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Philosophy as Noblest Idolatry in *Paradise Lost*

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After Satan and his followers conclude their deliberations in Pandemonium, Milton depicts some of the sinful angels congregating to discuss speculative subjects:

Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy and glory and shame,
Vain wisdom all and false philosophy (ll. 562–65).

There is sufficient reason to inquire into the comprehensiveness of Milton's terms in the appositive phrase which echoes Colossians 2:8 "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit." Do the adjectives "vain" and "false" distinguish a defective kind of speculative activity to which one might oppose all "true" philosophy, or do the epithets apply to the entire genus, philosophy as such being considered misleading, false root and branch? A consideration of Milton's portrayal of temptation and fall supports the argument that Milton is presenting a categorical criticism of aspirations to philosophic wisdom. Furthermore, by arguing that Milton means to call into question the classical ideal of the philosophic life, one may account for those features of *Paradise Lost* which have as their source most clearly Milton's own invention rather than scriptural texts. To the Genesis story of man's first disobedience the poem adds (1) a deep characterization of the first man and woman, (2) a much-elaborated drama of temptation erected upon the terse biblical narrative of Eve beguiled by the serpent, (3) a lengthy digressive prelude to the fall comprising the middle third (Books V–VIII) of the narrative and depicting a conversation set in Adam's bower in which the participants are Adam and the angel Raphael, with Eve as silent audient for part of the discussion. These three areas of Milton's inventiveness operate in concert to develop a critique of philosophy through which Milton intends to reveal the speculative life as noblest rival to the way of fidelity enjoined by Old and New Testaments. Milton works his distrust of philosophic ambitions into his characterization of Adam as incipient philosopher, he makes Satan's deception of Eve depend upon Satan's enticing her to aspire towards philosophic superiority, and he so interprets God's interdiction against eating from the tree that he adds to the Genesis account an indictment of philosophy which amounts to an indictment in principle.¹

1. Although one can hardly read *Paradise Lost* without sensing the danger in Adam's intellectual impertinency, critics have been generally disinclined to see in Milton's portrayal of the fall an

I. THE FORBIDDEN TREE AND NATURAL LAW

Milton conceives God's "sole command" as a test requiring the submission of intellect to faith. In the *Christian Doctrine* he infers a purpose for the injunction recorded in Genesis 2:16–17:

It was necessary that something should be forbidden or commanded as a test of fidelity, and that an act in its own nature indifferent, in order that man's obedience might be thereby manifested.²

Milton conceives law a precondition for obedience, fidelity, and liberty, for unless beings capable of choice are subject to some law they cannot attest their fidelity. Raphael says the angels receive commands not in order to produce works which otherwise could not be accomplished but in order to test their love and steadfastness (VIII.239–40). God creates liberty for the angels by devising occasional commands which can be disobeyed, and similarly, to permit human beings the demonstration of an unconditional love God must establish a special kind of law. With regard to the particular command given Adam, we notice Milton adds the important qualification: God must forbid a thing "in its own nature indifferent." *Indifferent* is a theological term signifying that the matter governed by the law is, apart from its status under the law, a matter neither good nor bad. If one should ask why the command *must* be in regard to a thing indifferent, the answer is in order to distinguish the divine edict from natural law. It would not have served for God to have required Adam, say, to live temperately or to treat Eve justly. For however punctiliously Adam had obeyed it would not then be clear whether he obeyed from a love of God or from a love

indictment of the philosophic life. See for example the interpretations of the first disobedience offered by Hugh MacCallum, *Milton and the Sons of God* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), pp. 109–58; John Spencer Hill, *John Milton: Poet, Priest and Prophet* (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 121–40; Louis L. Martz, *Poet of Exile: A Study of Milton's Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 120–41; John T. Shawcross, *With Mortal Voice: The Creation of Paradise Lost* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1982); Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in "Paradise Lost"* (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 241–71; Northrop Frye, *The Return of Eden* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 60–88.

Howard Schultz dwells upon the background of contemporary ideas and emphasizes the comprehensiveness of Milton's denigration of all un sanctified learning in, *Milton and Forbidden Knowledge* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1955). My approach adds to Schultz's an account of the bearing of the issue of forbidden knowledge upon dramatic incident and development, particularly the alteration in the relationship between Adam, Eve, and Satan set up by Adam's turn to philosophical speculation. At least in regard to Eve, John M. Steadman perceives the issue as I have posed it: "Eve's imaginary apotheosis bears a significant resemblance to that of the classical philosopher . . . For Stoics and Neoplatonists alike, knowledge—contemplation of heavenly things and purification through philosophy—conducts the soul back to the skies." *Milton's Biblical and Classical Imagery* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1984), pp. 184–85.

2. *The Christian Doctrine*, trans. Charles R. Sumner, in *John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey, 1957), I, 10.

of the good of his own body, in the case of temperance, or from love of Eve's good, if justice were commanded. In order to permit the unambiguous declaration of love for God, man must conform to a divine rule that has no other ground for its existence but the divine will. To see more clearly what causes Milton to say the act forbidden must *necessarily* be an act indifferent we need only imagine an Adam, who, upon being informed that he must abstain from the fruit of one tree asks, Why? One must suppose God's reply would point to the necessity of His positing some arbitrary faith. Moved by love of his Creator, Adam must abstain, and for no other reason. A more extreme demonstration of love might come of enjoining conduct opposed to natural law, as in the homicide proposed by God in the Abraham-Isaac story. A matter indifferent suffices, however, to distinguish the divine will from nature while leaving otherwise intact Milton's dictum that the law of God does necessarily agree with the law of nature.³ Milton writes that prelapsarian man "had the whole law of nature so implanted and innate in him, that he needed no precept to enforce its observance." From this Milton concludes that "if he received any additional commands, whether respecting the tree of knowledge, or the institution of marriage, these commands formed no part of the law of nature, which is sufficient of itself to teach whatever is agreeable to right reason, that is to say, whatever is intrinsically good. Such commands must therefore have been founded on what is called positive right, whereby God, or any one invested with lawful power, commands or forbids what is in itself neither good nor bad, and what therefore would not have been obligatory on any one, had there been no law to enjoin or prohibit it." This distinction between a law grounded in God's will alone and a law decreed by nature may account for the anomaly of Milton's God's referring to the interdiction upon the tree as his "sole command" (III.94 and VIII.329). The God of Genesis does not say his forbidding the tree is his only command, and, moreover, Milton's God has in fact imposed other imperatives: Adam must propagate his race, must govern Eve, must exercise dominion over his physical surroundings and must control his appetites "lest sin / Surprise thee" (VIII.546-47). By "sole command" Milton must understand an edict that owes its obligatory force to God's personal sanction rather than to its consistency with a scheme of things discernible through reason.

For the duty to abstain from the tree is the only moral obligation Adam could not have deduced by his own lights but must learn through revelation. Since God has made the fruit of the forbidden tree attractive to the senses (compare Genesis 2:9 and 3:6 with *PL* IX.735-36), Adam without the express interdict would reason that he might taste of it subject only to temperance. Eve echoes the Father when she tells the serpent that God left the interdiction as the "command / Sole Daughter of his voice" (IX.654) and she supposes she otherwise enjoys the widest liberty allowed by reason: "the rest, we live / Law to

3. *CD* (1,10).

ourselves, our Reason is our Law" (654–55). The tree signifies the only instance of a positive law in Eden, the only dictate deriving authority from the will of the Legislator rather than from the self-evident intrinsic fittingness of the conduct stipulated by the law.

Even though this pledge of obedience must appear somewhat capricious (why make the tree conspicuous and attractive if not to tempt disobedience?) it conveys an important revelation. For the mere existence of the prohibition of something by nature arbitrary sets bounds to nature and reason. Because God has expressly conferred upon Adam dominion over all inferior creatures, Adam might plausibly conceive himself an absolute sovereign were it not made manifest that his will must submit to limits set not by circumstance or by the nature of things but by a superior will. The revelation of a higher will which does not propose to give reasons for its every edict also declares the bounds placed on man's capacity to grasp the good. Adam's intelligence enables him to name the species of animals, to regulate his own appetites, to govern Eve, and to infer God's goodness and omnipotence from imprints left upon the created world. At the utmost, Adam possesses an understanding sufficient to direct all other species toward ends he perceives proper to the economy of the whole; such is his permitted, or delegated, dominion (VIII.375). Adam must nonetheless refer his delegated power for making provisions to God's absolute and finally inscrutable providence. He would not know God intends a special providence operating apart from laws of nature did not God remind Adam continually through the exclamation made by that tempting tree centrally located next to the Tree of Life, constantly beckoning with its alluring fruit and its even more alluring tittle, yet bearing always its "no trespass" pointing to purposes held by God which Adam cannot penetrate. So long as Adam refrains from violating the tree he acknowledges his trust in a providence he cannot fully grasp. However clearly he thinks he discerns God's design through its vestiges in created beings, he must yet admit there is a depth beyond this depth which remains unknowable. Even the angels encounter this depth when they find themselves presented with a revelation—the begetting of the Son—which seems altogether apart from any unfolding of an abiding order of nature, or in moments when they intuit (as Raphael has) that the behests God sets them to obey aim at no purpose beyond testing their love. So long as Adam acknowledges this inexplicable depth of the divine will he acknowledges a constraint upon philosophy. For philosophy founders if it cannot attribute rational grounds to God's ways. If the Ultimate Cause declares a purpose in essence arbitrary, the principle of will then rises above the principle of rationality, and philosophy—the effort to supplant opinion by knowledge regarding the nature of the whole—must subordinate itself to simple trusting obedience. We know from the trial set the angels at the moment of the elevation of the Son that Milton's God's favored proof of love from rational creatures is this acceptance of his dispositions on trust. The trial of the forbidden tree is on the level of mankind, the same sort of

trial that the Father's announcement of the begetting had been for the angelic intelligences.

This is not to say Milton's God requires after the manner of Tertullian a fideism which glorifies in embracing absurdity. Milton establishes evidence of God's goodness and of Adam's awareness of that goodness adequate to show that the trust required by obedience to the unexpected behest is not itself ill-founded. God requires no leap in the dark. But faithful obedience does require an act of reverence which extends beyond the reach of speculative wisdom, for God's ultimate will remains opaque to human reason not just in the degree of its depth but, so to say, on its surface also, inasmuch as it requires an assent not conditional upon anyone's determining its propriety. Faith in philosophy as the one authoritative way of life becomes, therefore, *eo ipso* a delusion, a prideful turning from God's law to one's own light. True wisdom requires submission of the intellect to a divine will which, by refusing to explain itself, declares itself irreducibly a will rather than a rational principle.

II. RAPHAEL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FALL

Departing from the Genesis narrative, which has the temptation episode follow immediately upon God's placing Adam and Eve in the garden, Milton seems to traduce his argument (*Reason of Church Government*, Book II) regarding the superiority of scriptural to classical poetic models by inserting, in accord with precedents set by Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, an extensive digression requiring four books. Obviously the action could proceed directly from Satan's soliloquy in Book IV, in which he considers God's command given Adam and Eve, to his seduction of Eve in Book IX. The chief issue posed by the structure of *Paradise Lost* is, then, the relation of its discursive middle to its more active beginning and end. Of course the intervening books do permit two important digressive subjects, the war in heaven (v-vi) and creation (vii), but an interesting dramatic momentum gathers as well. Besides affording accounts of battle and creation the central books present a drama executed somewhat in the mode of Platonic dialogue finding its action in discursive thought. Yet although Milton's materials for this drama are discursive, discourse eventuates in a new disposition of the chief characters, and this realignment and interaction of Raphael, Adam, and Eve contributes to the fall. It is not extravagant to infer from the progress of Adam's discussion with Raphael that Milton means to show Adam's fatefully setting forth upon speculations which identify ultimate happiness with the philosophic life. Adam inclines towards his fall because he becomes more philosophic than in his first innocence.

The terms for sustaining first innocence in *Paradise Lost* are unambiguous: keep God's "sole command" not to eat of the tree whose fruit brings knowl-

edge of good and evil. Not clear at all, however, are the terms upon which Adam and Eve may improve their estate and arrive at a closer familiarity with God than they now enjoy. Yet the first parents surmise a more perfect felicity. They realize their vision of God comes fitfully in Eden, and they know God resides in heaven where, as they learn in the course of the poem, angels surround his throne to enjoy a beatific vision more constant than their own occasional face to face meetings with the Deity. Milton's Adam and Eve live in the ambiguity of this unanswered question: Should they expect a closer union with God, a more constant, unmediated vision afforded by movement from Eden to heaven? Milton finds occasion to treat this issue of man's prelapsarian destiny in the course of Raphael's visit, during which the question of Adam's future comes up twice, first near the beginning of the conversation between Adam and Raphael and then, elliptically, near the end of the angel's stay. The first treatment of the issue (v.494–503) presents Raphael's conjecture of what should await our first parents if they continue obedient. Raphael founds his conjecture on a metaphysical scheme the elaboration of which immediately precedes his hypothesis of man's eventual ascent to heaven (469–94). Because the material in both passages provokes Adam and Eve to try interpretations, each after his own fashion, and because the imagery will return at the crisis of the action, it may be useful to set down the well-known lines. In reply to Adam's concern for the appropriateness of the food Eve has offered, the angelic guest Raphael explains:

O *Adam*, one Almighty is, from whom
 All things proceed, and up to him return,
 If not depriv'd from good, created all
 Such to perfection, one first matter all,
 Indu'd with various forms, various degrees
 Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
 But more refin'd, more spiritous, and pure,
 As nearer to him plac'd or nearer tending
 Each in their several active Spheres assign'd,
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
 Proportion'd to each kind. So from the root
 Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
 More aery, last the bright consummate flow'r
 Spirits odorous breathes: flow'rs and their fruit
 Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd
 To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
 To intellectual, give both life and sense,
 Fancy and understanding, whence the Soul
 Reason receives, and reason is her being,
 Discursive, or Intuitive; discourse
 Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,
 Differing but in degree, of kind the same.

Wonder not then, what God for you saw good
If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
To proper substance; time may come when men
With Angels may participate, and find
No inconvenient Diet, nor too light Fare:
And from these corporal nutriments perhaps
Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend
Ethereal, as we, or may at choice
Here or in Heav'nly Paradises dwell;
If ye be found obedient, and retain
Unalterably firm his love entire
Whose progeny you are (v.469–503).

Before commenting on this passage I should record one assumption and state one fact regarding the dramatic context and authority of the speech. My assumption is that at least in the first part of his discourse (down to the prophecy commencing at 493) Raphael speaks whereof he knows and wherefrom we, the readers, as well as Adam, the immediate addressee, can receive instruction. The first part, consisting of Raphael's account of being and its gradations, evidently conveys reliable information since it accords with details Milton states on his own authority as narrator while nothing in the passage contradicts better authorities (God, the Son, scriptural texts). My stipulation of fact regards an elementary matter which, because it is usually ignored, deserves emphasis: although Raphael explicitly addresses Adam, Eve remains present for one portion of his instruction; she takes in Raphael's metaphysical and eschatological discourses on the ladder of ascent from matter to God. Milton makes the point of specifying the moment she leaves her husband and her guest to converse without her, and that departure comes much later (at viii.40) when Adam turns the discussion to astronomy. Hence one supposes that having listened to Raphael's reports and conjectures, Eve (just like Adam) must interpret Raphael's revelations (and Adam's replies) by whatever resources she possesses. We shall see that confronted with Satan's similar hypothesizing in the temptation scene she interprets audaciously and wrongly, but that her misprision resembles Adam's own understanding—or misunderstanding—of Raphael's teaching.

For Raphael's discourse leaves an important issue unclarified, thereby inadvertently tempting Adam and Eve to make their own clarifications. Materials adequate for man's complete happiness, including means for improving upon Edenic satisfactions, are at hand. But by what means exactly and how cultivated? Raphael will offer only a partial explanation, and his effort produces the more doubtful portion of the speech. In the lines which document Milton's "monism" the angel relies on an illustration (479–87) to explain how material being reveals a character at once hierarchical and continuous, matter all through yet aspiring to spirit. His illustration, a living plant, rises from dark

root, through lighter green stalk, through still more rarified leaves, until it arrives at its most tenuous corporeal form in “the bright consummate flow’r” which exhales “Spirits” (479–81). The illustration serves as an analogy but also stands literally as an instance of coarse matter rising by degrees to spirit, spirit which is nothing other than the same first matter much attenuated. In reading through this passage we tend to retain the wide analogy and to discard the precise literal instance. We think of the appropriateness of the image as a symbol for macrocosm, the tree of being rooted in matter and flowering in spirit, and then we shift to the microcosm and note how well the figure of speech survives the transition, serving as an emblem of man’s several kinds of soul (vital, animal, rational) enabling his ascending grades of activity from organic function to intellectual perfection. If Adam perceives in Raphael’s illustration nothing other than a diagram for the tripartite organization of the human soul, we can sympathize with his anthropomorphism.⁴ Yet danger lies in the direction of identifying rationality too emphatically with speculation, neglecting the duty to govern in order to better concentrate upon satisfying the appetite for knowing, and Adam’s response to the next part of Raphael’s speech moves him somewhat closer to just that peril. Although Raphael wants his example to be understood literally, Adam’s enchantment with the delights of speculation will drive him to discard the physical illustration in favor of an allegorical tribute to philosophy.

Reason, according to Raphael, constitutes the essential being both of men and angels, and, whether considering the predominately intuitive form proper to angels or the predominately discursive form proper to human beings (488–90), reason in man and angel partakes of the necessity shared by all active material beings in that it requires energy, hence, fuel, hence food, hence vegetable nutrient. By this route we return to Raphael’s example of the plant and understand why it cannot be a figurative plant. Angels consume various sorts of heavenly food which Milton imagines to be provided in Homeric abundance (v.426–30 and 632–35) and which serves for the angels the same function of fueling the ratiocinative powers that the fruits of the garden serve for Adam and Eve. Because Raphael *really* needs energy to converse he *really* eats and digests and turns to incorporeal substance the food Eve sets before him (v.428–30). This recognition of the rationality he shares with Adam—their common materiality, and therefore their common reliance upon nutritional sustenance

4. Familiarity with such imagery in more conventional poetic contexts dulls one’s sense of Raphael’s literalness, but acquaintance with Milton’s other poetry may also seem to warrant emphasis on the allegory to the exclusion of the letter. One may remember that in *Comus* much was made of the plant *Haemony* “unsightly” in its root, “darkish” in its leaves but at its top bearing a “bright golden flow’r” (629–33) said to resemble that moly which Hermes had given Odysseus as an antidote against Circe’s charms, yet “more med’cinal” (636). In *Elegy I* Milton associates moly with knowledge (85–90), and, therefore, the efficacy of *haemony* as a countercharm employed against Circe’s son (*Comus*) accommodates a reading of *Thyrsis*’s herb as another emblem for intellect functioning as the governing part of the soul.

—leads Raphael first to acknowledge human hospitality and then to deduce the regimen whereby Adam may find his way to heaven. The upshot of his deductions is that by frequent association with angels, partaking of their finer diet, Adam may so improve through “tract of time” that his body will turn to spirit and “wing’d ascend / Etherial.” Raphael envisions some process whereby the gross matter of Adam’s body will be raised to the fifth element (ether, see vii.243–44 and vi.660) at which point he may, if he chooses, join the already ethereal angels and participate in their more constant beatific vision.

The continuity of being asserted in Raphael’s monistic ascent of matter from chaos to God Himself requires one to understand with unusual literalism Raphael’s conjecture. Heaven is a place populated by beings whose bodies are extraordinarily bright and buoyant. Human beings will levitate to heaven if they take their nourishment from the same fifth element substances as nourish those other rational beings, the angels. “Tract of time” is not a bad pun but an exact expression of gradual etherealization indicating a physical process: the operation of the digestive tract upon ever more refined nutrients over a lengthy span of time.⁵ Baulked by unfamiliar metaphysics one may prefer the allegorical reading which accommodates a more familiar dualist ontology, but if Raphael wants to be understood figuratively he has blundered strangely and strayed from his mission of forewarning. If it were selected merely for its usefulness as an analogy Raphael’s image of the plant and of ascent would appear wondrously ill-chosen, for if Adam’s paramount concern should consist in refraining from eating of a particular tree it would appear unwise now to tell him that by eating a fruit presently untasted he may rise to heaven. That will be Satan’s line. In fact we recall it has *already* been his line: the Father sends Raphael on his mission just after Eve recounts the dream in which Satan suggests she eat of the tree and causes her to imagine that upon eating she flies to heaven (v.37–87). Milton’s adding Eve’s dream to the Genesis narrative carries his suggestion of a sad congruence between Satanic malice and the speculative notions encouraged by Raphael’s well-meaning, but possibly imprudent, excursus upon future dignities. Satan in the dream has even employed language tolerably close to Raphael’s, “Taste this, and be henceforth among the Gods / Thyself a Goddess, not to Earth confined, / But sometimes in the Air, as we, sometimes / Ascend to Heav’n” (v.76–79). Raphael inadvertantly assists Satan by authorizing the idea that the way up to companionship with angels may lie in the effects of changing diet. Without the preparation afforded by his discussion of angels, men, and their common food, Satan’s proposal in the temptation scene would lack plausibility. Why should anyone believe he might become divine by eating? It’s hard not to charge Raphael with inattentiveness since his conjecture cooperates so uncannily with Satan’s malice. The thought

5. Compare Anchises’ account of the purification of souls and their release from bodily confinement, *Aeneid*, vi.724–48.

occurs that Milton means to suggest the difficulty of understanding God's purposes through any intermediary other than God's own Son. However well-disposed, however near to the divine mind may be any other mediator, he is as a created, material being, a finite medium subject, even if not to intellectual error, to misjudgments of rhetorical effect. *A fortiori* churches and synods of merely earthly intellects will prove so much the less reliable, a view obviously consistent with Milton's course in the religious prose towards a Protestant independency ever more individualistic and unmediated.

III. ADAM'S PROCLIVITY FOR THE PHILOSOPHIC LIFE

Raphael's conjecture of changing habitude from earth to heaven does nonetheless differ from Satan's suggestion in Eve's dream by commanding obedience as the condition for ascent, whereas Satan had prescribed daring. Hence Adam and Eve cannot later exonerate themselves by charging God's messenger had misled them. Adam may lead himself astray, however, when he seizes upon Raphael's suggestion as if it had amounted to an invitation to participate in a philosophic symposium. He responds to the conjecture about etherealization with this tribute:

Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
 Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set
 From centre to circumference, whereon
 In contemplation of created things
 By steps we may ascend to God (508-12).

Raphael has not mentioned contemplation; his scheme was dietary. Yet Adam interprets Raphael's plant illustration, tract of time phrase, and "wing'd" conjecture fancy as though all of these elements were features of an extended figure of speech reducible to the one ideal of attaining perfection by elevating one's thoughts through contemplation. Implicit in his interpretation one sees this chain of inferences: (1) man's faculties bespeak a hierarchy ascending from sensation up to speculative reason (the plant image allegorically rendered); (2) by virtue of his speculative powers man was created fit for association with those higher intellectual beings, angelic and divine (Raphael's account of reason as the common possession of men and angels); (3) the mind when engaged in contemplation spirals upward through realms ever more abstract and general (as ascent suitably likened, Adam supposes, to "wing'd" flight); (4) habituation in speculative activity insensibly and gradually weans man away from bodily concerns (Raphael's notion of gradual etherealization); (5) once perfected in intellectual virtue, man, having finally become a suitable companion for his intellectual betters, will live in their midst sharing in the sort of philosophical conversation Adam enjoys just now with Raphael (this explains the angel's

expectation of Adam's self-powered translation to heaven, indeed Adam later rhapsodizes, "For while I sit with thee I seem in Heav'n [VIII.210]); (6) he will attain the topmost reach of the ascent when, after preparation by the stepwise operation of the speculative faculty, he conceives God, the ultimate idea or archtype of all lower forms (what else could Raphael mean by stating that "all things" distributed among "various forms" tend back to their divine source?). Adam thus anticipates the course of philosophic eros portrayed in the *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Phaedo*, the paradigm which inspired the praise of learning in Milton's *Seventh Prolusion* and supported the elder Egerton brother of *Comus* in what proved to be an ill-founded confidence in "old schools of Greece."

The proper attitude we have seen displayed early in the poem when Adam urged Eve to join him in referring all the joy of their condition to the goodness of their Creator (IV.411–39). In the same spirit of gratefulness Adam had once addressed essentially the same issue of a geocentric cosmology which he later approaches in a more critical, philosophical spirit as he concludes his dialogue with Raphael. When in Book IV Eve had asked why stars should shine while human beings sleep Adam had replied with several considerations the sum of which was grateful acceptance of God's arrangements. Their conversation led eventually to a prayer of thanksgiving (720–35) in which their souls blended "unanimous" (736). Our first views of Adam show him conducting thought in the spirit Milton enjoins in his theological treatise where he declares that "Obedience and love are always the best guides to knowledge" (*On Christian Doctrine*, XIV.24). Yet at the end of the middle books Milton depicts an Adam who having enkindled his scientific interest at Raphael's fire now allows his thinking to grow more intent upon resolving problems, an Adam who has become, indeed, critical of God's arrangements. Milton's dramatic indication of Adam's philosophical earnestness is the passage at the beginning of Book VIII which records his hanging rapt on Raphael's last words so that he thinks the angel continues to speak after he has fallen silent (1–4).⁶ That passage is not without a certain local charm, but a more troubling indication of philosophical abstractedness registers in Adam's having become oblivious of Eve. Eve departs with such grace "that won who saw to wish her stay" (43). But it is not clear whether Adam and Raphael desire to detain her or whether Milton compliments in the mode of poetic hypothesis. I think the latter alternative better voices the pathos of the situation. In any event, neither Raphael nor Adam moves to de-

6. These lines were contrived as the transitional splice made necessary by the decision to divide the Book VII of the 1667 edition, making Books VII and VIII (1674). But the interlude has been made dramatically functional. Merritt Hughes comments:

The words sounding in Adam's ears may be an echo of those of the incarnate Laws that Socrates hears ringing in his ears and obeys at the close of Plato's *Crito*.

Yet Adam's rapture does not make him more attentive to God's law, for in the next book he disobey.

tain Eve and neither alludes to her departure as the philosophic conversation resumes. Thus, even before the disagreement which separates Adam and Eve on the morning of the day of the Fall a rift in their unanimity begins to appear once Adam undertakes science in the mode of dispute rather than in the mode of prayer. Milton depicts Adam as an intent and abstracted Glaucon or Phaedrus who neither invites his spouse to join the conversation nor speaks of their common condition to their guest, nor even takes much note of her departure as he enters “on studious thoughts abstruse” (40).

The same ardor that causes Adam to forget his manners also moves him to place new topics of discourse before Raphael in his anxiety to prolong conversation—now that I have you here let me pick your brain on this other matter.⁷ The further subject Adam proposes after Raphael has checked him in his pursuit of questions regarding celestial motions differs from the astronomy topic in having more obvious relevance for conduct. But the spirit of the second query is fully as critical as that of the first. Perhaps more critical, for in his confessing a doubt of native strength sufficient to withstand sexual desire he now alarms Raphael who suspects Adam means to charge God’s work with a serious fault. “Accuse not Nature” (561). When he moves from astronomy to ethics Adam only brings nearer home a doubt of God’s dispositions that cannot well consist with his earlier subordination of speculation to prayer and thanksgiving. At the moment Adam confesses to Raphael his unsettling passion for Eve he does so no longer from the posture of a servant of God seeking to serve better by asking counsel of his superior. He rather adduces his experience of passion as evidence prompting him to question the fittingness of his native composition. Of sexual desire he says:

here passion first I felt,
Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
Superior and unmov’d, here only weak
Against the charm of Beauty’s powerful glance.
Or Nature fail’d in me, and left some part
Not proof enough such Object to sustain,
Or from my side subducting, took perhaps
More than enough (530–37).

The concern Adam here reveals to the angel is related to their earlier conversation more intimately than has been noticed. We miss the point if we think of

7. On Adam’s unslaked thirst for speculative knowledge, see C. A. Patrides, *Milton and the Christian Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 118–19. Patrides observes that Adam’s ranging among topics and persistence in questioning Raphael goes beyond his claim of seeking knowledge solely to praise God, “the more / To magnifie his works, the more we know” (vii.96–97). Schultz puts the right emphasis on the unseasonableness of Adam’s curiosity: “once warned by Raphael’s lecture that he needed to study perfect obedience he stood in mortal peril, Adam was in no case to open the question period foolishly with the digressive topic of astronomy” (*Forbidden Knowledge*, p. 182).

Adam's complaint only as that of an imperfectly instructed Neoplatonist immobilized on a lower rung of the ladder of love, a predicament that might be remedied by learning how to ascend. Adam in fact thinks he knows how to rise ("In contemplation . . . By steps we may ascend to God"). But, knowing the way, he is perplexed by an arrangement of things that does not encourage sublimation, or at least does not encourage transcendence so thoroughly as Adam conceives other arrangements might. Adam voices his present misgiving from a perspective he assumes he shares with Raphael, their unanimity regarding the dignity of reason as the excellence distinct to human and angelic being. If it be true, as Raphael has said and Adam agrees, that reason accounts for man's essential being and if reason aims at knowing, why, then, does man desire pleasure that competes with the pleasure afforded by knowledge? Accessory desires such as delight in the reports of the senses which lead eventually to abstract knowledge may conduce well enough to rational ends. But passion—especially erotic passion—transports the soul as intensely as intellectual delight yet in a direction opposed to the transports of speculative thought. If he must be subject to such "commotion strange" Adam thinks man seems not to have been well designed for his proper task of intellectual reflection. Adam objects that a creature intended to fulfill himself by knowledge has been given a body unnecessarily inclined to distraction. Because this question of design, of fittingness, takes precedence in Adam's mind over the practical question of what he should do, he proceeds immediately to inquire into the sexual activities of those other intellectual beings, the angels, even though Raphael has just responded to Adam's confession with a vehement practical admonition.

Raphael's pointedly ignoring questions he considers insufficiently practical warns Adam not to underrate the efficacy of reason as the self-governing faculty. As earlier in his urging a "lowly" wisdom (VIII.173), Raphael seeks simultaneously to moderate Adam's preoccupation with reasoning as speculation and to raise his estimate of reason as the arbiter of action and seat of temperance. For Adam's hypothesis of a nongeocentric cosmology resembles his psychology in its tendency to undermine confidence. Raphael has that tendency in view when he points out the likelihood of earth containing more of "solid good" than all the immense universe surrounding it. He steers Adam away from concluding that if the earth moves about the sun it therefore loses authority as the center of God's providence. Adam's danger lies in the direction of diffidence of his own proper authority, diffidence regarding the authority of his governing capacity over his feelings, doubts which in turn undermine his confidence in the rightness of his authority over Eve and hence impair his ability to act responsibly towards her. Raphael sees that Adam has set reason against reason by placing emphasis on rationality employed in learning rather than acknowledging reason's more important function as the faculty which governs will. Milton's God, by contrast, never refers to speculation but does identify reason with choice (III.108).

What Adam seeks ultimately to learn through the questions he poses about macrocosm and microcosm is the final cause of all being, the purpose inherent in the arrangement of the whole, cosmic and human taken together. He wants to learn whether he is right in supposing that being subserves reason. If so, then the physical cosmos should exist for man, its rational pinnacle, and within the individual human being all elements should contribute to the full realization of the speculative rational faculty. If this were positively manifest all of creation would clearly proclaim its telos. Adam reveals his perplexity that nature's telos appears not unequivocally manifest, but that perplexity does not cause him to doubt he is right to pursue speculation into final causes wherever they may lie. This very urge to seek out final causes in nature may be inordinate with respect to man's unquestionably proper end of obedience.

In Book III Milton has the Father declare it to be His "pleasure" that human beings be so fashioned that they pay their obedience freely rather than, as all lower creatures do, obey by necessity. There is no purpose behind God's will. To suppose there may be a more intelligible purpose immanent in the makeup of created beings is to obscure the immediate and overriding obligation to obey the divine will whether one understands its dictates or not. To make the right distinction and restore proper order with speculative reason subordinate to governing reason, Raphael had put the issue as clearly as one can when he warned Adam that knowledge must be subject to temperance (VII.120–30).

The difference between boundless philosophic eros and the reason Raphael now urges Adam to heed is that for such unqualified lovers of wisdom as Socrates the desire to know is properly illimitable and rises therefore to the status of a transcendent standard by reference to which all other desires receive their limits. Temperate desire for understanding is no virtue, excess in the pursuit of wisdom no vice. The properly illimitable character of philosophic eros provides for Diotima and Socrates a measure whereby all inferior desires—for pleasure, for power, honor, or whatever—range themselves as subordinate to an altogether superior authority. In the Socratic accounting temperance results from philosophy: the philosopher remains impassive to all other pleasures just because he finds himself satiated by the joys of understanding. Training in continence, that painful control of passions by self-discipline, prepares the mind for philosophy, but once well embarked on its quest for truth the soul which loves wisdom transforms rigors of self-discipline into delight of learning and therefore ceases to feel pain in its regulation of the lower desires. The by-product of the philosopher's setting his heart on intellectual treasure is his indifference towards other pleasures. The distance, therefore, between Raphael's recommended "lowly" wisdom and philosophy—whether finally redirected, as with Socrates, to issues of conduct or not—appears in Raphael's treating knowledge itself as a pleasure subject to regulation. Raphael indeed somewhat depreciates science by likening the appetite for knowledge to the appetite for food, "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" (vii.126–30). God's law takes the place of knowledge as the measure whereby to set bounds to every human endeavor. From this perspective philosophy falls to the level of those inferior or instrumental goods properly subject to the rigorous control of law. Adam misunderstands if he thinks only recondite cosmological theorizing falls under regulation. The reader may remember at this point fallen angels on the outskirts of Pandemonium who theorized upon not cosmic but moral perplexities. Discipline of the will, not speculation, must ultimately raise his soul toward God, and Adam must first learn to discipline his thirst for speculation.

IV SATAN'S ANTICIPATION OF SOCRATES

Satan exhibits no inclination toward philosophy. Milton never depicts God's adversary engaged in free speculation as distinct from calculating his chances, or attempting to put the best face on his defeats. Both Adam and Eve in their first moments of consciousness muse upon their origin (compare viii.273–78 and iv.451–12), yet Satan never wonders what accounts for his existence. In his soliloquy at the beginning of Book IV he acknowledges his creation by God although he disputes Abdiel's asserting his creation by the "secondary hand" of the Son (vi.853–55). But no acknowledgment of contingency impels him to consider the nature of his Creator or the order of the created universe. Satan lacks the disinterested inquisitiveness, the capacity for wonder, required for philosophy, and his self-absorption causes him to be oblivious to any subject not clearly adjunct to his projects. Satan desires glory not wisdom, which is why although he is ignorant of God's purpose in forbidding the tree it does not occur to Satan actually to eat as opposed to pretending to have eaten the fruit which promises knowledge. His fall proceeds from no aspiration so nobly tragic as hunger for understanding.

Still, if he cannot forget himself long enough to enter into free thought, Satan nevertheless can imagine what it is like to burn with ardor to know and conceives how to employ the attraction of philosophizing to tempt Adam and Eve. Instead of aspiring to knowledge Satan employs the deception of pretending to desire wisdom so that he may work upon a genuine desire for wisdom latent in our first parents. He had pretended scientific intents when he deceived Uriel with his lie about wanting to admire God's new creation (iii.670–76), and he perfects the simulation of philosophic zeal when he deceives Eve. This second temptation depends upon Satan's seizing upon possibilities of deceit inherent in the imperfect state of Adam and Eve as knowers. We can properly characterize Satan's strategy as an exploitation of the potential for impious self-sufficiency latent in the philosophic life.

Milton calls our attention to the inventiveness of his Satan by departing from the Genesis account of the serpent's lie. Whereas in the Genesis narrative the serpent flatly denies the veracity of God's word, "you shall not die" (3:4), Milton's Satan explains why Eve should not fear death even if she dares not go the length of believing God to have lied. Milton's more subtle tempter says: you need not think God seeks to deceive you in threatening death but that he has only declined to explain what death entails. Dying means a change of state on the scale of being. In this case the change is upward for the better because greater knowledge will permit you to enjoy the condition of angels. Milton's Satan can make a plausible case just because he has taken the appearance of the serpent, a creature either not possessed of powers of reasoning speech or not possessed of such powers in the degree they are here exhibited. Milton has thus devised a telling explanation for a detail all but opaque in the Genesis story. Whereas the Biblical account assigns no cause behind the serpent but merely has a vocalizing snake abruptly appear with his suggestion that Eve taste of the tree, Milton asks us to believe that Satan took the shape of a beast in order to offer Eve concrete proof of his contention that God's threat of death bears a metaphorical signification. Satan disguised as serpent points to his ability to speak and reason as evidence for his own ascent from bestial to human, a fact which argues for Eve's elevation to the angelic level by proportional operation of the forbidden fruit. But besides the argument from analogy Satan persuades by a consideration still more characteristic of the philosophic tradition. Gathering himself, Milton says like "some Orator renown'd / In Athens or free Rome" (ix.670–71), he launches into an argument which will convince Eve, as Socrates will convince Simmias in the *Phaedo*, that death offers a consummation of the life of thought:

he knows that in the day
Ye Eat thereof, your Eyes that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Op'n'd and clear'd and, ye shall be as Gods,
Knowing both Good and Evil as they know (ix.705–9).

If Satan had dared to suggest to Eve that by eating of the forbidden fruit she would equal God as Supreme Being, she would have remained unpersuaded. But instead he promises merely that she will resemble "Gods"—the ethereal spirits which Eve knows from Raphael's discourse. She already knows the angels share with human beings a rational nature superior to man's reason only in being less impeded by the human's grosser corporeality. Moreover she has also learned from Raphael that by habituating themselves to the angels' diet she and Adam may grow wings, become thoroughly ethereal, and thereby be equipped for consorting with these higher intellects. One observes how similar are Satan's false promises to Raphael's speculations, and how closely they anticipate thought ascribed to Socrates, as Satan reassures:

So you shall die perhaps, by putting off
Human, to put on Gods, death to be wisht,
Though threat'n'd, which no worse than this can bring.
And what are Gods that Man may not become
As they, participating God-like food? (713–17)

So death is nothing other than the translation Raphael had hypothesized and Socrates will identify with the culmination of philosophy.

Eve is no lovely inanity, but on the contrary Milton as narrator certifies her both capable of the lofty speculative hours Adam shared with Raphael and inclined to enjoy abstruse conversation. She is certainly not so unintelligent as to be unable to penetrate a sophistry that cannot explain God's threat so as to remove the danger of disobeying His clear command. But Eve's intelligence also makes her susceptible to the attraction of intemperate speculation. Asleep she dreams of soaring to the clouds on the wings of meditation because she harbors such desire during waking hours. As Alecto works upon a passion already smoldering in Turnus and Amata, Satan in Milton's counterpart to Virgil's temptation scene works upon a passion already present in Eve. Her earlier query about the purpose of wasted starlight documents philosophic curiosity antecedent to Satan's dream suggestion. Satan can now at once dispel God's threat and emancipate Eve's appetite for speculative knowledge by offering the argument that the intellect in the act of knowing so transcends bodily limits as to make the activity of philosophizing a practice of dying. Satan thus anticipates the essentials of Socrates' explanation that "those who really apply themselves in the right way to philosophy are directly and of their own accord preparing themselves for dying and death they have actually been looking forward to death all their lives"⁸ Because God foretells no bad consequence to man's eating of the tree other than death, for His declaration to have the force of an interdiction rather than simply a statement of fact, death must be regarded as a fearsome thing. Socrates would not view death as a fearsome thing or even as disagreeable. And if some god declared dying to be the necessary consequence of knowing good and evil, he would choose to know, accepting the consequence. Such precisely is the choice he defends in the *Phaedo* and *Apology*. It is the choice Plato and Xenophon depict him making every day of his life. Philosophy rivals the gospel in its claim to remove the sting of mortality.

Besides beguiling Eve with a false hope of immortality, Milton's Satan also moves her to desire philosophy as an instrumental power useful towards maintaining or improving her place in a marriage that since Raphael's visit has begun to resemble a struggle. Eve wants to prove she deserves Adam's respect by showing she loves that which he has demonstrated he loves perhaps even more than he loves her. For Satan has already made clear what species of knowledge

8. *Phaedo*, 64a, trans. Hugh Tredennick.

From this we might infer that Satan's lure of sudden knowledge although it has everything to do with Eve's fall contributes little to Adam's. Yet earlier, God, foreviewing the fall, had laid it down that "Man falls deceiv'd / By th'other [Satan] first" (III.130–31), and after his transgression Adam twice refers to his particular sin, each time identifying his error not solely with fondness for Eve but with aspiring to forbidden knowledge (XII.179–80; 558–60). A detail Milton adds to the Genesis narrative indicates he wants us to think of Adam not as simply passive in joining Eve but as inventive in discovering reasons for doing what he resolves upon the moment he sees Eve bearing her plunder from the tree. Right or wrong he will side with his wife against the divine command, but he has one hope of evading a bad outcome and that consists in seizing upon Eve's story of the serpent's having raised himself to human speech by eating the forbidden apple. Adam does not perceive that the serpent must have been a fallen angel's disguise but takes the tale at face value:

he yet lives,
Lives, as thou said'st and gains to live as Man
Higher degree of Life, inducement strong
Proportional ascent, which cannot be
But to Gods, or Angels Demi-gods (IX.932–37).

Adam reasons away death by equating dying with translation to a higher order of existence, just as Eve had surmised following Satan's suggestion. What Satan does not know is that Raphael has laid groundwork which makes his sophistry convincing. Adam adopts the serpent's likely story about death because it accords with Raphael's suppositions about movements up the chain of being. Although not so gullible as Eve and therefore more desperate than blithe in his transgression, Adam risks disobedience in the hope that the fruit just might prove the means to the "proportional ascent" through diet of which he has lately heard from his angelic guest. This false speculation provides a sufficient makeweight to decide Adam's choice in favor of following Eve rather than interceding for her with the Father. Philosophic ambition contributes, then, to Adam's disobedience in three ways: it inclines him to pursue cosmological theorizing at the expense of moral clarification; it interposes between Adam and his stewardship by inducing him to neglect Eve when she requires instruction from Raphael as well as his own tutelage; it offers him a false hope at the last moment when the fall could yet be averted. So it is no surprise that Milton borrows an image from a Platonic dialogue to mark Adam's delusion with the imprint of perhaps the most distinctive poetic phrase employed by Plato's Socrates. Just after the speech displaying Adam's desperate trust in rising by sublimation and as Adam and Eve devour the fruit, Milton says they feel themselves preparing for divinity by "breeding wings / Wherewith to scorn the Earth" (IX.1009–11). Their false imagination anticipates the *Phaedrus* with its

fantasy of souls sprouting wings in the first stage of divinizing themselves through philosophy. This Socratic fancy receives a further correction from Adam's manner of repentance which in place of flying aloft emphasizes humble walking. The folly of achieving autonomy through philosophy is the error Milton has Adam realize when in the expulsion episode he says:

Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
 And love with fear the only God to walk
 As in his presence, and on him sole depend (xii.561–63).

Milton is echoing the prophet Micah:

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God (6:8).

Once Adam has set the duty of obedience over the desire to learn the natures of things, he is in position to be granted a further light whereby he sees that death indeed is the entry to a more abundant life but only for those who prevail through obedience:

suffering for Truth's sake
 Is fortitude to highest victory,
 And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life (xii.569–71).

Michael further ratifies Adam's insight by emphasizing the superiority of prudence in the mode of obedience over speculative knowledge even on the supposition that the latter might extend boundlessly:

 thou has attained the sum
 Of wisdom, hope no higher, though all the Stars
 Thou knew'st by name, and all th' ethereal Powers,
 All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
 Or works of God in Heav'n, Air, Earth, or Sea (xii.575–59).

Part of learning the sum of wisdom is learning to deprecate science and even theological speculation ("works of God") for the sake of setting aside every thought that might distract one's mind from obedience to God's will. From his fall Adam thus gains wisdom by learning to disparage all but practical forms of knowledge.

VI. SUBLIMATION WITHOUT PHILOSOPHY

However instructive for him, Adam's fall is not for that cause a fortunate fall. Although a condition allowing man more perfect union with his Creator will indeed be attained after Adam's transgression, that is not because sin is necessary to advance man's perfection. Terms for human improvement evi-

dently independent of any future atonement by a Messiah had been established from the beginning, for Milton's God at the moment He announced creation had also announced His plan for an apocalypse, saying He would:

create

Another World, out of one man a Race
Of Men innumerable, there to dwell,
Not here, till by degrees of merit rais'd
They open to themselves at length the way
Up hither, under long obedience tri'd,
And Earth be chang'd to Heav'n, and Heav'n to Earth,
One Kingdom, Joy and Union without end (VII.154–61).

In this speech one observes, besides the promise of translation to a still better paradise, God's conception of a graded excellence ("degrees of merit") and slow-rising ascent ("at length . . . under long obedience tri'd"). Raphael's recollection of this speech appears to have been the material out of which he extemporaneously spins his hypothesis regarding Adam's future commutings between earth and heaven once he has attained through diet and association with angels a suitably etherealized body. One recognizes a revised, and presumably better considered, interpretation of the Father's prophecy when, rebuking Adam's confessed passion for Eve, Raphael at the last expounds God's "degrees of merit" as a ladder of refined loves:

Love refines

The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
By which to heav'nly Love thou may'st ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure (VIII.589–92).

Elevation by enlarged and sublimated exercise of love here, perhaps too belatedly, replaces the notion of levitating by diet or of raising the speculative intellect by its own exertions. Is this ascent through refining love the way God Himself understands the proper process of rising through degrees? If so, what is the connection between successive trials of obedience and a succession of refined loves? Is there a mode of refining love not by a series of speculative abstractions but by successive renunciations of the will out of regard for a holier will? Had God expected Adam to rise toward heaven by progressively tempering his fondness for Eve's charms whether bodily, sociable, or intellectual? Had God expected additionally that Adam should discipline his self-fed inclinations either to conceive the scope and purpose of the stars or to discover the makeup of the human soul? What does Adam enjoy that he might rise above other than these natural goods of beauty, companionship, and knowledge bestowed by God? Milton's reconstruction of Adam's situation in *Areopagitica* seems pertinent:

reason is but choosing God therefore left him free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence.

God's providence before the fall, as afterwards, aimed at tempting man by a profusion of created good which must be embraced only to the extent that savoring the good intimates the goodness of the Maker. Thereupon a way of renunciation becomes obligatory. This regimen of affirmation followed by renunciation reveals the plan of God

who, though he command us temperance, justice, continence, yet pours out before us even to a profuseness, all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety.

Gratitude for God's abundance coupled with self-control in the enjoyment of His plenty makes for the disposition God accepts for proof of man's obedience, proofs which in turn constitute progress up the grades of ascending love. This seems to formulate Milton's adjustment of the classical ideal of sublimation to scriptural standards.

After the fall evidently the same determination of merit persists because in Book III, when the Father foresees the economy of salvation, He lays down these terms for men who heed God's implanted "Conscience":

Light after light well us'd they shall attain
And to the end persisting, safe arrive (196-97).

Illumination of the intellect therefore follows upon acts of obedience, not upon successive abstractions or rational sublimations. Viewed against this corrective explanation of the terms proper to graded ascent, Adam's overvaluing of contemplation stands forth clearly as does his undervaluing the governing power of rationality in its capacity to regulate not just the lower affections but also "minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety." Adam's philosophic ardor has undermined his reason in the sense of the deliberative, governing faculty enabling both obedience towards higher authority and responsible rule of his proper subordinate. Milton's Christ will fulfill his role of New Adam by demonstrating over the course of the action of *Paradise Regained* what it means to progress from light to light well used and, consistent with the lesson taught negatively in *Paradise Lost*, the last of the worldly temptations he will withstand is the temptation to divinize human nature through philosophizing (*Paradise Regained*, IV.271-84).