

## Satanic Ingratitude and Psychological Determinism in *Paradise Lost*

Abstract: This essay suggests that Milton's representation of Satanic ingratitude in book 4 of *Paradise Lost* imports into his epic poem some of his previous thoughts on unchangeable affections in the divorce tracts. Satan's inability to repent in the soliloquy on Mount Niphates is routed through an experience of emotional fixity, his failure to feel gratitude for divine beneficence even though he knows he ought to feel it. In the divorce tracts, Milton has based his argument for divorce on the claim that certain affections, even negative ones, could not be changed because they originated in a person's innermost nature. Satan's soliloquy, I propose, explores the possibility that a similar emotional immutability may preclude certain persons from participating in virtue.

Keywords: *Paradise Lost*, Satan, gratitude, emotion, psychology, determinism

### 1. Impossible Repentance and Milton's Natural Affections

The argument opening the fourth book of *Paradise Lost* summarizes Satan's emotional agitation and his final resolution as he pauses on Mount Niphates: "[Satan] falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions, fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil."<sup>1</sup> In the argument, the conjunction "but" suggests that Satan's confirmation in evil stands in contrast to his former emotional turmoil. Beset with "many doubts" and "many passions," the argument suggests, Satan has had the opportunity to reconsider his "bold enterprise," and yet he ultimately chooses to carry it on. His prolonged deliberation makes the decision worse. When Satan narrates the same event soon thereafter, however, he charts a different route from passion to decision, one that deemphasizes moral choice and embeds it in the contingencies of emotional responsiveness. This essay proposes that Satan's self-

understanding in book 4 expresses a genuine concern about psychological determinism on Milton's part rather than the dismissible product of sinful consciousness.<sup>2</sup> As I hope to show, Satan's entrenched ingratitude allows Milton to explore the full moral implications of the naturalizing account of emotions he had begun to develop in his earlier writing, where some emotions were not modulations of the will but expressions of an unalterable individual nature.<sup>3</sup> I begin with suggesting that Milton's early interest in unchangeable emotion intersects with his representation of Satan's inability to repent in book 4. Next, I argue that ingratitude toward God provides Milton with an especially potent case for examining the implications of unchangeable emotion, because ingratitude is an emotional disposition that constitutes sin rather than only motivates it. Finally, I suggest that Milton associates unalterable ingratitude not only with sin but also with Satan's aspiration for autonomous creativity.

The soliloquy on Mount Niphates opens with Satan's perplexity about his ingratitude toward God—although he understands that grateful praise would be the well-deserved and “easiest recompense” for divine beneficence, for him it is nevertheless “burdensome” (4.47, 53). The moral insight that he ought to feel grateful to God for what he “still received” from him does not move him emotionally (4.54), and without being moved to gratitude his response to divine beneficence remains negative. Tortured by his own emotional fixity but powerless to change it, Satan ultimately concludes that repentance is impossible:

But say I could repent and could obtain  
By act of grace my former state; how soon  
Would height recall high thoughts, how soon unsay  
What feigned submission swore: ease would recant  
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.  
For never can true reconcilment grow

Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep:

Which would but lead me to a worse relapse

And heavier fall (4.93–101)

It is the realization of his mastering hatred toward God that eventually leads Satan to recommit himself to evil: “So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear, / Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost; / Evil be thou my good” (4.108–10). In his own understanding, Satan “confirms himself in evil” as a result of unchangeable affective dispositions that foreclose long lasting repentance. For him, the imagined “former state” that repentance might restore is not a state of virtuous innocence that has preceded his fall (like that of prelapsarian Adam and Eve), but merely one of altered circumstances that would not curb his hostile affections for long.

Satan’s conclusion is remarkable for its determinism, so at odds with his characteristic claims of self-determinacy elsewhere in the poem. Even conscious of his former errors, he says, he could never feel otherwise than he does. And since he feels pride, hatred, and ingratitude, he is unable to enjoy, let alone reciprocate divine beneficence. As a result of his inability to pursue goodness, evil must take the place of good as the ultimate end of his striving. Although the imperative “be” rhetorically indicates a willful commitment, this verbal gesture of self-determination follows Satan’s conclusion that things could not have been otherwise. In Satan’s experience, the soliloquy suggests, moral choice is limited by the affordances of his psychology. Soon into the fourth book of the poem, we are therefore faced with two different representations of the relation between emotion and moral choice: the argument outlines a moral story allocating moral responsibility, whereas the soliloquy demonstrates what Paul Cefalu describes as the “approximately real ethical quandaries” whereby literary texts “expose the limitations of the theoretical apparatus found in dogmatic

theology.”<sup>4</sup> The argument suggests that Satan should have chosen otherwise than he has despite his feelings; the soliloquy asks how he might have done so.

Although Milton’s theodicy obviously advises against preferring Satan’s perspective to that of the argument (and many commentaries are dedicated to refuting it), the centrality of perspectivism in the form of *Paradise Lost* recommends not to dismiss it either. As Timothy Harrison has observed, Milton’s epic poem is routed primarily through “the perspectives of its characters.”<sup>5</sup> Harrison argues persuasively that “Milton occupies the first-person scene of thought in order to examine and represent the conditions of possibility that underpin free choice.”<sup>6</sup> This position by no means authorizes characters’ moral convictions, but it accords the expressed self-understanding of individual characters an important role in explaining how moral choice works in the poem. Satan’s experience of emotional fixity that prevents repentance and limits his moral agency does not substitute a Satanic explanation of sin for a theological one, but it does gesture at theology’s limitations in explaining emotional phenomena and their moral implications. The major theological accounts of sin in the poem, epitomized in God’s declaration that “freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell” (3.102), foreground the blameworthiness of free agents, but they do not advise on how sinful emotions such as pride, hatred, or ingratitude can be overcome. The gap between moral certainty and psychological bewilderment is evident from the first encounter between the rebellious angels and the virtuous ones. Raphael is astonished at the emotional rigidity of the angels that “stood obdured” even after witnessing the Son’s restoration of Heaven, wondering at the possibility of “such perverseness” in “heavn’ly spirits” (6.785, 788). He concludes that pride is responsible for this paradoxical result: “But to convince the proud what signs avail, / Or wonders move the obdurate to relent? / They hardened more by what might most reclaim” (6.789–91). As Richard DuRocher argues, it is pedagogically important that “the fixed posture of Satan’s crew only *appears* to be the virtue of heroic warriors; in reality, it

externalizes their inner despair.”<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Raphael’s moral clarity about the Satanic crew’s obduracy is accompanied by considerable confusion about the possibility of such obduracy in the first place as well as about its paradoxical operation.<sup>8</sup> Milton leaves the primary discussion of negative emotion and its moral implications in the poem to Satan and raises in it unanswered concerns that, in calling the possibility of moral choice into doubt, stand in contrast to his explicit theodicy project.<sup>9</sup>

The concern implicit in the soliloquy on Mount Niphates is that emotion is not, as suggested by Michael Schoenfeldt’s summary of early modern sensibilities, “an external force that needed to be tamed and subjugated for the human subject to live well,” but rather the more entrenched “intrinsic element of personality.”<sup>10</sup> If Satan’s ingratitude and hatred toward God are inseparable from his personality, then it is hard to see how he can overcome them and relate to God with love and gratitude. Milton has previously explored the possibility that certain affections possessed such an intrinsic quality in the divorce tracts. In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644), he has argued that conjugal sympathy or antipathy belonged to a person’s “inmost nature” and were therefore both compelling and unchangeable.<sup>11</sup> These “radical and innocent affections of nature” (*YP* 2:345), he insisted, determined which marital relationships could be happy and which could only be miserable. Although the reasons that inclined the affections this way or another were often unknown, their effects were undeniable, and forcing anyone to “love against a possibility, and to use a dissimulation against his soul in the perpetual and ceaseless duties of a husband” could lead to immeasurable pain and spiritual despair (*YP* 2:259). The unchangeability of such deeply entrenched affections, their proclaimed innocence, and their power to demarcate the possibilities for human happiness all allowed Milton to distinguish them from merely evanescent and violent passions. Whereas passion must be “tamed and subjugated” (as Schoenfeldt writes), certain affections had to be obeyed, as well as accommodated by the law

for the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of individuals.<sup>12</sup> For Milton, these affections expressed not the upheavals of the malleable will but the traits of a fixed and personal nature.

The psychological symptoms of the unhappy husband, the protagonist of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, reemerge in a modified fashion in Satan's character. As we have seen, *The Doctrine* has maintained that suppressing natural affection transformed the loving duties of a husband into continual toil. The labors of forced affection reappear in Satan's lamentation of "the debt immense of endless gratitude, / So burdensome, still paying, still to owe" (4.52–53). Although gratitude is supposed to be easy, forced gratitude is toilsome. The unhappy husband and the character of Satan alike face claims on their emotional lives: to love one's wife in the first, God in the second. Milton also gives Satan the most intuitive of his arguments for divorce in *Tetrachordon*, found in the divine law "which bids us nothing more then is the first and most innocent lesson of nature, to turn away peaceably from that which afflicts and hazards our destruction" (*YP* 2:623). This is the rationale that Satan, caught in Paradise by the angelic guard, repeats to Gabriel: "Lives there who loves his pain? / Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell, / Though thither doomed?" (4.888–90). These symptoms and explanations, of course, are not transferred into Satan's voice unchanged. Whereas Milton vehemently argues that the pain of a loveless marriage is private and innocent and therefore warrants relief, Satan's argument equivocates on "the double early modern sense of 'pain' as hurt and punishment," highlighted in Joshua Scodel's discussion of another part of the poem.<sup>13</sup> His claim for the naturalness of escaping pain obscures the fact that he is also escaping justice. And whereas Milton's argument for divorce depends on his assertion that conjugal sympathy or antipathy are "not morall, but naturall" (*YP* 2:271), the same defense is unavailable to Satan, whose failure to reciprocate divine beneficence with love and gratitude carries obvious moral implications. At the same time, as I hope to show, Satan's hatred and ingratitude nevertheless approach the fixity of

what Milton has formerly described as an “inmost nature,” a predicament evidenced by his failed efforts to change his feelings. Milton’s argumentative goal in *The Doctrine*—subordinating legal requirement to the unalterable contingencies of emotion—becomes a threat to his theodicy in the religious context of his epic poem, where to subordinate law to unchangeable emotion would upend the divine moral order.

Satan’s usage of counterfactual thinking demonstrates the temporally pervasive nature of his emotions, which in turn contributes to the impression that they are essential to his personality. He admits that his “unbounded hope” would have led him to revolt against God even had he been ordained “some inferior angel” and that even if he “could repent” he would ultimately recant his vows (4.59–60, 93), a confession of guilt that also disconnects his hostility toward God from specific circumstances or events. Instead, Satan’s certainty that hostile feelings would arise regardless of contingency grounds them in a fixed mental constitution that would have inevitably manifested when met with the appropriate occasion. Such occasion, importantly, would not have been the cause for Satan’s hostility but only the catalyst for revealing it. Counterfactual thinking therefore allows Satan to describe sinful subjectivity as a persistent aspect of his personality rather than a discrete moral choice. While other accounts of the origin of sin in the poem speculate about the precise moment when it entered the world and thus share a diachronic understanding of it (Sin springing from Satan’s head is a diegetic event in her narrative; the moment when Satan “thought himself impaired” and resolved to revolt against God is an event in history [5.665]), Satan’s soliloquy implies that the psychological experience of sin is boundless and coterminous with the sinner. At the beginning of book 4, Satan suppresses explanations that tie the onset of his sin only to the exaltation of the Son. Instead, he focuses on his relationship with God and imbues it with hostility that extends beyond specific events.

Satan's pessimism about the possibility of repentance echoes Michel de Montaigne's rejection of repentance based on the deep-seated nature of personality in his essay "Of repenting." Montaigne's skepticism about repentance results from the futility of its inherently counterfactual mode:

For my part, I may in generall wish to bee other then I am; I may condemne and mislike my universall forme; I may beseech God to grant mee an undefiled reformation, and excuse my naturall weaknesse; but mee seemeth I ought not to tearme this repentance noe more then the displeasure of being neither Angell nor *Cato*. My actions are squared to what I am and conformed to my condition. I cannot doe better: And repentance dooth not properly concerne what is not in our power; sorrow dooth. I may imagine infinite dispositions of a higher pitch, and better governed then myne... I flatter not my selfe: in like circumstances, I should ever bee the same.<sup>14</sup>

Since certain "natural cosubstantiall and intestine vices" are unextractable from individual nature, and certain traits cannot be "grubd out" and will always lead to the same actions, Montaigne suggests, repenting past actions is as vain an endeavor as wishing oneself to be a different person or creature altogether.<sup>15</sup> Satan's inability to repent, routed through his inability to change his emotions toward God and informed by Milton's previous exploration of natural rather than voluntary affections, comes close to Montaigne's pessimism on the same subject. The deterministic strand in Montaigne's thought is also a precursor to Milton's argument that unchangeable individual nature is the basis for interpersonal affection.

Considering his friendship with Étienne de La Boétie, Montaigne writes: "If a man urge me to tell wherefore I loved him, I feele it cannot be expressed, but by answering; Because it was he, because it was my selfe."<sup>16</sup> The two consequences of individual nature according to Montaigne—its decisive influence on interpersonal relationships and its capacity to limit

moral improvement—are fused in *Paradise Lost* in the image of a fallen angel whose hostile relationship with God also prevents his moral improvement.

Satan's inability to repent is consistent with the popular theological belief that unlike human sinfulness the Fall of the angels is irreversible.<sup>17</sup> Helen Gardner cites Thomas Aquinas's assertion that this predicament is due to the angels' irrecoverably corrupted wills.<sup>18</sup> Milton's commitment to the freedom of the will, however, would have made it difficult for him to share this popular belief. Indeed, in *Paradise Lost* God does not comment on the free will of the fallen angels but rather makes the vaguer pronouncement that since they fell "by their own suggestion" they will not "find grace" (3.129, 132). God does not say whether the angels will not find grace because he will not grant it to them or because their wills have been irrecoverably corrupted (as Aquinas thinks), making it impossible for the fallen angels to find grace even had he given it to them. Abdiel certainly thinks that repentance is possible when he urges Satan to "hasten to appease / The incensèd Father, and the incensèd Son, / While pardon may be found in time besought" (5.846–48), although he adds the extra condition that it must be sought in a timely manner. If Abdiel is right, then the ability of the fallen angels to repent is hindered not by their corrupted wills but by the divine refusal of repentance that comes too late. Satan, however, does not think that God would refuse his repentance. He rather assumes that repentance is foreclosed only by his own obduracy. Even when Satan entertains the possibility that God might reject him ("therefore as far / From granting he, as I from begging peace [4.103–104]), the reason for the rejection is the insincerity of the repentance. It is possible that Milton, preferring to distract from the troubling image of God refusing a beseeching sinner, focuses instead on Satan's reasons for not repenting. In so choosing, he also diverges from theological explanations and gives voice to what DuRocher has described as "the psychological point that 'hardening of the heart' involves a failure of emotional responsiveness, a kind of affective fixity or numbness."<sup>19</sup>

Milton's own theology in *Christian Doctrine* explains hardness of heart—which first inflicted Pharaoh and later the Jews—as a “justice” executed by “making particularly wiced men stubborn in their wickedness, and punishing them” (*YP* 6:198), a claim resounding the Augustinian position that some sins are punishments for other sins. In this view, God did not induce new evil in Pharaoh's heart but “merely called into action, and that mostly justly, Pharaoh's harsh disposition” (*YP* 6:198). Applied to Satan, the view developed in *De doctrina* expounds on what various characters in the poem have already made clear, that Satan is at fault for his own emotional obduracy. But Milton also distinguishes two kinds of hard-heartedness in *Tetrachordon*: the first is a general weakness suffered by all fallen humanity, which made suffering and error part of the human condition; the second is the worse “stubborne resolution to doe evil” (*YP* 2:662). Satan's soliloquy displays both weakness and resolution, suggesting that the “resolution to doe evil” is already enmired in the difficulty of softening one's own heart. Milton's exploration of sinful subjectivity in the soliloquy on Mount Niphates imports into his epic poem the understanding of emotional unresponsiveness that he has labored to make legitimate in the divorce tracts. Although Satan's moral blameworthiness is still explainable from a theological point of view, the psychological portrait his emotional entrapment receives also suggests that theology is insufficient for understanding his moral psychology.

## 2. Gratitude and Moral Debt

Satan's ingratitude provides the primary example of emotional fixity that prevents participation in virtue. It remains recalcitrant in the face of his moral and intellectual judgment:

Ah wherefore! he deserved no such return

From me, whom he created what I was

In that bright eminence, and with his good  
 Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.  
 What could be less then to afford him praise,  
 The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,  
 How due! yet all his good proved ill in me,  
 And wrought but malice; lifted up so high  
 I sdeind subjection, and thought one step higher  
 Would set me highest, and in a moment quit  
 The debt immense of endless gratitude,  
 So burdensome, still paying, still to owe;  
 Forgetful what from him I still received,  
 And understood not that a grateful mind  
 By owing owes not, but still pays, at once  
 Indebted and discharged; what burden then? (4.42–57)

Satan's frustration that his feelings are unmoved despite his better judgment is an intensification of Raphael's former bewilderment about how the fallen angels could stand "obdured" even after they had witnessed the miraculous signs of the Son's divinity (6.785). Raphael finds it hard to understand how the angels could remain indifferent to miracles; Satan contends with the even more troubling fact that his feelings are indifferent to his own beliefs. Whereas miracles are external means for persuasion that may be misinterpreted and therefore doubted, the ineffectiveness of Satan's inner conviction to produce gratitude may undermine the capacity for self-governance that stands at the basis of Milton's belief in moral responsibility. This is truer with regard to ingratitude than regarding other instances in which emotion revolts against reason and virtue because, as we shall see, ingratitude effaces the distinction between passion and action. Whereas other unwholesome emotions in *Paradise*

*Lost* merely motivate sin, ingratitude constitutes it. Adam's passion for Eve, for example, while it receives Raphael's disapproval, does not make Adam sinful until it leads him to taste the forbidden fruit. By contrast, Satan's ingratitude already manifests his sinful rejection of God.

Milton's conflation of sinful affection and sinful action in Satanic ingratitude and his representation of the ineffectiveness of persuasion for altering it respond with doubt to the Stoic optimism of Seneca's *De beneficiis*, a source where gratitude is lauded as a central virtue.<sup>20</sup> Seneca prioritizes interior disposition over outward conduct in the repayment of benefits. The primary aspect of giving benefits and receiving them, he says, is the spirit in which the giving and receiving are conducted. It is this prioritization of spirit over material means that should make gratitude the "easiest recompense." All members of society, regardless of their financial status, can reciprocate benefits with gratitude. Seneca asserts that "to plead bankruptcy is, surely, most disgraceful, just for the reason that, in order to perform the promised payment, what is needed is not wealth, but the desire; for, if a benefit is acknowledged, it is returned."<sup>21</sup> His theory empowers even the weakest members of society to repay substantial benefits and promotes a model of social equality based on the common capacity to feel. This model, however, depends on the Stoic belief in self-determination, which suggests that people can freely choose (or at least intentionally cultivate) their emotions based on reason. Satan is usually happy to prioritize spirit over contingency, or mind over place, but his aspiration to self-determinacy is ironized when even the easy duty of gratitude, dependent on the capacity for emotional change, proves too difficult for him.<sup>22</sup>

As Peter E. Medine's insightful study of gratitude in *Paradise Lost* shows, Aquinas adapts Seneca's ethics to the Christian context of the relationship between created being and Creator. Divine beneficence incurs an inestimable moral debt that no human being can even begin to repay, but the capacity for gratitude enables all people to repay it nonetheless:

“Gratitude is thus an empowering virtue: *si faciat quod possit*, even the pauper *can* — that is, *is able to* — repay the greatest of gifts.”<sup>23</sup> Aquinas, Seneca, and Medine all establish a connection among feeling, freedom, and facility—since thankfulness requires only the believer’s willing heart, repaying divine beneficence, however vast, is always within reach. Medine therefore usefully concludes that Satan’s problem in book 4 is an emotional rather than intellectual one:

Satan’s understanding of his debt to God is standard and orthodox. It is a debt that is endless, one that necessitates paying still and owing still; but it is also a debt that by one’s very owing of it one discharges it. That is, by *feeling* the debt one repays it... That frame of mind [gratitude] depends on recognition and acknowledgment of the basic reality of God’s beneficent creation and the individual’s undeserved creation. Satan recognizes and acknowledges this reality, but he cannot accommodate himself to it. He thinks that doing so would entail inferiority. He disdains subjection and inferiority; he aspires to superiority. The result is profoundly ironic: perfect misery and complete loss of freedom.<sup>24</sup>

Medine describe Satan’s ineffective acknowledgement of his moral debt as a kind of anomaly, a case in which gratitude has almost been achieved by acknowledging the debt only to be frustrated by competing beliefs (Satan thinks that accepting his debt entails inferiority) and passions (he feels disdain and ambition). Satan’s self-understanding affirms this view but also goes a step further. First, because his contrition and use of the past tense (“sdeind,” “thought,” “understood”) indicate that he has already revised the erroneous beliefs that had previously hindered his gratitude. Second, because he does feel the debt but nevertheless, he does not repay it. He feels it in the wrong way. For Satan, the acknowledgement of debt manifests in a feeling of burden rather than gratitude.

Satan's realization that "the grateful mind / By owing owes not" (55–56), while constituting an important moral insight, also revises Seneca's assertion above and rejects the egalitarian Stoic premise that underpins *De beneficiis*. Satan's words diverge slightly but meaningfully from Seneca's celebratory dictum: "*reddit enim beneficium, qui debet*" (1.1.3). As we have seen in the English translation that I quoted from J. W. Basore, Basore renders the sentence: "if a benefit is acknowledged, it is returned." But Miriam Griffin and Brad Inwood's recent translation is more literal and makes Satan's revision of the original obvious: "the person who owes a benefit repays it."<sup>25</sup> Satan replaces Seneca's impersonal *qui* with the more limited "grateful mind." In his speech, the adjective *grateful* qualifies the type of mind that can repay a benefit by owing it—not every person is capable of such a feat, but only one whose mind is already grateful in the first place.<sup>26</sup> By using affective terms to qualify the type of mind whose acknowledgement of debt also repays it, Satan suggests that gratitude is a prerational affective disposition that inclines the mind to either welcome or reject a benefit. In this view, gratitude is a property individuals possess rather than an emotional state that can be achieved by anyone through reasoned cultivation. For minds not already infused with the affective quality of gratitude, the acknowledgement of debt is an empty cognitive act. Satan's understanding of ingratitude challenges the model advocated by Seneca and Aquinas and reiterated by Medine by destabilizing its presumed conflation of gratitude's spontaneity with the freedom to feel grateful at choice.<sup>27</sup> For Seneca and Aquinas, the fact that gratitude is spontaneous—that is, resulting from an inner impetus—also entails the ability to choose it. But Satan feels spontaneously burdened rather than grateful, despite his acknowledgement of his debt, and it is precisely the force of this spontaneity that prevents him from choosing thankfulness instead.

In contrast to Medine, who affirms Satan's understanding of his endless debt to God, other readers of *Paradise Lost* have found the entanglement of gratitude in a logic of

repayment alien to divine love as conceived in the poem. As a result, they sometimes read Satan's association of gratitude with debt as a symptom of his sinful thinking. Colin Burrow denounces the economic language that saturates Satan's moment of moral clarity: "The jingle of money (afford, recompense, pay, due, debt, paying, owe, received, owing, owes, pays, indebted) dominates all areas of experience."<sup>28</sup> Examining the contrast between Satan's economic thinking and Milton's understanding of gratitude, Tzachi Zamir argues that the ideal form of gratitude in the poem is "becoming the giving," a merging of giver and receiver that only the self-sacrifice of the Son achieves in full.<sup>29</sup> The opposite of such intimate blending, Zamir suggests, is treating gifts as "merely part of an economic calculus of reward-based transactions."<sup>30</sup> The worldview that prioritizes gifts themselves over the relationship they inaugurate with the giver inevitably spoils this relationship. As an alternative, Zamir suggests that gifts constitute part of a different kind of transaction, one that is based on acknowledgement rather than reward. Acknowledgement-based transactions require receivers to recognize givers' gestures rather than repay them, and they do not incur a debt.<sup>31</sup> The extent to which Satan arrives at this insight, according to Zamir, is uncertain.<sup>32</sup>

Zamir's emphasis of the relationship between giver and receiver provides a helpful context for my suggestion that Milton's interest in Satanic ingratitude is rooted in a concern about emotional change. As we have seen, interpersonal relationships make up Milton's field of inquiry about emotional flexibility in the divorce tracts. The unchangeable affections Milton explores there are emotions felt toward someone. Satan's stubborn ingratitude similarly emerges in his interpersonal relationship with God. At the same time, for Zamir, the central problem Satan faces seems to be a conceptual one: "his inability to dissociate gifts from debt, to separate the economic logic of gratitude from that of repayment."<sup>33</sup> For the purpose of my argument, by contrast, it is not obvious that Satan would have had the appropriate emotional response to divine beneficence even if he had realized that he ought to

acknowledge rather than repay it (and Zamir allows that Satan may realize it). Since Satan feels an antipathy toward God, acknowledging the giver may even prove a more difficult task than repaying his gifts. Moreover, I suggest below following Medine, Satan's apprehension of gratitude as a moral debt is affirmed in *Paradise Lost*, directing the reader to understand his ingratitude as an emotional rather than intellectual problem.

*Paradise Lost* supplies evidence that even virtuous characters consider gratitude to be a repayment of divine beneficence, and that this conception is part of their thriving. Appreciative of the extent of divine beneficence, Adam and Eve notice gifts in all the garden's delights, including the insensible "gift of sleep" (4.735). Their conversation in book 4 offers an instructive parallel to Satan's soliloquy. Like Satan, Adam believes that the "manifold delights" received from God require him and Eve to "praise him" (4.435–36), and Eve agrees: "For we to him indeed all praises owe, / And daily thanks" (4.444–45). In addition, Adam's expressions of gratitude often convey the further notion that the repayment of gifts should be proportional to their magnitude. He modestly frames his and Eve's hospitality toward Raphael as an act of proportional repayment: "well we may afford / Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow / From large bestowed" (5.316–18). When Raphael is ready to depart, Adam's desire to adequately repay his generous storytelling is overflowing: "What thanks sufficient, or what recompense / Equal have I to render thee, divine / Historian" (8.5–7). Adam also apprehends the aspirational nature of proportionate repayment in the case of divine gifts: "to the infinitely good we owe / Immortal thanks" (7.76–77). Adam and Eve are created beings and therefore finite. They cannot repay the Father's infinite goodness with equally infinite gratitude. But they are also immortal beings (at this point in the poem), able to extend the next best repayment—a thankfulness that will last for as long as they shall live, which is forever.<sup>34</sup> For Satan, "endless gratitude" demonstrates the onerousness of his debt (4.52). For Adam, "immortal thanks" represent an astute understanding of his duty to model

his emotional response to divine beneficence on the structure of proportionate repayment, even though such a repayment can never be achieved.

Adam's harmonious experience of moral debt and spontaneous emotion is captured in Christopher Ricks's illuminating analysis of the adjective *grateful* in the poem, whose seventeenth-century meaning is both *thankful* and *pleasing*. The unity of enjoyment and repayment, Ricks suggests, testifies to the "innocent integrity of Paradise" where pleasure and thankfulness are two related aspects of the same experience.<sup>35</sup> Ingratitude, on the other hand, which Ricks credits as "the great theme of the poem," is the mark of a fallen consciousness.<sup>36</sup> Ricks's reading usefully demonstrates how gratitude can be easy when emotion conforms to duty. But it also deemphasizes the giver, whom, in agreement with Zamir, I consider central for understanding gratitude in the poem. The giver is an essential link in the cycle of giving, receiving, and repayment, whose emblematic image—the dance of the Three Graces—appears in Milton's Paradise. Directly after the soliloquy on Mount Niphates, Satan beholds a panoramic view of the blooming garden: "while universal Pan / Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance / Led on the eternal spring" (4.266–68). Bridging Satan's soliloquy on ingratitude and Adam and Eve's grateful conversation, the Three Graces are woven into Milton's representation of nature, kept in eternal bloom through the cycle of giving, receiving, and repaying divine beneficence.

The mutuality between giver and receiver in *Paradise Lost*, I suggest, manifests not in the denial of a logic of repayment in the poem but in the inalienability of paradisaical gifts from their giver. Inalienable possessions are those that cannot be given away or sold, or those that do not entirely depart from the giver even when they are given.<sup>37</sup> In his conversation with Raphael, Adam expresses his understanding that the Father's gifts never fully depart from him. Adam says that he and Eve are "two only, who yet by sovereign gift possess / This spacious ground (5.366–67). The adverbial usage of *by gift* suggests that possession in

Paradise requires continual divine sustenance. In *Tetrachordon*, Milton had stated his admiration for the Justinian Code that “permit the giver to recall his gift from him who proves unthankful towards him” (*YP* 2:626), a further testimony to his belief that gifts preserve an aspect of their original ownership. This is ontologically as well as morally true in Paradise, where the divine gifts of trees, blooms, fruit, shade, and embodiment itself, are all created from the very substance of God. Even Satan offers only a modest flattery to Eve at the beginning of his temptation: “all things thine / By gift” (9.539–40), although the enjambment anticipates his sinister suggestion that all things could become hers without qualification. In Paradise, the principle of inalienability means that divine gifts do not only bespeak the existence of “some great maker” (8.278), whose existence Adam derives from natural phenomena soon after his first awakening, but also approximate the maker’s presence and initiate a relationship with him. This inalienability receives its most poignant expression in Adam’s self-condemnation after the Fall: “thy reward was of his grace” (10.767), where the genitive expresses both the origin of Adam’s previous reward and its content. God’s graciousness is the source of the gift, and the gift itself is grace.

Satan, I suggest, is not wrong to believe that he is indebted to God. Since feeling and expressing gratitude constitutes the repayment of moral debt in the poem, Satan’s emotional failure itself constitutes sin, a result that he seems unable to change through determination and which stands in tension with Milton’s usual emphasis on free choice.

### 3. Envy and the Burden of Gratitude

I have said that Satanic ingratitude imports into Milton’s epic poem his earlier thoughts on how unchangeable emotions determine the felicity of interpersonal relationships. This analogy likens Satan to an unhappy husband and God to his undesired wife. In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* likeness is the precondition for concordant relationships: “Gods

doing ever is to bring the due likenesses and harmonies of his workes together” (*YP* 2:272), a principle that Milton interprets as applying not only to kinds but also to individual personalities.<sup>38</sup> In *Paradise Lost* personal likeness guarantees Adam’s happiness with Eve: “What next I bring shall please thee, be assured, / Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self” (8.449–50). Eve’s likeness to Adam manifests not only in the fact that both are human beings, but also in her individual suitedness to his specific needs and desires. But likeness is also routed through filial relationships. Adam tells God that begetting “like of his like” is humankind’s means of overcoming its “single imperfection” (8.423–24). God asserts that no creature is like himself: “none I know / Second to me or like” (8.406–407), but he nevertheless establishes a limited likeness between himself and Adam, since he has “imparted” to Adam his image (8.440). It is God’s imparted image, God says, that makes Adam “dislike” the company of the beasts and enables him to desire human company in the first place (8.441–43). The reader is also encouraged to recognize their own filial likeness to Adam and Eve when inquiring “what cause / Moved our grand parents... / ... to fall off / From their Creator” (1.28–31).

Alongside the theological project of Milton’s attempt to “justify the ways of God to men” (1.26), *Paradise Lost* is also motivated by an inquiry into sundered filial relationships: why did our parents fall away from their Father and Creator? Why did Adam’s likeness to Eve bind him more strongly than his filial likeness to God, manifest in God’s imparted image? Why does Satan, unlike the godlike angels (Raphael is a “godlike power” [8.249]), reject God and never addresses him as Father?<sup>39</sup> For Milton, likeness is linked to love and the capacity for desire. It offers a conceptual bridge between Satan’s resemblance to the unhappy husband of the divorce tracts, bound to a wife with whom he shares no likeness, and his denial of a filial relationship with God. The soliloquy on Mount Niphates concludes with Satan’s resolution to destroy the filial relationship of God with “his new delight, / Mankind”

(4.106–107), created, he believes, to replace himself and his followers. Satan’s envy of newly created humankind reveals one possible anxiety associated with being created by another entity, namely the possibility of being uncreated or replaced. His resolution to destroy both “man” and “this new world” targets God’s creation and challenges God’s creative force with Satan’s destructive one (4.114).

The tendency of Satanic envy to target divine creativity has been discussed with nuance. Anne T. Barbeau notes a particular hostility to divine creativity in the rebellious angels’ envy of the Son—after witnessing his rehabilitation of the heavenly landscape, “they end up envying him not merely his hierarchical position but also his creative and restorative powers which arise from his divine nature.”<sup>40</sup> Applying the same hermeneutic to the soliloquy on Mount Niphates, Barbeau suggests that Satan’s hostility toward divine creativity manifests in his disregard for “light, heat and creative energy of the sun” to which his speech is addressed and instead “focuses on his usual linear, one-dimensional, vertical pattern of existence.”<sup>41</sup> Maggie Kilgour also proposes that Satan’s envy is “generated by and set in opposition to the creativity concentrated in and expressed by the Son,” as well as “the creative energy of the poet himself.”<sup>42</sup> These analyses expand our understanding of Satanic envy beyond the occasion that has triggered it, the exaltation of the Son. They draw attention to how Satan’s envy targets not merely the Son’s perceived rank in Heaven but primarily the divine properties the Son manifests, chief among which is divine creativity.<sup>43</sup> Divine creativity is not limited to its manifestation in the Son, it is rather a precondition for all existence in the world of *Paradise Lost*, where all things are created by God and from him. By showing that Satan resents this creative force rather than merely his hierarchical status, then, Barbeaus’ and Kilgour’s works invite further thought about how Satanic envy fundamentally opposes God as creator.

In her much earlier essay “Envy and Gratitude” psychoanalyst Melanie Klein uses Milton’s Satan to encapsulate the opposition between the destructive force of envy and the creative force of life:

The spoiling of creativity implied in envy is illustrated in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* where Satan, envious of God, decides to become the usurper of Heaven. He makes war on God in his attempt to spoil the heavenly life and falls out of Heaven. Fallen, he and his other fallen angels build Hell as a rival to Heaven, and become the destructive force which attempts to destroy what God creates. This theological idea seems to come down from St Augustine, who describes Life as a creative force opposed to Envy, a destructive force.<sup>44</sup>

Klein’s brief analysis is especially pertinent to my argument because it sets envy in contrast not only to creativity but also to gratitude, and because it suggests that these two emotional attitudes underpin interpersonal and moral capacities. She identifies the first object of envy and gratitude as the feeding breast, which the infant perceives as an omnipotent source of nourishment. The fully gratified infant “feels that he has received from his loved object a unique gift which he wants to keep,” which Klein terms “the basis of gratitude.”<sup>45</sup> Gratitude for the good breast not only prepares the infant for a gratifying social life in adulthood, but also enables one to ultimately establish “trust in one’s own goodness.”<sup>46</sup> By contrast, the infant may also become envious of the breast that they cannot control and which may sometimes not satisfy their needs, and come to resent the goodness on which they depend. When this happens, the breast is envied because “the infant feels that it possesses everything he desires and that it has an unlimited flow of milk, and love which the breast keeps for its own gratification.”<sup>47</sup> Such envy ultimately undermines the capacity to achieve a “feeling of unity with another person.”<sup>48</sup> Klein speculates on the moral implications of envy: “I would

even suggest that it is unconsciously felt to be the greatest sin of all, because it spoils and harms the good object which is the source of life.”<sup>49</sup>

In Klein’s reading, Satan is analogous to an infant who resents the source of his nourishment, God. After trying to spoil God’s heavenly creation, he loses his capacity for interpersonal unity and his identification with goodness not only psychologically but also materially, by falling out of Heaven. Satan ultimately becomes a destructive force, the allegorical representation of Augustine’s theological idea. Milton’s poem, however, shows Satan’s painful loss of unity before it allegorizes him. The first words we hear Satan say in Heaven, mediated by Raphael’s storytelling, are addressed to a sleeping companion after the exaltation of the Son: “Sleepst thou, companion dear, what sleep can close / Thy eyelids? ... / ... / Thou to me thy thoughts / Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart; / Both waking we were one; how then can now / Thy sleep dissent?” (5.673–79). The density of “thou to me thy thoughts” contributes to a sense of interpersonal blending, interrupted by the line break that separates the end of the chiasmatic expression (“mine to thee”) from its beginning. The feeling in these lines is one of broken intimacy. The first overtly sinful thought that Satan expresses in the diegesis is therefore routed through a feeling of loneliness, later followed by various instantiations of separateness from the divine source and culminating in his claims of self-creation, a complete independence from others.

Klein’s psychoanalytic revision of Augustine’s theology allows for a distinction between negative emotions and their moral implications, as well as between the explanatory force of psychology and that of theology. For Augustine, the image of an envious infant is already morally fraught in a way that it is not for Klein. The unwarranted anger of a “full fed” baby at the sight of “another child that sucked away its milk from it” is evidence that original sin is present from the moment of birth, even if one cannot remember this early time of one’s life.<sup>50</sup> By contrast, for Klein the first appearance of envy is a natural response to the absence

of perfect congruity between desire and contingency, nor does it betray an intrinsic evil. It is rather a negative emotion that risks moral consequences if it is allowed to take over the personality. Satan has never been an infant, but Klein's model is nevertheless helpful for conceptualizing his envy and correlating ingratitude as emotional dispositions that are felt to precede his moral capacities and permeate all aspects of his experience. Considering Satan's envy and ingratitude as foundational affective dispositions that extend beyond the scope of moral thinking suggests that evil in *Paradise Lost* originates outside the reach of rationalizing explanation, requiring a mythic and nonrational etiology in tension with Milton's supposedly rational theodicy. The cognitive diagnosis attempted by Satan in the soliloquy on Mount Niphates can only arrive after the fact and fails to explain the beginning of his sinful emotions.

Satan's question "what burden then?" (4.57), which expresses his confusion about his emotional recalcitrance, puns on sinfulness and fertility and shows how a desire to overtake creative resources stands in the way of feeling gratitude for God's creation. The term *burden* is associated with the guilt of sin in Psalm 38:4: "For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me."<sup>51</sup> In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus promises to replace the heavy burden of sin with the lightness of his own yoke: "For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."<sup>52</sup> Satan associates his burdened feelings with the divine requirement of gratitude instead of with his own guilt, a fact that may betray his bad theology—he believes the feeling of burden results from moral duty rather than from the failure to fulfil it. At the same time, I suggest, the question "what burden then?" also reveals the difficulty of achieving complete self-understanding when emotions prove to be recalcitrant.

It is tempting to read the question as merely rhetorical rather than genuinely interrogative. Read as a means for self-castigation, the question has a similar impact to that of "what could be less" (4.46), the implied answer being nothing at all. The question would then

only serve to punctuate Satan's momentary clarity and heap more guilt on his shoulders. But "what burden then?" can also be read as a genuinely open-ended rather than rhetorical question. The question halts the flow of remembrance and divides Satan's lamentation of past mistakes from his counterfactual statement: "Oh had his powerful destiny ordained / Me some inferior angel, I had stood / Then happy" (4.58–60). Standing between history and alternative history, it derives its dramatic impact from Satan's continuous experience rather than from a moment of erroneous judgment in his past and functions as an anchor amidst Satan's shifting understanding. In enquiring about the nature of the burden he feels, Satan genuinely wonders why acknowledging his debt to God does not also lead to the repayment of that debt, as promised by theological and philosophical accounts of gratitude.

Milton uses *burden* to signify both sin and fertility throughout the poem. Adam, welcoming Raphael with gratitude, tells the angel that nature "by disburdening grows / More fruitful" (5.319–20), and Eve looks forward to offspring who would "Help to disburden nature of her birth" (9.624). Their agricultural metaphors emphasize the nourishing function of God-created nature. At the same time, Heaven is also "disburdened" by the ejection of the rebellious angels (6.878), and Adam finds the blame for all mankind's corruption the heaviest burden of all: "Fond wish! Couldst thou support / That burden heavier than the earth to bear" (10.834–35). The two registers of sinfulness and fertility are welded most strikingly in Sin's description of the birth of Death: "my womb conceived / A growing burden" (2.766–67). Death's birth is a paradoxical event in which creativity brings forth its opposite, destruction. Satan's achievement of a creative power autonomous from the divine source of nourishment, an energy that Wendy Olmsted aptly describes as an "energetic counterforce of destruction," is therefore inseparable from the spoiling of divine creativity.<sup>53</sup> In Paradise, by contrast, creativity is linked to the expression of gratitude—Adam's and Eve's grateful "orisons" multiply in "various style" and "numerous verse" (5.145–46, 150). Theirs is a creative

expression that is both spontaneous and harmonious with God's divine creation. Satan cannot enjoy the creativity that gratitude enables; his creativity is rather motivated by envy, gratitude's opposite. Importantly, the burden that forecloses gratitude is a different affective experience from the passions, those volitional disturbances that can and should be regulated. Whereas the "high passions" that follow the Fall of Adam and Eve, for example, "shook sore / Their inward state of mind" (9.1123–25), the burden felt by Satan does not rattle him but weighs him down. The different metaphors Milton uses to describe these different affective registers contribute to the sense that he distinguishes stable emotional dispositions from merely evanescent passions that can be more easily overcome.

Satan's exasperated exclamation: "Oh then at last relent: is there no place / Left for repentance, none for pardon left?" is directed at himself (4.79–80), but it could have addressed God as well. Satan is the one who must relent (in both senses of "to soften" his heart and "to repent" available in the *Oxford English Dictionary*), but only God can answer whether there is any place left for pardon as well as repentance.<sup>54</sup> The Satanic tendency to exclude God recalls Raphael's observation that the obdurate angels' pride prevented them from relenting (6.789–90)—here, Satan's insistence on asking himself rather than God whether he can relent and be pardoned may be the reason he cannot relent after all. His failure to relent by his own persuasive efforts directs us back to Montaigne's assertion that only God can change a person's nature. Satan's ultimate resolution—"Evil be thou my good" (4.110)—expresses his final resignation to what he perceives as the affective limits on his moral agency. Elsewhere in the *Paradise Lost*, Milton has been staunch in his theological commitment to free choice, which may be why he puts any doubt about it in the mouth of the poem's most unreliable narrator. In Satan's voice, the soliloquy on Mount Niphates explores the possible implications of the author's former attempt to defend certain negative affections

as legitimate sources for moral obligation—the possibility that negative affections are indeed unchangeable but are nevertheless sinful.

---

I wish to thank the readers of this essay in its early drafts with special thanks to Timothy Harrison, David Marno, Mark Miller, Joanna Picciotto, Joshua Scodel, and Richard Strier. I am grateful for the comments and suggestions I received from participants in the Renaissance Workshop and Advanced Writing Workshops at the University of Chicago and in the University of Virginia’s Multidisciplinary Approach to the Study of Gratitude Project, as well as from audience members in response to my presentation of this work at the 2019 RSA in Toronto. Finally, I thank the anonymous readers from *Milton Studies* for their insightful responses.

<sup>1</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, 2nd ed. (New York, 2013), 214. All subsequent references to the poem are taken from this edition and cited parenthetically.

<sup>2</sup> In emphasizing deterministic considerations in Milton’s representation of emotion, my argument diverges from a recent reading of the passions as active forces in Milton’s thought. See Karis G. Riley, “Milton, the Passions, and the Knowing Body,” *The Seventeenth Century* 35, no. 1 (2020): 31–53. Riley argues that by contrast to recent humoral accounts of the early modern passions, “Milton’s monism makes matter active, independent and conscious — and therefore free” (46).

<sup>3</sup> On the Renaissance reception of the Augustinian view that the passions were modulations of the will see William Bouwsma, “The Two Faces of Humanism: Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought,” in *A Usable Past: Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1990), 19–73 (47–48).

<sup>4</sup> Paul Cefalu, *Moral Identity in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge, 2004), 7.

---

<sup>5</sup> Timothy Harrison, *Coming To: Consciousness and Natality in Early Modern England* (Chicago, 2020), 33.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Richard DuRocher, “‘Tears such as Angels weep’: Passion and Allusion in *Paradise Lost*,” in *Their Maker’s Image: New Essays on John Milton*, ed. Mary C. Fenton and Louis Schwartz (Selinsgrove, 2011), 23–45 (39).

<sup>8</sup> See also William Kerrigan, *The Sacred Complex* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 242. Kerrigan makes the similar point that for Raphael, pride is “not something well-understood.”

<sup>9</sup> My reading of moral choice in the poem as standing in tension with spontaneous moral conduct owes a general debt to Richard Strier, “Milton’s Fetters, or, Why Eden Is Better than Heaven,” in *The New Milton Criticism*, ed. Peter C. Herman and Elizabeth Sauer (Cambridge, 2012), 25–48.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Schoenfeldt, “‘Commotion Strange’: Passion in *Paradise Lost*,” in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia, 2004), 43–67 (67).

<sup>11</sup> John Milton, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols., ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. (New Haven, 1953–82), 2:259; hereafter cited as *YP*.

<sup>12</sup> For an illuminating analysis of obligation’s subordination to passion in the divorce tracts see Victoria Kahn, *Wayward Contracts: The Crisis of Political Obligation in England, 1640–1674* (Princeton, 2004), 198–207. Building on Kahn’s argument, I would suggest that Milton’s subordination of obligation to emotion also entails a deviation from the category of *passion* for describing emotional phenomena; instead, he wishes to establish a new emotional category based on natural rather than volitional inclinations.

<sup>13</sup> Joshua Scodel, “Edenic Freedoms,” *Milton Studies* 56 (2015): 153–200 (178).

---

<sup>14</sup> Michel de Montaigne, “Of repenting,” in *The Essayes or Morall, Politike and Millitarie Discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne*, trans. John Florio (London, 1613), 451–58 (454–55). On Montaigne’s determinism as demonstrated in this and other essays see also Richard Strier, *The Unrepentant Renaissance: From Petrarch to Shakespeare to Milton* (Chicago and London, 2011), 208–29.

<sup>15</sup> Montaigne, “Of repenting,” 454.

<sup>16</sup> Montaigne, “Of friendship,” in *The Essayes*, 89–96 (92).

<sup>17</sup> Helen Gardner, “Satan and the Theme of Damnation in Elizabethan Tragedy,” in *Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Arthur E. Barker (New York, 1965), 205–217 (206–207).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>19</sup> DuRocher, “Passion and Allusion,” 39.

<sup>20</sup> *De beneficiis* first appeared in English in 1569, in the partial translation of Nicholas Haward, and later in the complete translations of Arthur Golding (1578) and Thomas Lodge (1614). See Felicity Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2015), 17. Milton, of course, would have had access to the original Latin text as well.

<sup>21</sup> Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *On Benefits*, in *Seneca: Moral Essays*, vol. 3, trans. J. W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1935), 1.1.3. All subsequent references to the text are taken from this edition and cited parenthetically, unless indicated otherwise. See also M. G. Barclay, *Paul & The Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2015), 48: “This Stoic reevaluation of ‘goods’... is offered as a way of alleviating the problems of a system in which such things continue to be exchanged. Thus, donors should be concerned first and foremost with eliciting *gratitude*.” (Original emphases.)

<sup>22</sup> The Stoic ideal underpinning Satan’s assertion that “the mind is its own place” is made explicit in Lipsius’s widely circulated *Of Constancie* (2.254), where the Stoic Langius

---

advises that “the mind must be changed, not the place” in order to achieve peace. See Iustus Lipsius, *Two Bookes of Constancie*, trans. John Stradling (London, 1595), 7.

<sup>23</sup> Peter E. Medine, “Gratitude and *Paradise Lost*,” in *Milton and the Grounds of Contention*, ed. Mark R. Kelley, Michael Lieb, and John T. Shawcross (Pittsburgh, 2003), 115–49 (122).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>25</sup> Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *On Benefits*, trans. Miriam Griffin and Brad Inwood (Chicago and London, 2010), 1.1.3.

<sup>26</sup> See also Neil Forsyth, *The Satanic Epic* (Princeton and Oxford, 2003), 222. Forsyth argues that Milton exploits the pun to convey that Satan cannot be “grateful” since he is denied “grace.” Forsyth’s position shares my interest in determinism in *Paradise Lost*, but it also suggests a causal relation between theological doctrine (God will not grant Satan grace) and its subjective manifestation (Satan cannot feel grateful) along Lutheran and Calvinist lines. By contrast, I do not make a case for determinist elements in Milton’s theology but argue that Milton incorporates a concern about determinism into his representation of sinful subjectivity.

<sup>27</sup> See also Scodel, “Edenic Freedoms,” 153–58. Scodel shows that in *Paradise Lost*, Milton distinguishes among different kinds of freedom. Spontaneous (voluntary) motion is distinct from the freedom to choose among different options.

<sup>28</sup> Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford, 1993), 254. The usefulness of such lists, I believe, is limited (in addition to the curious inclusion of “received” among the contaminated terms). For one, God and the Son use similar vocabulary to that of Satan: “pay,” “redeem,” “due,” “debt,” “paid” (3.211, 214, 245–46). The unreliable nature of such sampling is further thrown into relief when compared to the very different list produced in Medine, “Gratitude and *Paradise Lost*,” 141, based on the same soliloquy: “The language of

---

gratitude pervades the speech: service (45), praise (46), thanks (47), debt (52), and the word ‘gratitude’ itself (52).”

<sup>29</sup> Tzachi Zamir, *Ascent: Philosophy and Paradise Lost* (Oxford, 2018), 165.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 125–27.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 127–28.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>34</sup> On immeasurable gratitude corresponding to “heavenly superfluity and excess” in *Paradise Lost* see Emily Stelzer, *Gluttony and Gratitude: Milton’s Philosophy of Eating* (University Park, PA, 2017), 7.

<sup>35</sup> Christopher Ricks, *Milton’s Grand Style* (Oxford, 1963), 113.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> See Barclay, *Paul & The Gift*, 20: “There are possessions that simply cannot be alienated (given away) at all, without loss of individual or group identity. There are others that are in one sense given, but in another sense still belong to the giver... but ‘inalienable’ goods serve to remind us of the strong investment of the giver in the gift.” Zamir, *Ascent*, 129 makes the correlative normative point that when “gracious gratitude” is achieved, “one looks at the gifts and discerns God.”

<sup>38</sup> See John Halkett, *Milton and the Idea of Matrimony: A Study of the Divorce Tracts and Paradise Lost* (New Haven and London, 1972), 47: “Unlike most of his Puritan contemporaries Milton consistently interprets the phrase “*adiutorium simile sui*” so that the likeness of personal disposition takes precedence over the likeness of kind.”

<sup>39</sup> The fact that Satan never addresses God as Father was brought to my attention by Shira Wolosky, in a seminar taught at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Fall 2011.

---

<sup>40</sup> Anne T. Barbeau, "Satan's Envy of the Son and the Third Day of the War," *Papers on Language and Literature* 13, no. 4 (Fall 1977): 362–71 (364).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>42</sup> Maggie Kilgour, "Satan's Envy and Poetic Emulation," in *Their Maker's Image: New Essays on John Milton*, ed. Mary C. Fenton and Louise Schwartz (Selinsgrove, PA, 2011), 47–61 (52).

<sup>43</sup> For a discussion of the theological traditions that link Satan's enmity more intimately to the exaltation of the Son or the creation of Adam see J. Martin Evans, *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition* (Oxford, 1968), 88, 225–26.

<sup>44</sup> Melanie Klein, *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works, 1946–1963* (New York, 1975), 176–235 (202).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>50</sup> St. Augustine, *Confessions*, vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library, translated by William Watts (Cambridge, MA, 1912), 1.7, 20–21.

<sup>51</sup> Ps. 38:4 (KJV). For a discussion of the traditional association of sinful guilt with burden see also Dayton Haskin, *Milton's Burden of Interpretation* (Philadelphia, 1994), 25–26.

Haskin also proposes that for Milton and other Christian writers, *burden* was associated with Biblical interpretation, a suggestion that bears out the connection I make between burden and creativity (25–28).

<sup>52</sup> Matthew 11:30 (KJV)

---

<sup>53</sup> Wendy Olmsted, *The Imperfect Friend: Emotion and Rhetoric in Sidney, Milton, and Their Contexts* (Toronto, 2008), 145.

<sup>54</sup> *OED*, s.v. "relent," v.I.3.b., v.I.7.a.