

**“For Knowledge Is As Food”:  
Digesting Gluttony and Temperance in  
*Paradise Lost***

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**Abstract:** In his *Commonplace Book*, the young John Milton cites Tertullian’s indication of the first sin as gluttony; in *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton asserts that gluttony was one of several sins compounded in the Fall. Through analysis of alimentary, gluttonous, and scatological metaphor throughout *Paradise Lost*, this paper evaluates Milton’s use of the long theological and literary tradition of a gluttonous first sin. Such an examination, allowing for the medieval consideration of excessive selectivity in diet as a form of gluttony, expands the philosophical implications of Raphael’s analogy comparing knowledge to food in Book Seven. In depicting the insidiousness of Gluttony, Milton not only underscores his theme of temperance but also clarifies the position of right reason within the poem and reinforces the importance of the divine exhortation to ‘Know thyself.’



*Paradise Lost* is replete with food metaphors, alimentary and scatological. In Raphael’s words of admonition to Adam, for example, the sociable spirit cautions against an excessive craving for knowledge:

“But Knowledge is as food, and needs no less  
Her Temperance over Appetite, to know  
In measure what the mind may well contain,  
Oppresses else with Surfeit, and soon turns  
Wisdom to Folly, as Nourishment to Wind.” (7.126-30)<sup>1</sup>

Milton compares the folly of *curiositas* to the fetid wind resulting from gluttony. In this instance, the metaphor of flatulence is intended to

generate a proper disgust in Adam and in the reader, and the limits of eating and of knowing are thereby reinforced. Images associated with gluttony and digestion collectively support the theme of temperance over physical and intellectual appetite, clarifying the significance of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the place of Reason in human action, and Milton's poetic objectives in writing *Paradise Lost*.

Throughout *Paradise Lost*, descriptions of things infernal or sinful employ figures of speech based upon one of the less glorious aspects of the human body—its digestive system. For example, as God the Father decrees Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise, he personifies Eden as a nauseated dyspeptic who can no longer contain the tainted Adam and Eve:

"Those pure immortal Elements that know  
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,  
Eject him tainted now, and purge him off  
As a distemper, gross to air as gross,  
And mortal food, as may dispose him best  
For dissolution wrought by Sin, that first  
Distemper'd all things, and of incorrupt  
Corrupted." (11.50-57)<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps because these words are put into the mouth of God, or perhaps because the eventual redemption of Adam and Eve is in the background (foretold as early as the fourth line of the poem), the diction here is gentle compared to that used to describe the machinations of Satan and his minions in the war in heaven. There, Mammon's devilish engines are fully operational digestive systems, as fire and cannonballs

From those deep-throated Engines belcht, whose roar  
Embowell'd with outrageous noise the Air,  
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul  
Their devilish glut. (6.586-89)

This "devilish glut" is soon corrected, however, and heaven excretes and cleanses itself of all impurities, for on the third day of the war, routed by the Son of God, the demonic hordes are pursu'd

With terrors and with furies to the bounds  
And Crystal wall of Heav'n, which op'ning wide,  
Roll'd inward, and a spacious Gap disclos'd  
Into the wasteful Deep; the monstrous sight  
Struck them with horror backward, but far worse

Urg'd them behind; headlong themselves they threw  
 Down from the verge of Heav'n, Eternal wrath  
 Burn'd after them to the bottomless pit.

.....  
 Disburd'n'd Heav'n rejoic'd, and soon repair'd  
 Her mural breach, returning whence it roll'd. (6.858-866, 878-79)

In referring to "Disburd'n'd Heaven," Milton is obliquely punning on the Latinate synonym *exonerate* (from L. *onus*, burden), which in the Early Modern era could refer to the relieving of the bowels.<sup>3</sup> Heaven is purged, and the "wasteful Deep" receives Satan and his followers.

One might rightly wonder why such references to vomiting, excretion, and flatulence are embedded in the nobler passages of the epic poem. Although metaphorical, certainly this cannot be the "answerable style" Milton seeks to obtain from his "Celestial Patroness"; certainly it is unfit to convey the height of his "great Argument" (9.20-21, 1.24). Yet these seemingly incongruous passages are exemplary intimations of the theme of temperance as espoused through images of gluttony throughout *Paradise Lost*.<sup>4</sup> Concomitant with scatological references, the depictions of demonic gluttony generate a disgust in the reader that extends to the analysis of Adam and Eve's parallel actions. Thus what appears so enticing in Book 9 in Eden becomes repulsive in Book 10 in hell, as the demons turned to serpents gorge themselves on the new-sprung grove of trees "laden with fair Fruit, like that / Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve" (10.550-51). The description that follows is one of Milton's best representations of the unpalatable quality of gluttony:

[The demons-turned-serpents] could not abstain,  
 But on they roll'd in heaps, and up the Trees  
 Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks  
 That curl'd Megaera: greedily they pluck'd  
 The Fruitage . . . .

.....  
 ...but taste  
 Deceiv'd; they fondly thinking to allay  
 Thir appetite with gust, instead of Fruit  
 Chew'd bitter Ashes, which th'offended taste  
 With spattering noise rejected: oft they assay'd  
 Hunger and thirst constraining, drugg'd as oft,  
 With hatefullest disrelish writh'd thir jaws  
 With soot and cinders fill'd. (10.557-61, 563-70)

Adam and Eve's act of disobedience is thus reenacted in such a way that the repugnance of partaking of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is self-evident. The "hatefullest disrelish" is experienced by both eater and observer; although evil may surprise us in Book 9, here the sin is stripped of its illusive grandeur, its crudity revealed.

Within the infernal realm, not only do the demonic hordes exhibit gluttonous sin, but Death stands for Gluttony itself. In this equation, Milton does nothing extraordinary. Sin and Death have been traditionally associated with lust and gluttony, respectively, and many critics have commented on Milton's application of this tradition.<sup>5</sup> Death even would have devoured Sin if he had not known that his own death was to be involved in the death of his sister/mother (2.805-07). Moreover, though much is made of Adam and Eve's ignorance of the nature of Death before the Fall, afterwards Eve recognizes Death's gluttony and so suggests counteracting it with abstinence: "'Childless thou art, Childless remain: So Death / Shall be deceiv'd his glut, and with us two / Be forc'd to satisfy his Rav'nous Maw'" (10.989-91).<sup>6</sup> By giving the formidable shape of Death a "Rav'nous Maw," Milton depicts not only the terror of death as a product of sin, but also what he believes to be the insidiousness of gluttony.

The foretelling of the eventual destruction of gluttonous Death is a popular Renaissance topos, and Milton's rendition offers one of the best examples of *contrapasso* in Early Modern English poetry. The promise of such eschatological retribution is fitting both to Milton's construction of Death and to the fulfillment of his poetic enterprise. Milton's endeavor to "justify the ways of God to men" is essentially an encounter with theodicy—that is, of making sense of sin and death in a world governed by an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent God. Milton conveys disgust for Sin and Death not only through their grotesque portraits, but also through their grotesque actions. Like Satan, their punishments are in part themselves. Just as Sin as Lust is incestuous and self-destructive—her offspring tear at her entrails—Death as Gluttony remains in the agony of perpetual famine. As early as Book 3, the Son foretells how Death's present punishment will reach completion at the eschaton: "'Death his death's wound shall then receive'" (3.252). The Son then describes to God the Father the particularly appropriate means by which ravenous Death shall be vanquished: "'By thee rais'd I ruin all my Foes / Death last, and with his Carcass glut the Grave'" (3.258-59). Also after the Fall, God the Father reinforces this understanding of the *contrapasso* reserved for Sin and Death:

"...I call'd and drew them thither,  
My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth  
Which man's polluting Sin with taint hath shed

On what was pure, till cramm'd and gorg'd, nigh burst  
 With suckt and glutted offal, at one sling  
 Of thy victorious Arm, well-pleasing Son,  
 Both Sin, and Death, and yawning Grave at last  
 Through Chaos hurl'd, obstruct the mouth of Hell  
 For ever, and seal up his ravenous Jaws." (10.629-37)

Thus in the same act, not only shall Death die, but the grave shall be glutted with the figure of Gluttony, along with that of Lust, their rapacious appetites forcibly quelled.

Death as Gluttony seems reasonable, and the gluttonous, scatological portrayal of the demons is likewise understandable, but to present "Man's First Disobedience" as the sin of gluttony seems farfetched to the modern reader (1.1). Do the demons and infernal forms such as Death and Sin prefigure certain actions of postlapsarian Adam and Eve? Such is the argument of Donald Davis, who says that Milton's "ready-made villains" in hell reinforce "the seventeenth-century reader's revulsion at the behavior of Adam and Eve after the Fall."<sup>7</sup> But even apart from comparison with infernal activity, Adam and Eve's partaking of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil can be considered gluttonous. *De Doctrina Christiana* states that gluttony was one of the sins compounded in that action.<sup>8</sup> Milton's *Commonplace Book* notes an even stronger position on the primacy of gluttony. Ruth Mohl's translation of Milton's Latin in his entry on *Gula* (Gluttony) begins, "Tertullian fitly calls 'gluttony a man-slayer,' and says that 'it must be punished by... the penalties of fasting, even if God had commanded no fastings,' because our first parent sank into it."<sup>9</sup> Thus, at the encouragement of the corroboration between one of Milton's earliest ongoing prose works, and one of his latest, one may expect to find a depiction of the first sin as gluttonous in *Paradise Lost*, before even examining the poem. Yet this alone should not persuade us.

In recording Tertullian's *De Jeuniis* in his *Commonplace Book* entry on gluttony, Milton positions himself within a rich theological and literary tradition of considering gluttony's primacy. William Ian Miller gives a partial but useful account of the history of the consideration of gluttony within Christendom. In the fourth century, gluttony headed Evagrius of Pontus' list of eight capital sins.<sup>10</sup> John Cassian in the fifth century also lists gluttony first. It was not until the sixth century that Gregory the Great reordered the sins, placing pride in the first and gluttony in the penultimate position, just before lust.<sup>11</sup> Of course, gluttony's position as first in a list of the Seven Deadly Sins does not ensure that it is first in severity, nor first in chronology. Yet Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica* assures us that gluttony is a capital sin, especially because of its

propensity to generate other vices, such as lust, pride, envy, and avarice.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Aquinas cites John Chrysostom in the fourth century as attributing both the Fall and the Flood to gluttony: "Gluttony turned Adam out of Paradise, gluttony it was that drew down the deluge at the time of Noah."<sup>13</sup> Milton seems at least in part to concur, for he describes the world before the flood as "luxury and riot, feast and dance," progressing "from Cups to civil broils" (*PL* 11.715, 718). In its wider sense, gluttony encompassed excessive drinking as well as excessive eating, and this excess was not limited to quantity. As Miller explains, "Following distinctions made by Gregory the Great in the sixth century, writers on vices and virtues well into the fifteenth century understood gluttony to have five main branches: eating too soon, too much, too avidly, too richly (in the sense of expensively), and too daintily."<sup>14</sup> In this list, it is this last, qualitative excess, that of eating too daintily, which is most intriguing, and most readily allows Miller to bifurcate gluttony into quantitative and qualitative versions. Aquinas' definition of gluttony favors this dualism:

Now two things are to be considered in eating, namely the food we eat, and the eating thereof. Accordingly, the inordinate concupiscence may be considered in two ways. First, with regard to the food consumed: and thus, as regards the substance or species of food a man seeks "sumptuous"--*i.e.* costly food; as regards its quality, he seeks food prepared too nicely--*i.e.* "daintily"; and as regards quantity, he exceeds by eating "too much."<sup>15</sup>

One justification for widening gluttony to include paradoxically qualitative excesses is the opposition of the vice to reason. Once again, a relationship between food and the intellect emerges, for according to Aquinas, "Gluttony denotes, not any desire of eating and drinking, but an inordinate desire. Now desire is said to be inordinate through leaving the order of reason, wherein the good of moral virtue consists."<sup>16</sup> One may eat unreasonably and inordinately, even without overconsumption. Moreover, a medieval tradition associated gluttony with any sins of the mouth, including lying, blasphemy, complaining, boasting and perjury.<sup>17</sup> Under this definition, even a poet as poet may be susceptible to charges of gluttony. Although such fluid definitions may make gluttony appear to be the all-encompassing vice of the medieval period and the early modern era, gluttony still retained the primary meaning of consuming to excess. Such is the meaning of the vice as it is punished in Dante's *Purgatorio*, where those who "gorg'd themselves" and "had drunk too avidly" were purified.<sup>18</sup> There they are tantalized, curiously enough, with a fruited tree having descended from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and then warned

away from it by voices advocating temperance (24.116-7). The placement of this tree on the terrace of Gluttony is not without significance for Dante and his contemporaries. Irene Samuel suggests Milton's acknowledgment of Dante's association of gluttony with dubious trees by comparing the tree in *Purgatorio* with "the sham trees" in Book 10 of *Paradise Lost*.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, as we shall see, Milton also associates the vice of gluttony with partaking of the real Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Similar connections surface in Middle English poetry, as Chaucer confirms the depiction of the first sin as gluttonous. His Pardoner exclaims against it; his Parson anatomizes it, and their conclusion is the same: Gluttony first corrupted the world.<sup>20</sup> The tradition continues into the Elizabethan period, as official Anglican homilies condemn Adam and Eve's gluttony.<sup>21</sup> In Book 2 of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, when temperance is tested in the Cave of Mammon, Guyon is tempted with a tree of golden apples. Although the tree in Eden is not mentioned here, one cannot help but pick up echoes of that same tree reverberating from the Garden of Proserpina, the call to temperance, and the temptation to eat forbidden fruit.<sup>22</sup> Familiar with the Church Fathers, Dante, Chaucer and Spenser, Milton was indeed aware of a long tradition depicting the first sin as gluttonous.<sup>23</sup>

This tradition finds further development in *Paradise Lost*, where prelapsarian Adam and Eve are exemplars of temperance, in opposition to gluttony. In *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature*, Joshua Scodel argues, "Milton presents unfallen Adam and Eve as models of a partially recoverable ideal.... Milton has his Edenic couple discover in temperate self-restraint both a moral discipline and the source of truest pleasure."<sup>24</sup> Roy Flannagan notes particularly their proper innocence in love-making and enjoyment of food.<sup>25</sup> Even Eve's food preparation mimics the active ordering and choosing necessary in a classically-defined notion of temperance:

She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent  
 What choice to choose for delicacy best,  
 What order, so contriv'd as not to mix  
 Tastes, not well join'd, inelegant, but bring  
 Taste after taste upheld with kindest change. (5.332-36)

The art of the hostess is described as a perfect ability to choose well—Eve selects and combines fruits in such a way that "taste after taste" provides a delightful sensation to the palate. Her elegant preparation (with connotations deriving from both the Latin adverb *eleganter*, *tastefully*, and the verb *eligere*, *to choose*) both incites pleasure (as that which is *delicious* is *delightful*) and involves rational activity. Eve's practical skill is aligned with

Aristotle's explanation of the interrelation between *proairesis* (choice) and *sôphrosunê* (temperance, self-control), as both require the harmony of desire and reason.<sup>26</sup> Before the Fall, Adam acknowledges that he has been created not for "'irksome toil but to delight / ...and delight to reason joined'" (*PL* 9.242-43). One of the perfections in the garden before Satan's influence is that Adam and Eve desire the good, intellect it, and choose accordingly.<sup>27</sup> Yet there is also a hint of a warning against excessive selectivity here. The angel Raphael accepts Adam's invitation to join their meal, assuring his hosts, "'To taste / Think not I shall be nice'" (5.432-33). That is, Raphael sets an example of not being too choosy, not being over-discriminating in his taste, though he eats of nectar, ambrosia, and manna in heaven (5.426-30). Although selectivity is a requisite for temperance, it must itself also be tempered.<sup>28</sup> The meal in Eden provides the occasion for depicting the perfect balance in choosing and in consuming. Though Adam, Eve and Raphael praise God's provision and fully partake of the repast, they do not eat to excess, for "with meats and drinks they had suffic't, / Not burd'n'd nature" (5.451-52).<sup>29</sup> Similarly, the angels feasting in heaven are "'secure / Of surfeit where full measure only bounds / Excess, before th' all bounteous King'" (5.638-40).<sup>30</sup> This passage is quite similar to a statement in the *Areopagitica*, directly following that famous passage where passions and pleasures are defended when, "rightly temper'd," they form "the very ingredients of vertu." Milton continues, "This justifies the high providence of God, who though he command us to temperance, justice, continence, yet powrs out before us ev'n to a profuseness all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety."<sup>31</sup> Such a similarity between this passage and the description of God's bounty and the call to temperance in Book 5 suggests that Scodel is correct in assuming that Milton believes the Edenic ideal is "partially recoverable."

The perfect, temperate condition of Eden changes with the presentation of Adam and Eve's participation in gluttony in Book 9, which marks the perversion of both eating and rational discourse. This theme is introduced by repeated references to physiological consumption. From the beginning of the book, the Fall is contrasted with the "rural repast" and its "venial discourse unblam'd" of Books 5 through 8 (9.4-5).<sup>32</sup> "On the part of Heav'n," the response to this Fall is one of "distaste" (8-9). As the bard's indirect reference to his "Celestial Patroness" contrasts the "higher Argument" of Milton's poem with the spurious heroic themes of martial exploits, we are also reminded that feasts in themselves are inadequate subjects for the truly heroic poem in praise of patience and martyrdom (31-2, 37, 42). As the narrative resumes, the references to eating prevail. Once Eve suggests separation from Adam, she articulates a changing perspective regarding eating. She sees their noontime meal as a future respite from

labor that must be earned, not as a response of thanksgiving for God's bounty. Her focus shifts from divine providence to her own efforts.<sup>33</sup> The predominant metaphor of food continues, as in his urging Eve to stay, Adam construes the kinds of food permitted as needed for refreshment without strict scheduling: whether physical nourishment (food proper), or discourse (the "[f]ood of the mind"), or "looks and smiles" (the food of love) (235-241). Despite this speech, Eve takes her leave, and as she does so she is likened to Pomona, goddess of fruit trees, or virginal Ceres, goddess of grain (393-96).<sup>34</sup> In an ironic moment, as Satan observes Eve alone, Milton compares her charms to those of Circe, the enchantress that tempts Odysseus's men with food and then turns them into the swine their natures signify (522).<sup>35</sup> Satan then tempts Eve as a serpent with the gifts of speech and intellect, and tells her that his extraordinary powers came from eating of the forbidden tree. Before this elevation, he says, he was a beast "of abject thoughts and low, / As was [his] food, nor aught but food discern'd, / Or sex, and apprehended nothing high" (9.572-74). Satan subtly speaks deprecatingly of the bodily desires for food and sex as a means to tempt Eve to eat something. It is as if he were saying to her, "Eating isn't important. There are so many other, more philosophic things that should demand the attention of such a noble creature as you are. What you eat doesn't signify anything. It's the animals that care for food and sex."<sup>36</sup> And ironically, after the Fall her desires for food and sex are exacerbated, made increasingly inordinate. Because Eve neglects the divine mandate and follows her appetite rather than right reason—though "Reason is [her] Law"—she becomes like the lawless man of Aristotle's *Politics*: worst with respect to sex and food (9.654).<sup>37</sup> Eve's appetite is awakened as she approaches the tree, and desiring its alleged intellectual and apotheosizing benefits, she eats of its fruit. The seduction of Eve is sensual, involving her eyes, ears, nose, appetite, hands, and finally, her palate (9.735-742).<sup>38</sup> After that first crucial bite, "greedily she ingorg'd without restraint / And knew not eating Death" (9.791-2). Then, intoxicated by her sin, "hight'n'd as with Wine," she brings back not one apple, but an entire "bough of fairest fruit" to offer Adam (9.793, 851). Once resolved, Adam does not eat sparingly, for as Eve offers him the fruit "[w]ith liberal hand," "He scrupl'd not to eat / Against his better knowledge" (9.997-98). As Earth trembles, Adam "took no thought / Eating his fill, nor Eve to iterate / Her former trespass feared" (9.1004-6). Eve's second helping of sin goes beyond the satiety she experienced earlier, complicating an already criminal act (9.792). The resulting state of intoxication contrasts with the "inoffensive must" of the crushed grape served earlier, suggesting that Milton considers both to have consumed gluttonously (5.345). Moreover, as Donald Davis notes, Adam shares with Eve in the psychology of gluttony, for he "remarks that the

fruit is so tasty that he wishes the Lord had forbidden ten trees rather than only one—an unwittingly ravenous appetite for death that Death himself would have applauded."<sup>39</sup> Drunkenness attends gluttony, and these lead to lust and further sin. The first sin is thereby characterized as undue acquiescence to appetite.

Two important objections to this understanding of the first sin remain. First, perhaps gluttony is only one of the sins compounded in the Fall, following Milton's expression in *De Doctrina Christiana*. It has been argued that *Paradise Lost* follows Augustine's threefold division of sin into the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—or more specifically, gluttony, *curiositas* (the avaricious desire for excessive, unnecessary knowledge), and vainglory. In turn, these three types of sin are subsequently conquered by the Son's resistance of the same three temptations in *Paradise Regained*.<sup>40</sup> Under this scheme, gluttony would seem to be merely a third of the problem. A second objection further removes gluttony from a position of primacy: perhaps gluttony was merely the first consequence of the Fall, not the act of the Fall itself. After all, Eve first partook, and then she partook ravenously.

An attempt to answer these objections satisfactorily returns our discussion to the understanding of gluttony as both quantitative and qualitative. Recall that Gregory the Great's classification of gluttony includes not only eating rapaciously, but also eating with the gourmet's snobbish, over-discriminating palate, *i.e.*, eating a certain type of food in a certain way. As William Ian Miller explains, "One style is gendered vulgar masculine, the other vulgar feminine; one low-class, the other pretentiously claiming for itself the superiority of expertise and highness, but often taking the style of an unintended parody of highness."<sup>41</sup> Though Miller never mentions Milton in his article, does not this dual nature of gluttony smack of the complexity of sin as presented in *Paradise Lost*? Eve first commits the gluttony of the discriminating type, and then that of the indiscriminating. In an "unintended parody of highness," she first chooses to act beyond her human limits—that is, beyond the dictates of right reason and against the divinely revealed prohibition. Her aspirations are not only appetitive, but intellectual and, ultimately, selfish. She experiences lust of the eyes and the pride of life, but each of these is a sort of gluttonous, qualitative excess. At first, Eve's sin is not that she wants too much knowledge; it is that she wants to know forbidden knowledge. At her fall, her pride is not in her place in the created hierarchy; it is in her assumption that she, too, can be "as the Gods" (9.804). Satan's temptations mirror these aspects of sin, as he first speaks of physical appetite, then philosophy, then godhood (576-97, 598-605, 679-697, 708-17ff.). Eve's response follows this pattern, as her appetite is aroused first; then she considers the virtues

of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and finally she questions God's motives in denying her its fruit (735 ff.). After she plucks and eats, the bard once more recapitulates this threefold sin of qualitative gluttony as Eve grows "intent now wholly on her taste... / ... / ...through expectation high / Of knowledge, nor was God-head from her thought" (9.786, 89-90). She then eats inordinately, fully succumbing to her bodily desires. Thus, her choice to eat was one of qualitative gluttony (in its three Augustinian forms), and her choice to continue eating led to quantitative gluttony (confined to the lust of the flesh). Adam reenacts this pattern, as the choice to ignore his rational misgivings and to disobey the mandate leads to his intemperate consumption. The quantitative and the qualitative—what Miller defines as essentially masculine and feminine versions of gluttony—thereby converge in the communal first sin of Adam and Eve. From this act, a horde of sins and disorders soon follow: intoxicated Lust first, and then "high Passions, Anger, Hate, / Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord" and the like (9.1123-4).<sup>42</sup> As a result of their gluttony, Adam's and Eve's tripartite souls are distempered, "For Understanding rul'd not, and the Will / Heard not her lore, both in subjection now / To sensual Appetite, who from beneath / Usurping over sovran Reason claim'd / Superior sway" (9.1127-31). Thus gluttony as ill-advised choosiness leads to gluttony as ravenous consumption, which leads to a host of other sins and to the subjection of reason to appetite. If "reason...is choice," as Milton says in *Paradise Lost* as well as the *Areopagitica*, this is as much as to say that the wrong employment of Reason leads to the destruction of Reason (*PL*, 3.108).<sup>43</sup> Eve's dainty gluttony—the supposition that the food of the gods ought to be for her own enjoyment—leads to the gluttonous tyranny of the appetitive part of the soul.

The final books of *Paradise Lost* are especially important because they take place in a postlapsarian world and can thereby advise the reader in the management his own fallen condition. Although C. S. Lewis has stated that Books 11 and 12 constitute a prosaic, "untransmuted lump of futurity," it is here that one may receive Milton's final word on human deportment.<sup>44</sup> Insofar as human effort is concerned, a recurring theme here is Temperance. The goal is now corrective, as Milton states in "Of Education": "To repair the ruins of our first parents."<sup>45</sup> In a postlapsarian world, maintaining temperance requires constant activity. Gluttony itself has been transmuted and compounded by the Fall. As Miller explains, "the true ground of gluttony's sinfulness was that it, along with lust, was a sin of what was once known as 'security,' that is, of culpable negligence in the ordering of one's system of values."<sup>46</sup> Gluttony may thus be broadly understood as intemperance, or a failure to order what was by nature properly ordered before the Fall. Although Raphael, using the metaphor of

food, calls for temperance toward knowledge in paradise, this exhortation takes on new and greater significance after the Fall (7.126-28, 8.167-74). Michael calls Adam to temperance repeatedly. Preparing him for visions of the future, the angel advises Adam to

"temper joy with fear  
And pious sorrow, equally inur'd  
By moderation either state to bear,  
Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead  
Safest thy life." (11.361-5)

Later Michael reminds Adam that temperance ought to govern Adam's opinion of his condition; "Nor love thy Life, nor hate," he commands (11.553). Nor does a treatment of gluttony in its specific sense of eating disappear from the final books of the poem. Michael shows Adam a vision of a lazar-house where many of the diseases there pertain to the digestive system: "Intestine Stone and Ulcer, Colic pangs... Marasmus... Dropsies" (11.479-488). Bodily sickness, Adam learns, is the fruit of "th'inabstinence of Eve" and of his own poor choice (11.476). The dominant cause of death, Adam learns, will be "Intemperance...in Meats and Drinks" (11.472-3). And when Adam asks if all men are meant to die through violence or excruciating pain, Michael tells him that a regimen of proper eating and drinking will soften the effects of sin on the body. Michael exhorts Adam to

"well observe  
The rule of not too much, by temperance taught,  
In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from thence  
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight." (11.530-3)

Yet this preventative diet can only partially undo the deleterious effects of the disordered human condition. Even with rigorous attention to consumption, Michael warns, old age will eventually give way to melancholy caused by the now natural imbalance of the humors (11.544).<sup>47</sup>

The temperance Michael prescribes involves not only food, but also knowledge. The achievement of temperance is a rational virtue that requires self-knowledge. The "rule of not too much" alludes to one of the inscriptions over the entrance to the temple of Apollo at Delphi—*mêden agan*, or "nothing too much." Joined with the temple's most famous inscription, *gnothi seauton*, "Know thyself," it commands an attention to practical and personal concerns but warns against excesses. As the temple and oracle at Delphi were dedicated to prophetic knowledge, the temperance advocated here is primarily applicable to intellectual

aspirations, particularly those which require divine assistance. Thus, the Delphic inscriptions are in accord with Raphael's admonition to "solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid" and to "be lowly wise" (8.167, 173). As Adam recites, "[N]ot to know at large of things remote / From use, obscure and subtle, but to know / That which before us lies in daily life, / Is the prime Wisdom" (8.191-94). Adam first expresses the importance of understanding one's limits when God tests Adam's self-knowledge as a precursor to the creation of Eve. In seeking a fit partner, Adam first gives a speech declaring his difference from the beasts and then admits his difference from God (8.379-97, 412-33). Following Aristotle's *Politics*, he knows his humanity lies between these two alternatives and that he is, therefore, in need of companionship. Adam's expressed understanding of his own nature and of his need for a fit companion meets with divine approval: "Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased / And find thee knowing... / ...of thyself" (8.437-39). At the Fall, Adam demonstrates a willful self-ignorance, for the Son tells Adam that his submission to Eve's governance in this one fatal instance would not have happened "hadst thou known thyself aright" (10.156). To *know thyself* requires knowing one's proper authority, limits, and needs as well as exhibiting the active condition of *sôphrosunê*, the Greek word for temperance, self-control, and soundness of mind.

A life of moderation may seem inglorious, but in the closing books of *Paradise Lost* Milton advocates temperance even at the expense of the epic battle tradition. In doing so he adheres to a tradition in which war is depicted as gluttonous.<sup>48</sup> Even though the battles Adam envisions occur much earlier in history than those of the Greek epics, the association of the two historical periods is patent. Michael relates,

"For in those days Might only shall be admir'd  
And Valor and Heroic Virtue call'd;  
To overcome in Battle, and subdue  
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite  
Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch  
Of human Glory, and for Glory done  
Of triumph, to be styl'd great Conquerors,  
Patrons of Mankind, Gods, and Sons of Gods,  
Destroyers rightlier call'd and Plagues of men.  
Thus Fame shall be achiev'd, renown on Earth,  
And what most merits fame in silence hid." (11.689-699)

Michael thus condemns the intemperance of human warfare. Following the depiction of the War in Heaven, war on earth is destructive, violent,

and yes, gluttonous. Adam weeps at the vision of the "brazen Throat of War" (11.674, 713). The epic battle heroes are further associated with gluttony when, in times of peace, after having "done much waste" they then revert to "sloth, / Surfeit, and lust" (11.787-795). Michael foretells that bountiful harvests in times of antediluvian peace will induce gluttony in fallen man, "for th' Earth shall bear / More than anough, that Temperance may be tri'd: / So all shall turn degenerate, all deprav'd, / Justice and Temperance, Truth and Faith forgot" (11.804-7). Yet Earth's prolific bounty is no new occasion for temperance; to assert this would ignore Adam's curse. It is the postlapsarian condition of fallen reason, rather, that exacerbates the temptation to misuse that abundance. Moreover, it is the newfound possibility of scarcity that encourages hoarding and gorging in times of plenty. In a world where equal honor and feasting cannot be always accessible to all, the would-be heroes are gluttons in war and in peace.<sup>49</sup>

In championing temperance Milton undercuts the classical epic while advocating classical philosophy. Instead of glorifying a vice—wrath, for instance—Milton is using one of the least attractive sins to describe the Fall and resultant human behavior. In doing so he completely deglamorizes rebellion against God, making such disobedience repulsive to the classically-trained ears of his seventeenth-century readers. Despite his feats of prowess in the War in Heaven, Christ's heroism primarily depends upon his obedience and love (12.403). Christ is also temperate in the sense of moderation; in his plans to judge the human pair, he tells the Father, "I shall temper so / Justice with Mercy" (10.77-78). Repentant Adam anticipates this consideration, for he remembers God's "mild / and gracious temper" (10.1046-7).<sup>50</sup> Divine and human temperance in Milton involves not merely kindness, but active moderation.

Michael's final exhortation is one of activity. After repeating the mandate for tempering one's desire for knowledge, he continues,

"Add  
Deeds to thy Knowledge answerable, add Faith,  
Add Virtue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,  
By name to come call'd Charity, the soul  
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loathe  
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess  
A paradise within thee, happier far. (12.581-87)<sup>51</sup>

This paradise is in part the peace that comes from the tempering of humors and passions. Rather than constituting a traditional *felix culpa* argument, Michael's words illustrate the hope that Adam through moral striving may

find a "partially recoverable," felicitous internal balance no longer possible outside the self, due to the changed nature of a world fallen askew.<sup>52</sup> Michael Schoenfeldt argues that this "paradise within" is "not a geographical place but rather a series of social and dietary practices that cultivate the inner spaces of the postlapsarian subject."<sup>53</sup> I believe this is taking the food metaphor too far; it is in fact destroying the simile between knowledge and food by limiting it to a too materialistic, literal interpretation. In his convincing argument for the thematic import of the "alimantal vision" in *Paradise Lost*, with deference to the evidence for Milton's materialist monism, Schoenfeldt examines the interrelation between physiology and psychology.<sup>54</sup> Yet Schoenfeldt also recognizes a tension between the discriminative sorting necessary for digestion and the materialist synthesis of the universe from a monist perspective, for a system where all things come from and return to a good God can not easily account for the infernal dregs. This discrepancy forms "perhaps the central ontological paradox in Milton's thought."<sup>55</sup> Another quote from Schoenfeldt helps preserve the integrity of the food/intellect metaphor: "Digestion is then not simply a function of some lower bodily stratum, to borrow a phrase from Bakhtin, but a central process of psychological and physiological self-fashioning."<sup>56</sup> And philosophical self-fashioning, one might add, metaphorically, because not only is the process of choosing and moderating one's diet a continual, important way to exercise one's reason, but also the neglect of this practice can inhibit that reason. Aristotle states that "the unrestrained person is one who stands aside from his reasoning," and Spenser's allegorical figure of Gluttony has a mind drowned "in meat and drinke."<sup>57</sup> The paradise within is not merely "social and dietary," not simply bodily and political, not even simply ethical. It is also metaphysical, intimating the nature of being, and involving the philosophical introspection encouraged by the Delphic oracle. "Knowledge is as Food," as Raphael says, and Milton's treatment of both is important in clarifying the conquest of temperance over appetite (7.126-7). In this enterprise, both reason and poetry have a task.

One may understand Reason's place in *Paradise Lost* as the guide which aids the human struggle to achieve temperance. In the poem, Reason is renamed as Choice, as Law, as Liberty's twin, and as Virtue (3.108, 9.654, 12.85, 12.98). The equation of Reason with Virtue recalls Aristotle's golden mean and accords with the classical or cardinal virtue of temperance.<sup>58</sup> Yet perhaps the most interesting information on Milton's opinion of Reason in *Paradise Lost* is found in the *Areopagitica*, in a passage honoring but misreading Spenser. In this passage, Milton retells how

our sage and serious poet Spenser, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas, describing true temperance under the person of Guyon, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know, and yet abstain.<sup>59</sup>

What has shocked critics about this passage is that Milton was wrong. In the *Faerie Queene*, the Palmer, the voice of Reason, assists Guyon through the Bower of Bliss but leaves him in the Cave of Mammon. The significance of Spenser's depiction, according to Ernest Sirluck, is that Guyon exhibits continence (the restraint of powerful desires through the force of Reason) when he sojourns in the Bower of Bliss with the Palmer, but Temperance (understood in Spenser by Sirluck as the Aristotelian state of having become virtuous through habit and without the need of active Reason) when he overcomes the temptations in the Cave of Mammon alone. The significance of Milton's misreading, according to Sirluck, is that, in contrast to the Aristotelian model, the efficacy of habit is less important for Milton, while virtuous striving according to one's Reason is necessary in the exercise of Temperance.<sup>60</sup> The particular significance of Milton's reading of this Spenserian episode to *Paradise Lost* lies in Dryden's comment in the preface to his *Fables* that "Milton has acknowledg'd to me that Spenser was his original."<sup>61</sup> As Edwin Greenlaw argues, this comment was most likely made in connection with *Paradise Lost*, for Dryden had an ongoing conversation with Milton about his epic poem, and sought permission to use it as the foundation for his *State of Innocence*.<sup>62</sup> The applicability of Milton's misunderstanding of Spenser to his understanding of his own epic is apparent, because for Milton, "the peculiar glory of virtue resides in the conquest, not the placidity, of appetite."<sup>63</sup> Just as Milton thought the continual presence of the Palmer was necessary for Guyon, Reason must guide Adam and Eve in their quest for Temperance.

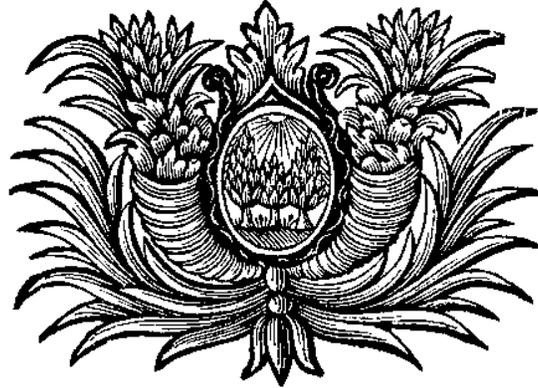
Of course, this understanding of Milton should not be taken too far. In a 1625 sermon John Donne has said that "We may quickly exceed a mediocrity, even in the praise of Mediocrity."<sup>64</sup> Gluttony, rapacious as it may be, is not the all-comprehensive evil of *Paradise Lost*, and the use of reason toward the acquisition of temperance is not a panacea. In *Paradise Lost*, even the struggle to be temperate is tempered by divine revelation and by the imperfections of human reason. As Michael explains in the lazar-house vision, temperate living may extend life and prevent the violent conditions of pain and sickness, but old age will inevitably lead to "a Melancholy damp of cold and dry," a lesser evil, but still an intemperate disorder (11.544).

Neither is the careful control of intellectual intake a panacea. Much is made of Reason's enervation as a consequence of the Fall, and any human knowledge gained thereby is considered infelicitous (9.1125-32, 11.86-89, 12.83-90). Perhaps Eve was not wrong when she said that "Reason is our Law," but the law appears imperfect (9.654, 12.300). Despite *Paradise Lost's* focus on moral responsibility and its ethics of active temperance, Milton's prescription for virtuous human activity offers only an imperfect, provisional remedy. Milton never quite forgets that the redemption of humans needs divine grace, needs "one greater Man" to restore them (1.4). Nevertheless, Michael's last words focus on the human response to the divine revelation of grace. The call to "'Deeds...Faith.../...Virtue, Patience, Temperance,'" and love emphasizes the ethical task remaining for Adam and for the reader. Prevenient grace is manifest in Book 10, but this is not Milton's final conclusion. The promise of redemption unfolded in Books 11 and 12 presents a new beginning, but one not removed from moral struggle.

Despite corporeal grossness and human shortcoming, the "alimentary vision" cannot be ignored, and the human capacity to act must be defended. After all, as Raphael explains, "'Whatever was created, needs / To be sustain'd and fed'" (5.414-15), and the necessity of sustenance itself argues for the necessity of the continuation of life, even in a postlapsarian world. As Milton asks in *Areopagitica*, "Wherefore did he create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly temper'd are the very ingredients of vertu?"<sup>65</sup> The distinction of the good from the bad, and the nutritive from the indigestible, as well as the pursuit for the temperate balance between both extremes of gluttony is a task for philosophy, and for Milton's idea of poetry, as well.<sup>66</sup> Both the fastidious and the vulgar representations of gluttony show us the unpalatable alternatives to this rational endeavor.

In Book 5, Raphael commands Adam, "'[E]njoy / Your fill what happiness this happy state / Can comprehend, incapable of more'" (503-5). In Book 9, Adam jeopardizes that happiness by "eating his fill" from the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil (1005). As a remedy, Michael reveals to Adam the hope found in the oracle, along with guidelines for self-government, to which Adam gratefully replies, "'Greatly instructed I shall hence depart, / ...and have my fill / Of knowledge, what this vessel can contain'" (12.558-60). What left Adam unsatisfied in his conversation with Raphael has now satiated him, although it has come after the advent of evil. Yet soon enough Adam will hunger again. As expressed in the gustatory theme throughout *Paradise Lost*, the whetting of one's appetite is an occasion for the exercise of temperance. Milton suggests that with a measure of grace, this endeavor can prove ultimately satisfying.

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<sup>1</sup>Citations from John Milton's poetic works and from his prose tracts *Areopagitica* and *Of Education* are from *Complete Poems and Major Prose.*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey, 1957). This passage receives variant analysis in several critical works to which I am indebted, including Michael Lieb's *The Dialectics of Creation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), 20; Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 138; John N. King, *Milton and Religious Controversy: Satire and Polemic in Paradise Lost* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 144, 157; and Denise Gigante, "Milton's Aesthetics of Eating" *Diacritics* 30, no. 2 (2000): 99. For King, whose perspective is new historicist, this is part of Milton's satirical polemic against the high-church, royalist supporters of the Restoration establishment; for Lieb, the polemic is primarily directed against Satan. Lieb focuses his analysis of Milton's dialectic on the metaphors of birth and eros rather than consumption, although both are certainly related in Milton's figures of speech, as both Lieb and Gigante note. Denise Gigante refers to Raphael's analogy in support of her argument for the "restricted economy of consumption" (99). Schoenfeldt mentions the passage's deference to the traditional topos uniting the consumption of food and ideas. In light of Milton's materialist monism, he emphasizes the

relationship between physiology and psychology, but does not use this to focus on the limits of philosophy (138). My essay seeks to examine more closely both the manifestation of the particular vice of gluttony in *Paradise Lost* and the philosophical implications of the analogy between food and knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> In Leviticus 20:22, Yahweh warns the Israelites, "Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out" (KJV). In his explication of *PL* 11.50-57, Michael Schoenfeldt mentions a similar passage, Leviticus 18:25 (not 28:25 as printed on page 154 of *Bodies and Selves*).

<sup>3</sup> For this use of *exonerate*, see *OED* definition 2; see also Hobbes's *Leviathan* 1.6.4. This understanding of heaven's excretory exoneration coincides with that of Kent Lehnhof in "Scatology and the Sacred in Milton's *Paradise Lost*" *English Literary Renaissance* 37 (2007): 432. The expulsion of the demons from heaven is revisited in the initial moments of the divine act of creation, as the Spirit of God separates the vital from the indigestible, and "downward purg'd / The black tartareous cold Infernal dregs / Adverse to life" (*PL* 7.237-39). In this sense, Denise Gigante argues that "Satan is expelled in the constitutive moment of Miltonic creation" (103). Although the expulsion and the creation appear to be not exactly simultaneous, since a divine speech, an angelic hymn, and the Son's procession separate the narration of the two events, the bard reminds us that "Immediate are the Acts of God, more swift / Than time or motion but to human ears / Cannot without process of speech be told" (*PL* 7.176-78). Nevertheless, as Gigante notes, the argument to Book 1 of *PL* clearly states that Satan's expulsion was before the creation of heaven and earth (95). Such "divine defecation"—to use Lehnhof's wording (437)—into the "cosmic latrine"—to use the phrasing of Gigante (94)—is not necessary until after the conception of Sin. Among the unfallen angels, excretion is characterized more pleasantly as transpiration marked by ambrosial fragrance (Cf. Lehnhof, 440-43). Schoenfeldt argues that Raphael's reference to the wind of indigestion indicates that "intestinal gas is neither an exclusively postlapsarian nor an exclusively terrestrial experience, or the comparison has no meaning for either party, but Milton sometimes nods or intentionally presents his reader with information that the characters could not empirically understand (138). Gordon Teskey sees these occasions in the narrative not as mistakes, but as "fold[s] in the poem's frames of reference." Cf. Teskey's note on Raphael's anticipation of the "three different motions" of the earth in his edition of *PL* (New York: Norton, 2005) 8.130. We need not think of unfallen Adam or angels as flatulent in

our understanding of the term, nor "oppress[ed]" with the "surfeit" mentioned in Raphael's analogy (7.129).

As an alternative to my understanding of the disburdening of heaven, Michael Lieb, finding reproductive imagery where I find digestive metaphor, sees in this passage a "metaphorical birth" (87). As Lieb argues, Milton often fuses images of generation and consumption, particularly noticeable in the repeated image of being swallowed in a womb (22-25). Yet Gigante rightly reminds us that *womb* could refer to the abdomen, stomach, or bowels (*OED* 1; Gigante 99, n. 20).

<sup>4</sup> Moreover, this movement specifically serves to degrade the infernal powers, contributing to Milton's examination of the "foul descent" undergone by those who turn from God (*PL* 9.163). Such imagery of flatulence, vomiting and excretion is even more rhetorically effective, I believe, than the visual degradation of Satan from angel to leviathan, to cormorant, to lion, to tiger, to toad, to serpent, upon which C. S. Lewis bases much of his argument against those who champion Satan's heroism in *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 94-103. The comic degradation of the infernal powers for Milton's satirical purposes is substantially analyzed in King, Lieb, and Gigante.

<sup>5</sup> Just as Milton's Satan fathers both Sin and then, through incest, Death, Lust is traditionally Gluttony's "sexy sibling sin of the flesh," as William Ian Miller describes in "Gluttony," *Representations* 60 (1997): 92.

The double allegory of Death as Gluttony is manifest throughout *Paradise Lost*. At hearing from Satan that the whole earth is to be his to consume, Death responds with a complacent, "ghastly smile" (2.846). After the Fall, Death follows Sin to destroy the earth. Compared to not one bird, but "a flock / Of ravenous Fowl," he exults, "such a scent I draw / Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste / The savor of Death from all things there that live" (10.267-69, 273-74). Indistinct as it may be, the very form of this "grim Feature" suggests gluttony (10.279), for as a goblin-like Hellhound he recalls Cerberus, as his snaky mother does Scylla (2.648-61, 688, 724; 10.616, 630). As Donald Davis notes, citing the work of Robert Fox, Scylla and Cerberus "were associated, respectively, with lust and gluttony in a long, steady tradition" [Cf. Donald M. Davis, "The Technique of Guilt by Association in *Paradise Lost*," *South Atlantic Bulletin* 37 (1972): 29-34.]

<sup>6</sup> Of course, the suggestion of sexual abstinence or suicide from the "Mother of human Race" is ill-advised (4.475). Michael Lieb sees in her proposal a dangerous substitute for creation and birth (209). Though the allegorical figure of Sin is associated with lust, the nonbeing that looms with complete abstention from the passions is no less a threat. Adam's repudiation of

Eve's suggestion provides an important indication of the type of temperance advocated by Milton—an Aristotelian virtue for which vice may reside at both the extremes of utterly ingratiating and of utterly stifling one's desires.

<sup>7</sup> Davis, 29.

<sup>8</sup> *De Doctrina Christiana* 1.11. *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Gen. ed. Don M. Wolfe. 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953—82). In a catalogue of sins committed in the Fall, Adam is called *gulosus* (gluttonous).

<sup>9</sup> *Complete Prose Works*, 1: 367. Milton's praise for Tertullian's expression is contained in the Latin adverb *eleganter*, which Mohl translates "fitly" but may also mean "tastefully." The case for the intentionality of this pun is strengthened in Book 5 of *Paradise Lost*, where the bard describes Eve's not "inelegant" food preparations (5.335). Derived from the Latin verb *elego* ("I choose"), *eleganter* also carries connotations of proper selectivity, uniting taste with the definition of reason as choice (*PL* 3.108). The correlation of food and knowledge is further supported by Milton's frequent punning on *sapience*, which in the Latin unites flavor with understanding, and by the concept of *ruminating* on a text with the slow deliberation with which a cow appears to chew its cud. The extent to which Adam's intellectual vision has been darkened by the Fall is then doubly evident when he calls Eve "elegant, of Sapience no small part" for her choice to eat of the forbidden fruit (*PL* 9.1018). For further analysis of Milton's use of *sapience*, cf. Gigante, 89, and Schoenfeldt, 194, n. 18. For an analysis of the ethical import of literary *ruminatio*, cf. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 205-06.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Morton Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, (Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1952), 59-60, as cited in Miller, 93. Much of my discussion of the historical background of the concept of gluttony comes from sources listed in Miller's article.

<sup>11</sup> Miller, 94.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Rev. Ed. (New York: Benziger, 1947-48), 2a2ae.148.5. Although it is no shocking statement that overconsumption (including drinking alcohol) can either dull or elevate the senses so as to encourage other vices, including lust, there is a discrepancy in the allegory of Sin (associated with lust) giving birth to Death (associated with gluttony). Perhaps this can be explained as follows: When Satan generates Sin, this is a qualitative error—a desire to be as God. This error then reproduces itself,

becoming quantitative in nature as Sin's offspring multiply, and as Death's appetite increases. In this manner the allegory of Sin and Death reflects also the first human sin—one of a qualitative error in the desire to be as God, compounded by a repetition of the sin in a fruitless attempt to satisfy the increasing appetite for sin. Allegorical gluttony follows lust here just as quantitative gluttony follows qualitative gluttony (a lust of sorts) in Book 9.

<sup>13</sup> Aquinas, 2a2ae.148.3.

<sup>14</sup> Miller, 99.

<sup>15</sup> Aquinas, 2a2ae.148.4.

<sup>16</sup> Aquinas, 2a2ae.148.1.

<sup>17</sup> Miller cites R. F. Yeager, "Aspects of Gluttony in Chaucer and Gower," *Studies in Philology* 81 (1984): 42-55.

<sup>18</sup> Dante, *Purgatorio*. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. (New York: Bantam, 2004) 24.123, 125.

<sup>19</sup> Irene Samuel, *Dante and Milton: The Commedia and Paradise Lost*, (Ithaca: Cornell, 1966), 246.

<sup>20</sup> Chaucer's Pardoner pontificates:

"O glotonye, ful of cursednesse!  
 O cause first of our confusioun!  
 O original of oure dampnacioun,  
 Til Crist hadde boght us with his blood agayn!  
 Lo, how deere, shortly for to sayn,  
 Aboght was thilke cursed vileynye!  
 Corrupt was al this world for glotonye. (PardT 498-504)

The Pardoner also confirms the association of Gluttony with Lust, mentioning "the fyr of lecherye, / That is annexed unto glotonye" (481-82).

If one refuses to accept the hypocritical Pardoner's word on this subject, one may turn to the words of a nobler, more authoritative pilgrim, the Parson. In his sermon on penitence and the Seven Deadly Sins, the Parson explains, "Glotonye is... unmesurable appetit and desordeyne coveitise to eten or to drynke. / This synne corrupped al this world, as is wel shewed in the synne of Adam and of Eve" (ParsT 817-8). In agreement with Aquinas, the Parson also notes that gluttony is especially dangerous because it leads to other sins: "He that is usaunt to this synne of glotonye, he ne may no synne withstonde. He moot been in servage of alle vices, for it is the develes hoord ther he hideth hym and resteth" (820). Following Saint Gregory, the Parson defines gluttony broadly, including aspects of dainty eating in a list of variations of his vice: "The seconde is whan a man

get hym to delicaat mete or drynke.... The fourthe is curiositee, with greet entente to maken and apparailen his mete" (827, 828). The *Remedium*, insofar as it lies within human willpower, is "abstinence... attemperaunce... shame... suffisance... mesure... sobrenesse... sparynge" (833-35). Citations are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boston: Houghton, 1987).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Miller, 94.

<sup>22</sup> An allegory of Gluttony occurs earlier, in Book 1 of *The Faerie Queene*. During Red Crosse's stop at the House of Pride, Lucifera's procession is led by Idleness, and Gluttony follows on a swine, gorging himself, drunk and wreathed in ivy like Bacchus or Silenus, and suffering from dropsy (1.4.21-23). Although Gluttony appears to be consequent to Idleness here, their order is reversed when afterward Gluttony serves as steward to a feast that then occasions Idleness (1.4.43).

<sup>23</sup> The argument for Milton's familiarity with Dante is concisely articulated in Oscar Kuhns's article, "Dante's Influence on Milton," *MLN* 13 (1898):1-6. See also Irene Samuel's *Dante and Milton: The Commedia and Paradise Lost*, (Ithaca: Cornell, 1966). For Milton's knowledge (and misreading) of Spenser, see my examination of Greenlaw and Sirluck on pages 19 and 20 and in note 60 below.

<sup>24</sup> Scodel, Joshua. *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 17.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. entry on "temperance" in William B. Hunter, Jr., John T. Shawcross, John M. Steadman et. al., eds. *A Milton Encyclopedia*. 9 vols. (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1978-83), 3.53; *Paradise Lost* 4.736-75, 5.631-41.

<sup>26</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Joe Sachs, (Newburyport, MA: Focus, 2002). 1119a 11-20, 1139a 30-1139b 5.

<sup>27</sup> Not until Satan's intrusion into the bower do we see the seeds of discontent, or hear Adam's concerns regarding the problematic separation of passion and reason (*PL* 8.530-31, 554-55). At the risk of arguing *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, I should add that, whether or not this conflict between reason and desire is *caused* by Satanic intrusion, Milton chooses not to introduce it until after evil has in some preliminary way entered the garden.

<sup>28</sup> Likewise, Adam's dependence on reason must also be moderated. His reason is sufficient to withstand temptation, but divine revelation should take precedence. The revealed command not to eat from the tree supercedes any rationalization for disobedience. Thus, Eve is accountable for such disobedience even though the words of the serpent were "impregn'd / With reason (to her seeming) and with truth" (9.737-38).

After the Fall, this is complicated, because as God no longer walks with Adam in the garden and as man becomes estranged from God, he must employ his reason to determine the validity of any mediated revelation (11.315-22).

<sup>29</sup> In *Paradise Lost*, Adam argues that Nature's bounty justifies their generosity (5.314-320). This contrasts with Comus's false reasoning that this bounty justifies intemperate consumption (*A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*, 710-714). Cf. Lieb, 197, n.5.

<sup>30</sup> Milton even answers the delicate question of what perfect digestion ends in, for in angels "what redounds transpires" and, similarly, Adam's "pure digestion" results in "temperate vapors bland" (5.438, 4-5) See Lieb, p. 219, n. 2. for a contrast between these temperate vapors and the "exhilarating vapour[s]" produced by the Fall.

<sup>31</sup> *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 733.

<sup>32</sup> *Venial* here means "allowable, permissible; blameless" (*OED* 3).

<sup>33</sup> Likewise, Eve's postlapsarian plans to worship the tree contrast with the fitly timed but unpremeditated "prompt eloquence" of Adam and Eve's unanimous morning and evening prayers (*PL* 4.736, 5.149, 9.799-80; Lieb, 197). Schoenfeldt remarks, "Where in Paradise eating was simply an appropriate response to God's generous plenitude..., after the Fall it becomes both a reward and a punishment" (157). Moments before the Fall, Eve suggests the noon meal must be an earned reward.

<sup>34</sup> In this passage Eve is also compared to Pales, the Roman goddess of shepherds, responsible for the fertility of the flock. In these images of fruition, Milton once again unites metaphors of birth with those of consumption.

<sup>35</sup> In Renaissance emblem books, Circe is a representative of gluttony, the consort of Bacchus, the figure for drunkenness. As a figure of intemperance, Circe is opposed to reason, symbolized by moly, the preventative herb that counteracts Circe's charms. The Renaissance interpretation of the rational powers of moly is reinforced by Circe's admiration of Odysseus: "There is a mind in you no magic will work on" [*The Odyssey*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (New York: Harper, 2007) 10.329]. The connection between Eve and Circe is strengthened by their shared ability to know the nature and virtues of plants (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Arthur Golding, 14.306-313; *PL* 5.331-336, 11.273-79). For a comparison of the Ovidian and Homeric Circe in Renaissance literature and mythography as they pertain to *Paradise Lost*, see Judith E. Browning's "Sin, Ève, and Circe: *Paradise Lost* and the Ovidian Circe Tradition" *Milton Studies* 26 (1991): 135-57 and Leonora Brodwin's "Milton and the

Renaissance Circe," *MilSt* 6 (1974): 21-83. For Milton's use of the tradition of bacchic gluttony, especially in *A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*, see Joan Larsen Klein, "The Demonic Bacchus in Spenser and Milton" *MilSt* 21 (1985): 93-118.

<sup>36</sup> The same point has been made by Donald Friedman ["Divisions on a Ground": 'Sex' in *Paradise Lost*," *Of Poetry and Politics: New Essays on Milton and His World*, ed. Paul G. Stanwood (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995) p. 204, n. 4] and by Michael Schoenfeldt (147).

<sup>37</sup> Aristotle, *The Politics* 1.1253a3ff. For the connection between this passage and the Circean temptation to which Eve succumbs, see Charles Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization: An Interpretation of Sophocles* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 61.

<sup>38</sup> At the climax of this catalogue, Eve is "inclinable now grown to touch or taste" (*PL* 9.742). Eve's inexact articulation of the prohibition ("We may not taste nor touch"), in addition to following the Genesis account, corresponds nicely with Aristotle's understanding of the involvement of temperance in the particular bodily pleasures of touch and taste (*PL* 9.651; *NE* 1118a25).

<sup>39</sup> Davis, 31; *PL* 9.1024-26.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Frank Kermode, *Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne* (London: Routledge, 1971), 69-70. In his homily on Psalm 8, Augustine breaks down the three types of sin according to 1 John 2:16. Cf. also Roy Flannagan's entry on gluttony in *A Milton Encyclopedia*, vol. 3. Avarice is substituted for lust of the eyes here, but they are related in that the Latin *avarus* (greedy, hungry for) need not be confined to riches. A fuller analysis of the three sins as listed in 1 John 2:16 is found in Augustine's *Homily 2 on 1 John*, secs. 10-14. Augustine's three divisions of sin are again listed in Book 10 of *The Confessions*, where one also may find his examination of gluttony [sec. 31, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (London: Penguin, 1961), 234-237].

<sup>41</sup> Miller, 105-6.

<sup>42</sup> See note 12 and 22, above.

<sup>43</sup> *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 733.

<sup>44</sup> Lewis, 129.

<sup>45</sup> *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 631.

<sup>46</sup> Miller, 102.

<sup>47</sup> For the "rule of not too much," its physiological benefits and its limits for Milton and his audience, see Schoenfeldt, 160-161.

<sup>48</sup> For previous examples of the gluttony of warfare, see Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* 1.3.119-24, Petrarch's letter "Italia Mia," and Eumolpus's poem on the glut of Roman luxury and warfare in Petronius's *Satyricon*, 119-20.

<sup>49</sup> Temperance in battle extends to the Oracle as well. Adam pictures a glorious battle between his Seed and the Serpent, but Michael corrects this vision (12.386). Christ is victorious by obedience and love, by suffering death, not through an exhibition of human strength (12.403). Yet the idea of Christ as a mild-tempered hero does not extend infinitely, for at the eschaton, perhaps no need for moderation will be necessary. After the resurrection, Michael relates, the Son "shall ascend / With victory, triumphing through the air / Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise / The Serpent, Prince of Air, and drag in Chains / Through all his Realm / and there confounded leave" (12.451-55). Does not this sound like Achilles dragging Hector's body across the Trojan plain?

<sup>50</sup> In continuance of this theme, Richard Douglas Jordan presents a case for the Son of *Paradise Regained* as a figure of Temperance in *The Quiet Hero: Figures of Temperance in Spenser, Donne, Milton, and Joyce*. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989). Temperance figures prominently as a theme in *PR* (2.164, 2.378, 2.408, 3.27, 3.92, 3.160, 4.114, 4.134). Gluttony also is discussed, although some critics argue that the banquet temptation is not properly about gluttony, but idolatry [Howard Schultz, "Christ and Antichrist in *Paradise Regained*." *PMLA* 67 (1952): 800]. Whether or not gluttony figures as prominently here as it does in *PL*, the insistent theme of Temperance is yet another important instance of the classically philosophical mind of Milton. Although Christ in *PR* rejects classical study, he essentially ascribes to an Aristotelian ethic governed by a Platonic understanding of the soul.

<sup>51</sup> Compare this passage with 2 Peter 1:5-7: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (*KJV*) Curiously, what is missing from Milton's list is godliness and brotherly kindness. Perhaps "brotherly" kindness may not be pertinent yet given that Adam has no fraternal relationships, and the absence of an exhortation to godliness may indirectly support the theme of knowing (and staying within) one's natural human limits.

<sup>52</sup> The intemperate climate of the postlapsarian environment is also a recurring motif in *Paradise Lost*. Eden's perfection is destroyed not only by the advent of Death, but by the "brandish'd Sword of God" which "began to parch that temperate Clime" after the expulsion (12.633, 636). The motion of the heavens is disturbed as a consequence of human sin, the earth's axis is tilted, and in an intriguing metaphor of repulsion after cannibalistic gluttony, "the Sun, as from Thyestean Banquet, turn'd / His

course intended" (10.688-9). Before the Fall, "Spring / Perpetual smil'd on earth with vernant Flow'rs, / Equal in Days and Nights" (10.678-80). Even Milton's heaven, a realm of light, is likewise temperate in its brightness. Near the throne of God, there is a cave "where light and darkness in perpetual round / Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heav'n / Grateful vicissitude, like Day and Night" (6.6-8).

<sup>53</sup> Schoenfeldt, 162.

<sup>54</sup> To my knowledge, the best argument for Milton's materialist monism is the third chapter of Stephen M. Fallon's *Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). Fallon writes of "Milton's forthright materialism" and depicts Milton as "impatient with any notion of incorporeal substance" (78, 115). This philosophy arguably makes its way into *Paradise Lost* with Raphael's explication of "one first matter" (5.472). Fallon depicts Milton's materialism as animist, allowing for the traits of mind within matter, but he does not account for Raphael's explanation of angelic digestion, where "corporeal to incorporeal turn," except to state that this incorporeality "must be taken as relative" (*PL* 5.413; Fallon 107, 111). Whether or not we assent to a monist universe in *Paradise Lost*, it is clear that Milton maintains distinctions between substances, even if these distinctions are only "in degree" (5.473, 490). Raphael's statement that the "grosser feeds the purer" shows that body and spirit are connected for Milton, but that the "grosser" is at the service of the "purer" intimates a hierarchical difference (5.416, 478).

<sup>55</sup> Schoenfeldt, 145. As Gigante notes, John Rogers also explains the problem that "the dregs resist assimilation into Milton's monist universe" [Gigante 95; cf. Rogers, *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 130-43.]

<sup>56</sup> Schoenfeldt, 60.

<sup>57</sup> Aristotle, *NE* 1145b10; Spenser, *FQ* 1.4.23

<sup>58</sup> Virtues are "mean conditions, ...active conditions, ...willing things, ...in the way that right reason would dictate" Aristotle, *NE* 1114b25. The virtue of temperance is "in a mean condition" concerning pleasure (1119a12).

<sup>59</sup> *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 729.

<sup>60</sup> Ernest Sirluck, "Milton Revises *The Faerie Queene*," *Modern Philology* 48 (1950): 90-96. Despite Sirluck's understanding of the ethical importance Aristotle assigns to habit, Joe Sachs successfully argues that Aristotle's understanding of virtue depends less on habit than is commonly supposed. The difficulty arises with the misleading (but appropriate) translation of the Greek word *hexis* as the Latin *habitus*, and thence to (the inappropriate)

*habit*. See Joe Sachs's introduction to his edition of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Newburyport: Focus, 2002).

<sup>61</sup> Quoted by Edwin Greenlaw in "A Better Teacher Than Aquinas," *StPhil* 14 (1917): 197.

<sup>62</sup> Greenlaw, 198.

<sup>63</sup> Sirluck, 95.

<sup>64</sup> Qtd. in Scodel, 1.

<sup>65</sup> *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, 733.

<sup>66</sup> For an analysis of Dante's poetics in which the "stay-at-home" vice of Gluttony is counteracted by the activity of poetry (of Dante and Bonagiunta), cf. Abrams, Richard, "Inspiration and Gluttony: The Moral Context of Dante's Poetics of the 'Sweet New Style.'" *MLN* 91 (1976): 30-59. Milton himself also opposes poetics to gluttony in his *Elegia Sexta*, where he argues to Charles Diodati that an abstemious diet is a necessity for the poet. This latin elegiac against gluttony is, E. M. W. Tillyard suggests, "a personal self-dedication" to the writing of epic poetry (33). Poetry most certainly involves for Milton the activity of temperance.