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Forbidden Fruit: Dryden's The State of Innocence And Fall of Man, An Operatic Version of Paradise Lost

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FORBIDDEN FRUIT: DRYDEN'S THE STATE OF INNOCENCE AND FALL OF
MAN, AN OPERATIC VERSION OF PARADISE LOST

by

DEVANE KING MIDDLETON

(Under the Direction of Candy B. K. Schille)

ABSTRACT

Ever since Dryden published his opera The State of Innocence, critics have speculated about his reasons for making a stage adaptation of Milton's Paradise Lost. The fact that Dryden worked for Milton in Cromwell's government may have been a factor. Dryden's Puritan indoctrination during childhood, followed by influences from a royalist schoolmaster in his teenage years, makes the answer to the question somewhat more complex, as does the fact that the play, its source a Puritan epic adapted by an Anglican royalist poet, is dedicated to the Catholic bride of James, Duke of York and brother to Charles II. Throughout the two works, theological, sociological, and political differences abound, but it is Dryden's stage characters that are the primary vehicles through which he portrays his divergence from Milton's epic. Lucifer, the ultimate evil, is in rebellion against Christ the King, and, while Adam ponders the dilemma of free will versus preordination, the ever-narcissistic Eve traipses through the garden toward her meeting with the serpent. This meeting, being both preordained and a result of Eve's (and Lucifer's) free will, brings about the fall of Man. Thus, Dryden and Milton take the Old Testament story and transform it into a vehicle for their own political, social, and theological agendas.

INDEX WORDS: Dryden, Milton, Free will, Paradise Lost, The State of Innocence, Hobbes, Bramhall, Restoration drama, Charles II, Cromwell, Interregnum, Catholic apologists, Reason, Religion, Adam, Eve, Lucifer, Satan

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DEDICATION

For the four ladies in my life: Linda, Greta, Molly, and Mary.

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CHAPTER 1
IN THE SHADOW OF MILTON

In Dryden's "Apology" to his heroic opera The State of Innocence, he praises his source, Milton's Paradise Lost, as "one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime POEMS, which this Age or Nation has produc'd," and he prefaces this remark with the statement that he would be "sorry" should "anyone take the pains to compare them together" (86). Nevertheless, it is impossible to read Dryden's play without making such a comparison (considering the impact of Paradise Lost through the ages). In fact, finding an anthology of the early modern era that excludes Milton's work is nearly impossible, while Dryden's play, for the most part, remains neglected by many readers and most critics. The relatively few reactions to the heroic opera have ranged from condemnation to praise, from satiric attack to panegyric, and from neglect to intense interest. While a twentieth century critic calls the play "an offensive vulgarization" (Ferry 21), one of Dryden's contemporaries extols its worth as the "best POEM [. . .] [Dryden] ever wrought" (Lee 4). Yet some wonder why he ever attempted his revision of John Milton's iconic classic at all, hence creating a work that would forever fall under the looming shadow of the original, a shadow that began to show itself even in the criticism of the play by some of Dryden's contemporaries.

Of his contemporaries, Andrew Marvell was one for whom Dryden had little or no respect (a sentiment that seems to have been mutually based on their opposing political views and Marvell's distaste for Dryden's patron, the Duke of York [Winn 264]), although their backgrounds were quite similar: both had grandfathers who had been imprisoned for refusing the Forced Loan of 1626; both had fathers who had attended

Emmanuel; both were graduates of Trinity (Winn 82). Also, as employees of Cromwell's government they had marched together, along with their supervisor John Milton, in Cromwell's state funeral (Winn 80). It is Marvell who makes the first critical attack against Dryden's play in his preface to the 1674 edition of Paradise Lost:

Or if a work so infinite he [Milton] spanned,
Jealous I was that some less skilful hand
(Such as disquiet always what is well,
And by ill imitating would excel)
Might hence presume the whole creation's day
To change in scenes, and show it in a play. (17-22)

In expressing his admiration of Milton, Marvell uses the opportunity to attack Dryden. Marvell's statement that he is jealous, meaning "suspiciously careful or watchful" ("Jealous" def. 3), is directed at Dryden in an attempt to protect Milton's work. However, Marvell's concern is not in reference to any published work (Dryden's play was not published until 1677), but rather an attack on the "many Copies of it being dispers'd abroad" that Dryden speaks of in his "Apology" (86). There is no doubt that the "less skilful hand" belongs to Dryden, nor is there any doubt as to which "play" Marvell is referring. Dryden's work, according to Marvell, is an "ill" imitation of Milton's excellence. But the chiding does not stop there, as Marvell concludes:

Well might'st thou scorn thy readers to allure
With tinkling rhyme, of thy own sense secure;
While the Town-Bayes writes all the while and spells,
And like a pack-horse tires without his bells.

Their fancies like our pushy points appear;
The poets tag them, we for fashion wear.
I too, transported by the mode, offend,
And while I meant to *praise* thee, must *commend*.
Thy verse created like thy theme sublime,
In number, weight, and measure, needs not rhyme. (45-54)

Milton writes his blank verse with sublimity while Dryden writes “like a pack-horse” that “tires without his bells.” Dryden is also identified as the “Town-Bayes,” an obvious allusion to George Villiers’ play The Rehearsal, a satirical piece that portrays Dryden, in the character of “Mr. Bayes,” as a talentless buffoon. Marvell continues to admit that even though he is “transported by the mode” of rhyming as well, he nonetheless bitterly attacks Dryden for such an offense, and goes on to satirize the conversation in which Milton gave permission for Dryden’s revisions, saying to the younger poet: “[. . .] it seems you have a mind to Tagg my Points, and you have my Leave to Tagg ‘em” (John Aubrey, qtd in Dearing 320). Yet Dryden, according to Marvell, cheapens the story of the Fall with his rhymes or “tag[s],” whereas Milton brings the reader to a sense of the sublime power of God through his blank verse and epic poetry.

However, there were contemporaries of Dryden who thought differently from Marvell. One of those, Nathaniel Lee, wrote a poem commending Dryden’s “Poem of Paradise” (Lee 537), a panegyric in which Lee begins by insisting that his words are not mere flattery:

This fairest labor of your teeming brain
I wou’d embrace, but not with flatt’ry stain;

Something I wou'd to you vast Virtue raise,
But scorn to dawb it with a fulsome praise;
That wou'd but blot the Work I wou'd commend,
And shew a Court-Admirer, not a Friend. (5-10)

Here we see echoes of Horace's warning in the Art of Poetry against poets accepting vain compliments from admirers, especially those indebted to them (74). However, in this case it is the flatterer himself who is denying insincerity and vanity. Undeniably, Lee was a friend and collaborator of Dryden's. In fact, in 1678 their collaboration on the play Oedipus would draw the two poets into the controversy of the Popish Plot (Winn 311-314). In his commendatory poem, Lee makes it his primary purpose is to come to his friend's defense against the attacks made by Marvell, but we must not rule out the possibility that Lee truly believed The State of Innocence to be Dryden's best work (4).

While Lee does give a modicum of homage to "the dead Bard" (11), as he calls Milton, his true praise is for Dryden:

He [Milton] roughly drew, on an old fashion'd ground,
A Chaos, for no perfect World was found,
Till through the heap, your mighty Genius shin'd;
His was the Golden Ore which you refin'd. (14-17)

Though Milton is the "Golden Ore," he stands on the "old fashion'd ground" of Cromwell's reign. Drawing upon memories of the Civil War, Lee reminds the reader of the "Chaos" of those times in which the Puritan Parliament tried – and failed – to form England into a "perfect World." It is the Restoration "Genius" of Dryden that shines and

refines, and it is Restoration culture and politics that open the playhouses for such plays to flourish.

With the opening of the playhouses, the role of women, both on stage and off, begins to change, and, during Charles' Restoration, women were first allowed to perform on stage. Hence, the stage coquette was born. In this environment, Dryden creates an Eve who, while coquettish, is also a refined court lady. While many critics object to Dryden's transformation of Eve, Lee sees no problem with the courtly image:

You took her thence: to Court this Virgin brought
Drest her with gemms, new weav'd her hard spun thought
And softest Language, sweetest manners taught.
Till from a Comet she a star did rise [. . .] (20-23)

The "Court" is certainly that of Charles II and the soft language and sweet manners those of an aristocrat that has overtaken the "hard spun thought" of the Puritan age. But Lee goes even further with his panegyric, claiming it is Dryden's improvements that make Milton's epic a true classic:

Betwixt ye both is fram'd a nobler piece,
Than ere was drawn in *Italie* or *Greece*.
Thou from his source of thoughts ev'n Souls dost bring
As smileing gods, from sullen Saturn spring. (26-28)

The connection of thoughts to Milton relates to the "hard spun thought" of the previous passage, and it is Dryden who brings forth the "Souls" as "smileing gods." Milton is "sullen Saturn" from which the gaiety of Dryden's revision springs.

However, neither Lee's flattery nor his royalist polemic is complete at this point.

He brings it all together near the end of the poem:

On then O mightiest of the inspir'd men,
Monarch of Verse; new Theams employ thy Pen,
The troubles of Majestick *CHARLES* set down,
Not *David* vanquish'd more to reach a Crown,
Praise him, as *Cowly* did that *Hebrew* King,
Thy Theam's as great, do thou as greatly sing. (46-51)

While urging Dryden to write verses praising Charles II as a new King David (a statement that looks uncannily forward four years to Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*), Lee's royal panegyric verse raises Dryden to the level of "Monarch" himself. In this poem, Lee, through his praise of *The State of Innocence*, seeks to put to rest both Milton and the Puritan cause.

But Sir Walter Scott had no such desire to bury Milton, or Milton's Puritan cause when he wrote the preface to the play in his 1808 collection of Dryden's works, and he is one of the first to wonder at "the motives by which [Dryden] was guided in hazarding such an attempt" (95). Scott goes on to speculate:

Had the subject been of a nature which admitted its being actually represented, we might conceive that Dryden, who was under engagements to the theatre, with which it was not easy to comply, might have been desirous to shorten his own labour [. . .] (95)

While Scott is unable to answer the question as to why Dryden wrote the work and insinuates that Dryden may have been merely lazy, his major issue with the poem is its language as compared to that of Milton. As he states,

The structure and diction of this opera, as it is somewhat improperly termed, being rather a dramatic poem, strongly indicate the taste of Charles the Second's reign, for what was ingenious, acute, and polished, in preference to the simplicity of the true sublime. (96)

The Restoration is obviously a problematic era for Scott. While Milton's language is described as having "majestic simplicity," Dryden's diction "seems misplaced" (97). In his distaste for Restoration, and Dryden's, diction, Scott refers to Lee's panegyric as expressing "the heretical opinion" common to the time (97).

Insisting that the work "was intended for perusal only" due to the "*costume* of our first parents," Scott claims Dryden's stage directions fall short of "the terrific and beautiful descriptions of Milton" (96-97):

What idea, except burlesque, can we form of the expulsion of the fallen angels from heaven literally represented by their tumbling down upon the stage? or what feelings of terror can be excited by the idea of an opera hell, composed of pasteboard and flaming rosin? If these follies were not actually to be produced before our eyes, it could serve no good purpose to excite the image of them in our imaginations. (97)

Nevertheless, as Vinton A. Dearing, editor of the California Dryden collection, concludes, the play was meant for stage production. Furthermore, Adam and Eve had been portrayed on stage for centuries, and, in the stage direction that Scott calls

“inconvenient,” we are told of an angel making an entrance “with a Woman habited like Eve” (3.3). “Habited” implies a costume, and the mere presence of stage direction argues that the intent of the poet was to produce the play in the theater, something that, despite Scott’s conclusion to the contrary, would have been possible with the machinery at the time. Dearing tells us that during the years immediately after the opera’s publication, we find “an increasing use of machines at Drury Lane” (323-324). Citing several examples, Dearing argues the possibility of the opera’s production:

One stage direction in [Nathaniel Lee’s] Sophonisba is “The Scene drawn, discovers a Heaven of blood, two Suns, Spirits in Battle, Arrows shot to and fro in the Air: Cryes of yielding Persons, &c.”; another is “Rosalinda rises in a Chair pale with a wound on her breast, two Cupids descend and hang weeping over her.” Although Rosalinda and the Cupids may have been lay figures, machinery of at least an elementary kind was now in place, and effects like the opening display of The State of Innocence were possible. (324)

However, Scott’s problem with the play goes beyond its supposed impossibility to be performed. In addition to his belief that it was never meant for the stage, Scott states that Dryden fails to reach the level of the sublime that Milton reaches in his poem, and, even worse, Dryden displays in “our first parents [. . .] some of the false and corrupted taste of the court of Charles” (97-98). Again, he is expressing his distaste for Restoration culture, and his bias against the reign of Charles II and the society of Charles’ court clouds his ability to review Dryden’s play objectively.

Anne Ferry, a twentieth-century critic, is even less impressed with the play. In the opening chapter of her book Milton and the Miltonic Dryden, she calls it an “offensive vulgarization” of Milton’s work (21). Her complaint is that “[t]he vast and mysterious world of pre-history evoked by Milton’s poem is rendered in the current clichés of Restoration drama and satire” (21). Her problem seems to be that she fails to get beyond Absalom and Achitophel as the greatest adaptation of Miltonic themes that Dryden produced and uses The State of Innocence as a comparative tool to show the superiority of the former to the latter. In fact, her only references to the drama in her book are used to show how well Dryden’s poetic style shows through in the biblical allegory as opposed to the drama. Her complaints include that Dryden “in no way idealizes unfallen Adam and Eve” (89) and that “he makes no distinction between the created nature of Adam and Eve and their condition after the Fall” (90).

However, Dryden is writing for the stage, and his characters’ development resides in the genre of drama, not epic, as Milton’s does. Dearing claims that the characters become, in Dryden’s hands, “comparatively conventional stage presences, drawn with firm and broad strokes” making a “more immediate and definite impression on the reader than Milton’s more fully modeled and complex epic figures” (Dearing 326). However “conventional” Adam and Eve are in Dryden’s hands, it is true that they make an immediate and definite impression. This is what drama does; it condenses and intensifies both story lines and characters.

Indeed, Dryden does create moving characters. For example, his Adam is seen questioning the angels about free will and finally being silenced by decree, to which he

plaintively responds, “Hard state of life! since Heav’n fore-knows my will, / Why am I not ty’d up from doing ill?” (4.1.113-114).

In addition, his Eve is a stage coquette and a seeker of power. She is Milton’s “rustic Maid” that Dryden has brought “to Court” and dressed “with gems” (Lee 18-21). Interestingly, Dryden never shows her tasting the fruit on stage, but he shows her to us after the Fall, emphasizing her transformation. In comparison to Adam, she feels she could be the “Sovereign now” (5.1.9); she thinks of “Empire” (5.1.11) and making “his manhood bow” (5.1.10). At this point, motivated by jealousy, she determines to have Adam join her in sin; what, she wonders

If I should dye, and he above provide
Some other *Eve*, and place her in my stead?
Shall she possess his love, when I am dead?
No; he shall eat, and dye with me, or live:
Our equal crimes shall equal fortune give. (5.1.12-16)

Contrary to Ferry’s argument, there are distinctions between the un-fallen and fallen states of Adam and Eve and Dryden presents the distinctions quite clearly. His Adam and Eve are innocent at the beginning of the play, and they are transformed to a fallen, though not necessarily degenerate, state by the end.

Later twentieth century criticism takes a less severe view of the play. However, while investigating issues inherent within the play itself, many critics still consider Paradise Lost the better of the two works. As with earlier criticism, any analysis of the play must, as Dryden feared, compare it to the original. Morris Freedman, in his article “The ‘Tagging’ of Paradise Lost: Rhyme in Dryden’s State of Innocence,” researches the

techniques Dryden uses to turn the epic into a stage play. As would be expected, the play condenses the original from 10,565 lines to 1,400 lines (18), and, even though it was never performed, the play was a literary success for the author. As Freedman states, “the adaptation was immensely popular. It went through more printings during Dryden’s lifetime [. . .] than did any of his other plays” (18). Although admitting the financial success of the work, Freedman, like many critics, considers the drama inferior to Paradise Lost, calling Dryden’s work “a downgrading” of the original (18). But he does involve us in Dryden’s technique of “condensation” that Freedman calls the “result of dramatic requirements” (18). Thus, Dryden takes sixteen lines of Milton and condenses them into nine (19). However, Dryden does not merely condense and downgrade. Freedman claims that, at times, Dryden’s verse is superior to Milton’s, citing as one example Dryden’s “Annihilation were to lose heaven more / We are not quite exiled where thought can soar,” which is his rendition of Milton’s spare “To be no more, sad cure, for who would lose / Though full of pain, this intellectual being” (qtd in Freedman 19). Freedman admits Dryden makes some improvements in his dramatization of the original, but, while recognizing and appreciating Dryden’s style in the play, he concludes that Milton’s work continues to stand above Dryden’s.

D. W. Jefferson, one of the critics to take the play seriously, writes about Dryden’s style especially as it pertains to character development. He utilizes Milton’s phrase that Satan becomes “stupidly good” when first seeing Eve (*PL* 9.465), “while Dryden’s devil envisages a special sexual gratification at her expense” (364). For a poet with a “special delight in mixing the absurd and the grandiose, Lucifer was irresistible material” (364). Eve seems equally irresistible, according to Jefferson, as he describes the

passage where Adam first encounters the “newly created Eve” (361). Adam proposes to “teach both himself and her” about sexual love (361), but Eve responds with “female resistance” “in the spirit of courtly love” (361):

Somewhat forbids me, which I cannot name;
For ignorant of guilt, I fear not shame:
But some restraining thought, I know not why,
Tells me, you long should beg, I long deny. (2.3.52-55)

Jefferson describes this passage as “humorously foreshadowing [. . .] the future disharmonies of the sexes” but it is still to him “innocent play” (362). One point he makes is that Dryden’s pair “give none of their time to worshipping their Maker” and that “apart from husbandry their main interests are sexual” (367).

Although he finds the characterization interesting, however, he goes on to criticize the poetry in the play as having the quality of “prettiness,” an effect that “is somewhat reductive, pleasing rather than moving, and occasionally with hints of mild absurdity” (367). “Prettiness” is his description of these lines by Raphael concerning the painless death for fallen man (367): “Gently they lay ‘em down, as ev’ning sheep / On their own woolly fleeces, softly sleep” (5.4.212-213). In his final analysis, Jefferson states that Dryden has “an art which can find room for the incongruities within his personality, which he indulges with considerable skill” (367-368). However, his skill, in Jefferson’s estimation, fails to reach the sublime (as Milton’s poem is often described) but rather remains in the realm of the aforementioned “prettiness” (367).

There are critics, however, who consider Dryden’s poetry in the play as deserving of better treatment than Jefferson gives it. As Jean Gagen states the issue,

On more than one occasion, Dryden has been accused of “bad taste” and “effrontery” in debasing a “noble poem.” More often the play has been ignored because of the assumption that it is not worthy of sustained comparison with Paradise Lost. Nevertheless, from time to time reputable critics *have* directed some serious critical attention to the play, and as a result, much that is helpful in understanding the intellectual background of the play and Dryden’s aims in composing it has appeared in print. (135)

Gagen goes on to say that the “verse of the play” has received “some genuine plaudits, even from those who have [. . .] little respect for much else in the play” (135). Despite such praise, Gagen seems quite surprised “that the changes which Dryden has introduced into his portrayal of Adam and Eve have been almost totally ignored” (136). Nonetheless, her final analysis returns to Milton:

The State of Innocence is not an unrecognized masterpiece.

Nevertheless, Dryden’s portraits of Adam and Eve certainly deserve attention, for they are among the most interesting and paradoxical features of a paradoxical play, one which is indeed worthy of a sustained comparison with Paradise Lost. (147)

In accord with other late twentieth century critics, she recognizes the power of Dryden’s characterization. Likewise, Louis Martz says it is in Dryden’s characters (particularly that of Lucifer) that Dryden distinguishes his work from Milton’s (185). According to Martz, “Dryden avoids what he seems to have regarded as major flaws in Paradise Lost,” including, among others, that “the Devil is the hero, instead of Adam” (185). Thus, we see the reasons for Dryden’s revisions. As we will see with Satan and Lucifer in Chapter

II, Dryden revises Paradise Lost with the thought of “succeeding where Milton had failed,” and, therefore, Dryden’s revisions are a result of his objections to some of Milton’s characterizations and his use of blank verse for a heroic epic (Dearing 342); hence, his use of heroic couplets and the repainting of the characters.

In spite of a more sympathetic view of the drama by modern critics, Dryden’s fear that the two works would be forever locked in comparison has shown to be prophetic (Dryden “Apology” to Innocence 86). However, there are differences in the two works that should be investigated without the traditional hierarchical view. There are political, social, and theological differences between the two authors that are defined, in Dryden’s work, through the three major characters. Dryden’s royalist political views are evident in the personage of Lucifer, a character whose rebellion against God and Christ embodies the presumed sinfulness of the rebellious subjects who clamored for the execution of Charles I; Dryden’s Eve, in her desire for equality with Adam, represents the narcissistic, power seeking, Restoration coquettes that populated not only the stages of the newly opened playhouses, but the royal court as well; and his Adam diverges from Milton’s in the theological discourse over free will. Indeed, Dryden’s Adam questions the wisdom of such an idea in a scene that, while stopping all action on the stage, remains intriguing. These differences cannot be fully brought into the critical discourse unless we dispense with the view that Dryden’s play must always be compared for quality with Milton’s poem. The play can, and should, be allowed to stand on its own merits. Whether or not the play is an “unrecognized masterpiece” (Gagen 147) remains an item for debate and will remain so as long as the original maintains its standing in the literary canon. However, Dryden is a great canonical figure in his own right, and to dismiss The State of

Innocence as merely an inferior work that Dryden should never have attempted is a mistake. It is more than a vulgarization of Paradise Lost, and it is time we allowed Dryden's work to step out from Milton's shadow.

CHAPTER 2

LUCIFER : A ROYALIST VISION

Lucifer, for Dryden, was an irresistible vehicle to present the royalist view that considers any rebellion against the Crown a sin. At the time he was writing The State of Innocence, Dryden would have subscribed to what had been written a century before in the Anglican document An Homily Against Disobedience and Willful Rebellion, which proclaims “the first author of [. . .] rebellion [. . .] was Lucifer” (346). Rebellion is denounced as “the root of all vices and mother of all mischiefs,” while obedience is extolled as “the principal virtue of all virtues.” Going further, we are told “that kings and princes, as well the evil as the good, do reign by God’s ordinance and that subjects are bound to obey them.” Although composed as the Crown’s response to the Northern Rebellion of 1569 (345-346), the Homily would have been pertinent to the adherents of the Restoration and, certainly, to a staunch royalist like Dryden.

But to call Dryden a staunch royalist, while true, is a simplification of his complex political thought and ignores the path he took to reach that position. Indeed, his Puritan childhood upbringing might have suggested his political thought to be more in line with such exhortations as Milton’s A Defence of the People of England, which states that “free popular assemblies are of God and may therefore compel the compliance of their kings or cast them off” (qtd. in Zwicker 40). However, the Parliamentary gentry from whom Dryden sprang were deeply conservative and quite removed from the ideas held by the radicals who executed Charles I (Winn 10). Their conservatism included a “desire to maintain position and property,” and “a sense of themselves [. . .] as ‘above’ the common people” (Winn 10-11). Therefore Dryden’s parents, adhering to the

conservative belief that “the greater the childe is” the greater the need “for him to be brought up in learning, and in good literature,” would have held his need for a sound education foremost in their minds (Winn 11).

His education included a stay at the Westminster School under Headmaster Richard Busby, who had attained his appointment in 1638 partly due to his royalist sentiments, yet was retained by the Parliamentary committee because of his sheer excellence (Winn 38-39). Evidently, the committee considered Busby’s academic credentials as far more important than any political thoughts he may have impressed upon the young students. Thus Dryden, by spending his formative teenage years under the tutelage of the royalist headmaster, would have certainly fallen under the influence of Busby’s political ideals, and, even after attending the Puritan-controlled Trinity College in his young adulthood (Winn 61), Dryden still held to the royalist politics of his old headmaster, a position that is evident in his later writings both before and after his election as Poet Laureate to the Court of Charles II (Winn 192).

But Charles’ court was not the first court for which Dryden labored in his career. In 1657, Dryden obtained, with the help of his relative, Sir Gilbert Pickering, an appointment with Cromwell’s court, quite possibly, along with Marvell, in the office of Milton, the Latin Secretary (Winn 79-80). Although the Latin Secretary himself was totally blind by 1652 and stayed home most of the time, Dryden, who marched with Milton in Cromwell’s funeral, presumably did meet the poet in the office (Winn 81). However, we have no record of their relations during this time, and, as Winn states: “Milton was fifty and famous; Dryden was twenty-seven and unknown” (81). Therefore, their relationship was most likely distant and formal (Winn 81). Dryden was obviously

impressed with Milton, and, even as Poet Laureate under Charles II, “he never attacked his old supervisor, as some gloating Royalists did in 1660; his references to Milton throughout his career are respectful” (Winn 81). In 1669, after receiving a copy of Paradise Lost from Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, Dryden responded: “that Poet has cutt us all out” (qtd in Winn 81), a sentiment he reinforces in his “Apology” to The State of Innocence (86).

Even though Dryden had great respect for Milton in general and for Paradise Lost in particular, he was not afraid to attack what he considered the poem’s greatest weakness, namely that in his estimation Milton makes Satan the hero of the work (Dryden Æneis 276). He also felt that Milton “creeps along sometimes, for above an Hundred lines together” and that Milton’s “antiquated words” create a “perpetual harshness of [. . .] sound” (Sylvæ 17). With these flaws in mind, Dryden sets out to remedy Milton’s failures, and, although critics disagree over the success of his language, nonetheless, no one has supposed Dryden’s Lucifer as the hero of the opera.

It is through the character Lucifer that Dryden’s divergent political agenda is portrayed. Dryden’s Lucifer has no problem equating God, and himself, with earthly kings. As Marcie Frank explains,

The ease with which Dryden’s Lucifer refers to “kings” as the paradigm of power contrasts sharply with Milton’s Satan’s indirect critical gesture towards God as “he who reigns.” Dryden’s royalism informs his revision of Milton’s Satan and his acceptance of monarchy as the model for divine rule. (48)

While Dryden's Lucifer does not directly name God as king, he does, through his methods for developing a government in hell (1.1), reinforce the royalist belief that the monarchy is not only ordained by God, but also built upon God's model for ruling the universe. This argument is carried forth in An Homily Against Disobedience and Willful Rebellion:

And for that similitude that is between the heavenly monarchy and earthly kingdoms well governed, our savior Christ in sundry parables saith that the kingdom of heaven is resembled unto a man a king, and as the name of the king is very often attributed and given unto God in the Holy Scriptures, so doth God himself in the same Scriptures sometime vouchsafe to communicate his name with earthly princes, terming them gods. (348)

God relates other princes to himself by calling them gods, and Christ, in his parables makes the "similitude" between earthly and heavenly kingdoms. Hence, rebellion against an earthly monarch is rebellion against the Almighty himself and equal to the sin of Lucifer. Therefore, Dryden's Lucifer, while having striking similarities to Milton's Satan, diverges from him because each author is presenting a demonic government that is a perversion of his individual vision of the site of political power. While Milton's demons all meet like a Parliament in the newly built Pandemonium, Dryden's ruling demons are an elite few who must meet in private for, as Beëlzebub says, "'tis not fit / [. . .] / [. . .] Th' Ignoble Crowd of Vulgar Devils hear" (1.1.77-80). Thus, while Milton's demons all gather in a debate consisting of long speeches, Dryden's demons deliberate the Fall of Man in a private court attended by a select few. Lucifer, for Dryden, is a usurper to the

throne motivated by his arrogant feelings that he, as a divine creature endowed with free will, has an innate right to place himself equal to God.

But let us first look at Milton's ideas on angelic government, especially that of the government in hell. In fact, he did believe in a hierarchy amongst the angels, both good as well as evil, and that they maintained their places within that hierarchy. In his work on Christian Doctrine, Milton states what he considers a Biblically sound view of the relationship between Satan and the fallen angels:

The devils have their prince too: Matt. xii. 24: *Beelzebub prince of devils*, similarly Luke xi. 15; Matt. xxv. 41: *for the devil and his angels*; Rev. xii. 9: *that great dragon and his angels*.

They also keep their ranks: Col. ii. 15: *having plundered principalities and powers*; Eph. vi. 12: *against powers and principalities*.
(413).

While this coincides with the divine model that the royalists endorsed, Milton decried applying it to human government. Milton's beliefs ran closer to those of the early Old Testament that God was the king of the nation and that the choosing of an earthly monarch was a rejection of God (I Samuel 8.7). With these beliefs in mind and in response to General George Monk's address to the parliament suggesting that the republican government would not endure, Milton published his treatise The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, arguing against those who wished "to put our necks again under kingship, as was made use of by the Jews to return back to Egypt" (395). The treatise, being a defense of "The good old [republican] Cause (396), concludes, in part with

But I trust I shall have spoken persuasion to abundance of sensible and ingenuous men; to some, perhaps, whom God may raise of these stones to become children of reviving liberty; and may reclaim, though they seem now choosing them a captain back for Egypt, to bethink themselves a little, and consider whither they are rushing; to exhort this torrent also of the people not to be so impetuous, but to keep their due channel; (396)

The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, published just prior to Charles II's return to power, added to the troubles Milton experienced soon after the Restoration. Although originally listed in the Indemnity Bill for special punishment (a euphemism for execution), when the bill was passed on the 29th of August 1660, "Milton did not appear as one of the exceptions on any ground or in any of the grades" (Masson 342-343). Despite his reprieve, anyone listed as an exception to the Indemnity Bill would be destined for the gallows. However, as Masson explains, Milton "was in some legal danger to as late as December 1660" (343). At that time he was arrested by the sergeant-at-arms even though his "special prosecution ordered against him by the Commons had been quashed by the Indemnity Bill" (345). After Milton's complaint against the "sergeant-at-arms for demanding exorbitant fees for his release," the House arranged for his release (343). Upon being released, Milton soon retired to his Jewin Street home where he wrote the bulk of Paradise Lost (345). We see the effects of these events upon him "when he tells us how, by the Divine help, he had been able to persevere undauntedly" (343). Hence, in Book VII we hear that he is

[. . .] though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues;

In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
Purples the east: [. . .] (*PL* 7.25-30)

Whether or not the “evil days” of the Restoration and his subsequent persecution as “an infamous outcast [. . .] and regicide who had, by too great clemency, been left unchanged” (Masson 343) had an effect on his portrayal of satanic government remains unknown; what is known is that Milton wrote the bulk of Paradise Lost after these events, and as Scott Elledge, the editor of the Norton edition of Paradise Lost, states,

The five New Testament titles, Thrones, Dominions (or Dominations), Virtues, Powers, and Principalities (or Princedoms), which Satan was so fond of rolling off his tongue when addressing his followers, are all words for power and authority, and all the angels in Paradise Lost, in heaven and hell, seem to live in societies where everyone has a title, a province, and a responsibility to a superior lord and ultimately to a king, but nothing quite that explicit appears in Paradise Lost. (467).

Though there is no explicit king of hell, Milton does place his Satan “[h]igh on a throne of royal state” (*PL* 2.1), and his fellow demons often address him as “Prince” (*PL* 1.128). But, “Prince” is a term used for all the demons, as is shown in Beëlzebub’s speech describing the demons’ newly fallen state:

“Thrones and imperial Powers, offspring of heav’n
Ethereal Virtues; or these titles now
Must we renounce, and changing style be called

Princes of hell?" (PL 2.310-313)

Satan, therefore, as a Prince among Princes, rules through the manipulation of the parliamentary process. His skillful political machinations grant him the position he desires, that of leaving hell to execute the Fall of Man. He begins by asking the demons

[. . .] But first whom shall we send

In search of this new world, whom shall we find

Sufficient? (PL 2.402-404)

To which he receives no answer:

Astonished: none among the choice and prime

Of those heav'n warring champions could be found

So hardy as to proffer or accept

Alone the dreadful voyage; (PL 2.423-426)

The demons, having voted for a war of deceit (PL 2.389) and an attack on God's new creature Man, are fearful of the peril of the "dreadful voyage"; therefore, they leave the opportunity open for Satan, who humbly accepts:

"[. . .] Wherefore do I assume

These royalties, and not refuse to reign,

Refusing to accept as great a share

Of hazard as of honor, due alike

To him who reigns, and so much to him due

Of hazard more, as he above the rest

High honored sits?" (PL 2.450-456)

His “high honor” and “royalties” appear to be granted to him by the fallen deities over whom he rules. While the entire process looks exceedingly democratic, we are nonetheless positive that Satan has the situation under his control. It is his manner of rule that makes Satan’s reign over the demons a perversion of Milton’s idea of parliamentary government.

Dryden, however, has no problem with an explicit kingdom of hell. Therefore, he presents his Lucifer as a royal prince who reigns tyrannically over his subjects, portraying a form of government that is quite different from Milton’s. As Frank explains: “Dryden shows the fallen angels in a council that is not a parliament but a cabal” (47), and while Milton’s Satan appears “momentarily modest” at accepting the risk of investigating Paradise (48), Dryden’s Lucifer is more direct in his manner and obvious in his motives:

Belial. Great is th’ advantage, great the hazards are.

Some one (but who that task dares undertake?)

Of this new Creature must discovery make. [. . .]

Moloch. This Glorious Enterprise-----[*Rising Up*]

Lucifer. -----Rash Angel, stay;

[*Rising, and laying his Scepter on Moloch his head*]

That Palm is mine, which none shall take away. [. . .]

Why am I rank’d in State above the rest,

If while I stand of Sovereign Pow’r possess,

Another dares, in danger, farther go?

Kings are not made for ease, and Pageant-show.

Who would be Conquerour, must venture all:

He merits not to rise, who dares not fall. (1.1.161-179)

Lucifer, donning the full regalia of royalty including a scepter, asks for no volunteers for the mission to Paradise. He is a king “not made for ease” and forcefully makes his will known to his subordinate fallen angels. Moloch creates a threat to Lucifer’s authority by attempting to volunteer, so Lucifer quashes the attempt quickly. The “Palm” that he claims is the prize of glory and right to kingship that he has already assumed and therefore must protect. He proclaims his royal empire in the opening lines of the play:

Lucifer. Is this the Seat our Conqueror has given?

And this the Climate we must change for Heaven?

These Regions and this Realm my Wars have got;

This Mournful Empire is the Loser’s Lot: (1. 1-4)

While Dryden’s Lucifer speaks of “[t]hese Regions and this Realm” and a “Mournful Empire”, Milton’s Satan laments about the “region, [. . .] the soil,” and “the clime” (1.242). Instead of an empire, hell is only a “mournful gloom” (1.244).

Indeed another striking difference is that Dryden leaves out the following remorseful soliloquy of Milton’s Satan: “Farewell happy fields / Where joy for ever dwells” (1.249-250). There is no remorse in the hearts of Dryden’s demons; there is only defiance, a defiance born out of the free will divinely allotted to the rebel angels. Asmoday first expresses this theme with his remark to Lucifer: “we defie him [God] still / And yet wage War, with our unconquer’d Will” (1.1.24-25). Homage to a higher power, either heavenly or terrestrial, proves impossible. Continuing this theme Moloch declares:

Mol. Chang’d as we are, we’re yet from Homage free;

We have, by Hell, at least, gain’d liberty;

That's worth our fall; thus low tho' we are driven,
Better to Rule in Hell, than serve in Heaven. (1.1.63-66)

Which is an obvious echo of Milton's

[. . .] "Here at least
We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence;
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition though in hell:
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heav'n." (1.258-263)

Milton's Satan, like Dryden's Lucifer ["Heaven cannot Envy me an Empire here" (1.1.38)], comments on the Almighty's "envy", but Milton's fiend considers hell a place where they may "reign secure", a place where "[a]t least" they are "free." Dryden's demons, through the speech of Moloch, discuss ruling hell like an empire, although not a desirable one. Conversely, Milton's hell appears to be a refuge where they may be safe from any further onslaughts from heaven.

The audience, knowing that Paradise Lost was the source for the play, would realize that it is Christ to whom the demons refuse to pay homage, but Dryden never mentions that directly. Instead Lucifer continues to display his disgust for any act of subordination, saying, upon his first sight of Adam and Eve, that God, "wanting subjects to his haughty Will, / On this mean Work, employ[s] his trifling skill" (3.1.54-55). However, it is the devil in both works who has taken a third of Heaven's angels with him into hell, the inference being that his revolt is the creative act that leads to the birth of

man because God no longer has enough angels for subjects. In the next scene, scornful of any act of subservience, Lucifer speaks venomously to Gabriel and Ithuriel:

Lucifer. Go, slaves, return, and fawn in Heav'n again;

Seek thanks from him whose quarrel you maintain.

Vile wretches! of your servitude to boast:

You basely keep the place I bravely lost. (3.3.60-63)

Calling Gabriel and Ithuriel “slaves,” Lucifer shows his contempt for any submissive position. He claims they are not free, to which Ithuriel replies: “Freedom is choice of what we will and do: / Then blame not servants who are freely so. / ‘Tis base, not to acknowledge what we owe” (3.3.64-66). Lucifer rejects Ithuriel’s statement, for freedom for him is the opposition of submitting to a higher authority of any sort, earthly or heavenly. His sin is his pride and his lust for “pow’r to quit th’ upbraided (nauseous [“Upbraided” Def. 6b]) debt” (3.3.68). Therefore, while Ithuriel speaks of giving thanks freely, Lucifer says, “Thanks, how er’e due, proclame subjection yet” (3.3.67). Dryden derived these lines from Satan’s soliloquy in Book IV as he “falls into many doubts with himself” (84). Milton’s passage reads: “I [di]sdained subjection, and thought one step higher / Would set me highest, and in a moment quit / The debt immense of endless gratitude” (*PL* 4.50-52). Both authors consider ingratitude as one of the fallen angels’ major sins. The good angels remain faithful by freely submitting to the “endless gratitude” required by God. However, driven by his own misguided free will, Lucifer is unable to feel any gratitude toward anyone.

Gabriel replies to Lucifer with a passage taken from the scene in Paradise Lost where Raphael instructs Adam about free will. The major differences between Dryden’s

passage and Milton's revolves around who is speaking and to whom. Hence, Milton's Raphael informs Adam that

[. . .] freely we serve
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
And some are fall'n, to disobedience fall'n,
And so from heaven to deepest hell; O fall
From what high state of bliss into what woe! (*PL* 5.538-543)

Likewise, Dryden's Gabriel tells Lucifer the angels are

Made for his use; yet he has form'd us so
We, unconstrained, what he commands us do,
So praise we him and serve him freely best:
Thus thou, by choice, art fall'n and we are blest. (3.3.75-78)

In both works the demons have fallen due to "choice," stemming from the freedom endowed upon them by the Creator. The angels, like all of God's creatures, are free "[t]o love or not." The creation of angels as entities endowed with free will, while not causing their fall, becomes the tool for its implementation. Milton's God explains, they "freely [. . .] stood who stood, and fell who fell" (*PL* 3.103), leaving the fault not to God whose "[f]oreknowledge had no influence on their fault" (*PL* 3.118) but to the angels themselves. Dryden has Ithuriel reinforce this theme with "Freedome is choice of what we will and do: / Then blame not servants who are freely so" (3.3.64-65). The paradox remains with God's "foreknowledge," but Dryden avoids the subject at this point, saving it for Act IV.

And first Hephaestus makes a great and massive shield,
blazoning well-wrought emblems all across its surface,
raising a rim around it, glittering, triple-ply
with a silver shield-strap run from edge to edge
and five layers of metal to build the shield itself,
and across its vast expanse with all his craft and cunning
the god creates a world of gorgeous immortal work. (*Il.* 8.558-564)

Undoubtedly, these fantastic images would be impossible to portray on a seventeenth century stage, but in addition to dismissing any sympathetic motivations due to God anointing Christ as Messiah, Dryden presents a Lucifer who is not a heroic warrior at all but a dissembling creature filled with spite who, upon seeing Adam and Eve kissing, responds venomously with,

Unwillingly I hate such excellence;
She wronged me not; but I revenge the offence
Through her, on Heav'n whose thunder took away
My birth-right skyes! live happy whilst you may,
Blest pair, y'are not allow'd another day! (3.1.96-100)

Admittedly, Dryden derived these lines directly from Paradise Lost: “[. . .] Live while ye may, / Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return, / Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed” for Milton’s Satan feels much spite as well (*PL* 4.533-535), but with Dryden, we get no sense that Lucifer could be a hero.

The similarities between Dryden’s Lucifer and Milton’s Satan pertain largely to the use of deception against the first parents of humankind. Since both authors would

have considered the story as historical fact, their interpretations are bound to have coinciding elements. However, Dryden varies from Milton in the depiction of the government in hell and his avoidance of any heroic symbolism concerning the devil. While both works depict a devil who has a debased and dissembling character, it is only in Milton's epic that there is any the possibility of a demonic hero. In addition, Dryden's cabal government has an explicit devil king at its head where Milton's parliament does not. According to Dryden's royalist view, the divine model of government under a king encompasses the government in hell as well as the one on earth. By creating parodies of their separate visions of government (republican and royalist), the authors portray their concerns over the misuse of such governments. Therefore, Dryden's Lucifer becomes an evil tyrant with little regard for the ranks below him, while Milton's demonic parliament comes close to depicting the political anarchy that eventually brought on the Restoration (Masson 345).

However, regardless of the types of government portrayed in the two works, the dissembler orchestrates the Fall. Returning to the Biblical narrative we see that "the serpent was more [subtle] than any beast of the field" (*Gen.* 3.1). It is through subtlety that the devil attacks the first human pair. In both works the target for the attack is the supposed weaker of the two, the one with "organs of [. . .] fancy" (*PL* 4.502), the one who falls susceptible to "[i]llusions [. . .] phantasms and dreams" (*PL* 4.503). Dryden's Lucifer explains it thus: "[. . .] Mimic fancy wakes, / Supplies her parts, and wild Idea's takes / From words and things [. . .]" (3.3.5-7). Of course, we are speaking of the mother of all humankind: Eve. She becomes the target for the attack and, as we shall see, through her own free will introduces sin into the world.

CHAPTER 3

EVE: COURTLY LADY OF FASHION

Nathaniel Lee, in his poem about The State of Innocence, praises Dryden for taking Milton's "rustic [m]aid" and bringing her "to court" dressed in "gemms" (Lee 18-20). Indeed Eve is the personification of the women, both married and single, with whom Dryden was associated in the court of Charles II. After the reopening of the playhouses, with female actors appearing on stage, the political atmosphere of the theater became charged with intrigue. Many of the members of the court, including the King himself, "had actresses amongst their mistresses, and at least one playwright [during the Restoration was] rewarded for his theatrical wit by acquiring a famous court beauty as his mistress" (Winn 226). Thus, Eve becomes, through Dryden's dramatization, a portrayal of both the submissive housewife and the coquettish mistress. She, like many of Dryden's characters, is developed from his love for "debate and discourse," by which he often "adopts a position somewhere in the middle of his arguments" (Salvaggio 7), or, just as often, retains the integrity of – and tension between – opposing positions. Like the court mistresses, she desires power and equality, but she also desires Adam as a husband and soul mate.

Dryden's association with the intrigues of the court and the theater began soon after the Restoration of Charles II, and at some point from 1666 to 1669 he had taken "an attractive actress [Anne Reeves] as his mistress" (Winn 226). He placed her in several of his plays, including The Conquest of Granada and Secret Love (Winn 217, 234). In the epilogue of the special revival of Secret Love with an all female cast, Reeves boasts that "our Legs are no ill sight, / And they will give you no ill Dreams at night" (qtd. in Winn

236), explaining that the true reason for the lack of men on the stage was to satisfy the voyeuristic desire of the audience by having women on stage dressed in men's clothing (Winn 236). (Even more voyeuristic would have been a performance of The State of Innocence, in which Eve would, by necessity of the subject matter, be dressed in a costume representing the nude body.) Eventually, Dryden's widely publicized affair with Reeves would produce a strain on Dryden's marriage to Elizabeth Howard Dryden, and in The State of Innocence we can hear, through the arguments between Adam and Eve, "the distant echoes of similar squabbles between John and Elizabeth Dryden, whose relations were undergoing the strain of Dryden's tightened finances and public infidelity" (Winn 268). Thus, Eve, as the first woman, is the personification of both women in general and the particular women in Dryden's life. As such, Dryden treats her with both a critical and a sympathetic eye, illustrating her motivations as stemming from her narcissism that leads to her desire for sovereignty and power, to displays of her jealousy of both Adam and Lucifer, and, ultimately, to her ability to question the paradox of free will.

In both Dryden's play and Milton's epic, Eve's narcissism is first represented at a watery site; a lake in Milton, a fountain in Dryden.. Although the scenes are similar in the hands of both authors, there are some differences that need exploring. First, Milton's version of Eve's narcissism:

As I bent down to look, just opposite,
A shape within the wat'ry gleam appeared
Bending to look on me, I started back,
It started back, but pleased I soon returned,

Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
Of sympathy and love [. . .] (*PL* 4.460-465)

While we cannot deny Milton's implication that Eve is narcissistic, Dryden intensifies her emotion by turning the scene upside down. Instead of an outward projection of self-love, there is an inner reception:

And now a Face peeps up, and now draws near,
With smiling looks, as pleas'd to see me here.
As I advance, so that advances too,
And seems to imitate what e'er I do:
When I begin to speak, the lips it moves;
Streams down the voice, or it would say it loves. (2.3.18-23)

Milton's Eve falls in love with her reflection. While that is an extreme narcissistic act, and one quite pertinent to Restoration society's emphasis on beauty, Dryden intensifies Eve's narcissism and, by portraying this scene on the stage, presents her as "both spectacle and spectator to herself" (Schille 12). As Dryden writes the scene, Eve doesn't immediately fall in love with her reflection; her reflection immediately falls in love with her. Eve's love of her reflection is in answer to the love emitted from the fountain. It is not the reflection that answers her loving remarks, but Eve is the responsive partner in the relationship. This sets the tone for her first meeting with Adam where she says,

Eve. O, only like my self, (for nothing here
So Graceful, so majestick does appear:)
Art thou the Form my longing eyes did see,
Loos'd from thy fountain, and come out to me? (2.3.36-39)

Eve's narcissism, in Dryden's version, brings about her trouble with submission to Adam. She sees him as a mirror of herself and not someone to whom she must submit. Like Adam, the audience is enticed by, as James Ogden says, her "innocent provocativeness" (19).

The Eve we see here is like the "forceful and highly articulate women" Dryden had been portraying for years (Gagen 141). As Gagen explains, Dryden at times "borrowed closely from Milton in his portrayal of Eve as inferior and subordinate to Adam, at other times he departed widely from this conception" (136). In fact there are times when "Eve is assigned a sovereignty over Adam which is considered just and right, not only by her and by Adam but by their angelic mentor as well" (137). Her ability to be forceful and highly articulate is apparent in the first dialogue with Adam, in which she immediately gains the upper hand:

Adam. Made to command, thus freely I obey,

And at thy feet the whole Creation lay.

Pity that love thy beauty does beget:

What more I shall desire, I know not yet.

First let us lock'd in close embraces be;

Thence I, perhaps, may teach my self, and thee.

Eve. Somewhat forbids me, which I cannot name;

For ignorant of guilt, I fear not shame:

But some restraining thought, I know not why,

Tells me, you long should beg, I long deny. (2.3.46-55)

Her coyness at first angers Adam. He claims her denial of him would be “[i]n vain” since his right to her is “sealed from above” (2.3.56). He is certainly remembering the statement of Raphael that Eve would be “[a]n equal, yet [Adam’s] subject” (2.1.64). But Eve sees the situation quite differently. Her statement that he “long should beg” and she “long deny” is her first attempt to gain power over Adam (2.3.55). Eve, like many women of Dryden’s time, is looking for a transformation, one that will make her equal, or superior, to Adam. As a faithful wife, she seeks Adam’s love; as a coquette, she seeks power. In spite of her love for Adam, it is power and empire that she desires. Although at times convinced to be submissive, she does not agree with the belief that she must always obey Adam “and cease from commanding and perform subjection” (Homily of Matrimony 286). Her lust for power is the “restraining thought” that drives her in this scene (2.3.54). Dryden’s Eve seeks more than the answer to the “for inferior who is free?” question posed by Milton’s Eve (*PL* 9.825). She seeks her own sovereignty. Her feelings of superiority are a part of her narcissistic nature even before she falls in love with herself at the fountain. Immediately after her creation she observes that

[. . .] from each Tree

The feather’d kind peep down, to look on me;
And Beasts, with up-cast eyes, forsake their shade,
And gaze, as if I were to be obeyed. (2.3.10-13)

Dryden’s Eve sees herself as something to gaze upon and even states that “I my self am proud of me” (2.3.14). Ogden says that in this scene “the new-created Eve asks questions about the nature of human life, but finds no answers beyond that she herself is a being who should be worshipped by the animals. So she exhibits vanity before seeing herself

mirrored in the pool” (17). In Paradise Lost Satan is the character who notices that “all living things gaze on” Eve’s beauty, but Dryden deliberately puts Satan’s words in Eve’s mouth to show her desire for supremacy. Adam inadvertently feeds her narcissism when he first greets her as the “fairest of [the] great Creator’s Work’s,” telling her she is a “Goddess” placed “on Earth to Reign” (2.3.29-31). Again these are words from Milton’s Satan who tells Eve:

Fairest resemblance of they Maker fair,
[.]
[. .] who shouldst be seen
A goddess among gods, adored and served
By angels [. .] (*PL* 9. 538, 546-548)

Dryden’s Lucifer flatters Eve as well by calling her “Nature’s Queen” (4.2.71) and telling her that she has “[s]uch Beauty” that if she were raised to the level of a goddess she might “raise factions in [. .] Heav’n” (4.2.98). Lucifer continues to play on her aspirations to sovereignty by stating that God is in awe of her, therefore “does possession keep, / And is too wise to hazard partnership” (4.2.99-100). In his attempt to stir Eve’s contempt of subjugation, Lucifer even accuses God of being lustful of power:

‘Tis all his aim to keep you blindly low,
That servile fear from ignorance may flow:
We scorn to worship whom too well we know.
He knows that eating you shall god-like be;
As wise, as fit to be ador’d, as he. (4.2.92-96)

While keeping the wording close to that of Paradise Lost, in which Satan says God desires to “keep [Adam and Eve] low and ignorant” in order for them to be “His worshipers” (*PL* 9.704-705), Dryden makes an interesting addition by having Lucifer tell Eve she would be “as fit to be ador’d” as God if she were but to taste the fruit (4.2.96).

It is after she tastes the fruit that her yearning to be supreme seems within her grasp. Realizing she has changed, she says that she “tread[s] more lightly on the ground,” her “nimble feet” “rebound” “from unhurt flow’rs” (5.1.1-2). Scornful of “this Earthly seat,” she feels she is “walk[ing] in Ayr” and contemplates the “unkind[ness]” of leaving Adam “behind” (5.1.3,5-6). Directing her thought toward allowing Adam to taste the fruit as well, she soliloquizes,

I love the wretch; but stay, shall I afford
Him part? already he’s too much my Lord.
‘Tis in my pow’r to be a Sovereign now;
And, know more, to make his manhood bow,
Empire is sweet [. . .] (5.1.7-11)

Differing from Milton’s Eve who wants to keep “the odds of knowledge” within her “power” in order to be “more equal, and perhaps / Superior” (*PL* 9.820, 823-824), Dryden’s Eve speaks like a usurper to the throne of the husband and considers herself an empress, a position warned against in the Anglican Homily of the State of Marriage:

Shall she abuse the gentleness and humanity of her husband and at her pleasure turn all things upside down? No surely, for that is far repugnant against God’s commandment. [. . .] But as for their husbands, them must they obey and cease from commanding and perform subjection. (286)

But for Eve, Adam is “too much [her] Lord” and she wants to make him “bow” to her (5.1.8, 10). Her desire to usurp her husband is a divergence from the concerns that Milton’s Eve has about her inferiority preventing her freedom (*PL* 9.825).

This is not the first time Eve has mentioned her sovereignty. In her first scene with Adam, after he chastises her for being coy, she replies with a response that indicates she is already having problems with the matrimonial arrangement and hints that Adam will be unfaithful:

Eve. I well fore-see, when e’r thy suit I grant
That I my much-lov’d Sovereignty shall want:
Or like my self, some other may be made;
And her new Beauty may thy heart invade. (2.3.66-69)

In the end of the scene, her submission to Adam causes her “want of worth [to] grieve” (2.3.77). Dryden’s Eve feels that her worthiness is dependent upon her sovereignty where Milton’s Eve, in “meek surrender, half embracing,” kisses Adam, who “in delight / Both of her Beauty and submissive Charms / Smil’d with superior Love” (*PL* 4.492-502). Dryden could have been inspired by some of the coyness evident in Milton’s earlier lines in the same book where Eve is described as yielding to Adam with “coy submission, modest pride, / And sweet reluctant amorous delay” (*PL* 4.310-311). Still, Milton’s Eve is more submissive to the marriage contract and only becomes concerned over Adam’s infidelity after she tastes the fruit and she is sure she will die, leaving him to be “wedded to another Eve” (*PL* 9.828).

In both works, Eve’s jealousy of a rival for Adam’s affections stems ultimately from her intense love for him. In Dryden’s version, she tells Adam

With thee to live, is Paradise alone:
Without the pleasure of thy sight is none.
I fear small progress will be made this day;
so much our kisses will our task delay. (3.1.88-91)

Their lovemaking is obviously interfering with their duties as keepers of the Garden. Dryden has transformed Eve's character, temporarily, from coquette to faithful wife. The only interruption to her duty to God is her duty to her husband, particularly that of lovemaking, coinciding with the Anglican belief that "[i]t is instituted of God to the intent that man and woman should live lawfully in a perpetual friendly fellowship, to bring forth fruit, and to avoid fornication" (Homily of Matrimony 285).

But her duty to Adam does not bring complete satisfaction to Eve. She has given up sovereignty. She has given up power. Adam has become, as she says after the fall, "too much [her] Lord" (5.1.8). Paradise is quickly becoming problematic. Lust for power breeds jealousy of those who possess it.

Eve's jealousy is aroused even more by the dream that Lucifer instills in her. Evidence of this can be seen in both her pleading to Adam for permission to walk alone in the Garden and the location to which she immediately proceeds:

Eve. Thus far, at least, with leave; nor can it be
A sin to look on this Celestial tree:
I would not more; to touch a crime may prove:
[.]
But Heav'n forbids: I could be satisfy'd
Were every tree but this, but this deny'd. (4.2.18-20, 24-25)

Remembering her vision in which she tastes the fruit and flies up to heaven (3.3), she is jealous of her dream self and wishes to do so in reality. She desires to be a goddess or an angel like the ones in her dream, but Lucifer has another enticement for her jealousy. Whereas in Milton's version, Eve is led to the tree by the talking serpent who tells her that he has already eaten of it (PL 9.590-645), Dryden has her see the "[s]trange sight" of the serpent climbing up the tree to eat the fruit (4.2.26). From the moment she sees the serpent taste of the fruit, her jealousy is intensified, and she laments that the "[privilege], which [. . .] their Masters want," is granted to "inferiour beings" (4.2.27-28). Thus, the stage is set for Lucifer to appear in human form, a shape that, ironically, allows for the suggestion of Eve's own infidelity:

Eve. What art thou, or from whence? for on this ground,
Beside my Lord's, ne're heard I humane sound.
Art thou some other *Adam*, form'd from Earth,
In this fair field? or sprung of Heav'nly race? (4.2.44-47)

While Dryden is taking a great risk in calling Lucifer another Adam, a phrase that is reserved for Christ alone (1 Cor. 15:45), and his use of it lends credence to the concern of the King's Players that "someone would accuse Dryden of heretical language or take offense" to the play in general (Winn 269), his use of the phrase transforms Lucifer into a possible object of Eve's sexual desire, notwithstanding her previous position as the jealous wife. Eventually, it is upon Eve's jealousy that Lucifer plays. After hearing he has eaten of the fruit, she responds with "Happy thy lot; but far unlike is mine" (4.2.72), to which he answers, "Sure you mistake the precept" (4.2.76), insinuating that her

knowledge of what God has ordained is incomplete or misinformed. But the final stroke of his argument resounds in a response to Eve's ultimate defense that

[. . .] death, our disobedience must pursue.

Lucifer. Behold in me, what shall arrive to you.

I tasted; yet I live: nay, more; have got

A state more perfect than my native lot. (4.2.113-116)

Again Dryden stays close to the source, for we hear Milton's Satan argue:

Queen of this universe, do not believe

Those rigid threats of death; ye shall not die:

How should ye? By the fruit? It gives you life

To knowledge. By the Threat'ner? Look on me,

Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live,

And life more perfect have attained than fate

Meant me, by vent'ring higher than my lot. (*PL* 9.684-690)

But we must remember that in Milton's epic Eve is in a conversation with Satan in the form of a serpent, whereas in Dryden's play Lucifer shows himself as a serpent transformed into "some other Adam" (4.2.46), an image that adds a sexual temptation to the scene missing in Milton. In Dryden's version Lucifer continues to taunt her with the intimation that she will as "God-head reign" (4.2.123). This goes beyond the biblical story, in which the serpent promises that they will be "as gods" (*Gen* 3.5) with no insinuation that either she or Adam will rule in heaven. Tempted to become a usurper who may reign in heaven, she desires to "remove" the difference between herself and the

“Gods” and brings upon herself the Fall by deciding to partake of the fruit (4.2.121, 120, 137).

Eve, like her counterpart in the dream sequence, only “repent[s] / [she] deferred” tasting the fruit earlier (3.3.38-39). Her decision to do so is motivated by her lust for power over Adam, the Angels, and eventually God, along with her jealousy of Adam’s sovereignty over her, and of the serpent’s ability to eat the fruit unscathed. While these motivations drive her toward the Fall, ultimately her decision is an act of free will, a point which she argues with Adam prior to her walk in the garden.

Knowing that her walk ends at the tree of knowledge, which she has dreamed of in the previous scene, we realize that her jealousy and lust for power are behind the excuses to leave Adam. She tells him that “Nature’s too kind, and follows us too fast” (4.1.130) and that nature “mocks our industry with her excess” (4.1.132). Once again Dryden is staying close to the original in which Milton’s Eve complains that “til more hands / Aid us, the work under our labor grows” (*PL* 9.207-208), but Milton’s Eve never says that she would be “absent still” if “constrained, and wish’d [her] self away” (4.1.182, 184), rather the sentiments expressed in Eve’s comments are stated by Adam in Milton’s version:

Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more,

Go in thy native innocence, rely

On what thou hast of virtue, summon all,

For God, towards thee hath done his part, do thine. (*PL* 9.372-375)

Dryden, ever thoughtful of the necessities of the stage, transforms Milton’s long discourse between Adam and Eve into a short bickering argument culminating in her

protestation that as a creature endowed with free will she should be treated as such by Adam. First, she tries to reason with her husband by asking “[w]hat reason makes [her] small request unfit” (4.1.150) and ends her argument with the protestation that she can only prove her “faith” if it is tested (4.1.179). Adam finally gives in and responds with the theological statement of free will that “[c]onstraint does ill” and tells her to “[g]o” (4.1.185, 189).

Eve, in the end, blames Adam for letting her go. Denying her own guilt, she blames everything on him. In anger she tells him:

You should have shown th’ Authority you boast,
And, Sovereign-like, my headlong will have crost:
Counsel was not enough to sway my heart;
An absolute restraint had been your part. (5.4.33-36)

Adam’s response to her argument is that her “pride” and her lawless will” is the problem (5.4.29-30), not his inability of confine her. He admits that in this case “force is lawful” but his love for her is “fondly kind” (5.4.38). Eve’s position is that her will should have been constrained by Adam. However, it is only after she finds herself in fear of the consequences of her actions that she considers such a solution. Their argument reaches a peak with an exchange about the nature of wives:

Eve. Th’ unhappiest of creation is a wife,
Made lowest, in the highest rank of life:
Her fellow’s slave; to know and not to chuse:
Curst with that reason she must never use.
Adam. Add, that she’s proud, fantastick, apt to change;

Restless at home; and ever prone to range,
With show delighted, and so vain is she,
She'll meet the Devil [. . .] (5.4.58-65)

This scene once again shows Dryden's ability to entertain both sides of an argument. While Eve's lines tend to show her sympathetically, Adam's words present a critical misogynistic view. Dryden's ability to present a misogynistic attitude can also be seen in the soliloquy of Lucifer as he plans his attack:

Lucifer. So, now they lye, secure in love, and steep
Their sated senses in full draughts of sleep.
By what sure means can I their bliss invade?
By violence? no; for they're immortal made.
Their Reason sleeps; but Mimic fancy wakes,
Supplies her parts, and wild Idea's takes
From words and things, ill-sorted, and mis-joyn'd;
The Anarchic of thought and Chaos of the mind:
Hence dreams confus'd and various may arise;
These will I set before the Woman's eyes;
The weaker she, and made my easier prey;
Vain shows, and Pomp, the softer sex betray. (3.1-6,10-12)

An interesting part of this soliloquy is its similarity of language to Dryden's attack on the poet and dramatist Elkannah Settle. Dryden speaks of Settle's "Mimic fancy," "wild ideas," "Anarchy," and "Chaos," and, in his condemnation for the type of audience Settle's performances attracted, Dryden sounds misogynistic (Winn 268). Winn notes that

the notion that women are more susceptible to “Vain shows, and Pomp” also appears in the Postscript to the *Notes and Observations*, where Dryden speaks dismissively of Settle’s “admirers who most commonly are Women.” He was not alone in such misogyny; the very poem he was adapting includes some exceedingly harsh remarks about women. (Winn 268)

Whether or not Dryden was a misogynist remains an item of debate amongst critics, but he certainly is not a feminist in the modern sense. He and Milton were male members of a patriarchal seventeenth century society and, therefore, would naturally have misogynistic tendencies stemming from their cultural backgrounds. It is interesting that Dryden uses Lucifer as the vehicle for this critical soliloquy, a point that perhaps weakens the misogyny of it. For Dryden is not only critical of Eve, he is sympathetic as well.

His sympathetic view of Eve can be seen at the beginning in the pool scene. Although Eve has a narcissistic nature, she has a strong desire to be loved, not just by herself but by someone outside of herself. She wants the image in the pool to love her, and is convinced her dream has come true when she first meets Adam. Her love for him compels her to say while considering giving him the fruit, “I love the wretch” (5.1.7), and it is her love for him that brings the argument in Act V to a point of reconciliation. Therefore, when Adam proposes that she see his “face no more” (5.4.89), she responds,

Vain pardon, which includes a greater ill:

Be still displeas’d; but let me see you still.

Without your much-lov’d sight, I cannot live:

You more than kill me if you so forgive. (5.4.90-93)

Love reconciles her to Adam, and, in the remainder of the scene, we find that love reconciles the couple to God. However, a paradox remains. We must question the responsibility, and deservedness of punishment, of the first parents who find they are living within the control of an all-knowing and all-powerful God who foreknows every event that transpires. While Eve never seems to ponder the paradox, her actions demonstrate the effect of it.

Her actions also demonstrate her “sexual power,” a quality that, as Clarissa Campbell Orr remarks, at the time “was feared for the way it could subvert hierarchies of gender and social rank” (qtd. in Schille 3). With her power, Eve has attempted to usurp the throne of the household, a sin described in the Anglican and Puritan pulpits as “repugnant” (Homily of Matrimony 286). She has forgotten, as the sermon continues to explain, that she must be “ready at hand” to perform “her husband’s commandment” (286). The throne after all, according to the social and theological thought of the time, belongs rightfully to her husband, a creature who finds himself even more entangled in the paradox of free will versus preordination than she, who questions this paradox openly with visiting angels, and who, in the end, must be admonished for the implied blasphemy contained in his consternation over God’s plan. Of course, we are speaking of Adam who, through his own free willed actions, finds himself destined to join in Eve’s sin.

CHAPTER 4

ADAM: A QUESTION OF THEOLOGY

While Eve, immersed in her coquettish narcissism, provided Dryden with an excellent vehicle to present his social view of women, particularly of those with whom he had familiarity both at court and on the stage, and Lucifer, as both a divine creature and a fallen villain, presented the playwright with an irresistible personification of the political controversies lingering from the Interregnum, so Adam, as the first man, bestowed upon our poet the opportunity to present one of the major philosophical and theological debates of the era to an audience for whom the dialogue would have held intense interest. Once again, Dryden's duality emerges as he purposely portrays Adam as espousing both sides of the discussion at different points in the play, thereby drawing the audience to accept, at various times, each of the opposing arguments' conclusions. Indeed, Dryden, who loved to play with ideas, appears to be having a great deal of fun with the thoughts engrossing Adam, both in soliloquy and in dialogue with other characters, and in the author's own unique ability to bait his audience into participating in the argument.

The argument in question hinged around the theories of the philosopher Thomas Hobbes, whom Charles II dubbed as "the beare to be bayted" (qtd. in Bredvold 55), due to the numerous disagreements in which Hobbes found himself engaged with various members of the royal court. Hobbes' argument defended his belief in a "mechanical and materialistic philosophy" that opposed the generally accepted "spiritualistic philosophy" and "idealism" of Descartes (Bredvold 54). Deriving his "mechanical theory" from Euclid and Galileo, Hobbes proceeds to apply it "both to the world and man" (53). As Louis Bredvold notes, according to Hobbes

Science is the study of causes, but all causes are ultimately reducible to motion. A complete science should begin with a study of simple motions, then proceed to more complex motions in geometry, thence to physics, until we reach the most complex motions in “moral philosophy, in which we are to consider the motions of the mind . . . what causes they have, and of what they be causes.” (53)

Hobbes’s theory finds its completion in his insistence that the “soul is material, a sort of thin, filmy substance, which could thus be assumed to be a part of the mechanical world.” He ridiculed as meaningless the customary theological definition of the soul as an incorporeal substance, while maintaining a faith in God and the angels, though suggesting that “the Scripture favoureth them more, that hold angels and spirits corporeal.” But it is his application of causative theory to the human mind that led to his long running controversy with Bishop John Bramhall over “free-will and necessitarianism” (53-55). In fact, the scene in which Adam argues with Raphael and Gabriel over the paradox of free will “runs like a brief summary of the famous Bramhall-Hobbes controversy, with Adam, despite his innocence, taking the part of Hobbes” (68).

Dryden, when introducing Adam at the beginning of Act II, portrays him as a Cartesian, rather than Hobbesian, character who infers “the existence of his Maker from his own capacity to think” (Winn 266):

Adam. What am I? or from whence? For that I am
I know, because I think; but whence I came,
Or how this Frame of mine began to be,
What other Being can disclose to me?

I move, I see; I speak, discourse, and know,
Though now I am, I was not always so.
Then that from which I was, must be before:
Whom, as my Spring of Being, I adore. (2.1.1-8)

Thus, Adam proves to be a complex creature that begins his life quoting Descartes but endorses the Hobbesian argument when discussing free will with the angels. Then, later in the play, in spite of his arguments against free will, Adam defends it as part of his explanation for his treatment of Eve, but, in the end, he succumbs to the Fall through his complete love for her.

However, it is when the angels come down to instruct Adam about free will and preordination that Dryden breaks from Milton. Although Milton does have Raphael come to instruct Adam about free will, Dearing points out that “the points made by Adam [in The State of Innocence] and the phrasing of the whole discourse are Dryden’s” (370). Milton’s Adam is instructed by the angel that God has “ordained thy will / By nature free” and that it is “voluntary service [God] requires” (*PL* 5.526-527, 529). To this discourse, Adam responds most amicably:

[. . .] Thy words
Attentive, and with more delighted ear,
Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
Cherubic songs by night from neighboring hills
Aerial music send: nor knew I not
To be both will and deed created free;
Yet that we never shall forget to love

Our Maker [. . .] (*PL* 5.544-551)

Hence, Milton's Adam understands free will and accepts the angel's instructions as being better than the songs of the cherubs that he hears at night. Created with a free will, he does not forget to love and worship his maker.

But Dryden's Adam takes a more skeptical position upon hearing the angels' instructive statements. While the points made by the two heavenly messengers are made by God in Paradise Lost (*PL* 3.95-130), we see a different dynamic in play within Dryden's portrayal of the conversation. Indeed Adam is quite the reluctant pupil:

Raphael. Praise him alone who, God-like, form'd thee free,
With will unbounded, as a Deity;
Who gave thee reason, as thy Aid, to chuse
Apparent good, and evil to refuse.
Obedience is that good; This Heav'n exacts
And Heav'n, all just, from man requires not acts
Which man wants pow'r to do: pow'r then is giv'n
Of doing good; but not compell'd by Heav'n.
[.]

Adam. Freedom of will, of all good things is best;
But can it be by finite man possest?
I know not how Heav'n can communicate
What equals man to his Creators state. (4.1.23-30, 33-36)

So Adam's first objection is that if he is like a Deity and created with a free will, he can't understand how God can give man something that would make him equal to the

Almighty. Free will is certainly the best of all things, but Adam sees it as impossible for his finite station in life. Man, as part of the Hobbesian material universe, is unable to ascend to the level of God and the angels. It would certainly take the knowledge of good and evil to reach that point, as Hobbes in his treatise Of Liberty and Necessity enunciates:

First, I conceive that when it comes into a man's mind to do or not to do some certain action, if he have no time to deliberate, the doing it or abstaining necessarily follows the present thought he has of the good or evil consequence thereof to himself [. . .] Also when a man has time to deliberate but deliberates not, because never anything appeared that could make him doubt of the consequence, the action follows his opinion of the goodness or harm of it. (36-37)

However, the angels are not finished with their instruction; likewise, Adam still has his objections. Answering Adam's question Raphael says that God "cannot give his boundless pow'r away; / But boundless libertie of choice he may" (4.1.37-38). Using the Ptolemaic system of the universe as a metaphor, Raphael explains that, although all the heavenly bodies receive their motion from God, "the first mover" (4.1.39), the "[o]rbs" themselves are responsible for continuing their own "proper revolutions" (4.1.39,40).

While the Heavenly Father has put Adam's life in motion, the direction it takes is entirely up to Adam. Having a free will, Adam is morally responsible for his own actions, or, as Bramhall proclaims in his A Defence of True Liberty, "[n]o object, no second agent, angel or devil, can determine the will of man naturally, but God alone, in respect of his supreme dominion over all things" (48), but even though God has supreme dominion, humans are responsible for their actions as Bramhall once again maintains:

So Darius suffered Daniel to be cast into the lion's den to make good his rash decree; so Herod suffered John Baptist to be beheaded to make good his rash oath. How much more may the immutable rule of justice in God, and his fidelity in keeping his word, draw from him the punishment of obstinate sinners, though antecedently he wills their conversion? (49)

Though God gives Man the choice to sin, he reserves the necessary right to punish said sin. If God does not have the boundless power required to both place things in order and to inflict punishment upon sinners, then there is no true choice and no chance for justice. Not accepting the answer from Raphael, Adam continues to argue, this time about preordination:

Adam. Grant Heav'n could once have given us liberty;

Are we not bounded, now, by firm decree,

Since what so'er 'e is preordain'd, must be?

Else Heav'n, for man, events might preordain,

And man's free will might make those orders vain. (4.1.41-45)

Adam is getting to the heart of the paradox. He asks if it is possible that man's free will can usurp God's will. Man, being a finite material being of little significance compared to the greatness of God, cannot, in Adam's mind, have the power to nullify the plans set forth by Heaven. If free will exists, then it cancels out preordination by the pure fact that choice changes the direction of man's life. If man himself can change the direction of man's life, then there can be no divine plan for his life.

Gabriel steps in at this point with even more seventeenth century scientific imagery that reverberates with intonations of the physics of the time. His argument places man in a unique status, as he says,

Gabriel. Th' Eternal, when he did the world create,

All other agents did necessitate:

So, what he order'd, they by nature do;

Thus light things mount, and heavy downward go.

Man only boasts an arbitrary state. (4.1.46-50)

In nature, man alone is endowed with the gift of free will. Uniquely, he remains free to move arbitrarily through life, and the forces of natural laws do not drive his destiny.

While light objects rise up and heavy ones move downward by the physical laws known at the time, man is a creature whose activities are truly free. Gabriel's response reminds us of Bramhall's response to Hobbes that

[. . .] if either the decree of God or the foreknowledge of God or the influence of the stars or the concatenation of causes or the physical or moral efficacy of objects or the last dictate of the understanding do take away true liberty, then Adam before his fall had no true liberty For he was subjected to the same decrees, the same prescience, the same constellations, the same causes, the same objects, the same dictates of the understanding. But *quicquid ostendes mihi sic, incredulus odi* [Whatever you show me so, I disbelieve and hate]. The greatest opposers of our liberty are as earnest maintainers of the liberty of Adam. Therefore none of these supposed impediments take away true liberty. (3-4)

However, Adam continues to put forward his Hobbesian opposition:

Adam. Yet causes their effects necessitate
In willing agents: where is freedom then?
Or who can break the chain which limits men
To act what is unchangeably forecast,
Since the first cause gives motion to the last? (4.1.51-55)

This reflects Hobbes' thoughts that "nothing takes beginning from itself, but from the action of some other immediate agent without itself" and "that there is no such thing as freedom from necessity" (38, 41). Even though Adam is a willing agent, or a person with a free will, his choices are all necessitated by previous events. One instance resolves in incidents creating an unbroken chain whose result is preordained by the original cause. The argument continues to evolve as Adam refuses to let the angels berate him into submission. The next section begins with Raphael:

Raphael. Heav'n by fore-knowing what will surely be,
Does only, first, effects in causes see;
And finds, but does not make necessity.
Creation, is of pow'r and will th' effect,
Foreknowledge only of his Intellect;
His prescience makes not, but supposes things;
Infers necessity to be; not brings.
Thus thou art not constrain'd to do good or ill;
Causes which work th' effect, force not the will. (4.1.56-64)

This coincides with Bramhall's assertion that:

[. . .] if there be no true liberty, but all things come to pass by inevitable necessity, then what are all those interrogations and oburgations and reprehensions and expostulations which we find so frequently in holy Scriptures (be it spoken with all due respect) but feigned and hypocritical exaggerations? ‘Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded that thou shouldst not eat?’ And he said to Eve, ‘Why hast thou done this?’ [. . .] Does God command him openly not to eat, and yet secretly by himself or by the second causes necessitate him to eat? (3)

According to Dryden’s Gabriel and Bramhall, God’s foreknowledge does not remove the fault of doing “ill” nor does it “force the will” into doing “good.” Necessity is “infer[red]” but not created as an ultimate cause for Adam’s actions. However, Adam espouses a contrary idea to Gabriel’s orthodox view:

Adam. The force unseen, and distant I confess;
But the long chain makes not the bondage less.
Ev’n Man himself may to himself seem free,
And think that choice which is necessity. (4.1.65-68)

This is to agree with Hobbes “that a man cannot imagine anything to begin without a cause” (39), a point on which he proceeds to elaborate with the question:

Did not God foreknow that Uriah in particular should be murdered by David in particular? And what God foreknows shall come to pass, can that possibly not come to pass? And that which cannot possibly not come to pass, does not that necessarily come to pass? And is not all necessity from God? (75)

If all necessity comes from God then all events, foreknown or not, remain preordained due to necessity; therefore, man's choice is not freedom but merely a reaction to previously preordained events. Even when the causes are of the distant past, man has no true free will to exercise beyond the necessities those causes create. Hence, according to Adam "the long chain makes not the bondage less" and "choice" is but "necessity," agreeing with Hobbes that "all necessity comes from God."

Gabriel steps in at this point asking, "And who but man should judge of man's free state?" (4.1.69) Dryden derives this line from the Apostle Paul, who tells us that no one "knows the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him," but Paul says what Gabriel leaves unsaid, that "even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2.11). Adam, according to Gabriel, is treading on dangerous ground by trying to know God's spirit.

Adam remains undaunted and continues with the same Hobbesian argument that "choice is but consent; not will" and that God "before that choice, my will confin'd" (4.1.72,74), a statement that begins to irritate Gabriel because of the "impious fancies" contained within it, implying that "Heav'n all pure, thy [Adam's] crimes [. . .] preordain (4.1.75-76).

Adam, seeing the danger of angering the angels, replies, "Far, far from me be bansh'd such a thought: / I argue only to be better taught" (4.1.77-78), a statement that, as Adam attempts to calm the situation, alludes to a historical circumstance. In Dearing's note on these lines, he tells us that Queen Catherine Parr, when finding herself in danger of angering Henry VIII with her own theological arguments, replied with lines similar to Adam's:

[. . .] “when I have uttered and said what I can, yet must I, and will I, refer my judgment in this, and in all other cases, to your majesty’s wisdom.” When the king expressed disbelief, she replied to this effect: “whereas I have, with your majesty’s leave, heretofore been bold to talk with your majesty, wherein sometimes in opinions there hath seemed some difference, I have not done it so much to maintain opinion, as I did it rather to minister talk [. . .] but also that I, hearing your majesty’s learned discourse, might receive to myself some profit thereby.” The king then embraced her and kissed her [. . .] (371)

But, unlike Catherine, Adam has not finished with his argument, for soon he moves from logic to ethics:

Adam. Though no constraint from Heav’n, or causes, be;
Heav’n may prevent that ill he does foresee:
And, not preventing, though he does not cause,
He seems to will that man should break his laws. (4.1.97-100)

Now we see Adam’s true perplexity with free will; he asks that if God can stop “that ill he does foresee” is not God “will[ing] that man should break his laws.” This puts forward the supposition that the Almighty himself is guilty of all sin and man is a mere pawn subject to the Lord’s boundless power. Gabriel’s answer gives Adam very little grounds for finding any redemption: “Heav’n may permit, but not to ill consent; / For hind’ring ill, he would all choice prevent. / ‘Twere to unmake, to take away thy will,” to which Adam retorts: “Better constrain’d to good, than free to ill” (4.1.101-104).

Raphael, considering that the argument has traversed too far for both angels and mortals alike, puts an end to the discussion by stating,

Raphael. But what reward or punishment could be
If man to neither good nor ill were free?
Th' Eternal justice could decree no pain
To him whose sins it self did first ordain;
And good compell'd, could no reward exact:
His pow'r would shine in goodness, not thy act.
Our task is done: obey; and, in that choice,
Thou shalt be blest, and Angels shall rejoyce. (4.1.105-112)

Raphael's statement "ends the debate with the worst of all arguments," that God created "free will in order to have somebody to punish or reward" (Martz 189). Understandably, Adam is not satisfied as he soliloquizes after the angels ascend "Hard state of life! since Heav'n fore-knows my will, / Why am I not ty'd up from doing ill?" (4.1.113-114). His speech concludes with a lament about his inability to fight temptation:

Since Angels fell, whose strength was more than mine,
'Twould show more grace my frailty to confine.
Fore-knowing the success, to leave me free,
Excuses him, and yet supports not me. (4.1.117-120)

If Dryden's Adam truly considers free will such a curse, he becomes quite the hypocrite with his treatment of Eve. Later in the same scene, Eve, being concerned with the amount of gardening work ahead of them for the day, asks that "[t]his day let each a several task pursue" (4.1.136), thereby allowing her the freedom to work away from him so the

temptation of lovemaking will not interfere, as she explains: “By thee, my hands to labor will not move, / But round thy neck, employ themselves in love” (4.1.137-138). Adam gives warning against her leaving since “[t]he fallen Archangel, envious of [their] state, / Pursues [their] Beings with immortal hate” (4.1.151-152), ending his argument with the seemingly misogynistic, yet loving, statement: “Call it my care, and not mistrust of thee: / Yet thou art weak, and full of Art is he” (4.1.161.162). However, at the end of the argument he succumbs to her with his own version of endowing free will: “I would p[er]suade: but not be absolute. / Better be much remiss than too severe” (4.1.186-187).

When his failure to be the absolute ruler over his wife leads to the Fall, Adam reverts to the sanctity of free will as the first couple’s remorseful bickering reveals:

Adam. I counsel’d you to stay; your pride refus’d:

By your own lawless will you stand accus’d.

Eve. Have you that priviledge of only wise,

And would you yield to her you so despise?

You should have shown th’ Authority you boast,

And, Sovereign-like, my headlong will have crost:

Counsel was not enough to sway my heart;

An absolute restraint had been your part.

Adam. Ev’n such returns do they deserve to find,

When force is lawful, who are fondly kind. (5.4.29-38)

This argument sounds eerily like the one between Adam and the angels, except Adam has taken the opposite position. He now endorses free will as an excuse for his inability to exert his lawful authority over Eve. She takes the position that Adam takes with the

angels as a device to express her regret of his lack of constraint over her, thereby failing to prevent her sin. She claims that her “headlong will” should be “crost” by his “[a]uthority.” She tells Adam that “absolute restraint” over her actions is his responsibility to prevent her from bringing on the Fall.

However, Adam operates not under a mandate of authority but under a mandate of love. It is love that has brought the pair to the brink of disaster. God’s love for man allows free will, Adam’s love for Eve allows sin to enter the world. Adam only partakes of the fruit because he loves Eve, as he tells her at the point of tasting the fruit:

Adam. Cheat not your self, with dreams of Deity;
Too well, but yet too late, your crime I see:
Nor think the fruit your knowledge does improve;
But you have beauty still, and I have love.
Not cozen’d, I, with choice, my life resign:
Imprudence was your fault, but love mine. (5.1.65-70)

Dryden climaxes the story with the passion of a love scene. Adam cares not for his own immortality if it means immortality without the love of Eve, so he willingly enters into the world of mortality with her because he freely chooses, through his love for Eve, to join her in death, a death he supposes to be immediate. Adam has no “dreams of Deity” or “knowledge” but only a love for Eve who, for him, has “beauty still.”

In The State of Innocence we discover Dryden’s exquisite ability to take a character like Adam and transform him into a vehicle that portrays on stage a complex philosophical argument, one that had created many heated discussions at court. Adam, like Dryden himself, is neither a confirmed disciple of Hobbesian philosophy nor an

apologist of Christian orthodoxy. Instead, both poet and stage character traverse across the grand spectrum between the two poles. While arguing with the angels, Adam insists that there is no possibility for him to exert any action truly founded in free will upon any situation, but when confronted with Eve's argument that he has failed to provide the necessary authority over her actions, he relies on free will as an excuse. We are left, like Adam, with an unsatisfactory solution to the issue. The question remains as to whether or not the characters are able to choose their own direction in life but, rather, are acting as mere pawns in a grand design beyond their control, a question as pertinent today as it was in Dryden's time.

But there is another question we are left with concerning this play: where does Dryden truly stand in his personal Christian belief? At the time of the play, Dryden was still Anglican although he sprang from a devoutly Puritan household. As an Anglican poet of an Anglican court, he dedicates this adaptation of a Puritan epic to a Catholic Duchess, quite possibly, as Winn states, "to emphasize Christian unity" (269). However, it is just as possible this play presents a picture of Dryden's own intellectual journey through life. Like Adam, Dryden appears to traverse a broad spectrum that leads him from Puritan to Anglican and eventually to his final conversion to Catholicism. His intellectual temperament creates in him a philosophical skepticism over Anglican thought that eventually will lead to his own Catholic conversion.

CHAPTER 5

AN INTELLECTUAL JOURNEY: A CONCLUSION

Dryden's theological thought at the time of this play is difficult to pinpoint. Although an Anglican poet, he would soon be influenced by the Catholic writer Father Richard Simon, who wrote The Critical History of The Old Testament, a work that would have a profound effect on the theological debate between Protestantism and Catholicism at the time. But even before Dryden fell under the influence of Simon's work, he was certainly aware of many of the other Catholic apologists of the time. Certainly some of the issues put forward by these apologists can be found in much of Dryden's work. His love of ideas and the interplay of political and theological discourse would lead Dryden to become influenced by many other writers both Catholic and Protestant, but his eventual conversion to Catholicism points to an affinity with the ideas put forward by the Catholic apologists, especially concerning reason in religion.

The Catholic apologists attacked human reason primarily as being a part of the fallible human intellect and therefore incapable of attaining a true understanding of God and religion. While the Protestants proclaimed the use of natural reason as the only way to dispute or determine things disputed, the Catholics maintained the authority of an infallible church, this authority Dryden eventually confessed to himself that the Anglican Church had renounced, leading to his conversion to Catholicism (Bredvold 81,128).

In addition to Simon's assertion that the Old Testament Scripture is unreliable, therefore making it impossible for the individual to interpret sufficiently (Bredvold 100), the apologists also maintained a fideistic philosophy that only revealed religion could bring man to true understanding, and, due to the unreliability of Scripture, this revealed

religion could only be embraced through the authority of the Church. Taking the argument even further the Catholics promoted a philosophical skepticism that proclaimed that there “was no certain proof of the Christian religion, unless [taken] from the authority of the church as infallible” (Gilbert Burnet qtd. in Bredvold 85). This led to the Anglican belief that anyone, like Dryden, who portrayed such philosophical skepticism, was either Catholic or atheist (Bredvold 86), an accusation Dryden defends against in his preface to Tyrannic Love:

This, Reader, is what I owed to my just defence, and the due reverence of that Religion which I profess, to which all men, who desire to be esteemed good, or honest, are obliged [. . .] I am already justified by the sentence of the best and most discerning Prince in the World [. . .], and above all, by the witness of my own Conscience, which abhors the thought of such a Crime [. . .], which shall never be justly taxed with the Note of Atheism or Profaneness. (110-111)

However, as we learn from Bredvold, “[a] dozen years later Thomas Hunt accused him of atheism and impiety on the basis of a speech in The Duke of Guise (108), and some critics still accuse him, not of atheism, but of Deism, a point he refutes in Religio Laici with an argument built from his own skeptical thought – that he finds it impossible that the reason of man without divine illumination is able to attain the tenets of Deism (Bredvold 109). In the poem he states,

Dim as the borrow’d beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wand’ring travellers
Is reason to the soul; and as on high,

Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here, so reason's glimmering ray
Was lent not to assure our doubtful way
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
So pale grows reason at religion's sight,
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light. (1-11)

These verses sound very close to the ideas propagated by the Catholic apologists that reason alone is insufficient for religious thought. While the doctrine found in Religio Laici remains “wholly Anglican” (Miner 262), and the poem goes on to attack Catholic and Protestant extremists alike, much of what Dryden says about reason within it sounds akin to his Catholic polemic The Hind and the Panther:

Can I believe eternal God could lye
Disguis'd in mortal mold and infancy?
That the great Maker of the world could dye?
And after that, trust my imperfect sense
Which calls in question his omnipotence?
Can I my reason to my faith compel,
And shall my sight, and touch, and taste rebel? (80-86)

Dryden's argument in favor of transubstantiation expands into an assertion that fallible reason could force man to rebel against God, due to man's own “imperfect sense.” As Bredvold states,

[The Hind and the Panther] is imbued with the same anti-rationalism as the earlier [Religio Laici]; though Dryden had changed his church allegiance, he had not changed his fundamental philosophical convictions. His criticism of Protestant principles in 1687 is only a more extended application of his animadversions against Deism in 1682. (125)

We can see evidence of these same fundamental convictions in The State of Innocence, with its use of reason as the ultimate human frailty that diverts man's obedience to God toward a questioning of the existence of free will that leads, first to heresy, then to rebellion, as shown in the actions of the three main characters.

Lucifer begins the discourse with his description of mankind as being "indu'd with Reason lodg'd in Sence" (1.1.147), and it will eventually be through man's reasoning that the Fall will be accomplished. Although Raphael praises Adam with "Well hast thou reason'd; of himself is none / But that Eternal Infinite, and One" (2.1.15-16), and continues with "Right Reason's Law to every humane heart / Th' Eternal, as his Image, will impart" (2.1.29-30), it is Adam's reasoning power that fortifies his argument with the angels over the doctrine of free will. Adam reasons that if an omniscient God foreknows all possible events, then there is no true free will, a point made eloquently but very briefly by the description of the demons' conversations in Milton's epic:

Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost. (*PL* 2.557-561)

For Dryden however, it is Adam, not the demons, who, with human reasoning, approaches heresy in his conversation with Gabriel and Raphael. Gabriel warns Adam that “[i]lls from within, thy reason must prevent” (4.1.17-18), but Adam uses his reasoning to argue that such ills are the result of a series of “causes” whose “long chain” locks him in the “bondage” of being forced to break God’s laws (4.1.89,66). Ultimately, reasoning is unable to resolve the paradox. Mankind is forced to live throughout history in a maze of choices, all of which are foreknown by the Creator. Foreknowledge implies preordination and preordination cancels out free will.

However, Gabriel and Raphael insist on a belief in an omnipotent God whose foreknowledge does not cancel out free will. Their final solution is simply “obey” (4.1.111). God is infallible; Adam is not. The angels are, as Adam should be, “[m]ade for his use” (3.3.75). Unlike Milton’s demons, the angels do not question God’s ability to preordain events, but “serve him freely” (3.3.77). In their discourse with Lucifer, they explain to him that it is “by choice” that he has reached his fallen state (3.3.78). By allowing reason rather than obedience to an infallible authority to rule over God’s gift of free will, Lucifer has chosen the path to destruction, a path that Adam and Eve follow as well.

Dryden eventually found his own infallible authority in the Mother Church of Rome. Having been associated with recusants since his marriage to Elizabeth Howard (who in all probability was a Catholic and just as likely raised Dryden’s sons in the faith), his conversion to Catholicism was not a mere convenience due to the ascension of James II as some critics (discussed in Bredvold 160) have claimed, but, rather, a response to the “human realities” of the complexities of living in close proximity to relatives who were

forced to hide their personal religious convictions from the Protestant world (Winn 124). His characters' failings revolve around the rejection of an infallible authority in favor of their own fallible reason. Lucifer argues with Eve that, even if God is her creator, it is doubtful that he "was first" (4.2.110), hence invoking the ever paradoxical question about the creation of God himself. Adam, as we have seen, comes near to heresy with his questioning of the paradox inherent within the argument of free will versus preordination, and finally Eve, with her insistence on walking freely in the garden against his will, violates the authority of the husband as ruler over the home (4.1.135ff). As suitable to a dramatist, Dryden entertains several such positions without unilaterally endorsing any one. This play is, like all of Dryden's works, a view into the mind of the poet. Theologically it refuses to be categorized as Puritan, Anglican, or Catholic. It is, ultimately, pure Dryden, complex and perplexing.

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APPENDIX A

SYNOPSIS OF STATE OF INNOCENCE

Act 1, Scene 1: Amidst a backdrop of chaos Lucifer and his rebellious angels fall onto the stage. Lucifer calls them out of the lake of fire to dry land. The palace pandemonium rises up from the stage, and the chief demons discuss their fate. They determine to find the newly created creature Man in order to use him as a deceptive attack on the Almighty. Lucifer determines to be the one to go to paradise to bring on the fall.

Act 2, Scene 1: The newly created Adam awakes quoting Descartes and determines through his reason that there must be a creator. Raphael descends to instruct him in the purpose of his creation and reveals to Adam that a mate is indeed planned for him.

Act 2, Scene 2: Lucifer arrives in a dark cloud that blots out the sun. Uriel arrives from the sun in a chariot. Lucifer deceives Uriel into thinking he is a heavenly creature who has come to gaze upon God's new creature. Uriel points out to Lucifer the location of Paradise, but, after Lucifer exits, he vows to observe Lucifer's actions.

Act 2, Scene 3: Adam awakes remembering a dream about his better half. Eve enters and gazes into the fountain discovering her reflection for the first time. Adam enters the scene, and, after some flirtatious bickering, the pair exit together.

Act 3, Scene 1: Lucifer enters Paradise. Upon hearing Adam and Eve approaching, he retires to spy on them. Adam and Eve enter and carry on a long discussion about the pleasures of their lovemaking. Lucifer hears the discussion and becomes jealous. Through the discussion between Adam and Eve, Lucifer first hears

about the tree of knowledge and the curse God has placed on it. The scene ends as Lucifer determines to use the tree and its fruit as the vehicle to bring on the fall.

Act 3, Scene 2: Gabriel and Ithuriel descend to the stage. They discuss their mission to protect Paradise from any outside attack from the rebellious angels. Uriel flies down from the sun. He tells Gabriel and Ithuriel of his encounter with Lucifer and of his subsequent observation of Lucifer's actions. He reveals to them that he has discovered that Lucifer is not the heavenly creature he first claimed to be, but something quite sinister. The three angels determine to seek the demon out and exit.

Act 3, Scene 3: The scene opens with Adam and Eve asleep. Lucifer enters and begins to whisper in Eve's ear. Eve sees herself in a dream in which angels entice her to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. After the dream ends, Gabriel and Ithuriel enter to find Lucifer who remains on stage. They attempt to interrogate Lucifer, who reacts with contempt. The conversation evolves into a discussion about free will and servitude to God. In the end the angels lead Lucifer out of Paradise, warning him never to return.

Act 4, Scene 1: Adam and Eve enter discussing her dream. Raphael and Gabriel descend to warn Adam that they discovered an enemy in the garden and that he should be on guard. The conversation moves quickly into the issues of the Bramhall-Hobbes debate on free will and necessitarianism with Adam taking the side of Hobbes. After the angels leave, Adam tells Eve she must remain by his side because of the imminent danger. Eve insists that she is strong enough to resist temptation and wishes to walk through the garden alone. Adam relents, citing free will as his reason.

Act 4, Scene 2: The scene opens at the location of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. Lucifer enters but soon retires when Eve approaches. Eve enters with the

desire to gaze upon the tree. A serpent enters, partakes of the fruit, and exits. Eve is amazed at the sight. Lucifer enters in human form, claiming he was the serpent she saw eating of the fruit. He convinces her that she will not die if she partakes of it but would rather become god-like herself. Eve takes a bough from the tree and exits. Lucifer is pleased with himself and exits soon after Eve.

Act 5, Scene 1: Eve enters carrying the bough. Obviously, she has eaten of the fruit, and can tell a difference in herself. She debates with herself whether to give the fruit to Adam since he is already too much her lord. Adam enters and can tell a change in Eve. Eve tells him about the encounter with the serpent and convinces him to eat of the fruit. Adam agrees out of his love for her. They exit to make love one last time before their deaths.

Act 5, Scene 2: Lucifer enters alone, soliloquizes about the success of his plan. A clap of thunder is heard and Lucifer sinks down into the stage.

Act 5, Scene 3: Raphael and Gabriel descend. Being aware that the fall has occurred they lament the fate of the human pair. Raphael exits to give the message of judgment to Adam and Eve. Gabriel exits to stand guard over Paradise so man cannot become eternal by eating of the tree of life.

Act 5, Scene 4: Adam and Eve enter after a clap of thunder. They are frightened and begin to discuss their fate. The conversation quickly becomes an argument between the two with each blaming the other for their downfall. Adam says Eve was too prideful. Eve says Adam was not forceful enough in convincing her not to walk alone. Adam threatens to leave Eve wanting to see her no more. The conversation ends with Adam claiming that he was really more at fault than Eve. Raphael enters to tell them of their

punishment. Indeed death has entered the world but it will not be immediate. Eve begins to argue against the unfairness of having to obey laws they did not choose. Adam reprimands her for arguing with the angel. Raphael then shows them a vision of the future of humankind, including deaths of several sorts. Then he shows them a vision of Heaven descending with the promise of immortality. The scene ends as Adam and Eve leave Eden only to search for a Paradise within them.