythologists, psychologists, and anthropologists have provided, that the phenomena which are today designated as myth and mythic archetypes transmit from generation to generation and culture to culture the essential truths inherent in man's existence. Milton's use of myth and mythic archetypes in Paradise Lost demonstrates his awareness of the importance of these phenomena as means of conveying essential truth. Milton's Paradise Lost, in its embodiment of myth and in its incorporation of mythic archetypes, transcends its cultural relevance as a narrative poem based on the Judeo-Christian account of creation and becomes universal in its application to all humanity. As an expression of human truth, Paradise Lost explains man's mortal mode of existence and, through Eve's archetypal nature, provides for man the hope of rebirth and renewal as a means of overcoming death.

The consideration of Paradise Lost as myth reveals that Paradise Lost exhibits characteristics of myths such as mythic motifs and mythic functions. As myth, Paradise Lost functions as aetiology to answer ontological questions concerning the nature of existence in both the human and cosmic spheres. Paradise Lost as myth, however, involves questions that are paradoxical and unanswerable or inexplicable by normal, logical means of explanation. Thus, Paradise Lost functions as myth to mediate or resolve the paradoxes inherent in the unanswerable questions raised

by the mythic narrative. Such mediation is accomplished by demonstrating the opposing halves of the paradoxes to be complementary rather than antithetical.

Paradise Lost includes two levels of myth, which contain related paradoxes, and which are linked in the mediation of their paradoxes by Eve as a mythic archetype. Paradise Lost contains a charter myth and an origin myth within a cosmogonic myth. On the cosmic level, the cosmogonic myth tells how God created the universe; on the human level, the origin myth tells of man's original creation, and the charter myth tells how he was changed by a catastrophe, the Fall, and how and why he came to exist as he does. The cosmogonic myth establishes the universe as man's frame of reference; the charter myth and origin myth establish, in the mind of man, his relationship to the rest of creation as well as his conception of his own mode of being. In Paradise Lost, both levels of myth involve paradoxes, conditions and situations which are logically irreconcilable.

The cosmic level of myth in Paradise Lost contains the paradox of good and evil. The paradox of good and evil arises from the co-existence of good and evil in a universe created by a God that is totally good. The paradox of good and evil is mediated by Christ, the means by which God brings good out of evil. In the mediation of this paradox, Milton's Paradise Lost reveals that evil as a force is ultimately powerless against good, by demonstrating that God, regardless of the apparent success of

Satan to work evil, is always able to bring about good, making ultimate good come from apparent evil. Thus, although Satan seems successful in having ruined man by tempting him to fall, and thereby introducing death into the world, God's introduction of Christ, as a means by which man might be saved from the fate of death, thwarts Satan's evil and turns it to good.

The human level of myth in Paradise Lost contains the paradox of life and death. On the human level of myth in Paradise Lost, the central paradox is man's mode of existence, mortal life, the question of why man is mortal. From the mediation of this paradox, the combination of life and death in mortal life, all else about man's existence follows.

The paradox of life and death arises from Eve's correspondence to two opposing parts of the Archetypal Female Principle. As an archetype, Eve corresponds to the human aspect of the Archetypal Female Principle. In Paradise Lost, Eve is the human source of the conflicting opposites, life and death. As a manifestation of the three-fold archetype, the archetype of the Good Mother, Terrible Mother, and Great Mother, Eve exhibits within her character the opposing elements which compose the paradox of Paradise Lost, the conflict between life and death, good and evil as expressed on the human level.

Eve's archetypal nature is manifested through images that link her

with attributes of the archetype, such as fertility and death. Her archetypal nature is further enhanced by Milton's metaphorical usage of figures from classical mythology which correspond to phases of the archetype and, in turn, to Eve as she manifests phases of the archetype. Many characters in myth represent aspects of the Female Archetype. Although this archetype, a reflected image of the archetypal contents of man's unconscious, may be given different names as it recurs throughout various cultures, its basic structure, form, and function remain the same. Figures of myth and literature which exhibit these similarities in their form and function have similar meanings and represent variations of this archetype. Eve's importance as a source of paradox in Paradise Lost is amplified by expressing her character not only by direct description and through her words and actions, but through allusions to characters from classical mythology who correspond metaphorically to her various archetypal aspects and who parallel her significance as a mythic archetype.

One of the means by which Paradise Lost accomplishes its primary function as myth—that of the mediation of paradox—is through the archetypal nature of Eve. As the human manifestation of the Archetypal Female Principle, Eve is both the source of paradox and the source of the mediation of paradox. Basic to the concept of the human feminine archetype, Archetypal Woman, is the symbol of the womb as the source of life. As an archetype symbolized by the womb, woman is associated with the

earth, the source of vegetative life. Yet, just as the earth, the womb of nature is the source of life, so too, it is the grave or tomb, the receptacle of death. Likewise, woman is a symbol of both life and death. In her own mortality, woman embodies death, but as a fertile womb, she carries the seed of rebirth within her. As the embodiment of both life and death, woman corresponds to the Good Mother, which emphasizes fertility, the Terrible Mother, which emphasizes death, and the Great Mother, in which the good and terrible aspects are mediated and combined.

Within the context of paradox and mythic resolution of paradox through mediation of the opposites in Paradise Lost, Eve, as a mythic archetype, is herself an embodiment of paradox, as at once a source of evil, having brought death into the world, and yet, a source of ultimate good, for it is through the continuation of her seed that mankind will be regenerated, Christ will be born incarnate, and immortal life will thus become possible for man. As the source of life, the unfallen Eve corresponds to the archetypal Good Mother. As the source of death, Eve in her fall corresponds to the archetypal Terrible Mother. Ironically, through her actions, man loses paradise; yet, through her archetypal significance, she provides the means by which man can regain the paradise which in the Fall he lost.

The paradox of life and death is mediated through Eve's correspondence, after her reconciliation with Adam and their subsequent

reconciliation with God, to the synthesizing phase of the Archetypal Female Principle, the Great Mother, which combines and mediates the two opposing parts of the Female Archetype. As the Good Mother, Eve is the potential source of unfallen life; as the Terrible Mother, she brings death into the world in her fall; but as the Great Mother, she becomes the earthly means of the mediation of the opposites, life and death. In her role as Great Mother, her aspects as Good Mother and Terrible Mother merge to make her not only the immediate source of mortal life and the physical regeneration of the human race, but, eventually, through Mary, the second Eve, and the fruit of her womb, Christ, the source of man's means of attaining immortal life.

On the human level, the paradox of the co-existence of life and death in mortal life is mediated on two interlocking levels. On a physical level, the mediation of life and death is accomplished through the seed of Eve, the means of physical regeneration of the human race. As the source of mortal life, Eve mediates life and death, for, although through her own mortality she has become subject to death, within her womb lie the seed which will renew human life through successive generations. Woman, as the fertile womb, is shown to be the means of physical regeneration. The woman dies in herself, but is reborn through future generations. Yet, Eve's role as Great Mother goes beyond the mediation of life and death through human fertility; for, out of human fertility come not only

successive generations, but the incarnation of Christ, through whom man's doom, death, is transformed into a bridge by which man can move from mortal to immortal life.

On a spiritual level, the mediation of life and death is accomplished through Eve, who, in conjunction with Mary, the second Eve, is the source of Christ Incarnate, who turns death into a means for man to enter eternal life. This mediation links the cosmic and human levels of myth as the means of mediation in the cosmic sphere, Christ, becomes incarnate and enters the human sphere in the seed of the womb of Mary, the second Eve. Eve, in conjunction with Mary, the second Eve, as the Great Mother provides the means by which the mediation of the cosmic and human levels of paradox in Paradise Lost are linked, through the incarnation of Christ. Thus, Eve links the physical and spiritual phases of the human level of mythic mediation, and, in turn, provides the means by which the mediation of the cosmic and human levels of myth are linked.

Christ, born of the womb of Mary, the second Eve, unites the human and cosmic levels of myth in Paradise Lost by bringing life out of death, and out of evil, ultimate good. Thus, Eve, the immediate source of mortal life in the physical regeneration of the human race, through Mary, the second Eve, becomes the eventual source of Christ, and thereby provides an essential step in the divine plan by which God ordained that man might regain paradise lost.

The study of Paradise Lost as myth and Eve as mythic archetype, rather than contributing a new discovery to Milton scholarship, provides a new perspective through which to view the poem. Milton criticism has long acknowledged Milton's purpose in Paradise Lost as an effort to "justify the ways of God to men," as well as Eve's role in the poem as the source of unfallen fertility, the means by which death enters the human mode of existence, the source of the physical continuation of the human race, and, in conjunction with Mary, the second Eve, the source of spiritual regeneration through the incarnation of Christ. Yet, approaching Paradise Lost as myth enables the reader to view the poem as more than a poetic rendering of the Judeo-Christian account of creation. Viewed as myth, Paradise Lost exhibits a dimension beyond its cultural frame of reference, a dimension of universal significance which arises from its mythic background and which allows the poem to transcend a meaning limited to the Judeo-Christian tradition and to achieve universal human relevance as an expression of humanly perceived truth about the nature of existence.

Approaching Paradise Lost as myth involves a shift in perspective that emphasizes the universal truths expressed in the poem rather than the specific cultural means through which the truths are manifested. Viewing Paradise Lost as myth and Eve as mythic archetype allows the poem and Eve within the poem to be seen as specific cultural expressions which provide a mythic explanation of man's mode of existence and a means of

resolving in the mind of man the paradox inherent in mortal life. The wide appeal of Paradise Lost for readers of several generations is perhaps based on its treatment of universals, the concepts, problems, and emotions common to all men. An analysis of Paradise Lost as myth stresses that the cultural manifestations are the means of expression in Paradise Lost, and that beyond the individual cultural manifestations lie the universal meanings—the human validity—the explanation of the nature of existence and the resolution of the paradoxes which are inherent in man's world.

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