


2002

# 'Impregn'd with Reason': Eve's Aural Conception in Paradise Lost

Kent Lehnhof

Chapman University, [lehnhof@chapman.edu](mailto:lehnhof@chapman.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/english\\_articles](http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/english_articles)

 Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Lehnhof, Kent. "'Impregn'd with Reason': Eve's Aural Conception in Paradise Lost." *Milton Studies* 41 (2002): 38-75.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English at Chapman University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Faculty Articles and Research by an authorized administrator of Chapman University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [laughtin@chapman.edu](mailto:laughtin@chapman.edu).

---

# 'Impregn'd with Reason': Eve's Aural Conception in Paradise Lost

## **Comments**

Permission to present this material in Chapman University Digital Commons has been granted by Duquesne University Press, the rightsholder.

Additional material is available through [Proquest](#) and [Duquesne University Press](#).

## **Copyright**

Duquesne University Press

# “IMPREGN’D WITH REASON”: EVE’S AURAL CONCEPTION IN *PARADISE LOST*

Kent R. Lehnhof

IN HIS STUDY of sexual attitudes at the time of Milton, James Grantham Turner reviews several interpretations of the Genesis myth in early modern England. He demonstrates that a number of these explications equate Eve’s Fall with some sort of sexual transgression. Both Paracelsus and Cornelius Agrippa, for example, interpretively conflate the forbidden fruit with Adam’s phallus and identify Eve’s sin as an act of copulation. According to this outlook, Satan brings about the Fall of humanity by fostering in Eve a lust that leads to unlawful union with Adam.<sup>1</sup> Although Milton rejects this particular formulation of the Fall, *Paradise Lost* nevertheless participates—at least in part—in this sexualization of humanity’s first sin. Milton’s erotic interpretation of the Genesis account, however, substitutes sexual companions. Instead of Adam, Satan serves as Eve’s first forbidden sexual partner. Rather than simply prompting Eve to carnally enjoy her husband, Satan usurps Adam’s role, in a certain sense copulating with Eve and causing her downfall. In this approach, Milton aligns himself with another exegetical tradition also examined by Turner. As Turner notes, rabbinical commentators often instructed that Eve brought sin into the world by having sex with the serpent. Catharist heretics who elaborated on this idea even stipulated the physical particulars of this sex act, teaching that the serpent penetrated Eve with his tail.<sup>2</sup> In his epic eroticization of the Temptation, Milton is not nearly so aggressive. In Milton’s account, the physical is displaced onto the verbal. Milton not only substitutes Satan for Adam but also substitutes discourse for intercourse. In *Paradise Lost* Satan inseminates Eve not with his phallus or with his tail but rather with his tongue. Using his mouth as an instrument of generation, Satan impregnates Eve through her ear, causing her to conceive sin and death.

The idea of oral insemination is not original to Milton, nor is it foreign to the exegetical tradition of his Christian subject matter. For centuries certain branches of Christianity have fostered a tradition of aural impregnation in connection with the Incarnation, contending that the Virgin Mary conceives

the Son of God through the ear. According to this understanding, the Annunciation does not foretell a conception to befall Mary in the future but actually effects that very event. The Virgin Mother conceives the Christ-child immediately upon hearing the divine declaration/decreed, “Thou shalt conceive.” As John Wall indicates, the feasting calendar of the medieval and early modern church implicitly institutionalizes this idea, for the Feast of the Annunciation is celebrated on March 25—exactly nine months before the day of Christ’s birth.<sup>3</sup> The idea of aural conception is explicitly addressed in the writings of a number of Christian authors, ranging from the imposing to the obscure. For instance, the Breviary of the Maronites proclaims: “The Father’s Word entered through the ear of the Blessed One,”<sup>4</sup> and a hymn believed to have been written by either Thomas à Becket or St. Bonaventure intones: “Rejoice, Virgin, mother of Christ, / Who conceived by the ear, / By Gabriel’s message.”<sup>5</sup> St. Agobard is included in the list of auricular advocates, asserting: “He came down from heaven sent from the Father’s citadel, he entered in through the Virgin’s ear into our realm.”<sup>6</sup> The idea also appears in texts tentatively attributed to St. Ephrem. The “Homily on the Nativity” instructs:

Just as the bush on Horeb bore  
God in the flame,  
so did Mary bear  
Christ in her virginity.  
Perfectly God,  
He entered the womb through her ear,  
in all purity the God-Man  
came forth from the womb into creation.<sup>7</sup>

Even St. Augustine is supposed to have espoused this interpretation of the Annunciation, straightforwardly stating: “God spoke through the angel and the Virgin was impregnated through the ear.”<sup>8</sup>

The idea of aural impregnation that underwrites these exegetical interpretations also informs artistic approaches to the Annunciation. Several visual representations of the scriptural scene re-create the episode in terms of oral insemination and aural penetration. Often, the angel is identified as the inseminating instrument. In Simone Martini’s *Annunciation* (Figure 1), the words issuing from Gabriel’s mouth proceed directly into Mary’s ear. Demurely receiving these words, Mary demonstrates the modest reluctance yet eventual acceptance appropriate to an obedient virgin submitting to the paternal wishes of an authoritative male.<sup>9</sup> In the Annunciation panel of Nicolas of Verdun’s *Klosterneuburg Altar* (Figure 2), a ray of light emanating from Gabriel’s outstretched index finger enters Mary’s ear. The angel leans forward

as an astonished Mary raises her hands in surrender. The presentation in this manner associates the Annunciation with the operation of an irresistible impregnating force.<sup>10</sup> In Jacopo Torriti's mosaic (Figure 3), the angel also stretches out his finger towards Mary, but the ray of light comes not from the angel's finger but rather from the Father's mouth. Visible in the heavens above, the Father speaks forth an inseminating stream that carries the dove of the Holy Ghost directly into Mary's ear. With its wings tucked in and its beak foremost, the dove dives directly at the Virgin, emphasizing a penetrative approach to the Annunciation.<sup>11</sup> The *Netze Passion Altar* (Figure 4) also shows a stream of light leaving the Father's mouth and carrying a dove in the direction of the Virgin's ear, but the head of the dove is no longer visible, having already entered Mary's ear. The ray of light emanating from the Father's mouth also carries an embryonic Christ, or homunculus. The idea of aural invasion indicated by the diving, half-visible bird is duplicated in the posture of the homunculus. Like the dove that precedes him, the infant descends headlong in the direction of Mary's ear. Indeed, the divine child shoulders a miniature cross that seems positioned to serve as a battering ram, better enabling the child to penetrate the Virgin's ear and immediately enter her womb.<sup>12</sup>

In Master Bertram's portrayal of the Annunciation (Figure 5) not just one but both of Mary's ears are being invaded. A scroll of words unraveling from Gabriel's finger penetrates the Virgin's left ear, while a dove and a Christ-child issuing from the Father's mouth in heaven enter her right ear.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps the most explicit expression of Mary's auricular conception, however, is found in the Lady Chapel of the Würzburg Cathedral. The stone relief above the north door of the chapel (Figure 6) shows the Father blowing into a phallic-like tube, the other end of which is inserted into Mary's ear. The phallic symbolism of the tube as an instrument of insemination is indicated by the anatomical route it traces, emerging from between the Father's legs. Emphasizing the aural endpoint of this tube, the artist has pulled back the Virgin's long tresses in order to clearly expose her intricately carved ear. A dove is pictured at the precise moment of entering this ear. Having traveled the length of the tube, the dove's beak is just beginning to pierce the Virgin's auditory canal. A little higher up, Christ as a homunculus slides head-first along the tube. With his hands clasped in front of him, the homunculus assumes the position of a diver preparing to break the surface of the water. Following the course of the bird of the Holy Spirit, the Christ-child readies himself to plunge into Mary's womb by means of her ear.<sup>14</sup>

The notion of aural conception in the theology, artwork, and religious practices of the medieval and early modern eras has its counterpart in secular drama; Shakespeare's texts often refer to the ear as an orifice of conception.



Figure 1. Simone Martini. *Annunciation* (detail, center panel).



Figure 2. Nicolas of Verdun. *Klosterneuburg Altar* (detail).



Figure 3. Jacopo Torriti. *Annunciation*.



Figure 4. *Annunciation* (detail of Netze Passion Altar).



Figure 5. Master Bertram of Minden. *Grabow Altar* (detail).



Figure 6. *Annunciation* (from the North portal of Marienkapelle Cathedral), Würzburg, Germany.

Cleopatra, for example, tells Antony's messenger to "Ram thou thy fruitful tidings in mine ears, / That long time have been barren" (*Antony and Cleopatra* 2.5.24–25).<sup>15</sup> Philippa Berry demonstrates that the idea is also present in *Hamlet*. According to Berry, much of the play's imagery evolves out of "an implicit quibble upon 'earring' as copulation."<sup>16</sup>

In the tragedy of *Othello*, however, the idea of aural impregnation is not simply implicit—it informs the plot of the entire play. In his very first soliloquy Iago invokes images of auricular impregnation, claiming that he has "engend' red" a scheme and explaining that by "abus[ing] Othello's ear" he will "bring this monstrous birth to the world's light" (1.3.395–404). Michael Long follows this trail of insemination, incubation, and delivery, emphasizing that the plot of the play imitates a repulsive pregnancy: "a hideous birth, whose conception takes place in Act One and delivery in Act Five." According to Long:

At first it is remote and small in "the womb of time", then "engender'd" in the brain of Iago: "Hell and night / Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light" (1.3.397–98). Thereafter we hear of its foetal formation—"tis here, but 'tis confused"—and later Othello senses its quickening and growth in the womb of Iago's brain: "As if there were some monster in his thought / Too hideous to be shown," (3.3.111–12); "As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain / Some horrible conceit" (3.3.118–19).

Long observes that by Act Three, Iago has successfully transplanted this embryonic evil into Othello: "Emilia and Desdemona now sense its growth as 'some unhatch'd practice', some 'conception' now felt to be in the brain of Othello." Long claims that Othello originally fears Iago's conception:

But then, with the vaginal ragings of "a cistern for foul toads / To knot and gender in" and "the gate of hell," the thing begins to be born in him. Desdemona's "Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?" is her bewildered response to its coming, and then his eyes roll and his frame is shaken and we get "the strong conception / That I do groan withal."<sup>17</sup>

The fact that Othello's "strong conception" has come through the ear does not escape John Wall. He accurately avers that in the course of the play:

Othello's ear and Iago's tongue become displaced organs of generation, and Iago is revealed as the Moor's aural-sexual partner. Iago's words thus become the seed which impregnates Othello's mind through his ear so that it will produce the "monstrous birth" of jealousy, the "green-eyed monster." . . . It is Othello's mind, assaulted through his ear, which gives birth in this play, and not Desdemona's abandoned, and thus barren, womb.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, Wall not only connects Othello's conception to the ear but also envisions the way in which this aspect of the play intersects with accounts of the

Annunciation that evoke the idea of aural impregnation. Wall claims that Iago is "a demonic Gabriel, creat[ing] through his words a 'monstrous birth,' a 'dangerous conceit' borne to Othello's ear." According to Wall, Shakespeare carefully connects Othello's temptation to Mary's Annunciation, showing through this juxtaposition that language is capable of bringing about both redemption and damnation. Shakespeare employs the idea of aural impregnation, then, in order to "remind us of the doubleness of human words."<sup>19</sup>

Milton utilizes in his own writings this tradition of auricular conception. Throughout *Paradise Lost* Milton patterns Eve's Temptation after Mary's Annunciation, presenting the Temptation in terms of oral insemination and aural impregnation. Milton's account of the Fall in this way indicates that Eve and the Temptation are typological precursors to Mary and the Annunciation.

Milton's desire to link Eve and the Temptation to Mary and the Annunciation surfaces in several places in the poem. For instance, Albert C. Labriola observes that the appellations applied to Eve by both Adam and the epic narrator are customarily associated in early modern literature with the Virgin Mother.<sup>20</sup> When Raphael first meets Eve in Book Five, this implicit typology is asserted openly, for Raphael's salutation to Eve is identical to Gabriel's later greeting to Mary. The narrator takes pains to emphasize the overlap, stressing that the "*Haile*" bestowed by Raphael on Eve is, indeed, "the holy salutation us'd / Long after to blest *Marie*, second *Eve*" (*PL* 5.385–87).<sup>21</sup> Milton's typological intent is manifest in the simple fact that Mary is only mentioned by name twice in the entire epic, yet each time she is identified as an antitype of Eve: "blest *Marie*, second *Eve*" and "*Mary* second *Eve*" (5.387; 10.183).<sup>22</sup> In his concerted effort to connect Eve and Mary, Milton engages with a number of patristic authors who elaborate at length a typological relationship between the two women.

In his study of Mariology in the patristic tradition, Walter Burghardt claims that the typological vision of Mary as the New Eve constitutes "the primordial patristic insight with respect to the Mother of Christ."<sup>23</sup> Burghardt traces this typology all the way back to the first century, when Bishop Papias appears to have asserted that the Annunciation took place on the same day as the Temptation.<sup>24</sup> In the following centuries, analogies between Eve and Mary were developed and disseminated by authorities in both the East and the West. According to Burghardt, the three most significant literary figures of the second and third centuries all championed the concept that Mary is the Second Eve. In Burghardt's view, Irenaeus occupies a prominent position in this exegetical tradition, for he is the first to integrate the Eve-Mary analogy with a formal theology.<sup>25</sup> In *Adversus haereses* Irenaeus instructs:

Just as Eve, wife of Adam yes, yet still a virgin . . . became by her disobedience the cause of death for herself and the whole human race, so Mary too, espoused yet a

virgin, became by her obedience the cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race. . . . The point is, what is tied together cannot possibly be untied save by inversion of the process whereby the bonds of union have arisen, so that the original ties are loosed by the subsequent, and the subsequent set the original free. . . . And so it was that the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by Mary's obedience.<sup>26</sup>

The formulation of the Mary-Eve analogy found in *Adversus haereses* is particularly pertinent insofar as Milton is concerned, for Milton mentions the tract in his own writings. In *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, Milton points to the very passage cited above, criticizing Irenaeus for claiming that Mary's obedience is "the cause of salvation for . . . the whole human race." Maintaining that this salvific role belongs solely to the Son, Milton accuses Irenaeus of idolatry and refuses to recognize his authority in doctrinal debates (*YP* 1:642).<sup>27</sup>

Although Milton rejects the veneration of Mary informing Irenaeus's interpretation of the relationship between Mary and Eve, he does not deny that the two women are typologically tied to one another. Milton in fact avails himself of the idea that Eve's experience in Eden foreshadows the supernatural conception experienced by Mary, adapting the analogy to conform with and express his own theological convictions. He appropriates for his own ends the Marian traditions of patristic authors in the same way that he drafts into service the pagan myths of classical eras. Christianizing the pagan and Protestantizing the Catholic, Milton syncretizes that which advances his epic aims.

In this Protestant appropriation of the typology of the Second Eve, Milton indicates that the Temptation in Eden constitutes a corruption of the kind of conception enacted at the Annunciation. Although Mary's union with God preserves her purity, Eve's relations with Satan in *Paradise Lost* compromise her chastity. Whereas Mary's conception in the New Testament is undeniably literal, Eve's conception in the epic vacillates between the metaphorical, the allegorical, and the real. Thus, the Temptation in Eden constitutes a vitiated and debased version of the Annunciation. Eve's aural conception paradoxically prefigures the Annunciation, wherein God impregnates Mary through the ear.

Satan's role as an oral author in this typological tale of aural impregnation is evident from the outset—even before he has been expelled from Heaven. Immediately after the Father has announced the begetting of his Son, Satan seeks out his sub-commander and engages him in precisely the type of oral/aural intercourse that we will see in Eden. Whispering into the ear of Beelzebub, Satan metaphorically impregnates his second in command. As Raphael explains, Satan "infus'd" into "th' unwarie brest / Of his Associate" the "deep malice" and "bad influence" that he has only a few lines



earlier been "conceiving" within himself (5.666, 694–96). After sowing sinful thoughts in Beelzebub's breast, the Adversary trains his "potent tongue" on the other angels under his command (6.135). "With calumnious Art / Of counterfeted truth," Raphael recounts, Satan "thus held thir ears" (5.770–71). Abusing the ears of his subordinates, Satan implants in his cohorts the envy he feels within himself. He uses insidious speech to refashion heavenly inhabitants after his own likeness, transforming upright angels into duplicates of his own disobedient self.

When Michael rebukes Satan on the battlefields of Heaven, he foregrounds the reproductive significance of Satan's deeds, adopting a terminology of propagation. Vilifying Satan as the "Author of evil" (6.262), Michael exclaims:

how hast thou disturb'd  
Heav'n's blessed peace, and into Nature brought  
Miserie, uncreated till the crime  
Of thy Rebellion? how hast thou instill'd  
Thy malice into thousands, . . .

Hence then, and evil go with thee along  
Thy offspring, to the place of evil, Hell,  
Thou and thy wicked crew.

(6.266–70, 275–77)

The ideas of insemination and creation that underwrite Michael's accusation are appropriate, for Satan has indeed impregnated his companions with evil. In the same way that Sin is to Satan both a lover and a child, the angels that Satan impregnates are simultaneously his sexual partners and his progeny. In keeping with the epic's confusion of demonic genealogies, the fallen angels assume the role of parent (the agent who conceives) and offspring (the new being that issues from the conception). After conceiving Satan's evil through the ear, the fallen angels become Satan's children. No longer known as the "Sons of Heaven" they are identified instead as the "sons of Darkness" (1.654; 6.715).

Although the Son eventually fulfills Michael's wish to exile Satan and his "offspring," the Adversary eventually escapes the confines of Hell. Satan's journey from Hell to Eden emphasizes at many points his intention to pervert creation by promoting and perpetrating improper propagation. When he encounters his children, Sin and Death, at the edge of Hell, Satan succeeds in re-seducing his former sexual partner. Persuading Sin to unlock the Gates of Hell, Satan gains entry into the realm of Chaos. Michael Lieb alerts us to the sexual implications of this trespass by reminding us that Chaos is repeatedly referred to as a womb, particularly the womb of God.<sup>28</sup> In this light, Satan's invasion of Chaos "takes on the character of a sexual offense to a

realm associated with impregnation and procreation." As Lieb writes: "The privacy of the Abyss as a womb is violated in Satan and Sin's perverted indiscretion."<sup>29</sup> Satan's own description of his journey supports this interpretation; the villain boasts that he "plung'd in the womb / Of unoriginal *Night* and *Chaos* wilde," forcing "uncouth passage" (10.475–77).

Lieb notes that Satan's arrival on earth is similarly associated with a sexual violation, for Milton's description of the new world is anatomically suggestive: "The insulated world . . . that Satan approaches becomes in itself a living organism that takes on characteristics of bodily functions." According to Lieb, Milton deliberately chooses words with corporeal connotations in his description of the landscape leading up to Eden in order to "[place] the whole description within the human context." These bodily images turn Satan's trespass into a type of rape: "Sexually, Satan assumes the posture of an assault: he is about to attempt to penetrate and thereby defile a pure, un-fallen, womb-like area that shelters and sustains what exists within."<sup>30</sup>

This demonic mission of sexual penetration eventually targets the matrimonial bower of Adam and Eve. Intending to "violate sleep, and those / Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss," Satan sneaks into Adam and Eve's boudoir (4.883–84). Although the bower is so "sacred and sequesterd" that "other Creature here / Beast, Bird, Insect, or Worn durst enter none," Satan nevertheless invades this privatized and enclosed interior of marital intimacy (4.703–6). The fiend then essays another invasive act, one that hearkens back to the aural impregnation associated with the Annunciation. Satan speaks forth a stream of words in an attempt to penetrate Eve's ear and gain access to her inner organs. As the narrator informs us, Satan crouches

Squat like a Toad, close at the eare of *Eve*;  
Assaying by his Devilish art to reach  
The Organs of her Fancie, and with them forge  
Illusions as he list.

(4.800–803)

Describing the encounter in terms of penetration, the narrator presents Satan and Eve's interaction as a simulacrum of sexual intercourse. Satan's tongue acts as a phallus, and Eve's ear—as the orifice that Satan penetrates and through which he intends to introduce the seeds of sin—functions as a vagina. The anatomical reordering herein effected finds numerous parallels in early modern discourses of the body.

As Carla Mazzio points out, early modern expositions on the tongue often contemplate "the isomorphic relations between the tongue and the penis, that other bodily member with an apparent will of its own." In *Pathomyatomia* (1649), for instance, John Balwer speculates that there is a connection between "the Egresse of the Tongue out of the mouth and of *Pria-*

pisme."<sup>31</sup> Jacopo Berengario's *Microcosmographia*, appearing in translation in London in 1664, also explores the analogical relationship between the extension of the tongue and the erection of the penis:

Yet there are many that say, that the Tongue is not moved to the outward parts voluntarily, but merely naturally from the imagination, as the Yard; and some say that it, and also the Yard are moved of muscles, and of the imagination together, and some of the imagination only, which by means of the spirit causeth a windiness, dilating, and erecting the Yard, and in like manner the Tongue, with bringing it out of the mouth.<sup>32</sup>

Although comparisons of this kind can be found in medieval texts, Mazzio claims that early modern authors elaborated on the tongue-penis homology with increasing detail and specificity. According to Mazzio, "associations between the tongue and the penis became more explicit in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," as did "the imagined relationship between rhetorical and sexual performance."<sup>33</sup> *Paradise Lost* appears to participate in this analogical approach, implying that Satan's tongue is a penetrative instrument of insemination. In the same way that Renaissance texts conflate rhetorical performance with sexual performance, Milton's account of the dream temptation blurs the boundaries between discourse and intercourse.

As Eve engages in verbal/sexual congress with Satan, her ear comes to stand in for her vagina. This kind of anatomical reordering, substituting one female orifice for another, also appears in early modern texts. Karen Newman demonstrates that Renaissance writers continually confuse the vagina with the mouth, identifying immoderate consumption and excessive speech with sexual impropriety. In early modern texts, Newman explains, "women's two mouths are conflated. . . . An open mouth and immodest speech are tantamount to open genitals and immodest acts."<sup>34</sup> Although Newman only addresses the equivalency of mouth and vagina, early modern exhortations to virtue mention other orifices as well. Stephen Gosson, for instance, informs his female audience: "If you doe but listen to the voyce of the fouler, or joyne lookes with an amorous gazer, you have already made your selves assaultable, and yeelded your cities to be sacked."<sup>35</sup> Gosson's lesson on chastity advises women to shut their mouths, but commands them to seal up other openings as well:

The best counsel that I can give you is to keepe at home, and shun all occasion of ill speech. The virgins of Vesta were shut up fast in stone wallies to the same end. You must keepe your sweete faces from scorching in the sun, chapping in the winde, and warping in the weather, which is best performed by staying within; and if you perceive your selves in any danger at your owne doors, either allured by curtesie in the day, or assaulted with musike in the night, close uppe your eyes, stoppe your eares, tye up your tongues.<sup>36</sup>

Commending the corporeal impermeability of the walled-in virgins of Vesta, Gosson worries over every female orifice. Requiring women to close their eyes, their ears, and their mouths, Gosson suggests that each bodily opening potentially betokens the vagina. In *Paradise Lost* Milton plays upon this signifying potential, turning Eve's ear into a symbolic vagina.<sup>37</sup> When Satan inserts his phallic tongue into Eve's receptive ear, the Adversary initiates an act of intercourse that oscillates between the sexual and the verbal, the analogical and the actual. As he tries to inseminate Eve through her ear, Satan imitates the method through which the Father impregnates Mary. Indeed, Satan's "Devilish art" of "inspiring venom" is the demonic counterpart to the Father's creative pronouncements at the time of the Annunciation (4.801, 804).

The dream that Satan creates for Eve further reinforces the relationship between the temptation in the bower and the Annunciation. In her dream, Eve is approached not by a toad (Satan's actual form at the moment) but by a beautiful angel. J. M. Evans is on the right track when he tentatively proposes that the gorgeous angel appearing in Eve's dream mirrors the magnificent Gabriel who appears to Mary at the Annunciation. Although Evans ultimately backs away from his speculation, I believe that he is correct in his initial proposition: "It is just conceivable that Milton wished to strengthen the standard typological parallel between Eve and Mary by giving Eve an experience analogous to Mary's vision of Gabriel at the Annunciation."<sup>38</sup>

A. B. Chambers also picks up on the correlation between dream and Annunciation. Linking Eve's dream with the tradition of Mary's conception through the ear, Chambers explains that Eve conceives sin and death through the words of a hellish angel in the same way that Mary conceives life and salvation through the words of a divine angel. As Chambers writes: "By means of his unwitting parody of Gabriel's relationship to Mary, Satan does cause an imaginative version of the conception of sin to occur."<sup>39</sup>

Satan's choice of bestial vehicle in the bower also suggests an aural seduction and impregnation, for medieval and early modern ideas about toads tie them closely to lust, sexuality, and copulation. Francis Klingender claims that during the twelfth century artists in France "degraded the ancient Earth-Goddess nourishing infants or serpents at her breast into the hideous nightmare of Lust devoured by toads and serpents."<sup>40</sup> Roland Frye notes that numerous medieval depictions of Hell identify lustful women by portraying them with toads attached to their breasts or vaginas.<sup>41</sup> Adolf Katzenellenbogen claims that sculptors of the Romanesque period take a similar approach: "the breasts and abdomen of the lustful woman are sucked out by toads and repulsive serpents."<sup>42</sup> Brueghel utilizes this iconography in the *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, and Bosch employs it repeatedly in such works as the

*Seven Deadly Sins*, the *Hay Wain* triptych, and the *Garden of Earthly Delights* triptych.<sup>43</sup>

This artistic tradition of attaching toads to female genitals speaks to Satan's nocturnal transformation. As a toad in the bower, Satan strives to penetrate Eve's ear with a stream of sinful suggestions. In this interchange, Eve's ear substitutes for her vagina, serving as the orifice through which Satan's seed is intromitted. As Eve's ear becomes a vagina, the gardens of Milton and Bosch converge. Bosch's toads attached to the (genital) vagina in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* correlates to Milton's toad attached to the (aural) vagina in the Garden of Eden. In both works, the presence and precise anatomical position of the toad signal an evil or illicit union. Gesturing toward the iconographic significance of the toad as a marker of sinful concupiscence, *Paradise Lost* transmogrifies Satan into a toad to imply a sexual impurity in his interaction with Eve.

Although Frye claims that the toad symbolizes lechery only when specifically situated on the genitals, Peter McCluskey persuasively argues for a more widespread association between toads and lust, demonstrating that early modern texts often equate toads with loathsome sexuality.<sup>44</sup> Shakespeare's Ajax, for instance, claims "I do hate a proud man, as I do hate the engendring of toads" (*Troilus and Cressida* 2.3.158–59). When Othello vilifies Desdemona as "a cester[n] for foul toads / To knot and gender in," the verbal association of toads and lust coalesces with the visual custom of using toads to label the lascivious (*Othello* 4.2.61–62). Othello's phrase not only accuses Desdemona of possessing the repugnant lust of "foul toads," but also riffs on the iconographic idea that toads attached to a woman's vagina indicate her immorality. Othello revises the iconography, however, by locating the toads on the interior rather than the exterior of Desdemona's vagina: it is Desdemona's womb that serves as the receptacle that Othello calls a "cester[n]." In what Michael Long accurately terms Othello's "vaginal ravings," Othello contends that his wife not only exhibits but also teems with toad-some lust.<sup>45</sup>

It is no accident that Othello in his jealousy refers to the exact animal that squats at Eve's ear in the bower of Book Four. The toad appears in both *Othello* and *Paradise Lost* because both texts are concerned with aural conception and oral insemination. To explain why both Shakespeare and Milton would associate the image of the toad with the idea of oral/aural reproduction, we turn to Edward Topsell's *History of Serpents*, first published in 1608 and reissued as a slightly revised version in 1658.<sup>46</sup>

In his scientific account of the animals that make up the serpent family, Topsell acknowledges the aforementioned association of toads and lust by devoting a great deal of attention to their reproductive activities. In the

course of this discussion, Topsell acknowledges a pervasive opinion that toads inseminate their mates with their mouths rather than with their genitals. Some have thought, Topsell relates, that the male performs the act of copulation "by the mouth." Topsell himself believes that the male services the female with "the instrument of generation," but his discussion in other ways associates the toad with aural sex (719).<sup>47</sup> Explaining that "with their croaking voyces the male provoketh the female to carnal copulation," Topsell turns the voice of the toad into a sexual instrument, diminishing in this manner the distance between oral and genital impregnation (719). Both Milton and Shakespeare gesture toward this understanding of the toad as an oral inseminator (or, at least, as an oral seducer) by invoking the image of the toad in situations suggestive of oral/aural propagation.

Topsell's text is especially illuminating insofar as Milton's toad is concerned, for *The History of Serpents* identifies the toad not only with oral insemination but also with Satanic influence. Once again witnessing the toad's significance as an emblem of lust and debauchery, Topsell talks at length of "the conception of Toads in Women." Topsell reports "it hath also been seen, that women conceiving with childe, have likewise conceived at the same time a Frog, or a Toad, or a Lizard." Topsell piously proclaims: "But what should be the reason of these so strange and unnatural conceptions, I will not take upon me to decide in nature, lest the Omnipotent hand of God should be wronged." Nevertheless, he cannot resist speculating. Pointing to apocalyptic prophecies "that Frogs and Locusts should come out of the Whore of *Babylon*," Topsell triumphantly reports that all of these toad births have taken place in Italy (728). These monstrous deliveries, Topsell avers, testify to Satan's grip on the Roman Catholic Church. Satan's power over papal countries is witnessed by the corruption of human reproductive behavior. Topsell's observations easily align themselves with the implications of what takes place in the bower of *Paradise Lost*. Were Satan to succeed in impregnating Eve through the ear while she sleeps, the issue would perhaps resemble the toad form its father took during the act of impregnation. Eve's delivery of a toad would illustrate her abasement. Her transformation into a Whore of Babylon would be made manifest by her monstrous maternity.

Moreover, Satan's strategy for engaging Eve in aural/sexual reproduction is perfectly harmonious with the reproductive behavior Topsell attributes to toads. As Peter McCluskey points out: "Topsell's moralistic description of the engendering of toads almost reads as a gloss of Satan's first temptation of Eve." As Topsell tells it, when toads emerge from hibernation:

With their croaking voyces the male provoketh the female to carnal copulation, . . . and this they perform in the night season, nature teaching them the modesty or

shamefastnesse of this action: And besides in that time they have more security to give themselves to mutual inbraces, because of a general quietnesse, for men and all other their adversaries are then at sleep and rest. (719)

In Milton's account, Satan acts just like one of Topsell's toads. The Adversary uses the cover of night to provoke Eve to a copulation confusingly located somewhere between the carnal and the symbolic. And Eve's physiological response might attest to the success of Satan's croaking. When Eve awakens in Book Five, her face is flushed. Satan's actions seem to have elicited the secondary sexual response of increased blood flow. Eve's "glowing Check" perhaps signifies both her sexual arousal and her unconscious participation in Satan's carnal fantasy (5.10). Before Satan succeeds in "ingendring," however, Ithuriel and Zephon stop the scene, prodding the Adversary in such a way as to startle him (4.809). The narrator compares Satan's reaction to a pile of gunpowder touched with a spark:

up he starts  
Discoverd and surpriz'd. As when a spark  
Lights on a heap of nitrous Powder, laid  
Fit for the Tun som Magazin to store  
Against a rumord Warr, the Smuttie graine  
With sudden blaze diffus'd inflames the Aire. (4.813-18)

Forced to withdraw from Eve's ear before effecting the kind of conception he intends, Satan's paternally minded pronouncements go up in smoke. The piercing ray of light that appears in portrayals of the Annunciation is dissipated in the account of the dream temptation, turning into a short-lived burst of unfocused and undirected light that quickly fades. In contrast to the Father's words, which directly penetrate the ear of the virgin, Satan's words flare up and fizzle out.

But the gunpowder simile involves heat as well as light, and when we read the passage in terms of Galenic models of reproduction, we uncover another way in which the simile suggests activities associated with impregnation. According to Galenic medical models prevalent during early modern times, sexual reproduction is a function of heat: the chafing of intercourse heats blood in both the male and the female. The blood heated in this fashion becomes the "male seed" and the "female seed" that unite to form a fetus.<sup>48</sup> In this physiological framework, then, semen is closely associated with heat. As a few bold readers have been ready to point out, Milton employs this Galenic equation of heat and semen in *A Mask*. The throne on which Comus confines the Lady is "smear'd with gumms of glutinous heat" (917), a substance that scholars such as John Shawcross and William Kerrigan have identified as semen.<sup>49</sup> Milton's practice in *A Mask* of using "heat" to euphe-

mistically denote "semen" illuminates the epic simile of *Paradise Lost*. If heat signifies semen, then the gunpowder simile describing Satan's premature retreat from Eve's ear can be seen to enact a type of *coitus interruptus*. Because Satan is compelled to terminate his intimate interaction with Eve before reaching his desired end, the words that he has attempted to introduce into Eve's ear/vagina are errantly expelled into the open. Satan releases into the air a burst of heat and energy suggestive of the vital heat of semen. In this way, the Galenic elements of Milton's simile reinforce the notion that the bower temptation sketches out a simulacrum of sexual intercourse aiming at aural conception. The inseminating stream of words that Satan directs upon Eve in the second scene of temptation, however, is not misdirected.

As Milton begins the book that will eventually describe the second temptation of Eve, he briefly digresses from his epic plot in order to acknowledge the divine source of his verse. The poet gratefully recognizes the beneficence of his "Celestial Patroness," who grants him "nightly visitation[s] unimplor'd, / And dictates to me slumbring, or inspires / Easie my unpremeditated Verse" (9.21-24). The digression establishes a heavenly origin for Milton's epic but simultaneously revives the model of auricular conception that had been conveyed five books earlier in the account of Eve's bower temptation. The process of poetic composition that Milton claims for himself closely parallels the events of Satan and Eve's initial encounter in Eden, when the uninvited Adversary visits the sleeping Eve and strives to influence the "Organs of her Fancie," by "forg[ing] / Illusions" and "inspiring venom" (4.802-4). Milton's lines on the nightly visitation of his inspiring Muse gently gesture backwards, reminding the reader of Eve's own nocturnal visitor. Declaring that he obtains his poetry from an otherworldly visitor who "brings it nightly to my Ear," Milton resurrects the idea of auricular conception, preparatory to the telling of the second temptation. Foregrounding in the first parts of Book Nine a model of literary creation based upon aural conception, Milton prompts the reader to recognize the aural aspects of the Temptation that will soon take place. Soon after priming the reader to perceive the way in which Eve's temptation becomes an insemination through the ear, Milton launches into an account of Satan and Eve's second encounter.

As was the case in the first meeting, Satan and Eve's second encounter occurs in a highly sexualized setting. The site of the second temptation is likened to mythical gardens of amorous activity. Alluding to "those Gardens feign'd / . . . of reviv'd Adonis" the text evokes Ovid's myth of Venus and her boar-slain lover, traditionally read as an allegory of the dangers of lust (9.439-40). As a footnote in the Oxford Authors edition points out, the reference in these lines also resonates with Spenser's version of the tale, identifying Eden with "the secret garden where Adonis and Venus make love."<sup>50</sup> The com-

parison to the garden "not Mystic, where the Sapient King / Held dalliance with his faire *Egyptian* Spouse" further identifies the setting in Paradise with sexual activity, linking it to the site of Solomon's famous affairs (9.442-43).

These erotic undertones are heightened as Satan advances upon Eve. Albert C. Labriola points out, for instance, that Milton has deliberately insisted throughout the epic that Eve—although naked—is nonetheless "clad" in honor, righteousness, and innocence (4.289). When Satan first sees the solitary woman in Book Nine, this paradoxical state of naked modesty is maintained, for Eve is clothed by a fragrant bank of flowers that render her only half visible. Amidst the roses, Eve is "veild in a Cloud of Fragrance"; she is only "half spi'd, so thick the Roses bushing round / About her glowd" (9.425-27). Labriola notes, however, that Eve is disrobed and exposed as Satan comes closer. Initially, "Eve appears clothed by the roses that surround her," Labriola writes, "but as Satan approaches her, she is figuratively undressed and fully naked to his view":

What pleasing seemd, for her now pleases more,  
She most, and in her look summons all Delight.  
Such Pleasure took the Serpent to behold  
This Flourie Plat, the sweet recess of *Eve*. (9.453-56)

According to Labriola, the "Flourie Plat" or "sweet recess of *Eve*" that Satan takes such pleasure in contemplating is Eve's pudendum: "the middle of Eve's body." Separated from her husband and protector, Eve's sexualized body is exposed to the Adversary's voyeuristic gaze. As Labriola remarks: "Satan's view of Eve . . . arouses his concupiscence and debases her."<sup>51</sup>

Wolfgang Rudat believes that Satan's lustful concern with Eve's sexual organs manifests itself in his dialogue with her. Rudat stresses the sexual significance of 9.626-29, where the serpent responds to Eve's interrogative about the location of the magical tree:

Empress, the way is readie, and not long,  
Beyond a row of Myrtles, on a Flat,  
Fast by a Fountain, one small Thicket past  
Of blowing Myrrh and Balme.

According to Rudat:

This is a description of the landscape of a woman's body, similar to a description likewise set in a seduction scene, namely, to the words with which in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* the goddess of love had tried to seduce the young man: "I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer: / Feed where thou wilt, on mountain, or in dale; / Graze on my lips, and if those hills be dry, / Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie."

Rudat believes that the passage in *Paradise Lost*, like the lines in *Venus and Adonis*, transforms topography into anatomy. In Milton's epic, "the anatomically descending order from the 'row of Myrtles' (breasts) over the 'Flat' (abdomen) and the 'Thicket' (pubic hair) to the 'Fountain'" suggests a caress that concludes at the female genitalia—the fountain just beyond the thicket. By way of this titillating topography, "Milton presents Satan as trying to get to Eve's 'Fountain.'"<sup>52</sup>

When Satan is likened to both Jupiter Ammon and Jupiter Capitolanus in lines 507-10, the sexual expectancy of the scene is enhanced, for the comparison classifies the imbruted Adversary with other legendary lovers who have assumed the serpent's shape in order to have sex with and impregnate the objects of their desire. The phallicization of the Satanic serpent is furthered in other moments as well. Calling to mind the image of an erect penis emerging from curling pubic hair, Satan is said to advance upon Eve, "erect / Amidst his circling Spires" (9.501-02). Writing of the way in which the imbruted Adversary approaches Eve, Wolfgang Rudat emphasizes the sexual echoes of the text. He claims that Milton's description at this point deliberately calls to mind Augustine's contention that prelapsarian man could completely control his sexual member, moving it with the same dexterity that we now move our fingers or our mouths. According to Rudat: "In his description of the controlled movement of the Satanic Serpent . . . Milton appropriates, and transforms into poetry, the prosaically graphic description of a phallic demonstration which he had found in *The City of God*."<sup>53</sup> This pervasive phallicism also informs the idea of tumescence underlying the description of Satan as he begins his assault in earnest: "to highth upgrown / The Tempter all impassiond thus began" (9.677-78).

With the onset of Satan's temptation, the devilish art of aural/vaginal penetration begins anew. Indicating an invasion of Eve's interior spaces, the narrator notes that Satan's words "replete with guile / Into her heart too easie entrance won" (9.733-34). Reproaching Eve for granting Satan "too easie entrance," the narrator calls Eve's chastity into question, accusing her of insufficiently policing her bodily openings. This sexualized account of the Temptation reaches its climax in the succeeding lines, as Eve contemplates the forbidden fruit:

Fixt on the Fruit she gaz'd, which to behold  
Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound  
Yet rung of his perswasive words, impregn'd  
With Reason, to her seeming, and with Truth. (9.735-38)

As she accommodates within herself the "perswasive words" implanted by Satan, Eve performs a symbolic act of conception. The sexual significance of

this act is signaled by the idea of impregnation expressed in lines 737–38. Although a strict reading of these lines suggests that the sexually charged participle “impregn’d” modifies the words that Satan speaks, Lara Bovilsky insists that the idea of impregnation is also valid insofar as Eve is concerned:

Though, literally, Satan’s argument is the impregnated object in lines 437–38 [sic], its insertion through Eve’s ear into her heart suggests that his “truth” germinates within her as well, as another Satanic birth. The “easy entrance” of Satan’s speech, its designs to awaken Eve’s “eager appetite,” and its impregnation in her heart define a trajectory which mimics coitus—and conception.<sup>54</sup>

The conceptual trajectory established in Book Nine progresses rapidly from insemination to gestation. After giving ear to Satan’s pregnant and impregnating rhetoric, Eve mulls over the Adversary’s invitation: “Pausing a while, thus to her self she mus’d” (9.744). This introspective interval acts as a gestational period, in which Satan’s conceit grows within her. Eve’s meditative gestation hearkens back to the moment of incubation Sin mentions in her description of the conception and delivery of Death:

Pensive here I sat  
Alone, but long I sat not, till my womb  
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown  
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes. (2.777–80)

As was the case with Sin, Eve’s gestational period does not last long. Dilating upon Satan’s disobedient dialogue, Eve approaches the tree and eats: “Her rash hand in evil hour / Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck’d, she eat” (9.780–781).<sup>55</sup>

Eve’s disobedience is accompanied by terrestrial tremors, as Nature, “sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe” (9.783). The pangs that Nature feels are not unlike the pains that Sin describes in her own account of labor: the “signs of woe” in Book Nine echo the “rueful throes” of Book Two. The Earth’s obstetric earthquake emulates Eve’s own conception and delivery. Drawing upon the pathetic fallacy, Milton puts Paradise through parturition at the precise moment of the Fall to reinforce the idea that Eve’s intercourse with Satan has caused her to conceive and deliver sin. Satan has succeeded in using seductive words to bring about an aural impregnation like unto that associated with the Annunciation. In the same way that God’s words impregnate Mary, Satan’s words “impregn” Eve.

In this symbolic conflation of sin and conception, *Paradise Lost* parallels Milton’s description of iniquity in the *Christian Doctrine*. In the *Christian Doctrine* Milton also explains the descent into sin in terms of insemination, gestation, and delivery. He writes that the soul is genuinely fallen “when it has conceived sin, when it is heavy with it, and already giving birth to it” (YP

6:332).<sup>56</sup> Milton’s equation of sin with sexual reproduction in the *Christian Doctrine* appears to grow out of the writings of St. Paul. Milton’s metaphor immediately follows a reference to the first chapter of James, where Paul describes sin and death as the issue of several unseemly conceptions. Apparently providing Milton with a pattern for the sexualizing of sin, Paul declares: “When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”<sup>57</sup> A. B. Chambers asserts that Milton was not the only early modern exegete attracted to Paul’s maternal metaphors. Chambers claims that many of Milton’s contemporaries pick up on the propagative nature of Paul’s definition and develop in their own writings the connection between sin and sexual reproduction. Robert Jenison’s *The Height of Israels Heathenish Idolatrie* (1621) typifies this type of writing. Teasing out Paul’s reproductive images, Jenison explains that in the course of sin, the soul first

lyeth open to the Devils suggestions. Secondly, wicked thoughts . . . cast in by Satan, are as the seed in the wombe. Then, sudden delight is as the retention of the seed in the wombe. Fourthly, Consent is the conception of sinne. Fifthly, a more permanent and enduring delight vpon consent, is as the fashioning and articulation of it. Then, Sixthly, purpose to commit sinne is as the springing of the child in the wombe, hastning the birth and egresse. Then Seuenthy, follows the act it selfe, as the birth of sinne. These are the degrees about the breeding and hatching of sinne.<sup>58</sup>

As Chambers points out, Milton’s approach to the Temptation of Eve parallels this model of sin-as-pregnancy: “The process described by Jenison is a reasonably accurate account of what happens to Eve in Book Nine.”<sup>59</sup> Jenison’s description, however, does not simply delineate the sexualized trajectory of the Fall in *Paradise Lost*. It intervenes importantly in Milton’s narrative, for the connection Jenison makes between conception and consent (“Consent is the conception of sinne”) indicates the way in which Eve’s agency is asserted in the act of sin, in spite of the numerous suggestions that the Fall is a verbal/sexual ravishment.

Relying upon such classical authorities as Galen and Aristotle, the early moderns asserted the existence of a female seed analogous to the male semen. Although the female seed was believed to be weaker and less pure than the male seed, it was nevertheless considered vital for conception. Conception, it was thought, could only occur if both the male and the female seeds were discharged during the sexual encounter. Because they believed that a female only emits her seed upon attaining orgasm, the early moderns insisted that conception could only come about if a woman enjoyed the sexual act. Thus, conception came to constitute concrete proof that a woman acted as a desiring, consenting participant in any given episode of intercourse. This putative connection is codified in Renaissance rape laws. As Sir Henry Finch

professes in the enormously influential *Law, or a discourse thereof* (1627): "Rape is the carnal abusing of a woman against her will. But if she conceives upon any carnal abusing of her, that is no rape, for she cannot conceive unless she consent."<sup>60</sup> Richard Burns reiterates the idea in his guide for English magistrates, citing classical authorities to establish that "a woman can not conceive unless she doth consent."<sup>61</sup> According to Thomas Laqueur, the belief that pregnancy proves complicity was so entrenched in English society that its physiological basis was not even questioned until the second half of the eighteenth or the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>62</sup> The medico-legal maxim that conception requires consent alleviates concerns about Eve's agency in Eden. When Eve conceives at Satan's suggestion, she conclusively demonstrates to an early modern audience that her will has not been violated, for "a woman can not conceive unless she consent." Suspicions that Satan has overwhelmed or abrogated Eve's agency are undone by the simple fact of her conception. Eve's impregnation establishes that she has not only consented in her relations with Satan but has also derived delight from them.

After the once-erect serpent succeeds in effecting through Eve's ear the conception of sin, it undergoes a post-coital detumescence: "Back to the Thicket slunk / The guiltie Serpent" (9.784–85). Eve's return is even more significant, pointing to a disastrous deflowering. Emphasizing the idea that Eve has in some sense aurally conceived as a result of her discursive intercourse with Satan, the narrator recounts:

Adam, soon as he heard  
The fatal Trespass don by Eve, amaz'd,  
Astonied stood and Blank, while horror chill  
Ran through his veins, and all his joynts relax'd;  
From his slack hand the Garland wreath'd for Eve  
Down drop'd, and all the faded Roses shed. (9.888–93)

Playing upon the traditional association of female chastity and maidenhood with flowers, the passage points to Eve's despoiling, for the "faded Roses" of the Garland are irreparably "shed."<sup>63</sup> The encounter with Satan deprives Eve of that which she has possessed only a few hundred lines earlier: "Virgin Majestic" (9.270). As the narrator remarks, Eve has been "Despoild of Innocence" (9.411). Adam, immediately intuiting the sexual pollution of his spouse, bewails Eve's deflowering: "How art thou lost, how on a sudden lost, / Defac't, deflour'd, and now to Death devote" (9.900–01).<sup>64</sup>

The union with Satan, however, does more than merely compromise Eve's chastity and transfer her individual allegiance from the Father to the Adversary. Eve's intercourse with Satan also affects the race that is to spring from her womb. Because Satan succeeds in insinuating himself into Eve's

creative life, he is able to assume a quasi-paternal relationship in regard to Eve's offspring. Satan's ability to usurp this paternal role unsettles the patterns of obedience that pertain in the prelapsarian Garden, for Edenic obedience is predicated upon subordinating one's self to one's creator(s).

The importance in Eden of submitting to one's creator is illustrated by the fact that Adam's first utterance in the Garden does not proceed for more than a line and a half before referring to "the power / That made us, and for us this ample World" (4.412–13). When he and Eve narrate the stories of their "births," we learn that both sought to learn the source of their existence and the nature of their creator immediately upon gaining self-awareness.<sup>65</sup> Adam's account registers not only his desire to discover the source of his existence but also explains the motive that drives that desire. Imploring the animals to reveal to him the identity of his "Maker," Adam exclaims: "Tell me, how may I know him, how adore, / From whom I have that thus I move and live" (8.280–81). Adam wants to know his creator so that he can adore him. He intuitively recognizes that in Eden, relations of obedience are forged according to creation.

This concept is made even more concrete in Adam and Eve's recorded prayers, the nightly orison of Book Four and the matinal invocation of Book Five. Both prayers follow the same basic form: a lengthy catalog of all that God has created followed by declarations of devotion directed at the "Maker Omnipotent" (4.725). Each prayer suggests that adoration arises from an appreciation of the Father's creativeness. Adam and Eve worship the Father because he has given them (and all other inhabitants of Eden) the gift of life.

Instances of lawgiving in *Paradise Lost* also demonstrate that structures of obedience in Eden are founded upon creation. Just before informing Adam of the terms and conditions of his paradisaic state, God proclaims: "Whom thou sought'st I am, / . . . Author of all this thou seest / Above, or round about thee or beneath" (8.316–18). No additional justification for the succeeding prohibitions is offered or asked: God's status as Adam's creator fully legitimizes his authority as lawgiver. Raphael's later visit, designed to reiterate the injunction against eating the forbidden fruit, similarly structures its prohibition around assertions of authorship. The angel begins his admonition by reminding Adam and Eve that they "proceed" from "one Almighty" (5.469–70). Asserting that Adam and Eve have been fashioned from the primary matter by the Father, Raphael simultaneously establishes their obligation to obey the Father. From this point, the angel need do nothing more than explain what the Father requires, for his unfallen audience fully accepts the burden of obedience they owe their creator. As Adam fervently professes: "We never shall forget to love / Our maker, and obey him whose command / Single, is yet so just" (5.550–52). Adam acknowledges the justice of his

maker's authority so completely that he cannot even imagine opposing him: "Can we want obedience then / To him, or possibly his love desert / Who form'd us from the dust?" (5.514-16).

The obedience that Adam owes to his Maker is fairly straightforward, for God acted alone in forming the first man from the dust of the earth. Since none but the Father and the Son had a hand in his genesis, Adam need recognize no other authority than that of God. Eve's obligations are a little more complex. As Adam is quick to tell his wife, he contributed to her creation: "To give thee being, I lent / Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart / Substantial Life" (4.483-85). Because he donated "his flesh, his bone" to Eve's creation, Adam is in some ways Eve's second father (4.483). As Adam reminds her, Eve is "Daughter of God and Man" (4.660). As a result of Adam's collaboration in her creation, Eve must submit herself not only to God, her primary creator, but also to Adam, her secondary creator. Possessing multiple makers, Eve must acknowledge multiple masters. This state of affairs is outlined in Book Four, when the differences between Adam and Eve's respective "formations" are said to produce differences in their respective responsibilities. Whereas Adam answers to one creator, Eve obeys two: "Hee for God only, slice for God in him" (4.299). On several occasions, Eve acknowledges her numerous obligations and simultaneously recognizes that these obligations arise from the conditions of her creation. In Book Four, for instance, Eve's declaration of submission to Adam accounts for and explains this submission by pointing to the fact that Adam "authored" her: "My Author and Disposer, what thou bidst / Unargu'd I obey; so God ordains" (4.635-36). Adam is one of Eve's masters because he is one of Eve's makers. In Eden, authorship and authority are inextricable.

Had Adam and Eve remained faithful in Eden, their children would have been born into this straightforward system of allegiance. Adam and Eve, made fertile by the Father, would have brought forth a race of humans who would consequently have recognized three authors: God, Adam, and Eve. Owing obedience to these authority figures (and only these), the children of Adam and Eve would have readily perceived their devotional obligations to God the Father. They would have constituted the "Race of Worshippers" that Raphael describes in 7.630. Satan muddies this model of metaphysical obedience, however, when he impregnates Eve with evil. When Eve turns her back on her husband and her God in order to unite with Satan, she affords the Adversary a role in the authorship of the human race. Supplanting the Father as co-creator of the human race, Satan becomes one of humanity's multiple authors. In this position of quasi-paternity, Satan commands from Eve's children an amount of filial obedience. Like Sin, the children of Eve must now acknowledge (albeit to a lesser degree) the presence of Satan in

their pedigree. Because Edenic obedience is structured according to authority, Eve's children must in some ways echo Sin's statement to Satan:

Thou art my Father, thou my Author, thou  
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey  
But thee, whom follow? (2.864-66)

Eve recognizes this condition when she laments that her children will be compelled by nature of their creation to render obeisance to the Adversary. Eve bewails the fact that her impure loins can bring nothing into the world other than "a woful Race" subject to Sin, Death, and Satan (10.984). As Eve herself realizes, "all by mee is lost" (12.621). The syntax of this assessment neatly conveys the complexity of the situation, encouraging two complementary interpretations. At one level, Eve acknowledges her primary guilt in the fall of humanity: all is lost by (i.e., because of) me. At the same time, she recognizes that sin has perverted her reproductive potential and made it so that her tainted womb can only produce fallen children: all by me (i.e., begotten by me) is lost.

Adam confirms Eve's conclusions when he claims that as a couple they can no longer beget anything other than a "propagated curse" (10.729). Indeed, Adam seems to be fully aware that Eve's sin has brought about a state of reproductive contamination. Reproaching Eve in Book Nine for giving "eare" to their enemy, Adam calls attention to the orifice through which Eve is deflowered but also punningly points to the reproductive repercussions of that deflowering: "O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give eare / To that false Worm" (9.1067-68). Remembering that in early modern pronunciation "ear" and "heir" are homonyms, we become aware of a crucial quibble in Adam's statement.<sup>66</sup> Entertaining the serpent's sexualized invitations, Eve allows Satan to impregnate her. By giving "ears" to Satan, Eve gives "heirs" to Satan. Having seduced Eve, Satan can in some sense claim her posterity. Her offspring become his offspring, owing him the kind of obedience due to a creator.

On this point *Paradise Lost* alludes to the theory of the *inquinamentum*, or the physical contamination of Eve. The theory is often expressed in rabbinic biblical commentary and folklore. As Robert Graves and Raphael Patai point out in their investigation of Hebraic myth: "Some [commentators] say that Samael disguised himself as the serpent and, after vengefully persuading man to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, fathered Cain upon Eve; thus defiling all the offspring of her subsequent union with Adam."<sup>67</sup> Within the Christian tradition, Origen is one of the first to elaborate the idea. According to Origen: "The serpent . . . had beguiled Eve and by spreading the poison of sin in her with his inbreathed encouragement had infected the whole of her



posterity with the contagion of the Fall."<sup>68</sup> In *Paradise Lost*, Satan's successful temptation of Eve pollutes both her person and her progeny. As the Son explains in Book Three, the serpent's intercourse/discourse with Eve contaminates the human family. The Son foresees that when Satan retreats from Eden, he will do so "with revenge accomplish'd and to Hell / Draw after him the whole Race of mankind, / By him corrupted" (3.160-62).<sup>69</sup>

Eve's first-born child testifies to the corruption of the human race. Cain's wickedness clearly establishes that metaphysical allegiances have been altered as a result of Satan's ability to insinuate himself into Eve's acts of reproduction. Succumbing to Satan's temptation, Eve fails to "multiply a Race of Worshippers," but rather gives birth to the first murderer (7.630). Killing his own brother, Cain performs the function of Death, further literalizing the doubled relationship between Satan's two sexual partners, Sin and Eve. Sin begets an allegorical murderer of humankind; Eve begets an actual murderer of humankind.<sup>70</sup> But Cain's submission to Satan is just the beginning. The sequence of visions that Michael shows to and narrates for Adam in Books Eleven and Twelve is little more than a long march of Hell-bound progeny. For several hundred lines, it appears that Satan's aural impregnation of Eve has captured for him all of humankind.

But then comes a vision that arrests the procession. The Father unites with Mary to beget "the true / Anointed King *Messiah*" (12.358-59). The manner in which the Father impregnates Mary provides a perfect counterpoint to the Adversary's earlier actions, for the Annunciation of Book Twelve simultaneously re-enacts and outstrips Satan's insemination of Eve. In Book Nine Satan's impregnation of Eve occupies a shadowy area between allegory, metaphor, and reality. God's impregnation of Mary, on the other hand, is irrefutably literal. Whereas Satan's coupling with Eve effects a deflowering, the Father's union with Mary preserves virginity. Most importantly, Mary's virginal conception, in which "God with man unites," overturns Eve's despoiling, for it brings about a second creation of humanity (12.382).

This second creation of humankind is outlined in Book Three, when the Father tells the Son that those who follow him, "live in thee transplanted, and from thee / Receive new life" (3.293-94). "Receiv[ing] new life" from the Son, the disciples of God are reborn, or regenerated. The process of rebirth is spelled out in the *Christian Doctrine*, where Milton teaches that the earthly mission of the Son creates afresh the human race, allowing each man and each woman to become a "new creature" (YP 6:461). Those who take advantage of the atonement, Milton explains, "are said to be regenerated and born again and created anew" (YP 6:394). "The old man is destroyed," Milton writes, "and . . . the inner man is regenerated by God . . . as if he were a new creature" (YP 6:461).

In many ways, humanity's second creation is identical to its first creation. Soon after forming the Earth, the Father gives life to the human family through the instrumentality of the Son. Acting as the Father's agent, the Son is sent to Earth from Heaven and successfully performs the creative task enjoined upon him by the Father. When the Father undertakes to create the human family a second time, he uses the same method, again sending the Son to Earth with a creative assignment. The Son's second trip to the terrestrial world, like his first trip, centers in the act of creating the human race. When Adam prophetically foresees the life of the Son, it is telling that he immediately understands the Son's salvific mission to be an act of creation. Adam identifies the regeneration of the human race as an act of creation similar—but superior—to the original act of creation that produced the earth:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!  
That all this good of evil shall produce,  
And evil turn to good; more wonderful  
Then that which by creation first brought forth  
Light out of darkness! (12.469-73)

Because structures of obedience and authority in the epic are established according to creation, the Son's ability to recreate or regenerate the human race successfully redraws structures of filial obedience. When Satan inserts himself into Eve's reproductive life, he in part enables himself to command from Eve's children the kind of loyalty that creatures owe to their creators. When the Son recreates humanity, however, he gives the penitent individual the chance to break with the corrupted race over which Satan presides as co-creator and graft him or herself into a new family, of which God alone is head. The Son's atonement establishes an alternate race into which the saved soul can be adopted. This alternate race acknowledges God alone as its creator and, consequently, recognizes no authority other than God. When adopted into this new family springing from the Son's sacrifice, then, each individual returns to his or her elementary condition of straightforward submission to God. The regeneration wrought by the Son restores humanity's original relationship to God: "Regeneration means that the old man is destroyed and that the inner man is regenerated . . . so that his whole mind is restored to the image of God, as if he were a new creature" (YP 6:461). In sum, the Father overturns Satan's paternal usurpation of the human family by begetting a divine child upon a human mother. Responding to the Temptation with the Annunciation, the Father regains his human family by showing himself to be the superior creator.

In order to encourage the reader to recognize the cause-effect, point-

counterpoint relationship that links the Temptation and the Annunciation, Milton presents the Temptation as a debased and weakened version of the Annunciation. Incorporating into his account of Eve's sin the idea of an auricular conception, Milton ties the Temptation to traditional accounts of the Annunciation and transforms the Temptation into a parodic version of the Annunciation. This parodic relationship prompts the reader to juxtapose the conception of Eve and the conception of Mary and thereby perceive their interrelatedness. In many ways, the epic constructs its accounts of the Temptation and the Annunciation in a method similar to the country-western contest of dueling banjos (to employ an anachronistic and utterly undivine analogy). Using the female body as a procreative instrument, the Adversary and the Father strive to best one another through increasingly impressive demonstrations of paternal power. In this dueling banjo format, Satan is the first to pick out his part. Using his "potent tongue" Satan impregnates with false reason the mother of all humankind and thereby perverts her progeny (6.135). The Father, however, upstages the Adversary with a virtuoso performance of supreme omnipotence. Surpassing at each point Satan's earlier attempt at sireship, the Father reasserts his paternal power with an unparalleled procreative act. The magnificence of the Annunciation in this way exposes the Temptation to be yet another perverse attempt on the part of Satan to emulate godly power. Imitating the process without possessing the virtue that makes that process efficacious, Satan falls short yet again. Satan attempts to rival the Father by inseminating a virgin through the ear, but his parody of divine paternity is overturned and overshadowed by the Father's omnipotent ability to beget a Messiah upon the Virgin Mary.

The passages in the poem that proclaim the Father's triumph over the Adversary exploit early modern homonyms to subtly emphasize the way in which the auditory canals of Eve and Mary constitute in some sense the cosmic battleground between good and evil. When the Father tells the fallen couple that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent, the epic narrator interjects:

So spake this Oracle, then verifi'd  
When *Jesus* son of *Mary* second *Eve*,  
Saw *Satan* fall like Lightning down from Heav'n,  
Prince of the Aire; then rising from his Grave  
Spoild Principalities and Powers, triumpht  
In open shew, and with ascension bright  
Captivity led captive through the Aire,  
The Realm it self of Satan long usurpt,  
Whom he shall tread at last under our feet.

(10.182–90)

Explicitly identifying Mary as the "second *Eve*," the passage connects Eve's and Mary's respective conceptions. In less explicit fashion, though, the text takes steps to reiterate the importance of the ear in these women's maternal roles. Earlier in the epic, Adam plays upon the homonymic relationship between "ear" and "heir"; at this point in the poem the epic narrator draws upon another set of homonyms—"air" and "ear"—in order to explain the way in which aurality impinges upon the epic's eschatology.<sup>21</sup> In the passage cited above, the epic narrator exploits "air" and "ear" to punningly paraphrase the way in which oral insemination operates in the epic as a means of either usurping or regaining power in the counterposed events of the Annunciation and the Temptation. According to the narrator, Satan commandeers a part of God's kingdom and becomes a temporary ruler ("Prince of the Aire") by commanding Eve's ear ("Prince of the Ear"). His appropriation of Eve's ear marks out both the air and the ear (the air because of the ear) as "the realm . . . of Satan long usurpt." Inseminating Mary through the ear, however, the Father sets in motion the series of events that will end Satan's reign, effectively "spoill[ing] Principalities and Powers." When the aurally begotten Son deposes the Father's enemy, "Captivity [is] led captive through the Aire." "Aire" describes the ethereal medium through which the captive is carried but also homonymically indicates the means whereby he is toppled. Satan is made captive "through the Ear"—through the ear of the Virgin who auricularly conceives Christ.

But the epic narrator is not the only voice in the epic to play on "air" and "ear." Indeed, the pun receives divine sanction in Book Three, when the Son employs this very homonymic pair. After volunteering to mediate for humankind, the Son assures the assembled hosts of angels that he will not fail to subdue with finality Heaven's enemy. Proleptically describing his eventual victory, the Son declares: "I through the ample Air in Triumph high / Shall lead Hell Captive maugre Hell" (3.254–55). As the epic narrator will do after him, the Son quibbles on "air" and "ear" to depict Satan's defeat while simultaneously describing the incarnational moment that begins the Adversary's overthrow. Referring to the "air" that is ample enough to accommodate his flight, the Son punningly points to the "ear" that was ample enough to provide for his entry into Mary's womb. Moreover, the Son utilizes the pun to chart the complete course of his condescension. His return to Heaven takes place only after he has detoured or passed through the "ample Air/Ear" of Mary. Abasing and reducing himself to such an extent as to be able to enter the Virgin through an orifice as small as her ear, the Son eventually resumes his former godlike grandeur. He returns to "Triumph high" after passing "through the ample [ear]." Recapitulating the depths to which he willingly

descended, the Son uses the air/ear pun to contrast the indignity of the Incarnation with the divine splendor to which he returns.

The epic narrator is not the only one to notice the Son's deft manipulation of "air" and "ear." Michael (who presumably overheard the Son's punning performance in Book Three) also employs the homonymic pair. After revealing to Adam in Book Twelve a vision of the redemptive life of the Son, Michael shows the first man how the Son "shall surprise / The Serpent, Prince of aire" (12.453-54). Informing Adam that God will defeat once and for all the rebel ruler of the Air/Ear, Michael teaches, "Then to the Heav'n of Heavns he shall ascend / With victory, triumphing through the aire / Over his foes and thine" (12.451-53). The Son's triumphant flight through the air is made possible by the Father's paternal intercession through the ear. Through the ear of the Virgin Mary ("through the aire"), God recuperates the human family temporarily lost when Satan aurally invades Eve. Imitating the Son's divine wordplay with the homonyms "air" and "ear," Michael informs Adam that the Father and the Son triumph through the ear/air over their foes and ours.

In short, Milton's epic utilizes the idea of aural conception in order to transform the Temptation into a parodic prefiguration of the Annunciation. The relationship of reverse typology calls attention to the inadequacies of the Adversary while emphasizing the superiority of the Father. Both Satan and God impregnate virgins through the ear. Satan, however, succeeds only in siring temporary death and destruction. The Almighty God, on the other hand, fathers everlasting life and redemption. Through the ears of Eve and Mary, the epic shows how the demonic virility of Satan, the "great Potentate," is met and overmatched by the divine fecundity of the Father, the "Maker Omnipotent" (5.706; 4.725). In the end, God does indeed triumph "through the aire/ear."

Duke University

#### NOTES

I wish to thank Lara Bovilsky for initiating the thought processes that produced portions of this essay. My understanding of Eve's temptation has been greatly influenced by her work. See "Female for Race: Pregnancy in *Paradise Lost*," in *Inroads: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Duke University Women's Studies Graduate Research Conference*, ed. Kate Manuel (Durham, 1997): 128-33. I would also like to acknowledge the tireless assistance of Albert C. Labriola, who patiently critiqued numerous drafts of this essay.

Simone Martini's *Annunciation* and Jacopo Torriti's *Annunciation* are used by permission of Alinari/Art Resource, New York. The images from the Klosterneuburg Altar by Nicolas de

Verdun, from the Netze Passion Altar, and from the North portal of the Marienkapelle, Würzburg Cathedral are used by permission of Foto Marburg/Art Resource, New York. The detail of the Grabow Altar, photographed by Elke Walford, is used by permission of Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany.

1. James Grantham Turner, *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (Oxford, 1987), 157-61.

2. Turner, *One Flesh*, 156.

3. John N. Wall, "Shakespeare's Aural Art: The Metaphor of the Ear in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 30.3 (Summer 1979): 366.

4. "Verbum patris per aurem benedictae intravit." The Latin translations in this essay were generously performed by Andrew S. Jacobs, Duke University Department of Religion.

5. "Gaude, Virgo, mater Christi, / Quae per aurem concepisti, / Gabriele nuntio." Quoted from Ernest Jones, "The Madonna's Conception Through the Ear," in *Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis* (New York, 1964), vol. 2, 269.

6. "Descendit de caelis missus ab arce Patris, introiit per aurem Virginis in regionem nostram." St. Agobard, *Opera Omnia, Corpus Christianorum*, ed. L. Van Acker, *Continuatio Medieaevalis* series, vol. 5 (Turnholt, 1981), 341.

7. St. Ephrem, "Homily on the Nativity," in *The Harp of the Spirit*, trans. Sebastian Brock, Studies Supplementary to Sobornost series, vol. 4 (London, 1975), lines 13-20.

8. "Deus per angelum loquebatur, et virgo auribus impraegnabatur." St. Augustine, "In Natali Domini, V," in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, Latin series, vol. 39 (Paris, 1844-65), 1988. The attribution of this text to Augustine is also somewhat uncertain.

9. Simone Martini, *Annunciation* (Florence, Musée des Offices).

10. Nicolas de Verdun, *Klosterneuburg Altar* (Vienna, Monastery of Klosterneuburg).

11. Jacopo Torriti, *Annunciation* mosaic (Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore).

12. *Netze Passion Altar* (Westphalia, district of Waldeck Evangelical Parish Church). In passages describing angelic locomotion, Milton gestures toward this image of the Christ-child carried on a beam of light. In Book Four the narrator recounts Uriel's arrival in this manner: "Thither came Uriel, gliding through the Even / On a Sun beam, swift as a shooting Starr" (4.555-56). The angel departs on the same ray of light on which he arrived: "Uriel to his charge / Returnd on that bright beam, whose point now rais'd / Bore him slope downward to the Sun now fall'n / Beneath th' Azores" (4.589-92).

13. Master Bertram of Minden, *Grabow Altar* (Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle).

14. Tympanum of the North Portal of the Marienkapelle (Würzburg, Würzburg Cathedral). For additional discussion of the appearance in art of the Virgin's auricular conception see Ernest Jones, "The Madonna's Conception Through the Ear," in *Essays in Applied Psycho-Analysis* (1951) (New York, 1964), vol. 2, 268-72; and Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, trans. Janet Seligman (Greenwich, Conn., 1971), vol. 1, 43-46.

15. All references to Shakespeare's texts come from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, second edition (Boston, 1997) and are cited parenthetically by act, scene, and line number.

16. Philippa Berry, "Hamlet's Ear," in *Shakespeare Survey* 50, ed. Stanley Wells (Cambridge, 1997), 59.

17. Michael Long, *The Unnatural Scene: A Study in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London, 1976), 47-48.

18. Wall, "Shakespeare's Aural Art," 361-62.

19. Wall, "Shakespeare's Aural Art," 366. Peggy Muñoz Simonds claims that Wall's work on the image of auricular insemination in *Othello* "can be applied equally well to *Cymbeline*, a later work in which a noble husband's ear is also poisoned against his innocent wife by deliberate

- calumny." In *Cymbeline*, however, the aurally conceived evil is ultimately aborted by the descent of Jupiter, whose first words frustrate the villainous project of abusing unguarded ears: "No more, you petty spirits of region low, / Offend our hearing; lush!" (5.4.93-94). According to Simonds, *Cymbeline* "goes beyond dramatizing the tragic fall of a good man seduced into irrational violence by a vice figure adept at verbal persuasion," for the play "also demonstrates that verbal and musical sound can elevate, even save, the human soul, when it is sufficiently harmonious and properly directed toward moral ends." Peggy Muñoz Simonds, "No More . . . Offend Our Hearing": Aural Imagery in *Cymbeline*, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 24.2 (Summer 1982), 137.
20. Albert C. Labriola, "The Aesthetics of Self-Diminution: Christian Iconography and *Paradise Lost*," in *Milton Studies* 7, ed. Albert C. Labriola and Michael Lieb (Pittsburgh, 1975), 298.
21. All references to Milton's poetry come from *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Roy Flammagan (Boston, 1998) and are cited parenthetically by book and/or line number.
22. For additional evidence of a Mary-Eve typology in *Paradise Lost*, see Mother Mary Christopher Pechoux, "The Concept of the Second Eve in *Paradise Lost*," *PMLA* 75.4 (September 1960): 359-66.
23. Walter J. Burghardt, "Mary in Western Patristic Thought," in *Mariology*, 3 vols., ed. Juniper B. Carol (Milwaukee, 1955), vol. 1, 110.
24. Walter J. Burghardt, "Mary in Eastern Patristic Thought," in *Mariology*, ed. Juniper B. Carol (Milwaukee, 1957), vol. 2, 88-89.
25. Burghardt, "Mary in Western Patristic Thought," 110-13.
26. Quoted from Burghardt, "Mary in Western Patristic Thought," 112.
27. All references to Milton's prose come from *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols., ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. (New Haven, 1953-82) and are cited parenthetically as YP, followed by volume and page number.
28. See 2.150, 2.911; 5.181, and 10.476.
29. Michael Lieb, *The Dialectics of Creation* (Amherst, 1970), 26.
30. Lieb, *The Dialectics of Creation*, 69.
31. John Bulwer, *Pathomyatoma, or a dissection* (London, 1649), 231.
32. Jacopo Berengario, *Microcosmographia or, a description of the body of man*, trans. Henry Jackson (London, 1664), 235-36.
33. Carla Mazzio, "Sins of the Tongue," in *The Body in Parts*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York, 1997), 59.
34. Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago, 1991), 11.
35. Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579), Shakespeare Society of London Publications, vol. 15, no. 2 (Nendeln, 1966), 49.
36. Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse*, 51.
37. *Paradise Lost* is not the only place where Milton participates in the early modern substitution of female orifices. As Jean Graham demonstrates, Milton's masque is also involved in this approach. She observes that when Comus captures the Lady and threatens her with sexual violation, his libidinal aggression targets the Lady's mouth and ears. Urging the Lady to open her mouth to his charmed drink and her ears to his lascivious invitations, Comus conflates the oral and the sexual. Accordingly, the Lady signals her chastity by closing both her mouth and her ears. As Jean Graham writes: "Through the Lady's assertions of silence and deafness, she proclaims her purity." Jean E. Graham, "Virgin Ears: Silence, Deafness, and Chastity in Milton's *Maske*," in *Milton Studies* 36, ed. Albert C. Labriola (Pittsburgh, 1998), 1.

38. J. M. Evans, *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition* (Oxford, 1968), 255.
39. A. B. Chambers, "Three Notes on Eve's Dream in *Paradise Lost*," *Philological Quarterly* 46.2 (April 1967), 192.
40. Francis Donald Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages*, ed. Evelyn Antal and John Harthan (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), 302.
41. Roland Mushat Frye, *Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts* (Princeton, 1978), 99.
42. Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Mediaeval Art* (1939), trans. Alan J. P. Crick (New York, 1964), 58.
43. Pieter Brueghel, *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts); Hieronymus Bosch, *Seven Deadly Sins* (Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado), *Hay Wain Triptych* (Madrid, El Escorial), and *Triptych of the Garden of Earthly Delights* (Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado).
44. Peter M. McCluskey, "The Toad at Eve's Ear," paper presented at the 1999 Conference on John Milton at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. My reading of Satan's shape in the bower scene owes much to Professor McCluskey's work, and I gratefully recognize his influence.
45. Long, *The Unnatural Scene*, 48.
46. All references to Topsell, indicated parenthetically, come from a facsimile version of the 1658 edition. Edward Topsell, *The History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents and Insects* (1658), 3 vols. (New York, 1967), vol. 2.
47. My discussion of Topsell does not differentiate between frogs and toads because Topsell himself does not recognize any distinction, identifying the toad as simply "the most noble kinde of Frog" (726).
48. For a discussion of Galen's influence in early modern ideas about reproduction, see Stephen Greenblatt, "Fiction and Friction," in *Reconstructing Individualism*, ed. Thomas C. Heller et al. (Stanford, 1986), 30-52; and Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 25-62.
49. John Shawcross, "Two Comments," *Milton Quarterly* 7.4 (December 1973), 98; William Kerrigan, *The Sacred Complex: On the Psychogenesis of Paradise Lost* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 47.
50. *John Milton*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg. Oxford Authors series (Oxford, 1991).
51. Labriola, "The Aesthetics of Self-Diminution," 292-97.
52. Wolfgang E. H. Rudat, "Ovid's Art of Love and Augustinian Theology in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Quarterly* 21.2 (May 1987), 63.
53. Wolfgang E. H. Rudat, "Milton, Freud, St. Augustine: *Paradise Lost* and the History of Human Sexuality," *Mosaic* 15.2 (1982), 111.
54. Lara Bovilsky, "Female for Race? Pregnancy in *Paradise Lost*," in *Inroads: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Duke University Women's Studies Graduate Research Conference*, ed. Kate Manuel (Durham, 1997), 131.
55. In the same way that Milton draws upon iconographic traditions to juxtapose the Temptation and the Annunciation, he subtly manipulates the iconography to signal dissimilarities between the two events. Albert Labriola asserts (and his assertion is borne out by the artistic examples included earlier in this study) that portrayals of the Annunciation typically display a Virgin whose posture suggests modesty and demure reluctance: "The Virgin is often glancing downward or away from Gabriel. . . . Her arms are sometimes crossed with the palms of her hands against her breast, or her arms are clasped in prayer; or an arm is extended outward in a gesture of modesty and humility." Milton, however, places Eve in the opposite position. In order to pluck the fruit, Eve must elevate herself to her fullest extent and lunge forward, for the

forbidden fruit is found on branches so "high from ground" that they "require / [Her] utmost reach" (9.590-91). Labriola, "The Aesthetics of Self-Diminution," 300.

56. The *Christian Doctrine* is not the only prose text in which Milton metaphorically connects sin to sexual reproduction. In *The History of Britain*, for instance, Milton relates that when "evil was embrac'd for good" the English people became "in falshood and wicked deeds pregnant and industrious" (YP 5:139-40). In the *Reason of Church Government*, Milton identifies the Roman Catholic Church as the maternal source of sinful offspring: "the very wombe for a new subantichrist to breed in" (YP 1:783). The biological model behind Milton's anti-Catholic accusation is spelled out a little earlier in the tract. Presenting papal apostasy as a series of grotesque generations, Milton explains: "Heresie begat heresie with a certain monstrous haste of pregnancy in her birth, at once borne and bringing forth" (YP 1:781).

57. James 1:15.

58. Quoted from Chambers, "Three Notes on Eve's Dream in *Paradise Lost*," 191.

59. Chambers, "Three Notes on Eve's Dream in *Paradise Lost*," 191.

60. Sir Henry Finch, *Law, or a discourse thereof*, 1678 edition (Buffalo, N.Y., 1992), 204.

61. Quoted from Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex* (Cambridge, 1990), 161-62.

62. Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 161.

63. The roses of Adam's garland contrast starkly with the roses showered upon the couple in their matrimonial embrace. When prelapsarian Adam and Eve retire to their bower in Book Four the narrator tells us: "On thir naked limbs the flourie roof / Showrd Roses, which the Morn repair'd" (4.772-73). Unlike the instantly "repair'd" roses of the bower, the blooms in Adam's garland are forever faded.

64. Wolfgang Rudat also emphasizes the sexual significance of the word "deflour'd" but explains that Adam's use of the word anticipates an eventual deflowering that will occur only after Adam has eaten and he and Eve have engaged in lustful, postlapsarian sex. As Rudat writes: "We can read the *deflow'r'd* proleptically: in the lapsarian sex act, Eve will lose the sexual token of her innocence." I suggest that Adam's pronouncement is not simply a prophecy of Eve's impending deflowering—it is an assessment of her current condition, arising from her interaction with the Satanic serpent. Rudat, "Milton, Freud, St. Augustine," 110-11.

65. See 4.449-52 and 8.270-81.

66. For evidence of the homonymic relationship in early modern English between "air" and "heir," see Helgē Kökeritz, *Shakespeare's Pronunciation* (New Haven, 1953), 64-65.

67. Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis* (Garden City, 1964), 85. In the Hebraic tradition, "Samael" is another name for Satan. See, for instance, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* where the entry for "Samael" reads: "the prince of demons in Jewish folklore; identical with Satan." *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, ed. R. J. Zvi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder (New York and Oxford, 1997).

68. Origen, *The Song of Songs: Commentaries and Homilies*, trans. R. P. Lawson, *Ancient Christian Writers* 26 (Westminster, Md., 1957), 225.

69. The plight of the rebel angels parallels not only Eve's auricular conception but also her resultant contamination. Like Eve, the rebel angels unwisely offer their ears to Satan, who uses devilish rhetoric to impregnate them with sin. Conceiving evil through their ears, the rebel angels are polluted in the same way that Eve is. Abdiel perceives this pollution, observing that among his followers Satan has the "contagion spread / Both of [his] crime and [his] punishment" (5.880-81).

70. Eve's connection to Sin is suggested by the fact that after her fall Eve is accused of possessing the snake-like shape that characterizes Sin. As Albert Labriola reminds us: "At the birth of Death, her offspring by Satan, Sin became serpentine from the waist downward (2.650-

53.782-85). After Eve has fallen to Satan, Adam describes her as if she had been transmogrified: 'thou Serpent, that name best / Befits thee with him leagu'd' (10.867-68)." Labriola, "The Aesthetics of Self-Diminution," 299.

71. For evidence of the homonymic relationship between "air" and "ear," see Berry, "Hamlet's Ear," 58.