

5-2023

Sing of Arms and Disobedience: Reading Vergil's Aeneid in Milton's Paradise Lost

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Sing of Arms and Disobedience: Reading Vergil's *Aeneid* in Milton's *Paradise Lost*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the Department of Classical Studies at
William & Mary

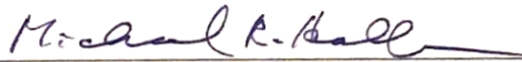
by

Brooke Elizabeth Braden

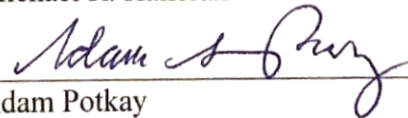
Accepted for Honors Honors



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May 5, 2023

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those without whom this thesis would not have been possible. First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis director, Dr. Vassiliki Panoussi, for her invaluable guidance and mentorship both in my academics and in life. I am indebted to Dr. Michael Halleran, not only for serving on my committee but also for his astute insights and cherished support. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Adam Potkay, whose work has been informative for my research, for also serving on my committee. Furthermore, I want to thank the rest of the faculty in the William & Mary Classical Studies department, especially Dr. Molly Swetnam-Burland for her invariable encouragement in all my endeavors. Additionally, I would like to recognize the generosity of the Roy R. Charles Center for funding this work through the Honors Fellowship Summer Research Grant.

I consider myself fortunate to have wonderful mentors not only at William & Mary, but also across the pond at St. Andrews. I am especially grateful to Dr. Emma Buckley, whose course on the reception of the *Aeneid* introduced me to the wonders of classical reception studies and inspired this thesis. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Roger Rees and his enthusiastic instruction on Constantinian Latin, which proved useful for this work.

I would be remiss in not mentioning my family and friends who have provided indispensable support throughout this odyssey. I first want to thank my parents, who have unconditionally endorsed me in all my ventures, no matter how eccentric. I am also thankful to the two Michelles for readily lending sympathetic ears to my ramblings. Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my high school Latin teacher, Ned Tuck, who played a formative role in cultivating my passion for Latin poetry. I will always be grateful for his enduring patience and witty tutelage, and I aspire to be as impactful an instructor to future students as he was to me.

Introduction

If one wanted to get a sense of the influence of Greco-Roman literature from the time of Homer to the Renaissance, one would not need to look much farther than John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*. Milton's poetry is rich with allusions to the works of classical authors including Homer, Hesiod, Lucretius, and Ovid. However, the strongest and most frequent references seem to come from Vergil. The presence of the *Aeneid* within the narrative structure of *PL* has been readily acknowledged, yet scholars do not agree on the full extent to which Milton embeds Vergilian references into his characters. Of course, because Milton is actively working within a Biblical framework, Biblical allusions and direct quotations abound in his text.¹ Yet it is precisely due to this fact that Biblical references are unsurprising and the intertextual engagement with classical literature appears all the more significant and meaningful. Milton approaches the story of the origin and fall of man through a classical lens, synthesizing both pagan and Christian texts.

There are striking similarities not only within the narrative of Vergil and Milton, but also between their socio-political environments, which Milton may have drawn on for inspiration. Both authors began composing their poems about two years before the beginning of new political eras: the Roman republic was virtually dismantled before Vergil composed the *Aeneid* during the first century BCE, as was England's commonwealth when Milton began writing in earnest.² Milton's *Paradise Lost (PL)*, first published in 1667 and consisting of ten books, was later updated in 1674 to include twelve books, perhaps indicating that Milton intended to model his

¹ See Ferry 1988 on how Milton follows and deviates from Genesis and the New Testament in his representation of Adam and Eve.

² Loewenstein 2017, 169.

narrative structure on that of the *Aeneid*.³ Milton even calls the meter of *PL*, iambic pentameter, “English heroic verse,” as it gives an affectation of classical epic’s dactylic hexameter. Both meters do not traditionally incorporate rhyme, which Milton castigates as a “modern bondage.”⁴ In addition, both poets turn to the founding myths of their respective cultures, either Aeneas’ wandering and arrival into Latium, or the creation and fall of Adam and Eve. Although they both deal indirectly with their contemporary politics, themes of civil war and cultural upheaval pervade both poems. However, Vergil and Milton appear to have opposing views on what their cultural shifts entailed for the future of their respective societies. Vergil seems to accept Augustus’ *Pax Romana*, even as he still depicts the devastating and violent origins of the Roman Empire. Conversely, Milton staunchly opposed what he believed to be the tyranny of monarchy. Although *PL* calls to mind the contemporary history of Milton, connections still remain elusive enough that drawing parallels between literary characters and historical figures such as Cromwell or Charles II remain debatable.⁵

Late antique authors often highlight Vergil’s possible connections to Christianity, referencing the “prophetic” character of his fourth *Eclogue*. This poem foretells the birth of a boy, often equated with Jesus Christ, sent from the heavens to reign over the world in peace (*pacatum orbem*, 4.17). Lactantius, considered one of the fathers of the early Christian Church, appears to promote such a Messianic reading in his *Divinae Institutiones*, as does Emperor Constantine in his *Oratio ad Sanctos*, related in the *Vita Constantini* of Eusebius. Centuries later, Dante included Vergil as a spiritual guide in his *Divine Comedy*, further cementing Vergil’s associations with Christian exegesis. Writing in a culture fundamentally steeped in both classical

³ Milton 2003, xii.

⁴ Milton 2003, 1.

⁵ Loewenstein 2017, 173.

and Protestant values and sensitivities, Milton thus may have viewed Vergil as a suitable author to engage closely with.⁶ As Katherine Calloway asserts, Milton's references to other classical works are not obscure but are rather intended to be informative.⁷ Such sources upon which Milton models his poem were certainly clear to late seventeenth-century writers. Joseph Addison, in his *Spectator*, complains that Milton appears to present "Heathen Fables" as facts and that Milton's inclusions of scientific and philosophical knowledge is inappropriate for his overarching divine message.⁸ In light of the view that Milton aspires to a more didactic purpose in his poetry, it is thus instructive to consider all possible parallels in order to appreciate more fully the richness of his text.

Although a broader discussion on the history and use of classical reception studies is beyond the scope of this thesis, a brief examination of the significance of this subject is useful and necessary.⁹ Within the model of classical reception, people continuously react to and re-adapt works from Antiquity in order to assert or subvert their connections to the past.¹⁰ However, this process does not occur in one direction, with the ancient text affecting a later culture, but is a reciprocal exchange directed by one's own interpretation.¹¹ Essentially, meaning is created and altered via an understanding informed by a dual viewing of the texts; in this viewing, each work

⁶ Song 2016, 143.

⁷ Calloway 2005, 82.

⁸ Addison 1868, 47.

⁹ For a more comprehensive discussion of reception studies, see Martindale and Thomas 2006; Zanker and Thorarinsson 2011.

¹⁰ Broder 2013, 505.

¹¹ Laird 2003, 19.

is read through the other.¹² References can appear in many forms including allusion, borrowing, reminiscence, and echo, all of which I use in my discussion of textual parallels.¹³ Some allusions are localized, appearing in specific places at particular times in order to enhance the language. However, the most significant contribution to a reading is discerning the network of allusions that readers can use to illuminate their interpretations in a more consistent manner.¹⁴ This systematic approach to allusion forms the basis for this thesis, in which references build on each other to create a framework on which to read *PL* through the *Aeneid*, and vice versa.

Modern scholarship readily acknowledges the presence of the *Aeneid* in *Paradise Lost* (Bush 1952; Rudat 1985; Song 2016); however, there is a surprising amount of contention on the ways in which specific characters may be modeled on or inspired by others. While some identify Aeneas with Milton's Adam (Goodman 1997; Verbart 1997) and Satan with Turnus (Herman 2003; Butler 1997), others see echoes of Aeneas both in the Messiah and Satan (Forsyth 2000). To my knowledge, Calloway is the first to note a possible link between Sychaeus and Adam.¹⁵ While Calloway admits that scholars have chronically neglected Book 4 of the *Aeneid* as a subject of comparison with *Paradise Lost* in favor of Books 6 and 12, there is much, although occasionally contradicting, literature on the direct links between Dido and Eve (Addison 1868;

¹² Kallendorf 2006, 70.

¹³ Porter 1993, 13; Porter specifies "critical allusion" as an association between texts, usually for the purpose of contrast. He defines "borrowing" as an immersive technique in which an author directly incorporates passages from another text. "Reminiscence" is a reference to the style, language, and technique of an author rather than a particular passage. "Echo" is a slightly more ambiguous device, as it enriches the later work with an emotional register without affecting the meanings of the source text or later work within their respective contexts (13-30).

¹⁴ Kallendorf 2006, 69.

¹⁵ Calloway 2005, 85.

Blessington 1979; Harding 1962; Porter 1993; Verbart 1997).¹⁶ Thus, in this study I investigate the specific connections between *PL* and the Dido episode of the *Aeneid*, building on, expanding, and deepening Calloway's brief but enlightening arguments.

In what follows, I examine the extent to which the figures of Satan, Sin, Eve, and Adam mirror, and even subvert, those of Aeneas, Creusa, Dido, and Sychaeus, respectively. While Calloway advocates for a close reading of the Aeneas/Satan and Dido/Eve pair, I believe that the roles of Sychaeus and Adam are similarly comparable, although not necessarily of equal significance. In the first chapter of this study, I focus on the actions and motivations of Aeneas and Satan, exploring how both figures behave similarly within their "epic" roles, resulting in the downfall of prominent female characters through their fateful interactions. In the second chapter, I focus on the Dido/Eve character pair, demonstrating how both women are tempted and influenced, both intra-personally and by forces beyond their control, which ultimately results in their "deaths." In addition, I compare the relationship between Dido and her late husband Sychaeus with that of Eve and Adam to elucidate how Milton may be responding to Vergil's hierarchical representation of marital bonds. Throughout this work, I analyze broader themes apparent in both works and evaluate how their similarities may enrich our understanding of Milton's purpose in creating such a dynamic exchange with Vergil's text. Indeed, one reason accounting for the enduring prominence of *Paradise Lost* is the poem's many allusions and references to another renowned classic, the *Aeneid*, which Milton both emulates in epic tone and style yet subverts in ways that scholarly literature has yet to evaluate more thoroughly.

¹⁶ Calloway 2005, 82-83.

**Chapter One: Wandering Heroes or Hostile Invaders? Aeneas as a Model for Satanic
Exploits**

Warriors in Exile

Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris
 Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit
 litora—multum ille et terris iactatus et alto
 vi superum, saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram,
 multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem
 inferretque deos Latio; genus unde Latinum
 Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae.
 Musa, mihi causas memora...

(Aeneid 1.1-8)

Of arms and a man I sing, who first from the coasts of Troy,
 Exiled by fate, came to Italy and the Lavinian shores—
 Much buffeted on both land and sea by divine will,
 Through the unforgetting wrath of savage Juno,
 He much endured war as well, until he would found his city
 And bring his gods into Latium; whence came the Latin race
 And the Alban fathers and the high walls of Rome.
 Muse, recount to me the reasons...¹⁷

¹⁷ All translations of Latin and Ancient Greek texts in this thesis are mine, unless otherwise stated.

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
 Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
 Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
 With the loss of Eden, till one greater man
 Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
 Sing Heav'nly Muse...

(*Paradise Lost* 1.1-6)

Vergil and Milton conventionally begin their epic poems *in medias res*, or “in the midst of things,” situating their audience within the action of the narrative and presenting the motif upon which to view the epic as a whole (cf. Homer, *Iliad* 1.1-7). As Andrew Kau notes, Milton mirrors the ambiguous triple meaning of the word *arma* (weapons, armies, war) in line 1 with the word “man,” which may refer to Adam and Eve as a pair, Eve herself as the first to sin, or mankind in general.¹⁸ Through this multivalence of meaning, Milton immediately assimilates his theme, tone, and language to that of Vergil, creating an analogy between “man” and *virum*, “fruit” and *arma*.¹⁹ Milton uses this Vergilian intertext to establish himself as a poet working within the canon of epic tradition. However, although Milton also entreats the epic Muse, he invokes “the meaning, not the name” of Urania (*PL* 7.5), whose name means “heavenly.”²⁰ In this later invocation, Milton strives to rise “above th'Olympian hill” (7.3); by reducing the grand Mount Olympus to a “mere hill,” Milton effectively calls on a more heavenly source of wisdom inspired

¹⁸ Kau 2013, 165.

¹⁹ Kau 2013, 165.

²⁰ Milton 2003, 381.

by God.²¹ This Christianizing gesture thus presents Milton's poem as "superseding" the pagan limits of classical authors. Indeed, Milton endeavors to create a work "not less but more heroic" than Juno's ire which "perplexed...Cytherea's son" (*PL* 9.14-9), establishing a canonical hierarchy in which Christian "Truth" supplants Greco-Roman *mythos*. Vergil, in his opening lines, prepares the audience for Aeneas' appearance within the narrative; likewise, Milton's reader expects to see Adam first, or even the Son of God. Both authors, however, first turn to their respective antagonists, Juno and Satan.

Milton's Satan initially seems to reflect some characteristics of Juno, the wrathful goddess intent on preventing Aeneas and the Trojans from coming to Italy, demonstrating just how far from Godlike divinity Satan has plummeted. The text characterizes him as full of "guile / stirred up with envy and revenge" (1.34-5), highlighting Satan's "obdurate pride" and "steadfast hate" (1.58). Vergil's Juno, meanwhile, is all too mindful of her causes of anger and raging anguish (*causae...dolores*, *Aen.* 1.25). The narrator depicts Juno's machinations as impious, asking rhetorically if such anger can really exist in divine hearts (*antaene...irae?* *Aen.* 1.11), a sentiment which the archangel Raphael echoes ("In Heav'nly Spirits could such perverseness dwell?" *PL* 6.788), as does Satan himself when tempting Eve ("Or is it envy, and can envy dwell / In Heav'nly breasts?" 9.729-30).²² This recurring emphasis on Satan's vindictiveness and spite through allusion to Vergil's Juno indicates that Satan encapsulates many characteristics traditionally associated with epic female figures such as reason yielding to passion.²³ Despite these numerous references to Juno when introducing Satan, Milton quickly changes tactics and positions Satan in comparable circumstances to those of Aeneas. In doing so, Milton implicitly

²¹ Milton 2003, 381.

²² Milton 2003, 412.

²³ Covi 1964, 59.

casts Satan as equally formidable a warrior and leader as Aeneas, if not on a much grander, cosmic scale.

The heroic comparisons between Satan and Aeneas become abundantly clear upon their arrival within their respective narratives. The readers first find Aeneas and his Trojan crew sailing from a ravaged Troy, battered by the winds of King Aeolus at the behest of Juno (*Aen.* 1.81-92). Aeneas and his men encounter a black night, a thundering of the heavens, and fires in the sky (*ponto...aether*, *Aen.* 1.89-90). He laments that the Greek Diomedes failed to kill him in Troy and grant him a hero's death (cf. *Il.* 5.311-51) and that he is now reduced from a Trojan prince to a wandering exile (1.93-101). Similarly, the reader meets Satan and his fellow fallen angels thrust into Hell, a dark, doleful dungeon teeming with "floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire" (1.77). Satan is tormented by thoughts of "lost happiness and lasting pain" (1.55) as he regards his new surroundings, but all he sees are "sights of woe" and "regions of sorrow" (1.64-5). As Wendell Clausen argues, Aeneas is fixated on his past, far from the conventional Greek hero such as Achilles, who is all too concerned with his present and future.²⁴ Satan is equally rooted in the past, but his doom "reserved him to more wrath" (*PL* 1.54), which incites him to find the greatest "means of evil" (1.165). Nevertheless, both figures are mindful of their positions as leaders and attempt to maintain an illusion of bravery:

Talia voce refert, curisque ingentibus aeger

Spem vultu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem.

With such a speech he replies, and ill with great cares,

He feigns hope in his countenance, and he conceals anguish deep in his heart.

²⁴ Clausen 1964, 140.

(*Aen.* 1.208-09)

So spake th' apostate angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair:

(*PL* 1.125-6)

In the passages quoted above, Aeneas appears to bury his apprehensions and unease for the sake of his men's morale, as expected of a responsible Roman *pater*, whereas Satan merely addresses a single demon, Beëlzebub. Milton's use of the word "vaunting" connotes a sense of bravado, suggesting that Satan is trying to persuade himself as well as his chthonic companion.²⁵ The narrator of *PL* later confirms the significance of countenance in revealing the inner turmoil of Satan, whose face shows "care... on his faded cheek" and brows of "dauntless courage" (1.601-3). Satan bemoans the disfigured state of himself and his fallen companion Beëlzebub (1.84-94), emulating Aeneas when he sees an apparition of the mutilated Hector in his dreams ("but O how fall'n! how changed / from him," *PL* 1.84-5; *ei mihi...Hectore*, "Ah me, what sort he was, how much he was changed from that Hector," *Aen.* 2.274). By equating Beëlzebub with Hector, and thus Satan with Aeneas, Milton adds to the *pathos* of the demons' plight and bestows a more heroic tone to their rebellion. As a result, he ultimately amplifies their humanity and draws a deeper connection between Aeneas and Satan, more so than more localized allusions to divinities such as Juno alone.²⁶

²⁵ Calloway 2005, 84.

²⁶ Davie 2011, 28.

Finally, one of the most surprising aspects of Satan's characterization are Milton's descriptions of his physical appearance, which evoke that of a traditional epic warrior. Even in his debased state, demoted from archangel to "arch-Fiend," Satan is physically pre-eminent among demons, just as Aeneas is among the Trojans. His spear and "ponderous shield" (*PL* 1.284) recall those of Aeneas, crafted by Vulcan and gifted by his mother (cf. *Aen.* 8.625).²⁷ Milton attributes both "heroic" and "monstrous" characteristics to Satan, describing him "in bulk as huge / as whom the fables name of monstrous size... / that warred on Jove" (1.196-8). Despite being likened to a Titanian beast, Satan shares the same sense of "remorse and passion to behold / the fellows of his crime" (1.605-6) as Aeneas. Moreover, Aeneas, at his worst moments of *furor*, or rage, also possesses "monstrous" qualities, such as when Vergil compares him to Aegaeon, a hundred-handed, fire-breathing monster, in his moment of *aristeia* against the Latins (*Aen.* 10.565-70).²⁸ Aeneas' capacity for bloodlust mirrors that of his final opponent, Turnus, in Book 12 (cf. *Aen.* 12.495-504), and this brutality threatens to overturn civil order and martial decorum, demonstrating the devastating impacts of war.

Milton may be using these allusions to Vergil's text as a way to align himself with, and even supersede, classical poets, juxtaposing ancient heroic virtues against those of Christian doctrine.²⁹ Satan's alluring nature embodies the worst traits of the pagan gods and the noblest attributes of classical heroes; little remains of his original angelic form, which has been transformed into a figure reminiscent of those in the Titanomachy. In his perseverance, Satan strives to found an empire, starting with his infernal capital Pandaemonium. Milton utilizes a

²⁷ Also cf. armor of Achilles, *Il.* 19.373-4.

²⁸ Butler 1997, 108-9.

²⁹ Butler 1997, 104.

recognizable epic simile to describe the gathering council of demons, comparing them to a swarm of busy bees. This comparison finds parallels in the *Iliad* and subsequently, the *Aeneid*:

ἤύτε ἔθνεα εἴσι μελισσάων ἀδινάων,
 πέτρης ἐκ γλαφυρῆς αἰεὶ νέον ἐρχομενάων·
 βοτρυδὸν δὲ πέτονται ἐπ' ἄνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖσιν·
 αἱ μὲν τ' ἔνθα ἄλις πεποτήαται, αἱ δέ τε ἔνθα·
 (*Il.* 2.87-90)

Just as tribes of close-packed bees go forth,
 always coming anew from a hollow rock,
 In clusters they fly over flowers of spring,
 And they fly in throngs,
 Some here, some there...

Qualis apes aestate nova per florea rura
 exercet sub sole labor, cum gentis adultos
 educunt fetus, aut cum liquentia mella
 stipant et dulci distendunt nectare cellas,
 aut onera accipiunt venientum, aut agmine facto
 ignavom fucos pecus a praesepibus arcent:
 (*Aen.* 1.430-5)

As work drives bees in early summer
 Throughout flowery fields under the sun,
 When they lead out the mature young of their kind,
 Or when they stop the flowing honey, and they fill
 The cells with sweet nectar, or they receive the
 Loads of those coming, or with the battle line drawn
 They keep the swarm of idle drones from the hive.

...As bees

In springtime, when the sun with Taurus rides,
 Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
 In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
 Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
 The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
 New rubbed with balm, expatiate and confer
 Their state affairs.

(*PL* 1.768-75)

Milton positions Satan's actions into mythological tradition, associating him and his devilish kind with the leaders Agamemnon and Dido, and consequently, their fatal flaws. In the *Iliad*, Zeus visits Agamemnon in a dream, urging him to rally the Greek troops for a siege of Troy. At a council discussing the validity of such a dream, the Greeks are compared to bees (2.53-83). In the *Aeneid*, Vergil likens the Carthaginians erecting buildings to bees maintaining their hives,

whose structured productivity their “queen bee” Dido disrupts with her death.³⁰ Vergil also notably discusses bees in his fourth *Georgic* as an allegory of the civilizing force of human endeavors. Through these allusions, Milton draws parallels between the three figures, associating the fate of Satan with that of Dido and Agamemnon. Like Dido, Satan tries to establish a new nation after being driven from his homeland, bringing a semblance of order amidst Chaos; however, his nation is always destined to be conquered by a more powerful force, God (or in Dido’s case, Rome). Like Agamemnon, Satan is unaware of his fated role within the epic narrative, and thus his actions are sanctioned, if not outright controlled, by higher powers. Furthermore, both Dido and Agamemnon come to tragic ends in epic tradition, and thus, Milton may be anticipating Satan’s eventual defeat. In light of this analysis, Satan is a complex and often paradoxical figure, exhibiting both noble and debased characteristics that Milton employs to comment on the limits of pagan epic and classical heroism. Although Agamemnon and Dido are arguably capable rulers, they are led astray by their own *hybris* and the influence of the gods. Milton’s Satan similarly possesses many attributes of an epic leader, but he lacks the fundamental *pietas* of Aeneas. The meaning and significance of *pietas* in the *Aeneid* differs somewhat from its conventional usage by Vergil’s contemporaries. In the *De Inventione*, Cicero defines *pietas* as a duty to fulfill one’s obligations towards his own country and family (*pietatem...moneat*, 2.66). In the *Aeneid*, however, *pietas* manifests as duty predominantly to the gods; family and *patria* are only secondary considerations.³¹ Among Aeneas’ many virtues including dignity (*dignitas*), piety occurs most frequently throughout the narrative to highlight his fidelity to the gods and emphasize his merits as a leader and founder of a new empire.³²

³⁰ Feeney 2014, 211.

³¹ Părvulescu 2005, 891.

³² McLeish 1972, 128.

However, despite Aeneas' epithet of *pius* throughout the *Aeneid*, Aeneas' piety is not always expressed willingly but rather oscillates depending on Aeneas' emotions or circumstances. Aeneas' compliance in obeying the gods creates at times a sense of inner moral disquietude followed by grudging acquiescence, especially in the Carthage episode (cf. *Aen.* 4.361). In addition, despite Aeneas' heroic characteristics, he is an unconventional warrior, constantly reflecting on the past and deferring to his destiny, but rarely living in the present.³³ Unlike *pius* Aeneas, Satan refuses to “repent or change” (*PL* 1.96), but rather curses God, who “holds the tyranny of Heav'n” (1.124). In his *odium* of God, Satan accepts that it is “better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n” (1.263), a subversion of the utterance that the shade of Achilles makes (*Od.* 11.489-91), further casting Satan as an arrogant “anti-hero.”³⁴ Satan regretfully reflects on the past but ultimately always strives for preeminence (cf. *PL* 4.20-31; 111).³⁵ Aeneas, on the other hand, grows complacent in Carthage, only leaving after the god Mercury's admonitions (*Aen.* 4.264-275). Indeed, Vergil propels Aeneas through the narrative not via the hero's own volition, but that of the gods, especially Venus, who has a personal stake in Aeneas' future as patron goddess of Rome. Aeneas' piety compels him to rely on Venus for aid, which complicates the issue of his agency. As I discuss below, Aeneas' piety is undermined in a number of instances, calling to question his heroic attributes and further solidifying his associations with Satan.

³³ Clausen 1964, 142.

³⁴ Milton 2003, 296; βουλοίμην κ' ἐπάρουρος ἐὼν θητευέμεν ἄλλω, / ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλήρω, ᾧ μὴ βίσιος πολλὰς εἶη, / ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν, “I would wish, being attached to the soil, to be a serf to another, / to a poor man, who would have a meagre livelihood, / rather than to be lord over all the spirits of the dead that have perished” (*Od.* 11.489-91).

³⁵ Benet 2005, 2.

Questionable Piety and Abandoned Wives

In this section, I analyze the similarities between Aeneas' flight from Troy and Satan's escape from Hell, a number of which scholars have previously noted.³⁶ Aeneas and Satan have comparable episodes of being driven from their homelands, both of which involve the abandonment of their partners. As Aeneas recounts in his tale at the court of Carthaginian Dido, when the Greeks ambush Troy after their emergence from the wooden horse, he wades through his own veritable hell of a city in ruins in search of his father (*Aen.* 2.624-38). Aeneas, in true heroic fashion, feels that the only option left for him is warfare and death (*Rursus...opto*, 2.655), but he displays his sense of filial piety in refusing to abandon his father (2.657-58). However, as Aeneas turns to fight, his wife, Creusa, delays his expedition, begging him either to take their son Iulus and herself with him or to guard their house (2.675-8). After this supplication, a portent of fire appears over Iulus' head (2.680-84). As a result, Anchises relents, and Aeneas offers to carry his father on his back himself and lead Iulus by his side, with Creusa following afar (2.707-11). In the midst of their escape, Aeneas reports to have lost sight of Creusa, whom he supposes is snatched by wretched fate (*misero...fatone erepta*), wandered (*erravit*), or is left behind, exhausted (*lassa resedit*, 2.738-9). When he turns back to look for her, he finds the magnified shade of Creusa, who seems to have perished (2.772-73). He tries to embrace her image three times in vain (2.792-4; cf. *Od.* 11.204-09), after which he rejoins his kinsmen to leave Troy.

Likewise in Milton, Satan, in his own journey mimetic of the *Odyssey*, slinks throughout Hell in an attempt to find an exit. He becomes lost and encounters at the gates of Hell a "goblin full of wrath" (*PL* 2.688), whom Satan, "undaunted" (2.677), warns not to interfere with his flight. The "grisly terror" (2.704) taunts him, and he and Satan bristle with indignation, with

³⁶ See Addison 1868; Blessington 1979.

Satan shaking “pestilence and war” from his hair like an ill-omened comet (2.711, cf. *Aen.* 10.272-5).³⁷ Before the fight escalates, however, the figure of Sin intervenes and immediately recognizes Satan, referring to him as “father” (2.727). Satan is surprised, as he does not recognize this “snaky sorceress” (2.724), whose sight he states is the most detestable he has yet seen in Hell (2.744-5). Sin recounts that she sprung from Satan’s head, much akin to the birth of Athena by Zeus or a perverted parody of Eve from the rib of Adam.³⁸ Sin’s Athena-like origin is consistent with Milton’s proposed modeling of demons and other hellish creatures from pagan deities and also indicates that Sin is an extension of Satan’s own ego, further adding to his dual, often paradoxical characterization as hyper masculine and feminine.

Sin alleges that Satan became so enamored with her (and essentially, himself) that she eventually conceived and gave birth to the monster before him, whom she named “Death” (2.787). The story becomes more horrific, as she states that her son Death promptly raped her, and she in turn conceived the numerous horrors that Satan encountered on his way to the gates. After hearing this, Satan becomes receptive to her, and his demeanor *seems* somewhat empathetic, despite the fact that he previously had forgotten about Sin’s existence and was otherwise unaware of Death’s. He answers in a manner that is almost humorous in its contrast with his first address to Death, now calling him his “fair son” (2.817-8). He reveals his intentions to leave Hell and promises to free them and establish an empire after conquering the newly created Garden of Eden (2.830-7). Sin delights in this idea, and, despite being entrusted as keeper of the keys by God to guard the gates, she affirms her allegiance with Satan as her progenitor and expresses her delight at ruling by his right hand as both daughter and lover (2.864-870). After the gates are opened, Satan makes his way to his “promised land,” Earth.

³⁷ Milton 2003, 319.

³⁸ Langford 1994, 127.

These two episodes share a striking similitude, from the behavior of Aeneas and Satan to the fates of Creusa and Sin. In their respective circumstances, Aeneas and Satan adhere to the ancient ideal of *kleos*, glory through valiant deeds in battle, preferring to win through their own actions rather than depending on others (cf. *Aen.* 2.655; *PL* 2.719-23). In addition, female intercession thwarts the warriors' intentions to fight; Creusa beseeches Aeneas to consider her fate and that of their son (*Aen.* 2.673-8), and Sin admonishes father and son not to combat each other (*PL* 2.727-34). Interestingly, Aeneas and Satan both experience strange bouts of forgetfulness or neglect for their female partners that occur during the process of their flight. Aeneas admits to disregarding Creusa's absence until he and his household reconvened at the temple of Ceres (*nec prius...reflexi*, *Aen.* 2.741), while Satan outright claims never to have seen Sin before, despite her simultaneous ejection with Satan from Heaven (*PL* 2.744-5). He still does not appear to remember Sin even after she professes her cephalic conception, but rather takes her words at face value, accepting them but not outright confirming their veracity (*PL* 2.815-19). Satan, like Aeneas, fixates on escaping from his scourged realm, and it is in favor of this mission that the warriors stoop to deception and females become forsaken casualties.

Furthermore, the narrator insinuates that Satan's reaction to Sin's account is suspect, calling him a "subtle Fiend" who "answered smooth" (*PL* 2.815-6). This new information of Sin and Death's family ties gives Satan an upper hand, allowing him to manipulate his words to placate them effectively. Satan adulates Sin, calling her "dear daughter" (2.817), and tells Sin and Death of his "plan," which he just devised, to bring them to a place where they may "dwell at ease" (2.841), prefiguring his temptation of Eve.³⁹ So, too, does Aeneas use subtle language to obfuscate his culpability in Creusa's death in an attempt to look his best in front of Dido. He

³⁹ Juhnke 1988, 55.

claims that an enemy god snatched his reason (*Hic...mentem*, *Aen.* 2.735-6), just as Creusa might have been stolen (*erepta*, 2.738). His use of the word *fefellit* (2.744) suggests that Creusa herself may have been responsible for her demise, as the verb has a wide range of meanings including “escape notice” or “cheat.”⁴⁰ Vergil virtually never uses *fefellit* to connote “escape notice,” but instead to convey a sense of deliberate duplicity.⁴¹ Indeed, Vergil has Aeneas use opaque language to enigmatize Creusa’s disappearance, which for the reader may cast a layer of doubt on Aeneas’ version of events and call into question Aeneas’ reliability as a narrator. Vergil’s ambiguous diction when Aeneas speaks thus seems to complicate a straightforward reading of Aeneas as merely a victim of Greek treachery. Instead, Vergil arguably casts Aeneas as a violent warrior who nearly kills Helen out of rage (*Aen.* 2.575-6) and a husband neglectful of his wife, characteristics that Milton adapts in his portrayal of Satan.

In addition to the similarities between the actions and language of Aeneas and Satan in these sections, the treatment of Sin’s character echoes that of Creusa. Both Creusa and Sin appear in the second book of their respective works as mothers abandoned by their partners in moments of ambiguous amnesia. Creusa displays the virtues characteristic of a typical Roman *matrona*, placing her son Iulus before Aeneas to supplicate peace (*parvum...Iulum*, 2.674), a conventional theme in Homeric epic as well as Vergil’s Augustan contemporaries.⁴² Sin also intercedes “with hideous outcry” and rushes between Satan and Death (2.726), displaying the significance of this motion as an attempt to create domestic harmony.⁴³ In their respective speeches, both women challenge the merits of warfare, advance the virtue of the *familia*, and

⁴⁰ Grillo 2010, 54. See *TLL* 6.1.181-90.

⁴¹ Grillo 2010, 56.

⁴² Grillo 2010, 57. Cf. *Il.* 6.399–401, 6.466–70; Livy, *AUC* 1.13.1-4; Ovid, *Fast.* 3.219-24.

⁴³ Grillo 2010, 57.

articulate their feelings of being forsaken by their partners.⁴⁴ Creusa emphasizes her value within the family as the final and most important member in the tricolon *Cui parvus Iulus, / cui pater et coniunx quondam tua dicta relinquitur?* (“To whom do you leave little Iulus, to whom do you leave your father and once your wife with your words?” 2.677-8).⁴⁵ Similarly, Sin immediately establishes Satan’s relations to herself and Death, exhorting him not to fight his kin (2.727-30). She does not shirk from telling Satan her origins and how he left her alone to give birth in Hell (2.777-80). When the specter of Creusa appears before Aeneas, she seems to be sympathetic and understanding, holding no grudges as she calls him “sweet husband” (*dulcis coniunx*, 2.777). In addition, Creusa affirms that she will not be enslaved to the Greeks (*Non...ibo*, 2.785-6) and asserts her devotion to her husband as a *univira* (2.787), relieving Aeneas of culpability for her death.⁴⁶ Sin similarly does not seem to begrudge Satan, and she declares her *fides* to him as her father and author (2.864), spurning the authority of God (2.856-7). Both Creusa and Sin show solicitude for their partners and children, displaying *obsequium*, or, in this case, dutiful obedience to a *paterfamilias*.⁴⁷ The classical notion of a gendered hierarchy within the family is appropriate in *PL*, even in the case of Satan, as the structure of the Cosmos, fashioned by God, inherently adheres to this order.

Just as Creusa represents the paradigm of a good wife, supporting Aeneas’ quest even after death, Sin is the converse archetype in classical tradition of a monstrous female “Other,” who serves as an extension of Satan’s *logos*.⁴⁸ Sin embodies literary misogynistic convention,

⁴⁴ Perkell 1981, 204.

⁴⁵ Perkell 1981, 207.

⁴⁶ Grillo 2010, 58.

⁴⁷ Grillo 2010, 58.

⁴⁸ Kilgour 2005, 339.

exhibiting the foulness of polluted female corporeality as much as Eve symbolizes woman's perfect form (cf. *PL* 2.650-666).⁴⁹ She is a symbolic portent of Satan's narcissism, signifying his capacity for selfishness and disobedience. In addition, Creusa is transfigured into a mere image, a reflection of Aeneas within his own narrative, since Dido, as Aeneas' audience, does not know the full extent of the events that transpired. Indeed, the epic narrator does not confirm the factuality of Aeneas' claims for the external audience. In this sense, the female voice becomes a vehicle for poetic manipulation, confirming within the narrative the warriors' destinies.⁵⁰ Just as Sin becomes collateral damage in the Satanic quest, so too does Creusa in the Roman one.⁵¹

Aeneas, through his actions, seems to value the life of his father and son over that of his wife, Creusa. Aeneas' first marital union ends in death (Creusa's), and Satan and Sin's copulation literally produces Death. Neither Creusa nor Sin are individuals with their own identities but in some ways constitute extensions of their male partners. Creusa represents Aeneas' Trojan heritage and culture, a position which necessitates her death since Aeneas must marry a woman of Latium in order to establish a new empire. Sin, on the other hand, personifies Satan's ego and serves as a paradigm for all things female and wicked. Both women essentially become the mouthpiece of the narrator, informing the audience of the warriors' destinies. By mapping the family paradigm of Satan, Sin, and Death on that of Aeneas, Creusa, and Iulus, Milton creates his own infernal familial unit that leads one to draw comparisons between the creation of Hell and the original foundations of the Roman empire. Aeneas' desertion of Creusa

⁴⁹ Juhnke 1988, 53. Cf. *Aen.* 3.211-8, 3.420-8 on foul female monsters and their allusions in Milton's Hell (*PL* 2.660, 2.1019-20).

⁵⁰ Nugent 1992, 256.

⁵¹ Perkill 1981, 216.

thus provides a model for Satan and Sin and prefigures the abandonment of Dido in Vergil and Eve in Milton.

Venus as Satanic Machinatrix

After the abandonment episodes, family still plays an essential role throughout both epics. Despite the similarities of Aeneas and Satan in terms of description and characterisation, in terms of function within the narrative, it is not Aeneas alone on whom Milton maps Satan, but Aeneas when he is in proximity of his divine mother Venus, and occasionally, his half-brother Cupid. In many instances in the *Aeneid*, Venus closely associates herself with Aeneas and his duty, even resorting to disguises and guile in order to further the Roman mission, oscillating between her roles as a goddess of love and mother of a mortal hero.⁵² She appears at crucial and significant occasions for Aeneas, acting as his benevolent and level-headed, if not divinely detached, guide (cf. 1.384-90; 2.591-4).⁵³ With her personal investment in Aeneas' future as the imminent patron goddess of Rome, she is equally involved with the realm of mortals as she is with that of celestials. However, Venus is not able to interfere physically with earthly politics but must act through Aeneas in order to fulfill her desire for what Jove decrees as "empire without end" (*imperium sine fine*, *Aen.* 1.279).⁵⁴

Venus, desperate to end the Trojans' suffering from the wrath of Juno (*unius ob iram*, *Aen.* 1.251), approaches Jupiter as a daughter in tearful supplication. When the goddess asks Jupiter about the Trojans' promised Italy (1.252), she grounds herself in the affairs of mortals by

⁵² Gutting 2009, 41.

⁵³ Grillo 2010, 61.

⁵⁴ Gutting 2009, 42.

saying, “we your children” (*nos, tua progenies*, 1.250), implicating herself with the mortal Aeneas and the Trojans as Jupiter’s progeny.⁵⁵ Venus, like Satan, is not afraid to question the king of the gods, just as Satan is inherently defiant towards God (cf. *PL* 4.40-65). And indeed, the God of *PL* and Jupiter of the *Aeneid* are linked in the ultimate supremacy of their words. In the *Aeneid*, *fatum* (fate) is literally what Jupiter says (*fabor*, 1.261; cf. 12.830-40).⁵⁶ In *PL*, God, as the omniscient creator of the Universe, is equally straightforward in his statement, “What I will is Fate” (7.173). Venus and Satan are willing to test the weight of these words to satisfy their own agendas; however, their supernatural struggle against the will of “Fate” ultimately results in the destruction of mortals.

Both Satan and Venus desire conquest and colonization, as they want to claim their promised citadel of heaven (*Caeli...arcem*, *Aen.* 1.250) or “just inheritance of old” (*PL* 2.38). In addition, Sin, as a feminine reflection of Satan, mirrors Venus as a preternatural, female entity seeking to expand her sovereignty at the expense of mankind.⁵⁷ After Adam and Eve eat the apple, the gates of Hell open, and Sin urges that she and Death join Satan by cleaving a “monument / Of merit high to all th’infernal host” (*PL* 10.258-9). Thus, Venus, Satan, and Sin all seek to trespass the realm of humans in favor of the realm of the supernatural in order to promote their own authority. Furthermore, Aeneas is often an instrument for Venus’ actions; he often acts not by his own will but by the promptings of his mother. Conversely, all of Satan’s devious actions are self-willed and reveal his inherently conniving nature, which differentiates him from *pius* Aeneas. By basing Satan on the behavior of the Aeneas/Venus duo, Milton seems to imply

⁵⁵ Gutting 2009, 42.

⁵⁶ Commager 1981, 104.

⁵⁷ Goodman 1997, 428.

that even the best of epic heroes and divinities are only equivalent to the most iniquitous personages of Christian epic.⁵⁸

Furthermore, Aeneas' obedience to the gods and ignorance of divine affairs serve as the foundation upon which Venus manipulates events through her own devices, a dynamic which Milton captures in his treatment of Satan. When Aeneas finally arrives in Carthage, he finds himself in seemingly wild, unknown territory, and at the first light of dawn sets out to ascertain its inhabitants and topography (*Aen.* 1.305-9). He happens upon a maiden huntress, reminiscent of Diana (1.318-20), who is actually Venus in disguise (1.314), and asks her where he has landed. Although Aeneas does not recognize his own mother, he does address her apparent godliness (1.326-32). Venus, unable to conceal her divinity, nonetheless hides her nature as goddess of love in the guise of a chaste huntress, a somewhat ironic image.⁵⁹ However, as Gutting contends, Venus' language in recounting Dido's history consistently incorporates the lexicon of erotic elegy, using words such as *miseræ dilectus amore* (1.344), even when not necessarily appropriate, as when discussing Dido's brother Pygmalion (*auri caecus amore*, *Aen.* 1.349; cf. *caeco...amore*, Catullus 67.25).⁶⁰ Venus, although in the guise of an innocent virgin, situates herself almost as a divine, erotic matchmaker in order to manipulate Aeneas through suggestive language, priming him for his encounter with Dido.⁶¹

Although Aeneas certainly acknowledges and appreciates Venus' efforts in guiding and reassuring him that his crew is safe (1.381-2, 390-1), after her virginal guise falls away, he protests Venus' pretenses and accuses (*incusat*, 1.410) her of deceiving him with false images

⁵⁸ Calloway, 88.

⁵⁹ Gutting 2009, 45.

⁶⁰ Gutting 2009, 45.

⁶¹ Gutting 2009, 47.

(*falsis imaginibus*, 1.407-8).⁶² Venus' concealment of her identity frustrates Aeneas, who yearns for an honest connection with his mother, free from falsehoods (*Aen.* 1.407-9). As Mac Góráin asserts, Aeneas is the "passive recipient" of Venus' majesty, and thus is subject to her whims.⁶³ Venus' use of illusion evokes how Lucretius, in his *De Rerum Natura*, also associates Venus with trickery through false images (*sic...amantis*, 4.1101).⁶⁴ This reading casts Aeneas as a sort of lover to Venus, suggesting a quasi-Oedipal relationship in which Venus is the *domina*.⁶⁵ The oblique nature of Aeneas and Venus' dynamic, some times maternal and loving and other times deceitful and manipulative, contains elements of inherent sexuality and eroticism, which, as Harrison posits, is a Vergilian model that finds another example in the ambiguous relationship between the Latin Queen Amata and Turnus (cf. *Aen.* 12.54-63).⁶⁶ Furthermore, Venus' illusions make not only Aeneas apprehensive, but also the reader, who now has reason to question Venus' motivations.⁶⁷ Any assumptions about a happy reunion between Aeneas and Venus immediately dissipate with Venus' use of disguises and deceptions that seem to come naturally to the goddess.

The inextricable associations of Venus with *erōs*, despite Venus' pretense as a chaste huntress, correspond with Satan's inherently insidious disposition. Having exited Hell, Satan passes through Limbo (*PL* 3.495) and eventually discovers the gate of Heaven (3.515). Instead of meeting a divine "huntress," Satan encounters an inhabitant of the heavenly realm, the archangel Uriel (3.648). Lest he betrays himself, Satan assumes the guise of a "stripling Cherub" (3.636)

⁶² Gutting 2009, 48.

⁶³ Mac Góráin 2017, 395.

⁶⁴ Mac Góráin 2017, 395.

⁶⁵ Mac Góráin 2017, 395; Roman elegiac poets use the term *domina* ("mistress") for a female lover to illustrate the male's subordination in the relationship, or *servitium amoris*. See Fulkerson 2013, 180.

⁶⁶ Harrison 1997, 58-9.

⁶⁷ Wilhelm 1987, 44.

and inquires of Uriel where he might find Man, God's newest creation, in order to admire him (3.663-680). Uriel is initially unaware of Satan's deception, as the narrator explains, because "neither man nor angel can discern / Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks / Invisible," except by the sanction of God (3.682-5). The archangel points the way to Eden, and Satan departs, seemingly undetected. Making his way to the Garden, Satan becomes troubled as he contemplates his past, and he feels bitter stirrings reminiscent of nostalgia. While Satan justifies to himself his decision to challenge God, "ire, envy, and despair... marred his borrowed visage" (4.116), distorting his cherubic illusion, a transformation which Uriel later remarks (4.124-6).

In this scene, Satan mirrors Venus' use of false appearances in order to manipulate and infiltrate. Both Venus and Satan disguise themselves as natives of foreign lands, taking advantage of their guileless addressees. In addition, Satan and Venus' transformations in these episodes prime the readers for their involvement in the climaxes of the respective books, namely Dido's suicide and Eve's consumption of the apple. Indeed, Venus in the form of Diana prepares Aeneas for Dido's misleading introduction as the same divine huntress; thus, Venus acts as a visual embodiment of Dido's dual representations as chaste goddess and lustful queen.⁶⁸ However, Milton disrupts the ostensible parallels between Venus and Satan by reversing Satan's positions. Although Satan remains an imposter, he assimilates Aeneas' role as a lost traveler in need of guidance. The archangel Uriel assumes the role of Venus, directing the fraudulent visitor to his intended destination. Through this stratified allusion, Milton interweaves the actions of Aeneas with the cunning character of Venus, subverting their positions as embodied in Satan in favor of God's ultimate authority.

⁶⁸ Wilhelm 1987, 45.

Concealment and subterfuge continue in both works, with Aeneas, via Venus, and Satan employing literal smoke screens in their respective explorations of Carthage and Eden. Before Aeneas wanders through the flourishing city of Dido, Venus cloaks Aeneas with a covering of murky vapor (*obsкуро...amictu*, *Aen.* 1.411-2) ensuring that he proceeds throughout the kingdom undetected (*cernere...causas*, 1.413-4). Venus' cloudy concealment in this passage recalls her similar behavior in the *Iliad*, where she saves Aeneas from Diomedes on the battlefield and whisks away Paris before he can contend with Menelaus (cf. *Il.* 5.311-8; 3.380-2).⁶⁹ Aeneas marvels (*miratur*, 1.421) at the developing new city where Dido has established laws, customs, and government (*iura...senatum*, 1.426). He eventually comes to the temple of Juno and weeps to see murals depicting the Trojan war. It is here that Dido herself arrives, like Diana in aspect (*Qualis...choros*, 1.498-9), and she welcomes Aeneas' presumably lost crew. After her reassurances of hospitality, Aeneas' cloudy covering falls away (*nubes...apertum*, 1.587), and he stands shining like silver edged with gold (1.592-3), a refulgent veneer which Venus breathes (*adflarat*, 1.591) onto him (cf. *Od.* 6.227-35; 23.156-62).⁷⁰

Like Aeneas, Satan, traversing the heavenly realm, observes a glistening metropolis (3.549-54). Satan is seized with "such wonder" (3.552) as Aeneas, but instead of being inspired by the kingdom and wishing to emulate it, he is envious and desires to conquer it himself (3.553). When he approaches Eden, Satan briefly transforms into a cloud of "rising mist" (9.75) before settling into his infamous shape, the serpent (9.86). In Book 10, Satan has a similar lustrous revelation from a cloud as he enters his court ("as from a cloud his fulgent head / and shape star-bright appeared..." 447-50). As Calloway posits, scholarship may not have previously

⁶⁹ Hughes 2002, 343.

⁷⁰ Ide 1985, 80.

acknowledged Satan's nubilous entrance as a direct Virgilian parallel due to the presence of this trope in other epics (cf. *Od.* 7.142-5);⁷¹ however, when paired with Satan's previous misty disguise in Book 9, it is evident that Milton alludes to Aeneas' concealed wanderings and subsequent refulgent emergence in court.

Thus, in the events leading up to the encounters between Aeneas and Dido on the one hand, and Satan and Eve on the other, we witness numerous instances of intentionally misleading representations both by Venus and Satan. Just as Venus conceals Aeneas from Carthaginian eyes as he traverses through the city, so too does she control how people perceive Aeneas when she reveals his presence.⁷² This first meeting between Aeneas and Dido is ironic, as Aeneas, through the agency of Venus, appears in a gleaming entrance reminiscent of Venus' disrupted guise as a huntress (*Aen.* 1.588-93; cf. 1.402-5). Venus denies Aeneas' yearning for an authentic exchange between himself and his mother and repeats the same act for Aeneas' encounter with Dido. Furthermore, Dido's initial appearance as a chaste and self-sufficient ruler is described through the eyes of Aeneas; however, Venus' influence to some degree colors Aeneas' vision. Despite Dido's attempts at living as a virginal queen unconstrained by marriage or men, Dido is in reality a lonely, vulnerable widow (cf. *Aen.* 1.355-6). Likewise, Satan assumes disguises that are intuitively suitable for each occasion, displaying an outward manifestation of his inward disposition.⁷³ These false images, impressions, and disguises anticipate the episodes between Aeneas and Dido and Satan and Eve, suggesting that Aeneas is just as culpable as Satan in his treatment of women.

⁷¹ Calloway 2005, 86.

⁷² Mac Góráin 2017, 396.

⁷³ Waddington 1962, 391.

Treacherous Gifts and Soured Hospitality

I now turn to the episodes of Aeneas' romantic associations with Dido and Satan's temptation of Eve which contain the most poignant parallels between the two works. While considering the thematic presence of males invading feminized spaces, I first want to address Venus' "seduction" of Dido via Aeneas and Cupid and Satan's symbolic penetration of Eve's psyche in dreams. These moments are the initial catalysts by which the women become under erotic influence and thus, as our epic narrators suggest, more susceptible to their impassioned desires. Venus, fearing any contrivances by Juno to delay Aeneas at Carthage, solicits her godly son Cupid to entwine Dido's bones with fervid flame (*ossibus implicet ignem, Aen.* 1.660) in order to manipulate Dido through her great love of Aeneas (*magno...amore, 1.675*).⁷⁴ Cupid and Venus' powers and identities are inherently linked, as Venus claims, albeit in cajoling flattery, that in him alone is her great might (*Nate...solus, 1.664*). Cupid disguises himself as Ascanius, duping even the young boy's own father Aeneas (*magnum falsi implevit genitoris amorem, 1.716*). Cupid sidles into Dido's lap, and as she embraces him, he effaces from her mind the memories of her deceased husband Sychaeus (1.719-21).

Rather than removing memories of a woman's beloved, Satan impudently perches "squat like a toad" (*PL 4.800*) by Eve's ear, implanting suggestive fantasies into her subconscious. Like Cupid, Satan favors psychological manipulation, hoping to engender "discontented thoughts" and "inordinate desires" (*PL 4.807-8*). Milton's use of the phrase "devilish art" (*PL 4.801*) reflects similar language used in Vergil describing Venus' cunning scheme (*nova artes, Aen.*

⁷⁴ This is not the last time Venus will use her erotic power for manipulation (cf. *Aen.* 8.370-406).

1.657), establishing a devious allusion between the shifty demon and calculating goddess.⁷⁵ Satan is “inspiring venom” (*PL* 4.804) just as Cupid breathes into Dido hidden flames of poison (*occultum inspires ignem fallasque veneno*, *Aen.* 1.688). Furthermore, it appears that Cupid is well allied with Venus concerning their possible attempts at undermining Jupiter’s authority, as Venus states that he scorns (*temnis*, 1.666) Jupiter’s lightning bolts. Of course, while angels protect Adam and Eve by unveiling Satan’s artifice and driving Satan from Paradise, Dido is not privy to such helpful divine intervention. Satan can only stand “abashed” (*PL* 4.846) among the celestial splendor of his former comrades, while Venus and Cupid delightfully proceed with their ruse (*gressu gaudens incedit Iuli*, *Aen.* 1.690). As Kilgour correctly states, the precise point at which Eve, and I argue, Dido, become “fallen” in both narratives is ambiguous, inciting the readers to ponder the nature of these women and whether they were inherently doomed in the first place.⁷⁶ It is through these suggestive manipulations of the women’s subconscious that the male characters are initially able to breach and invade the distinctly “feminine” domains of Dido and Eve.

A notable ploy of both Cupid and Satan is the offering of gifts, which charm and effectively disarm Dido and Eve, allowing access to the women’s hearts and psyche. In the *Aeneid*, the gifts which Cupid as Ascanius presents are an element of good *xenia*, or guest-friendship, in return for Dido’s granting the Trojans safe harbor. Although Aeneas uses these gifts as a gesture of goodwill and gratitude, for Venus, they are merely a part of her scheme to kindle the queen’s ardor and envelop her with the flames of love (*donisque...ignem*, 1.659-60).⁷⁷ The gifts in question include the finest of Troy’s surviving treasures: a golden

⁷⁵ See *TLL* 2.0.658.48-50 on associations of *ars* with *dolus*, *fraus*, and *machina*.

⁷⁶ Kilgour 2004, 6.

⁷⁷ Frangoulidis 1992, 26-7.

mantle (*pallam...rigentem*), a yellow veil (*velamen*), a scepter (*sceptrum*), a pearl necklace (*monile bacatum*), and a crown (*coronam*, 1.648-55). Vergil insinuates that these gifts are an inherently deceptive part of Venus' plans (*nova artes, nova...consilia* 1.657-8), and both the gifts and Ascanius himself become false objects of marvel (*mirantur dona Aeneae, mirantur Iulum*, 1.709).⁷⁸ However, the most fatal token that Aeneas bestows to Dido is his sword (*ensem...munus in usus*, 4.646-7), which Dido eventually uses to stab herself in a fit of passion (4.663). These items are deceptive due to their underlying purpose for the emotional manipulation of Dido and their significance as articles of Aeneas' Trojan past also remind of Aeneas' own duplicity.

By having Cupid assume the guise of Ascanius to gain control over Dido, Vergil subtly recalls certain events of the Trojan war. Aeneas himself recounts how, when the Greeks leave the shores of Troy, they create a wooden statue of a horse as an offering to Minerva for a safe return home (*votum pro reditu simulant* 2.17). The verb *simulant* in this context means "feign," suggesting pretension or falsity, as the Greeks did not actually depart from Troy but were either hidden in the belly of the horse or waiting close by in ships. The Greeks leave behind Sinon, brimming with false feeling (*ficto pectore*, 2.107), in order to convince the Trojans to bring the horse within the city walls, which allows the Greeks entry into Troy to destroy it from within. As further confirmation of the sincerity and veracity of the horse's purpose, two snakes devour the Trojan priest Laocoön, who warned of Greeks bearing gifts (*timeo Danaos et dona ferentis*, 2.49), and his sons (2.203-21). However, the wooden horse is ultimately a ruse, and the Greeks infiltrate Troy while her citizens are fast asleep, at their most vulnerable (2.255-67). However, during the battle for Troy, the Greeks are not the only ones stooping to such duplicity. Aeneas

⁷⁸ Smith 1976, 6.

and his men put on Greek armor in order to come upon their enemies undetected, a method that, while effective, is not considered the most noble way to fight (2.387-401). For Aeneas, this deception is merely a means to an end (*dolus an virtus, quis in hoste requirat?* 2.390); however, this situation reveals that, at least in a military context, the Trojan hero is willing to resort to more questionable ways to victory. Furthermore, in his associations with his mother and divine half-brother, the language used of Venus and Cupid by Juno also suggests militaristic conquest through trickery: *egregiam vero laudem et spolia ampla refertis* (“Truly you obtain distinguished glory and great spoils,” 4.93).⁷⁹ Thus, Cupid’s actions in Dido’s court mirror those of both Sinon and Aeneas himself, underlining the duplicity and violence that Aeneas’ interactions with Dido introduce.⁸⁰

Aeneas deceives and deserts Dido in Carthage in the same way that he had assumed disguises and abandoned Creusa in Troy. Not only does Venus conceal Aeneas in a cloak of mist, but Aeneas himself takes on a false Carthaginian identity after he and Dido consummate their “marriage” in the cave (4.165-72). When the god Mercury urges Aeneas to leave Carthage on the orders of Jupiter, he finds him overseeing the building of citadels and houses while wearing a cloak of Tyrian purple, woven by Dido herself (4.260-4). He rebukes the hero for denying his son Ascanius an “Italian kingdom and Roman land” (*regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus*, 4.275) by acting in the role of a Carthaginian king. Indeed, despite Aeneas’ attempts at assimilating into Carthaginian culture, he is *not* the destined ruler of Carthage but of the future empire of Rome. Aeneas’ temporary persona, while perhaps not assumed with malicious intent, is enough to

⁷⁹ Frangoulidis 1992, 26-7.

⁸⁰ Frangoulidis 1992, 28.

convince Dido of Aeneas' commitment to her and her people, which makes his departure all the more shocking and dishonorable and contributes to her feelings of sheer betrayal and loneliness.

Satan also approaches his target in the shape of something familiar and strangely appealing, a snake. Creeping through Eden "like a black mist" (*PL* 9.180), which again recalls Aeneas' traversing Carthage in a shroud of fog, Satan seeks an animal's body to inhabit, and finds the "serpent subtlest beast of all the field" (*PL* 9.86). The reasons for Satan's decision to choose the serpent as the "fittest imp of fraud" (*PL* 9.89) reflect Venus' deliberations for appointing Cupid as a pseudo-Ascanius in order to best sidle into the Dido's lap (*cum te gremio accipiet laetissima Dido, Aen.* 1.686). The narrator of *PL* even describes the Satan-serpent as pleasing to behold and "lovely, never since of serpent kind / Lovelier" (9.503-5). As stated previously, Satan's pleasing appearance evokes Aeneas' godlike emergence from the mist (*os umerosque deo similis, Aen.* 1.589). The beauty of both figures serves to entice the women, making them more receptive to believe the tales of each. Eve succumbs to the mendacious serpent rather quickly, swayed by his animal magnetism and extraordinary persuasive eloquence, while Dido, through the carnal influence of Venus, becomes entranced by Aeneas. In this serpentine form, Satan offers Eve what she most desires: knowledge, here in the form of the forbidden apple (cf. 9.773-5). This "gift," of course, is the reason for Eve and Adam's subsequent ejection from Eden, thus granting Satan victory in corrupting God's creation. Just like the events at Troy in which the Greeks deceive, and then are deceived by Aeneas, so too does Satan trick Eve through disguise and manipulation. However, the *dolus* or deceit that causes the fall of Troy and even Dido's demise is transfigured into eventual triumph for Rome, just as Eve's fall results in temporary victory for Satan.⁸¹

⁸¹ Smith 1976, 8.

Penetrative Gaze, Insidious Seduction

The strongest parallels between Aeneas and Satan lie in the ways that their actions impact their female “victims,” namely, their death. In addition, the actions of both Aeneas and Satan that result in female death imply psychological and metaphorical sexual penetration, which only emphasizes the degree of these women’s sufferings. Before Satan actually tempts Eve, he secretly gazes at her while she tends to her flowers, “veiled in a cloud of fragrance” (PL 9.425). Satan is so enamored that he is temporarily “disarmed / Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge” (9.466). Milton employs language that suggests a sexual response from Satan when viewing Eve, as he is overcome with “pleasure not for him ordain'd” (9.470) and “sweet/Compulsion” (9.473-4).⁸² He approaches Eve “with burnished neck of verdant gold, erect / Amidst his circling spires” (PL 9.501), which could insinuate phallic puissance as Satan is renewed in his vigor to destroy mankind (9.492-3).⁸³ Aeneas also becomes emotional as he views Carthage: he weeps at the murals at the temple of Juno and is rendered speechless (*stupet*, 1.495) by the magnificent presence of Dido. Both Vergil and Milton choose to describe these scenes through the eyes of the male protagonists, blurring the lines between the clouded, emotionally charged vision of the two characters from the omniscient perspective of the narrator. Aeneas and Satan become voyeurs of these idyllic spaces and of the women within them, creating a false perception of events that foreshadows the tragedy to come.⁸⁴ This is especially true in Aeneas’ case, since just before he sees Dido, he is primed by Venus to see a vulnerable yet regal queen deserving of sympathy and

⁸² Rudat 1985, 17.

⁸³ Milton 2003, 409.

⁸⁴ McCabe 1999, 80.

affection, revealing the errancy of visual perception in a genre that highlights “vision as knowledge.”⁸⁵ Indeed, the idea of “vision” is also a primary theme throughout *PL*, even within the lines of the poem itself, as seen in the acrostic SATAN that appears while Satan first approaches Eve (9.510-4).⁸⁶ This visual marker embedded in the text reveals just how subtle and pervasive Satan’s influence is. As Mac Gorain asserts, ocular intrusion can metaphorically integrate with the notion of sexual violence or penetration, rendering the infiltration of Satan and Aeneas into the female spaces even more invasive.⁸⁷

Satan and Aeneas are not only voyeurs of Eve and Dido’s physical realms, but invade even their subconscious through dreams. Satan alights by Eve’s ear while she sleeps, filling her with “vain hopes, vain aims” (*PL* 4.808) in order to prime her for eating the apple, much as Venus prepares Aeneas for Dido. Satan cajoles Eve with sweet words in the voice of Adam, asking, “Why sleep'st thou Eve?” (5.38; cf. 5.673). Satan’s words within Eve’s dream are unctuous with flattery and hidden malice, yet are dismissed by Adam as “mimic Fancy” which in the absence of Reason “wakes / To imitate her” (*PL* 5.110-1). Similarly, Dido is plagued by dreams and hallucinations of Aeneas, likely caused by the flames of Cupid (*caeco carpitur igni*, *Aen.* 4.2). She exclaims to her sister Anna about how constant dreams have terrified her ever since Aeneas came to Carthage (*quae me suspensam insomnia terrent!* 4.9); Anna interprets these dreams as an invitation to begin a romance with Aeneas (4.50-52). However, these dreams of Aeneas quickly transform into nightmares later in Book 4 after Dido realizes that Aeneas plans to sneak out of Carthage (*agit ipse furem in somnis ferus Aeneas*, 4.465-6). Although

⁸⁵ Mac Góráin 2017, 392.

⁸⁶ Partner 2007, 129-30. Cf. the MARS acrostic in *Aen.* 7.601-4.

⁸⁷ Mac Góráin 2007, 411.

Aeneas himself is not intentionally causing Dido mental strife or is even aware of these dreams, his presence in Dido's kingdom clearly leaves a deep impression on her psyche, an impression colored by the influences of Venus and Cupid. Indeed, Aeneas himself seems to deny his responsibility for Dido before he sails away, saying that he never considered their union a marriage (4.337-39) and that he seeks Italy against his will (*Italiam non sponte sequor*, *Aen.* 4.361). Aeneas' frustrating passivity and lack of agency in this scene only emphasize his less-than-heroic attributes as well as the strength of Venus' involvement in Dido's turmoil. Thus, Satan's manipulations mirror those of Venus as acted through Aeneas, who serves as the instrument through which Venus enacts her will. Although Aeneas again plays a more passive role in the effects he has on Dido, these effects are still as potent as those intentionally wrought by Satan on Eve, further cementing the links between the four characters.

Overall, Milton uses this Vergilian intertext to cast Satan as a figure just as complex as the "pious" hero Aeneas, with all his successes and failings. In turn, the reader gains a more nuanced understanding of Aeneas himself, who through these comparisons is cast as a morally ambiguous character reflecting the darker history of the founding of Rome. If Milton does indeed incorporate the *Aeneid* with an anti-imperialist perspective, it can be argued that Satan commences his exploits as a commander yet eventually develops into an imperial, tyrannical figure reminiscent of the worst of Roman emperors, as he obtains domination through trickery and rhetorical persuasion.⁸⁸ By entangling Satan's character so inextricably with that of Aeneas, Milton seems to equate Aeneas' Roman imperialism with Satan's aspirations for a demonic empire, which could thus extend to Milton's own castigation of the Stuart monarchy.⁸⁹ After

⁸⁸ Kallendorf 2007, 164-65.

⁸⁹ Kallendorf 2007, 165.

Satan accomplishes his goal of tempting Eve, he slinks “back to the thicket” in a fashion reminiscent of how Aeneas slips away into the night (*PL* 9.784; cf. *Aen.* 5.1-3). Both figures are able to journey on and establish their own empires after these encounters, even if they experience repercussions for their actions later. Just as Aeneas lands in Italy only to have to contend in another war, so too does Satan reunite with his demonic comrades in Hell, only to be transformed back into the serpent that he previously feigned to be (*PL* 10.505-21). Milton’s inclusion of these Vergilian episodes not only questions the heroics of the epic warrior and the stability of empires, but also raises larger questions about the roles of women in epic, namely Eve and Dido, which I shall discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter Two: Regal Queens, Tragic Heroines: Dido, Eve, and The Fall

Aurum and Adder: Appearance as a Reflection of Psychological and Moral Degradation

In the previous chapter, I established how Milton incorporates several figures from the *Aeneid*, including Aeneas, Venus, and Creusa, into the portrayal of his own epic characters such as Satan and Sin. While Milton uses allusions to ancient Greek and Latin works for a broad range of purposes, I argue that Milton engages specifically with Vergil's *Aeneid* in order to establish his authority among epic poets from antiquity while simultaneously expressing the primacy of Christianity vis-a-vis these "pagan" texts. In addition, I believe that Milton may have had socio-political reasons for engaging so heavily with Vergil, which I address in the conclusion of this paper. What follows consists of two main sections, one focusing on Eve and Dido and the other on Adam and Sychaeus. I first discuss the parallels between the characters of Eve and Dido, exploring their descriptions as they devolve from images of pastoral beauty to emblems of passionate dishevelment. I then investigate the question of fate versus free will, a central theme shared by both poems, and evaluate how the actions of the unsuspecting women result in their downfall through the influence of not only human, but also supernatural beings. I specifically discuss the nature of their misfortunes as the result of "double determination," whereby a character reaches her end through both her own volition and divine intervention. In the cases of Dido and Eve, I contend that divinely induced madness and trickery, respectively, are the catalysts for their περιπέτεια, or reversal of fortune.

In the second half of this chapter, I propose that Adam is cast not mainly in the role of Aeneas, but rather of Dido's deceased husband, Sychaeus. In the first portion of my chapter, I demonstrate this dynamic by analyzing the way that Sychaeus and Dido on the one hand, and

Adam and Eve on the other, are partners ordained by patriarchal forces and follow each other even to death. I then examine how Adam's acquiescence to Eve, which allows for Satan's accosting of her, mirrors the way in which Sychaeus' absence serves as a primer for the encounter between Aeneas and Dido. Indeed, the separation of these lovers, either by death or desire for independence, grants opportunities for temptation or moral decline for Dido and Eve. Finally, I show the similarities between the reunions of the two couples in which Dido and Sychaeus reunite in the Underworld while Adam and Eve are simultaneously ejected from Eden, arguing that both scenes create an affectation of tragedy in their bittersweet *pathos*.

Although scholars have paid greater attention to the associations between Eve and Dido than to the links between Aeneas and Satan, the full extent to which the female figures align is still surprisingly unexplored.⁹⁰ A number of critics analyze similar aspects of Dido and Eve individually; however, they do not necessarily draw connections between the two characters. I aim to synthesize these discussions while adding my own commentary on the ways in which we may use Dido's tragedy to inform our interpretation of Eve's plight. Furthermore, other than a brief comment offered by Calloway, few if any scholars mention the idea of Adam possessing qualities of Sychaeus.⁹¹ In this chapter, I propose to fully explore these possibilities in order to determine the degree to which Milton's figures mirror those of the *Aeneid* and the reasons behind Milton's choice to represent his characters in such a way.

The most striking similarities between Eve and Dido appear in descriptions of their countenance, namely their pre-eminent beauty. Scholars have demonstrated that Milton's Eve owes much to Ovid; yet, several passages throughout *PL* suggest that attention to the Vergilian

⁹⁰ See Addison 1868; Blessington 1979; Calloway 2005; Harding 1962; and Porter 1993.

⁹¹ Calloway 2005, 85.

intertext will pay greater dividends in our efforts to understand Eve's characterisation more fully.⁹² In the passages I discuss below, Eve's decline from the pastoral ideal to infernal torment is intended to mirror that of Dido, especially in terms of physical appearance and psychological turmoil. Milton's treatment suggests a departure from Eve's conventionally negative presentations, even as Milton worked within the confines of Biblical exegesis and seventeenth-century mores.⁹³ We can discern this connection in the descriptions of the two figures' beauty in the following pair of passages:

regina ad templum, forma pulcherrima Dido,
 incessit magna iuvenum stipante caterva.
 Qualis in Eurotae ripis aut per iuga Cynthi
 exercet Diana choros, quam mille secutae
 hinc atque hinc glomerantur oreades; illa pharetram
 fert umero, gradiensque deas supereminet omnis:
 Latonae tacitum pertemptant gaudia pectus:
 talis erat Dido, talem se laeta ferebat
 per medios, instans operi regnisque futuris.
 (*Aen.* 1.496-504)

Queen Dido, most lovely in appearance,

⁹² See Green 1996, 2005 and Kilgour 2004, 2005 on Ovidian readings of Eve in *PL*, specifically allusions to the *Metamorphoses*.

⁹³ Moore 2002, 1. See Gilbert 1978, McColley 1983, Norris 1999, Woodbridge 1984, and Woods 1988 on varying views of Eve from Biblical tradition to Milton's period and beyond.

Proceeds to the temple, with a great troop of young men crowding around.
 Just as on the banks of Eurotas or the summits of Cynthus,
 Diana, around whom a thousand following nymphs gather far and wide,
 Oversees the choral dances; she carries a quiver on her shoulder,
 And advancing, she surpasses all the goddesses:
 The joys of Latona beat in her silent heart:
 Such was Dido, so she was bearing herself happily
 Through the midst of her people, urging on work for her future kingdom.

Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
 Soft she withdrew, and like a wood-nymph light
 Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train,
 Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self
 In gait surpassed and goddess-like deport,
 Though not as she with bow and quiver armed,
 But with such gard'ning tools as art yet rude,
 Guiltless of fire had formed, or angels brought.

(*PL* 9.385-92)

Both of these scenes occur before Dido and Eve encounter and engage with the intruders of their lands, Aeneas and Satan. In their prelapsarian states, both resemble the virgin goddess Diana (Delia), even surpassing (*supereminet*) the goddess in “gait” and “goddess-like deport.” The women are seen tending to their respective kingdoms: Dido oversees the building of a temple,

while Eve proceeds to tend to her garden. Milton's wording, "though not as she with bow and quiver armed," directly references Dido's simile, *illa pharetram / fert umero*. However, Milton undermines this simile, stating that Eve is *not* armed with weapons but with gardening instruments. Milton paradoxically infuses classical myth into the Biblical framework as Eve's tools, used to help her maintain the flora of Eden, initially conjure a scene of pastoral cultivation reminiscent of the motif of the "Golden Age." Yet the use of rudimentary tools also suggests culling and violation, as their purpose is to "lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind" (*PL* 9.210). This reference to Eve's tools maintains her connection to Diana (and Dido) as a wielder of weapons, albeit in a less violent manner. Furthermore, the image of cropping later contrasts with Eve's description as "fairest unsupported flow'r" (9.432) which emphasizes Eve's vulnerability and loss of innocence within her *locus amoenus*. This image foreshadows her ensuing fall by evoking an epic simile often used for perished warriors, such as Euryalus and Pallas (*Aen.* 9.435-7, 11.68-71; cf. *Il.* 8.306-8).⁹⁴ Milton thus grounds Eve's actions within a classical framework as a way to suggest her predisposition to sin while simultaneously elevating Eve above these mythic predecessors into the role of a Biblical tragic heroine.

Milton draws a distinction between the kinds of beauty represented in the two figures. Vergil's mention of the quiver deepens the comparison of Dido to the Diana the huntress and emphasizes her more militaristic qualities as the sole ruler and defender of her kingdom. Furthermore, Milton emphasizes Eve's fragility within her *locus amoenus*, calling her "soft" and "light." However, Vergil's use of the phrase *forma pulcherrima* suggests not only Dido's distinguished magnificence as a queen, but also her vulnerability and suitability as a potential

⁹⁴ Blessington 1979, 55. The idea of a drooping flower being cut down also appears in erotic elegy, most notably Catullus' *Carmen* 11.

bride who possibly yearns for a romantic partner.⁹⁵ Although these figures are initially presented as women who can stand independently from their partners, their weaknesses are immediately, if subtly, apparent. The similes create the foundation upon which the reader interprets the change in the women's fate: Dido devolves from huntress to hunted (*Aen.* 4.68-72) and Eve from innocent shepherdess into serpent's prey. In addition, the emphasis on the virginal qualities of Dido and Eve serves to highlight the women's innocence and purity within their bucolic, flourishing environments. However, the initial portrayal of the two women as chaste maidens is immediately suspect, as neither of them is a virgin even in their prelapsarian state. Vergil recurrently portrays "virginity" as an unassuming front that eventually falls away to reveal a pernicious and even deadly nature.⁹⁶ This treatment is especially true in the case of Venus disguised as a Carthaginian huntress but can equally apply to Dido's appearance in the likeness of Diana. Dido's and Eve's maidenly aspects grant a sense of integrity and individuality to the women that are lost after their ensuing interactions with Aeneas and Satan. However, through their language and diction, Vergil and Milton hint of the women's underlying proclivity to err that results in their ultimate ruin.

One notable link between Dido and Eve is their association with gold, which casts them as eminently refulgent yet overly decadent and signals their predisposition to vice. In both the *Aeneid* and *PL*, gold typically amplifies noble or divine characteristics. Gold forms part of the accouterments of celestial figures such as Jupiter (*Aen.* 10.115) and the host of Heaven (*PL* 1.538, 4.554). Interestingly, the focus on gold in relation to women (and snakes) also connotes a sense of effeminacy, madness, and guile. Dido is one of the figures in the *Aeneid* most connected to gold, or *aurum*. Everything that surrounds her is golden, from her court to her drinking ware

⁹⁵ Ramsby 2010, 14.

⁹⁶ Mitchell 1991, 222.

(1.640, 726), her horse's livery (4.134), and the cloak and robes she weaves for Aeneas (4.264; 11.75).⁹⁷ Weber reads the epithet *aurea* in the lines *cum venit, aulaeis iam se regina superbis / aurea composuit sponda mediamque locavit* (1.697-8) as a nominative singular modifying *regina* (Queen Dido), not as an ablative with *sponda* (couch) by synizesis as commonly translated, claiming that Vergil assigns the attribute "golden" to Dido herself.⁹⁸ The poet also highlights the gold surrounding Dido in the lines, *cui pharetra ex auro, crines nodantur in aurum, / aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem* (4.138-9). The juxtaposition of *aurum* and *aurea* at the end and beginning of the lines and the caesura after *auro* indicate an emphasis on Dido's finery, including her golden quiver (*pharetra*), hair fastenings (*crines...aurum*), and brooch (*fibula*). Through this aureate presentation of Dido, Vergil effectively reinforces the notion of Dido as a virginal exemplum. In addition, through a reference to the golden belt of Amazonian Queen Penthesilea (*aurea...cingula, Aen. 1.492*) Vergil also evokes the traditional regalia of the maiden Artemis (Ἄρτεμι Παρθενίη) including her golden weapons and belt (χρύσεια...ἔντεα καὶ ζώνη), chariot (χρύσειον...δίφρον), and bridles (χρύσεια...χαλινά, Callimachus, *Hymn III to Artemis* 110-2).⁹⁹ However, while this golden description certainly demonstrates Dido's success and regality as an autonomous queen, some scholars interpret Dido's lavish costume as not appropriate for a hunt but rather as an expression of power suited for a more formal occasion.¹⁰⁰

As Thornton asserts, the similarities between Dido and Diana, namely their beauty, are

⁹⁷ Weber 1999, 321-2.

⁹⁸ Weber 1999, 317.

⁹⁹ Nappa 2007, 309; see also *Homeric Hymn* 27.1-6.

¹⁰⁰ Thornton 1985, 620.

superficial; quite the contrary, Vergil introduces Dido as Diana only to unveil her as more closely aligned with and influenced by Venus herself.¹⁰¹

The correlations between Dido and Venus sharply contrast with Dido's previous representation as a chaste huntress and subtly intimate her potential to become overwhelmed by passion. In her entrance scene in Book 1, Dido is not accompanied by a band of maidens as one would expect in view of the simile that casts her as Diana, but of young men (*magna...caterva*, 1.497). Her male companions suggest that the queen is comfortable navigating within the realm of men even as she claims to eschew marriage.¹⁰² In addition, the golden bow which Dido bears in Book 4 not only calls to mind the weapons of Diana but also echoes Venus disguised as a huntress, on whose shoulder a bow hangs unused (*suspenderat arcum*, 1.318).¹⁰³ For both women, these weapons are merely pieces of their costume as they play an inactive role in the hunt; indeed, after the influence of Cupid, Dido only seems intent on pursuing a man, Aeneas.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, Dido delays the hunt as she gets ready in her bedchamber (*reginam thalamo cunctantem*, 4.133), a hint that she might care more for appearances, acting more as a hesitating bride than a huntress.¹⁰⁵ Even the word *aurea*, when employed as an epithet to describe a woman, evokes the context of Roman elegy in its associations with sexual lovers, further emphasizing that Dido is not an innocent maiden but a mature woman who succumbs to the influence of Venus.¹⁰⁶ Thus, these amorous affinities with Venus subvert the maidenly paradigm of Dido in

¹⁰¹ Thornton 1985, 620.

¹⁰² Thornton 1985, 619.

¹⁰³ Thornton 1986, 621.

¹⁰⁴ Thornton 1985, 621.

¹⁰⁵ Thornton 1985, 620.

¹⁰⁶ Weber 1999, 322-3; cf. Prop. 4.7.85; Hor. *Carm.* 1.5.9.

order to cast her as a woman who initially resists erotic temptation but is ultimately unable to fight these deeply-rooted elements in her life and character.

Likewise, Eve possesses attributes that at first only seem to demonstrate her beauty and virtue but eventually degrade her, as Milton reveals Eve's inherent connections to Satan. Milton also links Eve with gold in a description that focuses on Eve's hair:

She as a veil down to the slender waist
 Unadornèd golden tresses wore
 Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved
 As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied
 Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
 And by her yielded, by him best received,
 Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
 And sweet reluctant amorous delay.
 (*PL* 4.304-11)

From ancient myth to the Renaissance, long or golden hair is associated with strength, attractiveness, and even divinity. Examples abound, from Homer's Achilles (ξανθῆς δὲ κόμης...Πηλεΐωνατο, *Il.* 1.197) to Samson (Judges 16:17) to Milton's angels (*PL* 3.626-8).¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the state of one's hair in Milton appears to reflect his or her moral or mental disposition.¹⁰⁸ Eve's locks initially seem innocuous, simply highlighting her purity and chaste

¹⁰⁷ See Dobranski 2010, 340 on Milton growing out his own hair as an expression of his poetic ambitions.

¹⁰⁸ Dobranski 2010, 340.

spirit. Yet certain words in this passage may connote a sense of licentiousness and seduction. Eve wears her hair as a “veil,” which suggests feminine demureness but also deceit, much like Venus when she is disguised as a young maiden.¹⁰⁹ The word “wanton,” in this case meaning “luxuriant,” occurs at other times throughout *PL* to describe lascivious women (1.454).¹¹⁰ In addition, the simile of the vine insinuates Eve’s hierarchical reliance on Adam and her proneness to suggestion, which will become significant when she eventually yields to Satan.¹¹¹ The word “dishevelled” in this context merely displays Eve’s life in nature, full of charming abandon and unconstrained by the grooming standards of civilization. However, after Eve undergoes her oneiric experience with Satan, Adam finds her “with tresses discomposed...As through unquiet rest” (5.10-1). Furthermore, when Eve begs Adam for forgiveness in eating the apple, she has “tresses all disordered” (10.911). Thus, as the poem progresses, the reader realizes that “dishevelled” has an anticipatory function similar to Dido’s epithet, *infelix* (“unlucky”).¹¹² The dual significance of these words, colored by Satan’s own perception of Eve, shapes Eve’s beauty into something superficial and sinister, presaging her capability to sin.¹¹³ Just as Dido’s refulgence conceals a dark madness, so too does Eve’s messy hair transform from an indication of innocence into a hallmark of corruption.

Perhaps more unsettling than this disorderly representation of Eve are the ways in which Eve’s imagery parallels that of Satan himself. In his description of Satan as a serpent, Milton

¹⁰⁹ Cheung 1988, 200.

¹¹⁰ Milton 2003, 342. Also cf. *PL* 1.414; 4.768; and 9.1015 for Milton’s more derogatory uses of “wanton.”

¹¹¹ Cheung 1988, 200.

¹¹² Dobranski 2010, 343. Cf. *Aen.* 1.712, 749; 4.69, 450, 529, 596; 5.3; 6.456 for instances of *infelix* as a description for Dido.

¹¹³ McCabe 1999, 80.

uses similar language to that of Eve's hair, especially regarding its sinuous, serpentine qualities. He describes Satan as moving in a "wave," with "rising folds" and "circling spires," and possessing a "neck of verdant gold" (9.496-502), which evokes Eve's curling "golden tresses."¹¹⁴ Satan coils "many a wanton wreath" (9.517), an alliterative detail reminding the reader of Eve's "wanton ringlets."¹¹⁵ However, these traits also appear earlier in the poem when Satan is in the guise of a cherub who has "flowing hair / In curls" and wings "of many a coloured plume sprinkled with gold" (3.640-2), connecting to Eve's later description of the "flowing gold / Of her loose tresses" (4.496-7). Again, although golden features and wavy hair conventionally indicate noble or divine characteristics, their affiliation in these contexts with sensuality and deceit link back to the *Aeneid* in quite profound, yet subtle, ways.

Along with her golden paraphernalia, Dido herself possesses golden hair (*flavum crinem*, 4.698), which Iris snips to release her spirit as she dies (4.704-5). In addition, the priestess whom Dido employs to perform magic rites sports hair that becomes loose and disarranged (*crines effusa sacerdos*, 4.509). The sibilance of this phrase suggests a snakelike duplicity as the priestess, acting as Dido's agent, performs rituals that conceal Dido's preparations for her demise. Furthermore, snakes in the *Aeneid* are typically associated with madness, guile, or bad omens.¹¹⁶ The artificial flames of love which Cupid injects into Dido are as insidious as serpents' poison (*occultum...veneno*, 1.688). Interestingly, the movements of Milton's serpent are highly evocative of Vergil's description of the sea snakes that kill Laocoön and his sons (*PL* 9.496-503; cf. *Aen.* 2.203-22). Although these snakes are formidable and terrifying, they are no

¹¹⁴ Cheung 1988, 200.

¹¹⁵ Cheung 1988, 201.

¹¹⁶ Knox 1950, 379.

less significant in deceiving the Trojans than the Trojan horse itself.¹¹⁷ Throughout the *Aeneid*, other women are also affiliated with gold, snakes, and crazed fervor. Vergil describes the sorceress Circe as “seized with passion” (*capta cupidine*, 7.189) while striking her spouse Picus with a golden reed (*aurea...virga*, 7.190), and the serpent which Allecto sends to drive Amata mad is likened to a gold chain twining around her body (*aurum ingens coluber*, 7.352).

Serpent imagery accompanies not only descriptions of Eve’s hair but also her entire body, which seems to curl and curve.¹¹⁸ Adam brings attention to these qualities in a scene that takes place after Satan deceives Eve, addressing her thus (emphasis mine):

Out of my sight, *thou serpent*, that name best
 Befits thee with him leagued, thyself as *false*
 And hateful; nothing wants, but that thy *shape*,
Like his, and *colour serpentine* may show
 Thy *inward fraud*, to warn all creatures from thee
 Henceforth; lest that too Heav’nly form, *pretended*
 To Hellish falsehood, *snare* them.
 (PL 10.867-73)

The repetition of thematically similar words such as “false,” “serpentine,” “fraud,” “pretended,” and “snare,” often occurring at the beginning or end of the lines, deepens the image of deception and emphasizes Eve’s ophidian nature. Indeed, after Eve consumes the forbidden fruit, Adam

¹¹⁷ Giamatti 1966, 304.

¹¹⁸ Fish 1967, 102. See PL 4.460-62 on Eve bending to gaze at her reflection in water, a posture which Cheung interprets as serpentine (1988, 202).

effectively identifies Eve *with* Satan as the adder. Following her interactions with the fallen angel, her once alluring characteristics, such as her appearance and coy manner, take on new connotations of deceit and falsity. Yet Adam also seems to imply that Eve may have even seduced Satan himself and that their similarities prompted this collusion. When Satan catches sight of Eve alone in the Garden, he becomes awestruck in her presence, rendered, at least temporarily, “stupidly good, of enmity disarmed” (9.465). Eve appears to engender a sexual response from Satan, who himself is likened to “Ammonian” and “Capitoline” Jove, who allegedly transforms into a serpent for the purpose of seduction.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, Milton compares Eve to Circe as Satan slithers towards her; Eve does not mind the advances of the serpent since she has command over the fauna of Eden (9.518-22).¹²⁰ Eve may even initiate a phallic reaction from Satan which reinforces his serpentine behavior, just as Circe has the power to transform men into wild beasts.¹²¹ This Circean allusion, perhaps surprising in its inversion of the expected power dynamic, suggests that Eve, through her resplendent beauty, holds a certain power over Satan. She proves to be a formidable temptress despite Satan’s own attempts at persuasion and seduction; yet, Eve seems to be unaware of her own charms.¹²²

In a similar way, Dido’s initially aureate appearance devolves into despair and dissipation under the influence of Venus and her interactions with Aeneas. When Dido and Aeneas first meet, Dido immediately identifies her past traumatic experiences with those of Aeneas: when discussing their resemblance as victims of fate, her assertion of *me quoque* (“me as well,” 1.628)

¹¹⁹ See Milton 2003, 409 on the myths of Jupiter with Olympias and as the serpentine sire of Scipio Africanus.

¹²⁰ Cf. Homer, *Od.* 10.10-19 and *Aen.* 7.15-20 on Circe transforming men into animals.

¹²¹ Rudat 1985, 18.

¹²² Cheung 1988, 205-6.

only strengthens her attraction to the refulgent hero.¹²³ Aeneas, too, is drawn to Dido, not only because of their shared past but also through his admiration of the impressive state of her kingdom. However, as the narrative progresses, Dido's once wealthy and prosperous city transforms from an emblem worthy of emulation into a symbol of exotic decadence and leisure (*otium*) that divert Aeneas away from his duty (*officium*).¹²⁴ Aeneas conflates *aurum* and *eros* (desire) as he takes on the role and appearance of a Carthaginian ruler, wearing the gold finery that Dido bestows to him (4.261-4).¹²⁵ Greed for gold, which Aeneas previously disavowed when he met the unfortunate Polydorus ("What do you not urge mortal hearts, sacred greed of gold?" *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis, / auri sacra fames?* 3.56-7), now begins to consume him as he follows Dido into carnal dissolution.¹²⁶

These negative associations demonstrate that a female character's outward appearance often reflects her inner disposition, indicating that the seeds of corruption are already inherently working from within. Thus, the natural state of Eve's prelapsarian hair suggests a "wantonness" that ultimately manifests when Eve falls. Similarly, Dido's decadent effeminacy suggested by her finery is reinforced when the narrator describes her as ceasing her work on Carthage. Dido's once wonderfully wrought appearance becomes tarnished while Eve's luxuriant locks become disarrayed through their shared fallibility. Yet these emerging parallels in the characters of Eve, Dido, Venus, and Satan are not necessarily meant to disparage women as a whole but are rather intended to highlight the duality of peccancy.¹²⁷ Indeed, Vergil and Milton provide nuanced ways

¹²³ Biow 1994, 233.

¹²⁴ Biow 1994, 235.

¹²⁵ Biow 1994, 235.

¹²⁶ Biow 1994, 235.

¹²⁷ Cheung 1988, 210.

to interpret both women, insinuating that Dido and Eve are inherently inclined to err but that their fates are not necessarily destined to end in disaster. The two women appear to make their own choices, even if they are influenced by interfering forces, thus bringing the question of free will to the fore.

Sufficient to Stand, Free to Fall

The physical indications that Dido and Eve were destined, or at least predisposed, to succumb to temptation necessitate a discussion on the parallel ways in which both women are able to exercise free will. Both Vergil and Milton demonstrate how, despite their better judgment, the women are drawn to what they know they should not have, attracted by the false guises of the male figures who interact with them. Dido and Eve connect with Aeneas and Satan, respectively, on physical and psychological levels, and this mutual link leads them, at least in part, away from their husbands; in other words, “like favors like” (*similia similibus applaudunt*, Petrus Comestor, *Historia Scholastica, Liber Genesis 21*).¹²⁸ Dido is initially enamored by Aeneas’ godly beauty, strength of character, and heroically tragic backstory, all of which she herself also possesses or relates to. Eve recognizes her own traits in Satan, through not only their comparably sinuous qualities but also their shared desire for knowledge and independence. The two narratives suggest the destructive power of beauty, especially for females, which reflects anxieties in both Imperial Rome and monarchical Britain, nations that enforce modesty as an inherent virtue. Yet, neither author seems to completely castigate the women but rather offers a nuanced and even sympathetic presentation of the conditions of their fall.

¹²⁸ Quoted and translated in Kelly 1971, 308.

Both poets focalize the women's actions around the issues of agency, victimization, and predestination. Their roles within classical and Biblical tradition are varied and widely contested, especially regarding their interpretations as either the pawns of capricious divine forces or as inherently corrupt or foolhardy women. Yet, even amidst their disputed victimhood, Dido and Eve possess a certain degree of individual will that complicates the question of female culpability. By reading Eve through a Didonian lens, we come closer to demystifying Milton and Vergil's perplexing innovations of character. Scholars have proposed varying tripartite models that apply to the falls of Dido and Eve separately, as well as Dido and Eve together. I include in my discussion the most useful models for informing our understanding of the ways in which Milton appropriates Dido's situation for Eve, as I believe that an altered synthesis of these models is most persuasive. Carey and Fowler put forth three phases to Eve's fall: *Suggestio*, *Delectatio*, and *Consensus*.¹²⁹ In *Suggestio*, Satan is the instigator of sin who piques Eve's interest in his ability to speak as a serpent, prompting her to converse with him; in *Delectatio*, Eve wavers in her obedient resolution when she approaches the tree but is eventually cajoled through flattery. Finally, in *Consensus*, Eve decides to consume the apple on her own logical reasoning, and it is at this moment that Eve "sins."¹³⁰

Another model synthesizes the actions of Eve and Dido: Porter sees connective links between Dido and Eve's circumstances, namely that 1) Dido is charmed by Cupid and tempted to dishonor her vow of celibacy; 2) she yields to the flames of desire and allows Aeneas to govern with her; 3) having learned of Aeneas' intended departure, Dido despairs and commits suicide.¹³¹ This sequence parallels with Eve's in the following way: 1) Eve is tempted and sins; 2) Adam

¹²⁹ Milton 1968, 900, as summarized in Fresch 1978, 87.

¹³⁰ Fresch 1978, 87.

¹³¹ Porter 1993, 112.

sins and joins with Eve in lustful dissolution; 3) Eve and Adam acknowledge their sin and are repentant.¹³² While I also see parallels in this progression of events within these works, I construct them in a slightly different manner: 1) Aeneas and Satan's introduction into Dido and Eve's realms allow for their temptation through Cupid/Aeneas and Satan; 2) Dido and Eve are led to sin by Aeneas/Satan and give in to their desires; 3) Dido and Eve introduce death into their realms. There is a subtle difference in my argument, namely that while Porter's sequence leads one to draw parallels between Aeneas and Adam, mine focuses on the Aeneas and Satan pairing, with Sychaeus and Adam similar by their absence during the actual moments of temptation.

In the androcentric genre of epic that generally denies agency to human women, Dido and Eve are notable exceptions. One of the most significant aspects of Eve's character is the emphasis on the tension between Eve's dependence on her husband and her desire to be an independent sovereign in her own right. This tension mirrors Dido's own frustrations as she navigates between her role as a widow in want of a new husband and as the sole queen of a burgeoning kingdom. Here, I want to highlight the parallel capabilities of Dido and Eve as rulers and benefactresses and explore how these similarities may enhance our interpretations of these characters, especially Eve. Vergil and Milton possibly intended to demonstrate how female encroachment into positions reserved solely for males results in Dido's and Eve's ruin.

Conversely, and perhaps more plausibly, the authors may actually be attempting to offer a more sympathetic and positive portrayal of Dido and Eve in order to give their characters a more dignified and nuanced reading. As previously discussed, Dido's independence is clearly exhibited in her first introduction in the narrative. Venus underlines Dido's courage in escaping Tyre after the murder of her husband and her ability to rally her fellow Tyrians in her flight (1.360-64). Dido's identification as a female leader (*dux femina facti*, *Aen.* 1.364) equally

¹³² Porter 1993, 112.

compounds her feminine and masculine qualities as she assumes the obligations of her former husband.¹³³ Venus also affirms Dido's resourcefulness, mentioning the legend of how Dido uses strips of bull's hide to determine the size of land on which to build Carthage (1.365-68). Like Aeneas, Dido also displays piety to the gods: when Aeneas first sees her, she is at the temple of Juno (*regina ad templum*, 1.496), and she later pronounces honors to be made at the temples (*divom templis indicit honorem*, 1.632).¹³⁴

In addition, Dido proves to be a skilled leader and magnanimous host, as evidenced by her growing city (1.422-36) and ready willingness to host and supply her Trojan guests (*auxilio tutos dimittam, / opibusque iuvabo*, "I will send you off safe with aid; I will support you with supplies," 1.571). She generously offers provisions and lavish feasts for Aeneas and his men (1.633-42, 697-706), demonstrating her mindfulness of *xenia* and success as monarch of an already prosperous nation. Ironically, Dido's openness and generosity provide the optimal conditions for Venus to influence her. When Dido is charmed by Cupid disguised as Ascanius, she is described as *inscia* ("ignorant," 1.718), unaware of Cupid's effect on her mind as he effaces Sychaeus from her memory. At the welcoming banquet, Dido is described as unlucky (*infelix*) as she drinks in deep love (*longumque bibebat amorem*, 1.749), which foreshadows her imminent downfall and illustrates just how subtly Cupid works his wiles, slowly intoxicating her with the heady power of *amor*. Finally, when Dido promptly urges Aeneas to recount his adventures (*multa super Priamo rogitans, super Hectore multa...nunc quales Diomedis equi, nunc quantus Achilles*, 1.750-52), the repetition of the words *multa...multa* and *nunc quales...nunc quantus* at the beginning and end of the lines displays Dido's inquisitiveness and

¹³³ Biow 1994, 231.

¹³⁴ Covi 1964, 57.

captivation with Aeneas. However, her inherent desire for knowledge will prove to be fatal, as Aeneas' tale only inflames Dido's feelings for the man himself.

For the characterisation of Eve, Milton deviates from traditional Biblical convention by emphasizing Eve's role as a creative stewardess of Eden, working among "thick-woven arboretum and flow'rs / Embroidered on each bank, the hand of Eve" (9.437-8). Eve's description as a gardener was unprecedented before Milton and can be traced back to Ovid's Pomona (*PL* 9.393-95).¹³⁵ She plays an active function in the cultivation of nature, "stooping to support / Each flow'r of slender stalk" (9.427-8), even as her own vulnerability is highlighted as "fairest unsupported flow'r" (9.432). This fragility foreshadows the apparent inevitability of Eve's temptation, but her instrumentality as cultivator of Eden displays the earnestness and efficacy of her work. Indeed, the reason Eve provides when she wants to leave Adam's side is that their physical separation will allow them to increase their efficiency, saying that the "work under our labour grows" (9.208). In this way, Eve displays the traditional virtues attributed to a good homemaker, reinforced and admired by Adam himself: "for nothing lovelier can be found / In woman, than to study household good, / And good works in her husband to promote" (9.232-4). Yet, although Adam acknowledges that "solitude sometimes is best society" (9.249), he remains concerned with what might befall Eve upon their parting, especially since they are both aware that a Foe is lurking to separate and assault the pair (9.253-6). However, Eve's initial creation, in which Adam describes her as "manlike, but different sex" (8.471), reveals Eve's

¹³⁵ McColley 1986, 133. The only mythological female gardener in extant ancient Greco-Roman literature is Pomona, whom Ovid describes as being a skillful, knowledgeable cultivator (*Met.* 14.623-25). Like Eve, Pomona is also resistant to marriage, but her latent sexuality is brought out by the intruder Vertumnus who infiltrates her garden in various disguises (*Met.* 14.643-49).

relation to Adam as equally “sufficient to have stood, though free to fall” (3.99).¹³⁶ Furthermore, just as Dido figuratively imbibes love and knowledge along with food at her banquet, so too is food and storytelling intertwined within Milton’s epic. When the angel Raphael visits Eden, Eve sets out a spread of choicest fruits, which she “heaps with unsparing hand” (5.344). Milton portrays Eve, like Dido, as a highly adept and knowledgeable hostess, able to cater to the needs of her guests. This banquet scene also connects the themes of consumption and acquiring knowledge, as Raphael reveals the purpose and history of man and the Creation.¹³⁷ Her competence as a nurturer shows that she is working within the epic formulae of reciprocity and female domesticity, but re-mythologized in a Biblical context.

After establishing the women’s capacity for autarchic initiative, Vergil and Milton underline Dido and Eve’s resolve by having a prolonged period of wavering before their actual decision to sin. Rather than portray the women as solely guided by their emotions, the poets demonstrate how the women make their fatal choice largely through logical reasoning. Following the death of Sychaeus, Dido vows against another marriage, yet she interestingly uses the same word that Aeneas uses for Creusa’s death, *fefellit* (4.17; cf. 2.744), which Andrew Dyck suggests could foreshadow her subsequent deception by Aeneas.¹³⁸ Despite Dido’s resistance to matrimony, Juno, asserting that Dido is fit to serve a Phrygian husband and give her people as a dowry (*liceat...dextrae*, 4.103-4), schemes with Venus to unite Dido and Aeneas. Dido’s underlying and subconscious disposition for marriage thus provides an opportunity for

¹³⁶ Butler 2003, 169. Butler notes similarities between Eve and Boccaccio’s Pandora (*Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*), whose actions also bring about destruction for mankind.

¹³⁷ Gulden 1998, 139.

¹³⁸ Dyck 1983, 242.

manipulation and control by these goddesses.¹³⁹ Furthermore, Cupid's invisible flames of desire continually weaken Dido's resolve (*caeco carpitur igni*, 4.2), and Aeneas' face and words agitate her rest (*haerent...quietem*, 4.4-5). Dido does not immediately yield to her passions but first speaks with her sister, who, perhaps surprisingly, urges Dido to follow her heart and marry the foreign leader. Anna's reasons for this union are ostensibly presented as reasonable, as she enumerates that Sychaeus is long dead (*Id...sepultos*, 4.34), Dido has finally met a suitor that is pleasing to her (*placitone...amori*, 4.38), Dido is surrounded by enemies (*Hinc...minas*, 4.40-44), and allying with a Trojan would bring glory to Carthage (*Teucrum...rebus*, 4.48-49).

Dido clearly values her obligations towards her kingdom just as equally as her personal feelings, and in her attempts to honor her vow, she is not able to reconcile her desires to be both a queen and a lover.¹⁴⁰ Anna, through her words, dissolves (*solvit*) the *pudor*, or modesty, which once checked Dido from marrying (4.55; cf. 4.27). Dido's dissolution seems inevitable when even showing *pietas* through sacrifices and prayers to gods is not able to give her an answer (4.65-66), adding to the impending sense of tragedy and doom weighing over the queen.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, when Dido is at the hunt, she acts as a bride hesitating in her bedroom (*thalamus*, 4.133), maintaining the last traces of *pudor* before she succumbs to her desires. The previous similes likening Dido to Diana before this scene, as discussed earlier, invite this reading of Dido hesitating due to her chastity, yet also become destabilized as Dido once again enters into the nuptial realm.¹⁴² Eve's rationale echoes that of Dido, as she also wavers for a sustained length of time before her fatal error. Satan initially fractures Eve's determination through a dream in which

¹³⁹ Ramsby 2010, 14.

¹⁴⁰ Tatum 1984, 450.

¹⁴¹ McLeish 1972, 130.

¹⁴² Caldwell 2008, 427.

he inspires “distempered, discontented thoughts” (*PL* 4.807). Like Dido, Eve’s sleep becomes disturbed, and the evidence of her psychological distress physically manifests when she awakes with “glowing cheek, / As through unquiet rest” (5.10-11). Yet Adam, like Anna, only reassures Eve that her dream is not malignant but rather a flight of “Fancy” (5.102). When Eve leaves Adam to work alone, she is described as “much deceived, much failing, hapless” (*PL* 9.404), unaware of her impending doom. Eve’s confidence in resisting any temptation naturally stems from her competency as a cultivator, secure in her agency. However, later in the narrative, Milton and Vergil clearly reveal just how perilous a desire for reaching beyond one’s station can be.

The Cave and the Apple: Sex and Consumption as Catalysts for Dissolution and Death

Both Vergil and Milton highlight their efficiency in order to show that these women do possess a degree of agency, and thus free will, within their own realms. Although they are still working within the established conventions of previous literature, they refashion these women into their own individual apparatus.¹⁴³ In many ways, however, the descriptions of Dido and Eve follow those of stereotyped females either as benevolent and protective or conversely overemotional and uncontrollable; however, both Vergil and Milton tend to blur or even upend the lines between masculine and feminine, preventing a simple reading of these characters.¹⁴⁴ The regression from benevolent to unpredictable essentially necessitates, in a patriarchal reading,

¹⁴³ See Odgers 1925 on earlier yet largely fragmentary iterations of Dido and her mythology by Timaeus of Tauromenium (345-250 BCE), Naevius (269-199 BCE), and Ennius (239-169 BCE), as well as possible influences of Medea from Apollonius Rhodius’ *Argonautica* on Vergil’s characterization of Dido.

¹⁴⁴ Quartarone 2006, 179-80.

the subordination of the chaotic female in favor of the rational, orderly male.¹⁴⁵ Eve and Dido's efficient work is disrupted by a sexual male presence, Aeneas and Satan, in similar scenes that mark the beginnings of their misfortune:

Speluncam Dido dux et Troianus eandem
 deveniunt: prima et Tellus et pronuba Iuno
 dant signum; fulsere ignes et conscius aether
 conubiis, summoque ulularunt vertice nymphae.
 Ille dies primus leti primusque malorum
 causa fuit; neque enim specie famave movetur,
 nec iam furtivum Dido meditatur amorem:
 coniugium vocat; hoc praetexit nomine culpam.
 (*Aen.* 4.165-72)

Dido and the Trojan leader reach the same cave:
 Ancient Earth and brideswoman Juno give a sign;
 Lightning and the witnessing sky flash with the union,
 And the nymphs howl on the mountaintop.
 That day was the first cause of death and misfortunes;
 For Dido is stirred neither by appearance nor rumor,
 Nor does she now consider her love secret:
 She calls it marriage; she concealed her guilt with this name.

¹⁴⁵ Quartarone 2006, 179.

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
 Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate:
 Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat
 Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe,
 That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
 The guilty serpent, and well might, for Eve
 Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else
 Regarded, such delight till then, as seemed,
 In fruit she never tasted, whether true
 Or fancied so, through expectation high
 Of knowledge, nor was Godhead from her thought.
 Greedily she engorged without restraint,
 And knew not eating death.

(*PL* 9.780-92)

By using similar language to that of the *Aeneid*, especially in the almost identical reactions of personified Earth and Nature, Milton emphasizes the sinfulness of Eve's consumption of the apple as not only a form of disobedience but also illicit sexual activity. Satan takes advantage of Eve's bodily desires to eat, love, and learn, tantalizing her not only with delicious fruit but even with aspirations to "Godhead." In a similar way, Venus and Juno exploit Dido's vulnerabilities as a lonely widow and queen of a nation surrounded by enemies. Through Aeneas, the goddesses provide for her, if only temporarily, the stability and comfort of a mutual and passionate

relationship. Despite Dido and Eve's prolonged hesitation, once they decide to yield to their desires, they eagerly perform the physical action of their fall. Even while they are aware of their offenses, they relish in their lust and carnal appetites. The asyndeton in the phrase "she plucked, she ate" demonstrates how quickly Eve decides and then acts on her desire.¹⁴⁶ The same holds true in Vergil's phrase *coniugium...culpam*, in which Dido swiftly conceals her ardor under the false name of a "sanctioned" union. They lose all sense of decorum and modesty as a result of their respective errors in judgment, shattering the restraints of moderation and civility.¹⁴⁷

However, Eve and Dido's euphoria is short-lived, as Eve realizes the severity of her transgression and yearns for death (*PL* 9.826-30) and Dido, when she loses Aeneas, subsequently loses the desire to live. She builds a pyre in the name of casting off all memories of Aeneas (4.497-8) and in tearful despair kills herself with Aeneas' sword. As with Milton's sexually charged language when Eve eats the apple, Vergil uses vivid and rather gory descriptions of Dido's death to create *pathos* and highlight the tragedy of her plight. The aural impact of the lines *conlapsam aspiciunt comites, ensemque cruore / spumantem, sparsasque manus* (4.664-5), in which Vergil alternates the hard *c* sounds and alliterates the hissing *s* sounds, evokes the sibilance of serpents in order to emphasize the cold, hard steel of the sword penetrating Dido's flesh, as well as the blood foaming around the blade and spattering her hands. This metaphorical phallic penetration by the gift (*munus*) of Dido's lover is further underlined a few lines later, where the sword is described as fixed in the gaping wound in her breast: *infixum stridit sub pectore vulnus* (4.689). The tragic fates of these women, cast in ways that almost suggest rape or sexual conquest, highlight how Satan and Aeneas devolve from pastoral visitors to militaristic transgressors, all in the name of imperial expansion. Interestingly, neither of the women's

¹⁴⁶ Thomas 2006, 38.

¹⁴⁷ Thomas 2006, 41.

choices were necessarily “destined” to occur. Dido’s death is described as sudden and unexpected, not willed by fate or justly merited (*nam quia nec fato, merita nec morte peribat, Aen.* 4.696). Likewise, God the Father affirms that Eve’s and Adam’s decision to sin is self-willed, saying that “no decree of mine” concurred “to necessitate his Fall” (*PL* 10.43-44). Milton links Eve’s experiences with those of Dido in ways that suggest the women’s ultimate agency, even when these choices lead to their downfall. Yet, throughout both narratives, the women are undoubtedly influenced by outside forces, whether mortal or supernatural, thus creating nuance in their characterizations that prevents immediate condemnation for these figures. Thus, Vergil and Milton construct these female characters as simultaneously flawed and individualistic yet inherently sympathetic and tragic, retaining a certain degree of dignity and autonomy even as they are expelled from their domains.

Sychaeus and Adam: Fatal Separation, Hopeful Reunion

In the final section of this chapter, I briefly discuss the ways in which the relationship between Adam and Eve echoes that of Sychaeus and Dido. Despite attempts of previous scholars to find parallels between Adam and Aeneas, I believe that Milton also draws on Dido and Sychaeus’ relationship to illustrate Adam and Eve’s fractured yet imperishable bond.¹⁴⁸ While Calloway is the only scholar who alludes to a possible connection between Sychaeus and Adam by noting their absence when Dido and Eve encounter Aeneas and Satan, she does not expound in depth upon their similarities. I assert that Sychaeus and Adam share a number of qualities including being the first husbands of Dido and Eve; facing similar consequences upon separation

¹⁴⁸ See Addison 1868, Blessington 1979.

from their wives; and experiencing a tragic yet bittersweet reunion after they are expelled from their domains.

Sychaeus' presence in the *Aeneid*, although not entirely necessary for the plot, serves several purposes, namely to highlight Aeneas' and Dido's similar backstories and to act as a foil to Aeneas when he supplants Sychaeus as Dido's lover. As part of what Andrew Dyck calls τὰ προγεγενημένα, or, "what had occurred before," Sychaeus only ever appears in the narrative as a spirit; however, the nature of his presence is intrinsically linked to Dido, manifesting as a benevolent apparition in times of need and a haunting specter in times of mental distress.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, Adam has a rather peripheral presence in the first half of the poem, as he does not strictly appear until *PL* Book 4. In Books 1 and 4 of the *Aeneid*, Vergil initially focuses on Dido, her reactions, and the calamity that ensues as she falls in love with Aeneas, whose own feelings come off as ambiguous.¹⁵⁰ In a similar way, in Book 9, Milton does not concentrate solely on Adam and Eve's interactions but highlights the ways in which Eve's encounter with Satan in his mission to corrupt God's creation leads to mankind's downfall. Although Sychaeus is a shadowy figure skirting along the edges of the narrative, Vergil adds much detail to demonstrate fully the depth of Sychaeus and Dido's relationship. Venus, in her account to Aeneas, stresses that Sychaeus was cherished by the great love of pitiable Dido (*magno miserae dilectus amore*, 1.344). In addition, Dido and Sychaeus' relationship is akin to that of Andromache and Hector, whose bond is traditionally viewed as transcending death, with the women remaining tied to their deceased husbands (cf. *Aen.* 3.301-305).¹⁵¹ Sychaeus comes to Dido's aid even after death to warn her of her brother's treachery (1.353-9), appearing to her in a dream just as Hector appears

¹⁴⁹ Dyck 1983, 239.

¹⁵⁰ Farron 1980, 34.

¹⁵¹ Biow 1994, 230.

to Aeneas to inform him of Greek infiltration (2.270-95). In a similar way, Adam, or at least his voice, also materializes in Eve's dreams, beckoning her to awake and enjoy the beauty of the night (*PL* 5.37-49). However, unbeknownst to Eve, this voice is merely a trick of Satan, implanted in her mind to lead her to the Tree of Knowledge (5.51-2). Sychaeus appears later in a similar manner, this time when Dido is wracked with despair at Aeneas' departure; as she pays homage to his memory, she thinks that she hears his voice, calling her to join him in the afterlife (4.460). In both instances, these dreams or disembodied voices occur at moments of precarious vulnerability and cause discontent in the women, resulting in sin or death.

Even after Dido assumes the more masculine role of a monarch, she implies that her marriage with Sychaeus, her first love (*primus amor*) was a joyful time in her life until his death cheated her of that happiness (4.20-9). Sychaeus' death incites Dido to shun other men and rule alone, and thus she remains in the liminal position of a widow and partnerless queen.¹⁵² Just as the happiest time in Dido's life was with Sychaeus, so too does Eve base much of her own joy and pleasure on Adam's companionship and virtue as her "other half" (4.488).¹⁵³ Both couples do not necessarily "marry" for love but are brought together by authoritative figures: Dido's father gives Dido in marriage as a young girl (*pater...dederat, Aen.* 1.345) and God fashions Eve as a mate for Adam from his rib (*PL* 8.465-70). Furthermore, the couples' relationships adhere to the traditional hierarchy associated with the roles of husband and wife: "How beauty is excelled by manly grace / And wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (*PL* 4.490-1). Patriarchal forces do not necessarily dictate these positions, but rather inform or influence them.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Ramsby 2010, 14.

¹⁵³ Hillier 2014, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Langford 1994, 121.

The closest link between Sychaeus and Adam is that neither of them are physically present with their wives at their most critical moments of temptation.¹⁵⁵ Venus' conversation in which she recounts Dido's past primes Aeneas for his subsequent encounter with the monarch.¹⁵⁶ Dido's treacherous brother kills Sychaeus and causes her to go into exile, a detail which provokes Aeneas' sympathy since the insidious trick of the Greeks resulted in his own refugee status and loss of his wife (*Aen.* 1.355-356).¹⁵⁷ Dido realizes that she is in love with Aeneas because she recognizes the flames of love she had for Sychaeus, even if this fire is at least partly kindled by Cupid (4.23). The conflict between her fidelity to Sychaeus and the vow she took after his death on the one hand, and her new love for Aeneas on the other creates moral disquietude within Dido.¹⁵⁸ The close bond between the queen and Sychaeus proves Aeneas' irresistibility as he distracts Dido from her oaths of celibacy. Thus, Dido's broken oath not only suggests the perfidy of Carthaginians (and women) but also the enticements of Aeneas' noble nature and intensity of his love.¹⁵⁹ As for Adam, some scholars note that his permitting Eve to leave his sight creates the conditions for her temptation, and thus Adam is to blame for original sin.¹⁶⁰ Indeed, by his absence, Adam is accused of resigning his "manhood" (10.148); however, God does not charge this fault as a sin, but rather his eating of the apple against his better judgment (10.199).¹⁶¹ Adam and Eve's mutual engagement in a sanctioned hierarchy implies an

¹⁵⁵ Calloway 2005, 85.

¹⁵⁶ Mac Góráin 2017, 394.

¹⁵⁷ Dyck 1983, 239.

¹⁵⁸ Dyck 1983, 242.

¹⁵⁹ Phinney 1965, 359.

¹⁶⁰ Revard 1973, 69.

¹⁶¹ Revard 1973, 71.

association between faith and reason, which are necessary elements for relationships with humans and God. When this hierarchy is subverted, their common reciprocity also suffers.¹⁶² Just as Sychaeus' absence results in Dido's vulnerability and an independence contrary to traditional Roman mores, so too does Adam's acquiescence and uxoriousness facilitate Satan's approach and Eve's downfall.

Finally, the way in which the readers see the ends of both couples is quite similar in how they are expelled from their original kingdoms and subjected to live in a place of death. Aeneas' *katabasis* and encounter with Dido in Underworld falls within epic convention, like Odysseus with Telamonian Ajax (*Od.*11.543-67). However, these events allow the audience, and Aeneas, to get a sense of closure as Dido is rejoined with her destined partner, Sychaeus. In a similar way, Adam and Eve are expelled from Eden, which basically ensures that they are not immortal and must essentially enter the realm of "the dead." The unity of both couples can be seen in that they walk hand in hand together off the meta-poetic stage, entering a new existence together, forever changed by their encounters with Aeneas and Satan. Among those in the Fields of Mourning, Dido is included as a victim of cruel passion (*quos durus amor crudeli tabe peredit*, 6.442); however, she is accompanied by Sychaeus, which sets her apart from the other infamous women in the grove.¹⁶³ Vergil thus elevates Dido to a tragic hero in death, in a similar way that Milton also retains a degree of Eve and Adam's dignity after their fall:

tandem corripuit sese atque inimica refugit
 in nemus umbriferum, coniunx ubi pristinus illi
 respondet curis aequatque Sychaeus amorem.

¹⁶² McColgan 1994, 84.

¹⁶³ Dyck 1983, 244.

(*Aen.* 6.472-4)

At last she (Dido) snatched herself away and hostile, took refuge
 In the shady grove, where her first spouse Sychaeus
 Responds to her cares and equally returns her love.

Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
 The world was all before them, where to choose
 Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
 They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,
 Through Eden took their solitary way.

(*PL* 12.645-9)

These passages do not at first glance seem to have much in common, yet they share a number of similarities, especially concerning how Vergil and Milton direct the final fates of the couples within their respective narratives. In light of the numerous allusions to the *Aeneid* thus far, Milton draws on the final scene of Dido and Sychaeus to set a mood of what Pecorino calls Milton's "muted optimism."¹⁶⁴ The simultaneously bittersweet, melancholic, and hopeful tone of Adam and Eve's last moments in the narrative demonstrate a certain departure from the iconographic and literary tradition of the couple which is usually associated with grief and regret.¹⁶⁵ The word *inimica* signifies the final transition of the relationship between Aeneas and Dido, a devolution from lovers to enemies, just as Satan is pronounced the opponent of mankind

¹⁶⁴ Pecorino 1981, 1.

¹⁶⁵ Pecorino 1981, 1.

(10.175-81). However, Dido is finally able to find solace with Sychaeus, just as Eve and Adam walk with joined hands to embark on a new journey, not as beings untouched by death but as fallible mortals.

Although Adam and Eve do quarrel after their offense, their animosity a reflection of their spiritually lapsed state, by the end of Book 10, they are once again in each other's good graces; with their relationship repaired, they are prepared to face divine punishment.¹⁶⁶ Adam's decision to join in sin with Eve is guided by his acknowledgement that Eve is a reflection of himself.¹⁶⁷ Milton visually represents their partnership through the imagery of joined hands ("her hand soft touching," 5.17), whose separation signifies a rift in their bond.¹⁶⁸ Eve withdraws "from her husband's hand her hand" (9.385), but is eventually reunited in marital harmony by the end of the poem ("they hand in hand"). The image of a physically reunited Adam and Eve, joined by their hands, appears to be an invention by Milton, as there are no iconographic precedents for such a depiction of the couple.¹⁶⁹ Milton also visually implies their equality as partners, which is also a departure from previous iterations of Eve as morally inferior to Adam, represented by her departing first from Eden; Milton suggests that both human characters are equally culpable for the Fall.¹⁷⁰ Adam and Eve leave Eden as equals, individually at fault for their sin yet united and strengthened by their mutual love.

In this ending, Milton seamlessly blends the classical and the Biblical, giving an affectation of Vergilian epic with his language and portrayal of Adam and Eve as equal

¹⁶⁶ Doerksen 1997, 125.

¹⁶⁷ Desai 1983, 123.

¹⁶⁸ Kilgour 2004, 8.

¹⁶⁹ Pecorino 1981, 7.

¹⁷⁰ Pecorino 1981, 7-9.

sovereigns, like Dido and Sychaeus. However, Milton's final message is ultimately the story of redemption through God. Unlike silent Dido and Sychaeus who remain confined in the Fields of Mourning (*lugentes campi*, 6.441), Eve and Adam gain a new, revealed perspective on their situation and have a new hope in God's promise of redemption.¹⁷¹ When Adam and Eve leave Eden, they are able to cast away their personae as tragic heroes and progress beyond them by free will and grace from God, eventually engendering the human race.¹⁷² Thus, by reading the story of Dido and Sychaeus into that of Eve and Adam, we are able to see how Milton elevates tragedy into something symbolic of God's divine mercy, in which death is not the final end for man but the beginning of a new stage of spiritual renewal.

¹⁷¹ Blessington 1979, 67.

¹⁷² Blessington 1979, 67.

Conclusion

Ultimately, a multivalent and highly complex Vergilian intertext informs the representation of Milton's characters. While I have only demonstrated one possible interpretation, my reading helps illuminate the possible intentions behind Milton's character portrayals, not only through direct allusion but also through thematic echoes. By drawing so heavily on Aeneas and Venus' characters for his presentation of Satan, Milton displays how Roman ideals may ostensibly seem noble but ultimately fall short of God's divine power. The parallels between Dido and Eve highlight the tragic elements in both of their stories, calling for a sympathetic reading of Eve that was highly unconventional during Milton's era. By equating Adam with Sychaeus, Milton emphasizes the deep bond between Eve and Adam, shared between Dido and Sychaeus, that leads them astray yet also helps them retain dignity and companionship after their spiritual or literal death.

Milton repurposes classical myths as allegories to illustrate how man, through the divine grace of God, can progress beyond the moral and spiritual limits of our pagan predecessors. Furthermore, although both poems deal obliquely with their contemporary politics, Milton may have had political motivations for incorporating Vergil, which my reading of Aeneas into Satan helps decipher. While the *Aeneid* certainly provides a nuanced presentation of Aeneas, as a work commissioned by Augustus, it is an inherently encomiastic message of the legitimacy of the Roman empire. Although many generally assume that Milton had an optimistic reading of Aeneas due to the number of allusions present within *PL*, the way in which he incorporates these allusions reveals quite the contrary. By likening Satan to Aeneas, the founder of Roman imperial legacy, Milton could be warning of the "fair appearing good" that monarchy entails (*PL* 9.354), of the easy descent into tyranny that rule by one man alone can signify. Indeed, Adam himself

seems to voice Milton's own beliefs that God gave "dominion absolute" only over "beast, fish, fowl," but "man over men / He made not lord" (*PL* 12.67-70). This anti-monarchical sentiment does not align with Vergil's pro-imperialist message, in which Augustus is shown to be the savior of the empire (*Aen.* 8.678-81). Rather, Milton seems to argue that since men are only intended to worship and be ruled by God, Jesus Christ supplants Augustus as the ultimate and eternal ruler.

In this thesis I focus mainly on specific episodes within *PL* and the *Aeneid*; however, even within this limited scope, there are a number of topics to explore further. I believe that there is more to analyze regarding Vergil and Milton's tensions between fate and free will, especially their implications on the decisions made by Dido and Eve. In addition, there is much more to examine concerning the parallels between Dido and Eve, namely their similar behavior after the cave and apple-eating scenes in which both women become lustful and then resolve to die, as well as the curses that arise because of their betrayal by Aeneas and Satan. I believe that the enmity described between Eve's descendants (mankind) and Satan echoes Dido's curse upon Aeneas and his progeny, which adds to the etiological aspects of both poems. Moreover, a broader examination of Milton's other works, specifically *Paradise Regained* and his various political and religious treatises, would help form a greater understanding of Milton's views on politics and religion. Of particular interest are Milton's divorce tracts, which would help reveal Milton's views on marriage and the role of women. Furthermore, since Milton often portrays his female characters as inherently sympathetic, an interesting topic for further analysis would be the varying and widely debated feminist readings of Milton. While I briefly mentioned other scholarship on the parallels between characters such as Adam and Aeneas in my introduction, I did not explore in depth how these alternate readings could change or enhance our understanding

of Milton's allusions. Thus, I believe further study comparing these readings would be beneficial in order to make sense of Milton's complex literary network.

This thesis is a study in the broad and diverse application of reception studies in which I re-evaluate past observations and offer new or rarely acknowledged ways of looking at neglected characters such as Sin and Sychaeus. Of course, the *Aeneid* is not the only work that Milton engages with, as I briefly mentioned in the beginning of this work. Indeed, one of the challenges of limiting my discussion to only a few characters from the *Aeneid* is that Milton seamlessly synthesizes a plethora of works from antiquity to the Renaissance, bringing these texts in communication with each other and in turn, the reader. By examining all forms of textual echoes, this thesis reinforces the notion of the enduring significance of classical antiquity on Western society. Milton is able to incorporate these classical texts so harmoniously because they pertain to the universality of human experience. Authors such as Vergil use myth to explain the supernatural in the absence of a Trinitarian God. Milton thus uses these texts as the foundations upon which to show the limits of human progress without God. Although Milton wrote much later than Vergil, his poem pertains to events that occurred well before the Trojan War, and thus he brings his audience both backward and forward in time, showing the chronologically transcendental nature of reception. While the *Aeneid* and ancient tragedy often end with the death of a character, Milton's epic reveals man's hope and enlightened ability to live beyond death through God alone.

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