Falling into temptation: risking vulnerability in *Hero and Leander* and *Paradise Lost*

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Allegorical readings of temptation and the Fall align Adam with reason, the serpent with evil and Satan, and Eve with the senses.[1] Yet, in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Adam allows his emotional bond to Eve to overcome his reason. Adam, in anguish upon discovering that Eve has eaten of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge, chooses to transgress with his wife. Whereas Eve at first dismisses and then is beguiled by Satan before finding reasons to support eating the fruit, Adam eats "Against his better knowledge, not deceived / but fondly overcome with female charm".[2] Earlier, Eve resolves to tempt Adam because she cannot tolerate the idea of dying without him or the possibility of Adam being wedded to another. Love as a form of emotional jealousy and as a form of emotional weakness thus sows the seeds of original sin. This raises questions over the relationship between knowledge, doubt, truth, the passions, influence and vulnerability, and the distinctions between active transgression and unwitting sin. These questions have been partially addressed by significant studies that examine Milton's language or Milton's appropriation of classical mythology, biblical narrative and biblical exegesis, seventeenth-century attitudes to gender and through scholarship that has been influenced by the material turn's renewed interest in the passions and the senses.[3] Perhaps most notably for the purposes of this essay, Michael Schoenfeldt observes how, "For all its emphasis on temperate self-regulation…the epic is

[1] Sarah R. Morrison, "Serpent and God's Grace in *Paradise Lost*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 49 (2009): 173-95 (p. 173).

[2] John *Milton*, *Paradise Lost*, edited by Alistair Fowler, 2 edn (Harlow: Longman, Pearson Education Limited, 1998), 9.998-99. Subsequent references to the poem will be placed in parenthesis after the passage quoted.

[3] See, for example, Stephen B. Dobranski, *Milton's Visual Imagination: Imagery in "Paradise Lost"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) on Milton's use of allusion and how visual culture and objects enrich Milton's narrative; studies such as Christopher Rick's *Milton's Grand Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), Stanley Fish's *Surprised by Sin: the Reader in "Paradise Lost"* (London, Toronto and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1967) and Ann Ferry's *Milton's Epic Voice: The Narrator in "Paradise Lost"* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963) set the tone – and provided points to fruitfully expand upon or argue against – for much scholarship on Milton's use of language.

operatically passionate to its core".[4] Schoenfeldt's insights form part of the vanguard of the affective turn in early modern studies and are insightful with regards to how the passions subsume reason in Milton's epic. But these insights also reflect on an earlier canonical poem with a very different focus: *Hero and Leander*, begun by Christopher Marlowe and continued by George Chapman. While these two poems are separated by seventy years which witnessed the end of the Tudor dynasty, accession of the Stuarts, Civil War, regicide, republic and restoration, and also by subject matter, there are also points of connection. Both poems nimbly draw from and embellish classical sources and classical form, even if Milton's epic repackages classical references within a Christian framework. Both poems are rhetorically erudite and expand upon their sources to create richer narratives; both are considered exemplars of their genres, despite even admirers of *Hero and Leander*, such as C. S. Lewis labelling it a "beautiful monstrosity", and early readers of *Paradise Lost* being cautious of its potential for sedition.[5] Perhaps an unexpected point of

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[4] Michael Schoenfeldt, "'Common Strange': Passion in *Paradise Lost*," in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, edited by Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 43-67 (p. 67).

[5] C.S. Lewis, "Hero and Leander", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 38 (1952): 36. Lewis praises the collaborative nature of the poem, though the critical reception of *Hero and Leander* very much worked with the idea that it is unfinished – a notion Marion Campbell argues was instigated by Chapman to legitimise his continuation. Campbell, "'Desunt Nonnulla': The Construction of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* as an Unfinished Poem", *English Literary History*, 51 (1984): 241-68. On the reception history of *Paradise Lost* in the Restoration, see Nicholas von Maltzahn, "The first Reception of *Paradise Lost* (1667)", *Review of English Studies*, 47 (1996): 479-49; Emma Depledge, "Repackaging Milton for the Late Seventeenth-Century Book Trade: Jacob Tonson, *Paradise Lost*, and John Dryden's *The State of Innocence*", in *Making Milton: Print, Authorship, Afterlives*, edited by Emma Depledge, John S. Garrison, and Marissa Nicosia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 42-52. On the changing reception of Milton from radical revolutionary with a "fit audience though few" to mass read neoclassical poet on the one hand and a poet of empire and imperialism on the other, see Thomas N. Corns, "Joseph Addison and the Domestication of *Paradise Lost*", in *Making Milton*, pp. 53-61 and Anne-Julia Zwierlein, "Milton Epic and Bucolic: Empire and Readings of *Paradise Lost*, 1667-1837", in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, edited by Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 669-686. On Milton's "daring effort to effect cultural and thereby political change", see Barbara K. Lewalski, "Milton and the Culture Wars", in *Visionary Milton: Essays on*

comparison, but one that will be one of the focuses of this essay, is between representations of Hero and Eve: as we will see, both women exemplify how transgression, the passions, trust, risk, and vulnerability are closely intertwined.

Scholarship on early modern passions has offered a corrective to the homogenous reading of the body through Galenic physiology that informed much earlier criticism to consider virtuous passions, Augustinian and Thomist influences on seventeenth-century passionate theory and the relationship between the passions and ethics.[6] However, here I would like to push these ideas about the connections between reason and the passions to accommodate rhetorical techniques learned in the early modern classroom and familiar to Milton and Marlowe. *Hero and Leander* and *Paradise Lost* are tenuously balanced between reason and passion, and this is in large part due to narrative form and rhetoric. After tasting forbidden fruit, both Eve and Hero become more prone to excess passion and this in part is due to placing trust in the bonds of love.

By focusing upon Book 9 of *Paradise Lost*, I will illustrate how seventeenth-century conceptions of the passions are married with rhetorical strategies to examine how Satan creates trust from mistrust and how, after tasting the fruit, Eve may have knowledge of good and evil but her abilities to persuade through words break down. Whereas Eve's words fail, words fail Leander as he attempts to seduce Hero: yet despite being a clumsy tempter, Leander moves Hero with his tumbling words. In Marlowe's poem, it is material objects rather than words that are the means through which innocence, lost innocence, vulnerability and mistrust are articulated in *Hero and Leander*. The clothing that Hero wears is richly embroidered by her and, in the first

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Prophecy and Violence, edited by Peter E. Medine, John T. Shawcross and David V. Urban (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2010), pp. 23-44 (p. 34), and for a study that considers the value of *Paradise Lost*, see chapter 5 of John Leonard's *The Value of Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[6] See, for example, Christopher Tilmouth, *Passion's Triumph Over Reason: A History of the Moral Imagination from Spenser to Rochester* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); *The Renaissance of Emotion: Understanding Affect in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries,* edited by Richard Meek and Erin Sullivan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); Erin Sullivan, *Beyond Melancholy: Sadness and Selfhood in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Abraham Stoll considers the related question of how poetry, theology and politics coalesce and inform the experience of conscience (Stoll, *Conscience in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018)).

sestiad, reveals an innocence about emotions and love; conversely, the veil that she embroiders in the fourth sestiad signifies lost innocence and visualises Hero's fears and jealousies. Collectively, these two poems illustrate how speech (both articulate and inarticulate) and the body of the speaker creates a network of misplaced trust and obligation through manipulation and acting on the passions; words encourage the Edenic couple to risk divine wrath through shirking their obedience to God and laying the foundations for original sin and also persuade Hero to relinquish her vows of chastity and surrender her obedience to Venus.

Green sleeves and red veils

Hero and Leander weaves different narratives together, primarily through ekphrasis – the precise literary description of visual images, and a form of vivid description that suspends the narrative. The epyllion's sumptuous descriptions and the way it creates visual imagery in the reader's imagination have long been recognised, but what I am particularly interested in here is the stories embroidered on Hero's rich clothing:

> The outside if her garments were of lawn,
> The lining purple silk, with gilt stars drawn;
> Her wide sleeves green, and bordered with a grove,
> Where Venus in her naked glory strove
> To please the careless and disdainful eyes
> Of proud Adonis that before her lies.
> Her kirtle blue, whereon was many a stain,
> Made with the blood of wretched lovers slain.[7]

Venus was a popular figure in early modern domestic art and the myth of Venus and Adonis was also a common Ovidian tale to retell.[8] Hero's fine clothing visually embeds Venus into the narrative of the epyllion. As Catherine Belsey and others have noted, the unclear dating of

[7] Christopher Marlowe, continued by George Chapman, *Hero and Leander*, in *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Poems and Translations*, edited by Stephen Orgel (London: Penguin, 1971), 1:9-16.
[8] Catherine Belsey, "The Myth of Venus in Early Modern Culture", *English Literary Renaissance*, 42 (2012): 179-202 (esp. 180-81); Sofie Kluge, "Adonis at the Crossroads: Two (Three) Early Modern Versions of the Venus and Adonis Myth", *Modern Language Notes*, 129 (2014): 1149-69.

Marlowe's poem and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* means it is uncertain whether Shakespeare's smilingly disdainful Adonis influenced Marlowe's carelessly disdainful young man or *vice versa*: the poems do not directly replicate each other and neither are they reworkings of the tapestry Spenser places in Malecaster's Castle in Book III of *The Faerie Queene*.[9] Yet all three poems were popular and while neither *The Faerie Queene* nor *Hero and Leander* are about Venus and Adonis, the tale of the youth admired by Venus and gored to death by a bore is woven into the fabric of each text.

The texture of the description of Venus and Adonis on Hero's robes is playful and connotes innocence, even as it gestures to the goddess's unrequited desire for Adonis and colourful lustfulness. The image is vivid and so are the vibrant colours that the scene is performed against. The wide green sleeves echo the idyllic tranquillity of the green grass in the garden of Adonis but "green sleeves" also gestures to green sickness, a yearning desire, and to youth. In optics, green also was believed by some to temper brightness and darkness, providing the viewer with the perfect shade and contrast to admire what was viewed.[10] But, as Bruce Smith notes, "green sleeves" also references the popular broadside ballad which transformed the singers' and listeners' bodies "from hot and moist (the passion of lust) to cold and dry (the passion of melancholy)".[11] Smith's focus is on the psychophysiological effects of hearing green and how hearing moves the passions, but Venus nestled among Hero's green sleeves perhaps also has resonances with this shift from hot and moist bodies to cold and dry ones. Marlowe's compact verse points to the rest of the tale of the goddess and her reluctant lover, where Venus's desire for Adonis turns to mourning as he lies dead, staining the ground with blood from the wound the wild boar gouged into his body. The imagery may be comic but the tale it narrates is tragic: Adonis's corpse thus becomes the focal point of the representation, even if it is not his physical slain body that is referenced.[12] Instead, the image encompasses "wretched lovers", couching the pangs of unrequited love in the folds of Hero's garments and transforming the subject into a universal tale of those ensnared by love through the bloody bodies of lovers.

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[9] Belsey, p. 196.

[10] Bruce Smith, 'Hearing Green", in *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, pp. 147-168 (149-150).

[11] Smith, p. 155.

[12] Judith Haber notes that "these bloodstains have disturbed many commentators" due to their rhetorical status and decorative function blurring the distinctions between literal and metaphorical images and how the artificial displaces the real. See Haber, *Desire and Dramatic Form in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 40-41.

Yet lovers' deaths also connote la petite mort, adding to the sexual punning that runs throughout the poem and foreshadowing Hero and Leander's sexual awakening. In the first sestiad, Leander attempts to woo Hero with a long diatribe against virginity (1.199-294 & 315-28). Hero retorts that she should "abhor" (1.339) the "taught…rhetoric to deceive a maid" (1.338), but instead likes the words uttered "for the orator" (1. 340). According to William Weaver, Hero's shrewd silence in comparison to Leander's verbosity "fits her priestly, otherworldly role as the object of men's gaze".[13] While her silence may indeed connect to the otherworldliness of her role and how the men of Abydos and Sestos desire the woman whom they can only gaze upon, I would like to focus on Hero's gaze and how it is not Leander's words that win her affection, which she dismisses as school room rhetoric, but sight and touch. In understanding that Leander is drawing from established tropes to seduce an innocent maid, Hero seems more worldly, or in Weaver's words, "savvy" than "the innocent youth who is performing" the words he speaks.[14]

As the section written by Marlowe progresses, we are introduced to Neptune and his thwarted attempts to woo the "rude in love, and raw" (2:61) Leander before Leander "Breathless spoke something, and sighed out the rest" (2:280) to prevail upon Hero's affections. The poem hints at the value of words to persuade, yet the precise nature of those words and language is dismissed as irrelevant. The focus shifts from the words or the "something" uttered to the breath and timbre of the speaker. As Jennifer Richards has illustrated, *pronunctio* and *elecutio* were integral to the early modern school room, with voice and understanding working symbiotically.[15] Typographical marks on the page provided vocal cues, helping to regulate the voice and enabling understanding through directing the speaker when to take a breath without destroying the sense of what is spoken.[16] Yet Leander seems not to have learned the lessons of the school room and instead of regulating his speech to ensure clarity of delivery as a means to persuade Hero of his affections, the affective sensory overload of words tumbling out of his mouth breathlessly before turning into wordless sighs prevail where words fail. Communication is not only articulated in composed and coherent speech but also in incoherent bodily lack of control. But "spoke

[13] William P. Weaver, "Marlowe's Fable: *Hero and Leander* and the Rudiments of Eloquence", *Studies in Philology*, 105 (2008): 388-408 (402).

[14] Weaver, p. 401.

[15] Jennifer Richards, *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance: a New History of Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), esp. chapter 2.

[16] Richards, p. 53.

something" also implies the limits of true desire, as Philip Sidney outlined "The Defense of Poesy" (1595):

> But truly, many of such writing as come under the banner of unresistible love, if I were a mistress, would never persuade me they were in love; so coldly they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather read lovers' writings – and so caught up in swelling phrases…than that in truth they feel those passions; which, easily, as I think, may be bewrayed by that same forcibleness or *energeia* (as the Greeks call it) of the writer.[17]

The body of the lover ultimately becomes the prime mode of persuasion, not the honeyed words of the poet. Leander's sincerity as a lover is articulated through his inarticulate speech. Rather than creating a visual image in the imagination of the reader or the listener, energeia betrays the insincerity of the poet. Instead, Marlowe shifts focus from the speech of the lover to the inarticulate oral/aural cues of desire and the visual cues of material objects.

These visual cues are taken up by Chapman in his continuation of the poem. In the fourth sestiad, we witness Hero's "diving needle" (4:53) bobbing in and out of the red fabric of her veil to embroider and image of Leander nakedly swimming, his limbs shadowed "with a pure sea green" (4:73). Echoing the green sleeves of the first sestiad, the green sea continues to connote the couple's youth but the images Hero embroiders of a fisherman with bloodshot eyes straining to catch fish but only catching a serpent who stings him dead and "A country virgin" (4:96) deceived by two foxes presents more sinister imagery. The idyllic, playful and pastoral representation of the "blood of wretched lovers slain" of the first sestiad turns into more urgent narratives of death and loss, illustrating the "ominous fancies" (4:108) expressed by Hero's soul "To show what death was hid in love's disguise" (4:110). Yet, as the sestiad progresses, we learn Hero is unconscious of the punishments that await, or that Venus seeks vengeance on Hero for breaking her vow of chastity. Hero's red veil thus becomes the means by which impending tragedy is foreshadowed, even as Hero is oblivious to the "violence subtle" (4:349) that is ensnaring her in consequence of her disobedience: her fingers embroider patterns on the veil

[17] Sir Philip Sidney, "The Defense of Poesy", in *Sidney's "The Defense of Poesy" and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, edited by Gavin Alexander (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 49. Conversely, Elizabeth Swann notes the relationship between sensual desire, rhetorical facility and oratory skill can lead the lover to be more compellingly articulate. See Elizabeth L. Swann, *Taste and Knowledge in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 213-22.

that articulate her love for Leander and as she does so, she also weaves these representations of love with unconscious anxieties that prophesise tragedy. The bond of trust and love between Hero and Leander that cannot be articulated through speech can thus be pictured in embroidery, but this love risks severing bonds of obligation and obedience, making the couple vulnerable to the wrath of the gods.

Trust, risk and (dis)obedience in Eden

Hero and Leander thus represents a couple who break oaths intuitively, lacking both worldly knowledge and the power of rhetorical persuasion to consciously disobey. Conversely, Milton presents us with a couple who, prior to eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge seem to understand the power of words but do not always understand their implications. As Stephen Fallon has perhaps most recently noted, prelapsarian Eve is disobedient: she is set up for a fall when she argues with Adam and persuades him to divide the labour between them instead of the couple working together. Adam initially disagrees with her suggestions as he wants to remain by Eve's side and proposes she is less vulnerable to Satan's wiles if they remain in the same place. When Adam realises Eve feels emotionally wounded by his assertion that she is protected from temptation if she is chaperoned by him, he responds with "healing words" (9.290): he repositions his words and posits that Eve is more resilient against the threat of evil than he might be. Adam goes on to suggest that Eve's honour might be affronted and tested by Satan and yet she is too strong to fall into temptation. Instead, he claims he would miss her company and feel more vulnerable to being led astray without her strength of character to support him. Eve thus persuades Adam to acquiesce to her wishes instead of heeding his warnings. In so doing, Adam is positioned as an uxorious husband: in the context of the hierarchy of obedience that governs Milton's Eden, Eve's desire to assert her independence not only reflects negatively on her, but could also be construed as exposing Adam and Eve's collective culpability and inability to comprehend the true essence of obedience. Eve, in seeking independence from Adam, has revealed her capacity to disobey. Conversely, Adam, in acquiescing to her wishes, has not paid attention Raphael's warning in Book 8 to "take heed lest Passion sway / Thy Judgment to do aught" (8.635-36). In their prelapsarian states, both Adam and Eve transgress and, as Fallon notes, these "extrapolations from and additions to the Genesis account…are designed to make the eating of the fruit plausible".[18]

[18] Stephen M. Fallon, "Narrative Theodicy in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies*, 61 (2019): 40-64 (45).

Paradise Lost thus fleshes out Genesis to create a narrative that justifies the ways of prelapsarian humanity to postlapsarian readers and offer a way to comprehend the appeal of eating forbidden fruit. Yet Adam's backtracking to mollify Eve does not simply illustrate how husband and wife negotiate minor domestic disputes; instead, it is a sophisticated rhetorical negotiation that registers (and responds to) Eve's passions. The emotional bond between Adam and Eve means that he notes how her "sweet austere composure" (9.272) conceals her frustrations at his co-dependence and he heals this through his verbal response that reaffirms the trust he places in her. Yet this apparent display of intersubjective feeling reveals the limits of compassion and how strife can develop through fellow feeling.[19] Empathy thus divides as much as it unites, and verbal utterances and body language conjoin to reveal feeling. As we will see, Book 9 is intensely concerned with sensory experience and rhetorical exploitation. First, I will turn to Satan's intemperate rhetoric and the physical and verbal strategies employed by him to tempt Eve, before moving on to consider rhetoric more broadly. By first assessing the use made by Satan of the physical body of the serpent and the serpent's status among the beasts, we see how the serpent's use of language becomes a means to tempt and to entrap Eve and, by extension, Adam.

Book 9 opens with a tragic turn in the narrative, which is punctuated by Milton's use of language:

> I now much change
> Those notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach
> Disloyal on the part of man, revolt,
> And disobedience: on the part of heaven
> Now alienated, distance and distaste,
> Anger and just rebuke and judgment given,
> That brought into this world a world of woe,
> (9:5-11)

[19] For a remarkable study that contains an overview of early modern theories of compassion and examines compassion and its capacity to reinforce division during the French Wars of Religion, see Katherine Ibbett, *Compassions Edge: Fellow Feeling and its Limits in Early Modern France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

As Christopher Ricks has observed, the repetitive and abrasive "dis" acts as a crescendo where the rhythm of the blank verse crashes into and emphasises the "distaste" that is occasioned by tasting the forbidden fruit. The rhythm pushes onwards and then falls into the disespousing between characters in Virgil's epic referenced a few lines later. In turn, this disespousing pre-empts the acrimonious dispute between Adam and Eve when they experience shame in their postlapsarian state.[20] In the passage quoted above, there is a punning on "taste" and "distaste" and their function as words that index both aesthetic form and the sensory experience felt through eating.[21] Taking his cue from scholars influenced by Derrida and expanding upon their reflections, Liam Haydon demonstrates how Derridean insights regarding representational absence being a form of presence where opposites are bound up within signs and signifiers underpins demonic speech and postlapsarian speech. Conversely, the good angels do not pun and take a more literal approach to language.[22] Good angels, as Joad Raymond notes, also use figures of speech to instruct. The theological and imaginative impulses that underpin figurative language means it has the capacity to deceive; despite this deceptive quality, it lacks the texture of lying because it is designed to instruct.[23] Instead of offering clarity to their words, angelic speech never quite captures in language the topic of discussion. The ways of God thus fail to be justified fully to humanity and an all-knowing God remains partly unknown to creation.

In the opening lines to Book 9, we therefore see how this instability of language enters the narrative more broadly as the poem takes a tragic turn: meaning is obfuscated and discord is allowed to enter Eden, transforming the harmonious tunes that underpinned creation into tragic notes. As Fallon has deftly noted, the texture of prelapsarian and postlapsarian states comes

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[20] Ricks, pp. 69-72.

[21] This is an example of the way in which both a postlapsarian and the demonic use of language has the capacity to cloud meaning, discussed by Stanley Fish and taken up by many scholars.

[22] Liam D. Haydon, "Ambiguous Words: Post-lapsarian Language in *Paradise Lost*," *Renaissance Studies*, 30 (2014): 177-91.

[23] Joad Raymond, *Milton's Angels: The Early-Modern Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), esp. pp. 225-28. For a study that examines early modern approaches to truth and lying from the beginnings of the Reformation in England through to the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, see Andrew Hadfield*, Lying in Early Modern English Culture: From the Oath of Supremacy to the Oath of Allegiance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). On ambiguous demonic language and puns in comparison to godly speech, see also Anthony Ossa-Richardson, *A History of Ambiguity* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019), pp. 106-10.

through in the sound of the poem and the word choice aurally enacts the move from there being harmony in creation to sounding discord.[24] But bound up within the negative and abrasive words that emphasise disunity are the residues of what is lost by the end of the book: "disloyal", "disobedience" and "distaste" all harbour within them their antonyms – "loyal", "obedience" and "taste". The unrelenting assertion of the prefix enforces the break that is to come. Through its repetition, Milton draws our attention to how "dis" creates meaning through being an etymological element that emphasises how the word it prefixes is negated or torn asunder. As Hannah Crawforth points out in her wide-ranging and detailed study on etymology, Milton is intensely concerned with words and, as his career progresses, he perceives etymology as a way to reenergise both the English language and English political institutions.[25] For Crawforth, "etymologies are so fundamental to *Paradise Lost* because they emblematize its central project of translating the divine into human understanding".[26] In this context, the abrasive "dis" foreshadows the severing of trust that happens as a result of eating forbidden fruit. The repetition underscores the rupture which is to come later in the narrative and focusses attention upon the sensory experience of taste.[27] This repetition is rhetorically powerful precisely because it prefigures the imminent fracture in creation that will be caused by original sin. The word choice thus emphasises the tragic turn by forcing the reader to confront the loss of loyalty and obedience that is being narrated. In these opening lines, Milton establishes a situation where deceit is inevitable and a scene where the innocence of Adam and Eve can be exploited.

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[24] Fallon, p. 55. Fallon is drawing from Tzachi Zamir's insights regarding the phenomenological qualities of literary and musical devices to enhance our experience, and how they move us away from the limits established by our environment (Zamir, *Double Vision: Moral Philosophy and Shakespearean Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 46-47).

[25] Hannah Crawforth, *Etymology and the Invention of English in Early Modern Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 147-84.

[26] Crawforth, p. 179.

[27] For a discussion of how Milton helps to lay the foundations of taste being understood as an aesthetic form and stretches the meaning of "taste" from its roots as a physiological phenomenon, see Denise Gigante, "Milton's Aesthetics of Eating," *Diacritics*, 30 (2000): 88-112. Conversely, Elizabeth Swann argues that the eighteenth century witnesses a contraction rather than an expansion in the meaning of taste in comparison to the multifarious ways in which epistemology and taste are bound up with embodied experience in the early modern period. See Swann.

This narrative of the exploitation of innocence would seem to be further underpinned by the physical body of the serpent, who, unlike other creatures in whom Satan hides, is punished for harbouring the satanic soul. Yet, the serpent is a paradoxical reptile who represents wisdom, rebirth, regeneration and medicine as much as it connotes deceit, trickery and death, and this paradox is embedded in Christian teachings.[28] In order to tempt Adam and Eve, Satan seeks a creature with whom he can merge souls and share agency; the serpent, in its prelapsarian state, is thus incongruous because, uniquely, it seems already to be corrupt instead of having the capacity to become corrupt. The soul of the serpent merges with the soul of Satan: ironically, perhaps, this diabolical spiritual matching echoes some of the views expressed by Milton in his divorce tracts regarding the spiritual matching or mismatching of souls in marriage, which might endorse Rosumund Paice's contention that *Paradise Lost* repeatedly calls to question the ideal of a spiritually matched couple, exposing the impossibility of human companionship ever being completely devoid of strife.[29]

After careful consideration, Satan chooses to merge his soul with the serpent in an act that teeters upon the brink of metaphysical violence. Conjoining with "The serpent subtlest beast of all the field" (9:86) is not without its risks, as exemplified by Satan's initial indecision in choosing which creature to accommodate him. In seeking an animal that can conceal his guile and "diabolic power" (9:95), Satan risks trusting a creature that breeds mistrust in others, can dissimulate and has the capacity to betray. Satan compromises through bonding his will with the will of the serpent to achieve his goals precisely because the wily subtleness of the serpent means

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[28] Morrison, pp. 175-76; Neil Forsythe, *The Satanic Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 308-9.

[29] Rosumund Paice, "Falling in Love and Language: Earthly Companionship and Spiritual Loss in *Paradise Lost*," *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 22 (2014) https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/journal/index.php/emls/article/view/121 (accessed 16 July 2019). Numerous scholars have addressed Milton's ideas on marriage and divorce. See, for example, James Grantham Turner, *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Thomas Luxon, *Single Imperfection: Milton, Marriage and Friendship* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005); Rachel Willie "Spiritual Union and the Problem of Sexuality," *Milton Studies*, 47 (2008): 168-84; Shigeo Suzuki, "Marriage and Divorce," in *Milton in Context*, edited by Stephen B. Dobranski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 382-93.

satanic intention and agency will remain undetected. Yet this weighing of risk puts pressure upon the way in risk is understood and conceived.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the earliest known instances of the use of the word "risk" date back to the 1620s and the word has always been used in conjunction with the desire to safeguard against economic loss.[30] In safeguarding against loss, however, insurance points to an economy of obligation that assesses the risks caused by human error. Liability, how groups build trust and distrust and the social context in which risk is assessed and perceived, all point to trust and risk being fundamental to human agency.[31] In Milton's epic, Satan enters this mercantile economy of risk by being the instigator and cause of the Fall. However, rather than the economy of risk being predicated upon monetary value, risk is calculated upon the value of souls. It is this that leads Satan to choose carefully which creature will harbour him, registering that his passionate agency aligns with the serpent and calculating the wily animal will give him greater access to Adam and Eve.[32] Satan and the serpent thus become entwined, but this is a union predicated upon trust born out of the economies of risk.

In this context, trust and risk underpins temptation, not only in terms of the choices made by Adam and Eve, but also with regards to the choices made by Satan. The physical body of the serpent and its significations become a site of trust, mistrust and risk and the narrative endeavours to reconcile the patterns of deceit with the ability to deceive. It is precisely because the serpent is recognised as a creature who is not to be trusted that he is trusted. Yet trust is

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[30] "risk, n.". OED Online. June 2019. Oxford University Press. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/166306?rskey=4BJwoJ&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed July 16, 2019).

[31] Since the 1970s, how groups interpret danger and assess risk is, according to James Tansey and Tim O'Riordan, fundamental to cultural theory, and how humans interact with their environment. See Tansy and O'Riordan, "Cultural Theory and Risk: a Review," *Health, Risk and Society*, 1 (1999): 71-91. See also James Tansey and Steve Rayner, "Cultural Theory and Risk," in *Handbook of Risk and Crisis Communication*, edited by Robert L. Heath and H. Dan O'Hair (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2009), pp. 53-79.

[32] "Passionate agency" is Brian Cummings's term, to explain how emotion is not only an excessive impulse but can also be voluntary. See Cummings "Donne's Passions: Emotion, Agency and Language," in *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture*, edited by Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 51-73 (p. 64).

never absolute; embedded within notions of trust are its antonyms.[33] The subtle serpent represents, not so much a negation of trust as it sits at the threshold of mistrust, but the inversion of mistrust into trust as occasioned by the economies of risk. At its core, the epistemology of trust requires trust to be placed in something that could be untrustworthy: the serpent's reputation for subtlety leads Satan to conclude that the creature's qualities are believed to be known and understood. The serpent's predilection to wiliness means he could therefore be underestimated as a harbinger of temptation by those who dwell in Eden. However, Satan's reasoning is opaque: a "long debate" (9:87) embodies his unarticulated thoughts. Whereas Leander's spoken somethings to Hero are lost in Leander's breathless sighs, Satan's debates are lost to an assertion of rational discourse that remains unuttered. The Blakean notion of Milton writing in fetters when he wrote of God but being unfettered when writing of Satan is here called to question by the inability of the narrative to articulate Satan's inner conflict.[34] Instead, the serpent is affirmed to be a "Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom / To enter, and his dark suggestions hide / From sharpest sight" (9.89-91).

Before the sensory experiences of taste and touch lead Eve into temptation, Satan sees the serpent and he judges it to be the creature most suited to deceive the Edenic couple.[35] Following the lead of Cicero, sight was often conceived by early modern anatomists and physicians as being the most important sense, closely followed by (though sometimes trumped by) hearing.[36] Satan selects the serpent because the creature's innate wiliness means Satan will be hidden "From sharpest sight." What makes this intriguing from the context of this hierarchy of senses is that sight has not failed the observers: they know the serpent to be a "wily snake" and

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[33] This is a point made by Julia Lupton at the Trust and Risk in Literature meeting, University of Aarhus, April 2016.

[34] William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. (A song of Liberty.)* [engraved c. 1790. Text and illustrations by William Blake. A hand-coloured facsimile of the original undated edition.], (Bernard Quaritch: London, 1885), p. 6.

[35] For a fascinating study of how taste and touch are intertwined in *Paradise Lost*, see Joe Moshenska, *Feeling Pleasures: The Sense of Touch in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 245-84.

[36] See, for example, *The Senses in Early Modern England, 1558-1660*, edited by Simon Smith, Jackie Watson and Amy Kenny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015). As Smith, Watson and Kenny's collection makes apparent, there were many ways in which the senses were perceived and understood in this period and sight was not always privileged.

so are not deceived by his appearance. Instead, the faith placed in sensory experience comes under scrutiny. It is the serpent's inherent qualities as a dissembling, untrustworthy creature that, paradoxically, means he will gain the trust of Eve. Word, faith and trust bind humanity to God, yet trust can also be coercive and the Bible itself was perceived by some – including Milton – to be untrustworthy.[37] It is this coercive quality of trust that enables word, faith and trust to be abused by Satan and the serpent becomes a physical manifestation of this coercion. Milton's use of language in indexing the serpent as "subtle" and a "snake" hints at this instability. The snake's long-established connection with sapience destabilises the ontological binaries present within knowledge and doubt and between wisdom and folly. This is compounded by allusion to the snake's subtlety.

If the sites of trust witness a collision of antonyms associated with trust and mistrust, the physical body of the subtle snake embeds these antonyms in the very construction of the creature. Within the body of the serpent, echoes and fragments of the "violence subtle" that engulfs Hero can be sensed, gesturing to the subtle violence of temptation and future punishments that both poems narrate. But "subtle" in *Paradise Lost* is not so strongly weighted to violence, pointing to its ambiguities. While "subtle" could be a word that connotes crafty cunning, sly guile and an abstruse use of language, it could equally reference the refinement of language, intellectual dexterity and skill, precision, or care. The words employed by Milton consistently point to what is not being narrated, presenting space for other ways to reconcile the narrative – even as the Fall becomes inevitable. Tensions between Arminian and Calvinist approaches to salvation exist in the linguistic blocks that underpin the narrative as the text attempts to balance the complexities of reconciling predestination with free will. This ambiguity over how to interpret scripture feeds through to the emotional and imaginative core of the poem. Reason is meant to prevent extreme emotion and human frailty, but Satan is momentarily "stupefied" by his passions and needs to overcome his feeling to tempt Eve.[38] Passions can move to virtuous behaviour as well as being at the root of sin, and this chimes with Schoenfeldt's

[37] Neil Forsythe, "Milton's Corrupt Bible," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530-1700*, edited by Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith and Rachel Willie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 209-23.

[38] For a detailed discussion on Satan's free will and the qualities of good and evil, see Paul Hammond, *Milton's Complex Words: Essays on the Conceptual Structure of "Paradise Lost"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 106-25.

contention that Milton values this fluid quality of emotion and hence passion both makes and unmakes Eden.[39]

Satan attempts to make Eve covetous and envious, sensations that the fallen angels know all too well. This is in accord with Thomas Wright's observation that "*Cicero* expressly teacheth that it is almost impossible for an orator to stirre up a passion in his audience, except he be first affected with the same passion himself".[40] In this respect, Satan's intemperate presence could be viewed as bringing personal frailty and error into Eden; his utterances are heard by Eve, infect her heart with false reason, and thus humanity becomes susceptible to corruption. Yet Cicero adds "almost" by way of caveat to his assessment of the relationship between oratory and emotion, demonstrating that classical authors and early modern rhetoricians alike were aware of the difficulties in assessing sincere and manipulative words and the passions that underpin utterances. In tempting Eve, Satan resorts to ekphrasis. For Quintilian, ekphrasis was a means by which oratory could excite an audience to virtue, but here it is abused by Satan to tempt Eve into original sin; instead of suspending narrative, the use of ekphrasis is necessary for the tragic turn.

Milton shows the way in which rhetoric and oratory can be abused, but as Claire Preston has noted, poetic ekphrasis insists on "interpretive responses from the reader".[41] The sumptuous presentation of the fruit in Book 9 not only tempts Eve, but it is also a means by which to create fellow-feeling between the tempted Eve and the reader. Just as Satan advertises and conceals his own deception through the body of the serpent, ekphrasis highlights its own contrivance through rhetorical affect. In *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646), Thomas Browne speculated that Eve's transgression occurred out of innocence and naivety, perhaps suggesting that she is unable to fully assess and react to the risks with which she is confronted:

> She might not yet be certain that onely man was priviledged with speech, and being in the novity of the Creation, and inexperience of all things, might not be affrighted to hear a serpent speak: Besides she might be ignorant of their natures who was not versed in

[39] Schoenfeldt.

[40] Thomas Wright, *The passions of the minde in generall. Corrected, enlarged, and with sundry new discourses augmented* (London, 1604), sig. M6v.

[41] Claire Preston, "Ekphrasis: painting in words," in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, edited by Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 115-32 (p. 116).

> their names, as being not present at the generall survey of animals, when Adam assigned unto every one a name concordant unto its nature.[42]

As mentioned at the beginning of this essay, it is Adam who allows emotion to cloud his reason by acquiescing to Eve's wishes. Milton's Eve does not immediately surrender to Satan's attempt to move her passions. Instead, she is left in "doubt" with regards to the serpent's trustworthiness and the virtuous qualities of the fruit as a consequence of Satan's "overpraising" tongue (9.615).[43] Eve's reason does not fail her, but she is coerced through passionate agency. She is moved instead by the sumptuous description of the fruit and Satan's feigned sympathy for her being forbidden to eat the fruit. This leads her into false reason.

Satan may have persuasive words, but hearing his words alone is insufficient to persuade Eve to eat: it is the smell of the fruit and hunger that ultimately leads to a desire to touch and taste. As Elizabeth Swann notes, taste and touch require proximity to the objects that are being experienced sensorily, whereas the other sensory experiences can be felt at a distance: whereas taste is active, smell is passive.[44] But sensory experience is also not universal: our levels of sensitivity to the sounds we hear and the colours we see, as well as our responses to smells, tastes and what we touch is relative to our bodies and external environmental pressures. The body, poised between the sacred and the profane, may be susceptible to honeyed words, but the needs of the body to satiate hunger ultimately leads to Eve's transgression: Eve trusts her fallible senses and this leads her to fallible reason. Conversely, Adam allows the emotional bond he feels for Eve to overcome his reason and his senses: his eyes note a distemper upon Eve's cheek, but he still risks eating the fruit instead of risking losing his spouse. The distinctions between virtue and vice become blurred, materialising the problems of language and transforming the fall into the reframing of vice as virtue: eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge is reframed into a form of paradiastole.

A favoured metaphor for early modern rhetoricians in understanding paradiastole is the fabric of clothing: Henry Peacham, for example, talks of covering "vices with the mantles of virtues".[45] In eating of the fruit "against his better knowledge, not deceived", Adam clothes his vice in the rhetoric of self-sacrifice. Conversely, Eve uses rhetoric to make the vice of eating

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[42] Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (London, 1646), I:238-9.

[43] See also Fallon, who notes that Eve is not easy to convince, pp. 45-46.

[44] Swann, pp. 18-20.

[45] Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (London, 1593), p. 169.

forbidden fruit appear more palatable. Adam and Eve are thus able to excuse their vices. The inevitable remorse, repentance and shame ensues, thus showing that vice cannot be dressed as virtue for long. After the Fall, language becomes corrupt and the true meaning of things is lost. But paradiastole is rhetorically unstable and rather than euphemistically smoothing over vices, it draws attention to vice and highlights that it can never be dressed in virtue's weeds.[46] In this context, the epic could be construed as a prolonged paradiastole, where eating of the fruit corrupted language and obfuscated the linguistic distinctions between virtue and vice. At the end of the poem, the inhabitants of pandemonium experience further punishments, exemplifying how attempts to deceive the opinion of others can only frustrate the antagonist. The acrimonious grief and shame into which Adam and Eve fall demonstrates the inability of paradiastole to be a sustained form of cloaking vice in virtue. Upon being expelled from the garden, Adam and Eve can begin the process of learning not only how to trust each other, but also how to trust themselves.

This section has touched upon some of the points of connection between the passions, trust, risk and rhetoric to identify how *Paradise Lost* demonstrates temptation to be predicated upon the consideration of trust and risk and how risk and trust connect to interior and exterior forms of knowing. Satan manipulates Eve through attempting to appeal to her passions and by stimulating her senses. The appropriation of a feigned rational discourse combined with bodily frailty draws attention to early modern anxieties regarding how bodily-generated passions and

[46] This is exemplified by Rutilius's definition of paradiastole, quoted at length by Quentin Skinner; "This *schema* distinguishes between two of more things that seem to have the same force, and teaches us how far they are distinct from each other by assigning the right meaning to each of them. Hyperides: For when you attempt to deceive the opinion of others, you frustrate yourself. You are not able to show that you should be understood as wise rather than crafty, or courageous rather than reckless, or careful in family matters rather than niggardly, or severe rather than ill-willed. There is no vice in which you are able to glory by praising it as virtue. The same *schema* can readily be use yet more impressively when a reason is added to the judgment. This can be done in the following way: Hence do not so often call yourself frugal when you are avaricious. For someone who is frugal makes use of what is sufficient; you on the contrary, because of your avarice, want more than you have. So what will follow will not be the fruits of thrift but rather the miseries of destitution". P. Rutilius Lupus, *De figuris sententiarum et elocutionis*, cited in Quentin Skinner, "Paradiastole: redescribing the vices as virtues,'" in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, pp. 149-63 (p. 150).

sensory experience could combine with honeyed rhetoric to operate against the best interests of body and soul. Ultimately, *Paradise Lost* points to how the passions, feigned and real emotion and rhetoric could deceive, meaning that even extending trust to the self means risking betrayal. But "honeyed rhetoric" also connotes bees. In my concluding points, I will return to the opening of *Hero and Leander* and Hero's sumptuous garments to consider the symbolism of the bee and the connections between trust, risk and vulnerability in both poems.

Trust, Risk and Vulnerability

The description of Hero's clothing in the opening to *Hero and Leander* not only depicts Venus and Adonis but also the natural world:

> Her veil was artificial flowers and leaves,
> Whose workmanship both man and beast deceives.
> Many would praise the sweet smell as she passed,
> When 'twas the odor which her breath forth cast;
> And there for honey bees have sought in vain,
> And beat from thence, have lighted there again.
>
> (1:19-24)

These vivid images on Hero's veil and the floral top notes of her breath confuse the bees who search fruitlessly for nectar and pollen to make honey. The busy honeybee has been connected to scholarly erudition and to sexual pleasure, leading Elizabeth Swann to examine the relationship between the discerning humanist bee and the bee as an erotic symbol of the lover's capacity for judgement and skill in seeking sexual love.[47] However, in *Hero and Leander*, we see bees are betrayed by their senses into believing Hero's breath is the sweet scent of the flowers on her veil. Far from representing the sweetness of sexual pleasure, the honeybees' inability to gather the raw materials required to make honey symbolises Hero's virginity and innocence with regards to desire.

[47] Swann, esp. chapter 5. Swann makes connections between the epistemologies of reading and how the bee trope has been used libidinously to show how the bee as "an emblem of desire…not only represents but also engages readerly discrimination, or taste" (Swann, p. 204).

The honeybees' failure to gather nectar and pollen also points to how transgressive tasting and sexual mastery were connected through sweetness being associated with erotic love and bitterness with betrayal in love. The biblical eating of forbidden fruit could thus connote sexual awakening and, as Swann notes, the verb "taste" also references carnal knowledge, connecting sex and taste as "base, appetitive drives".[48] Sexual appetite as sin and sensual pleasure as cognition are therefore closely intertwined, which might support William Keach's contention that Hero becomes Venus's nun to be spared the bittersweet sensations of love, but it is only through risking heartache and falling in love with Leander that she can truly serve Venus.[49] Love may make Hero a better nun, but it also makes her more vulnerable and this vulnerability is closely aligned to shame.

James Bromley notes the juxtaposition of Neptune's "surface-level" seduction of Leander, which insists on pleasure without "possession, penetration and consummation" in comparison to possession, penetration and consummation that defines Hero and Leander's relationship. Bromley reads the episodes involving Neptune as indicative of the poem's refusal to succumb to narrative closure; the episode also suggests to Bromley how skin can be a site of erotic stimulation without needing to be a site of vulnerability, unlike the vulnerable post-coital Hero who rises from the bed she has shared with Leander and seeks to hide her nakedness and shame from him.[50] Hero's attempts to conceal herself fail, partly because "Hero's ruddy cheek Hero betrayed" (2.323), foreshadowing Eve's distempered cheek betraying that she has transgressed in Milton's epic. After tasting metaphorical or literal forbidden fruit, both women are betrayed by their cheeks and both women are made more vulnerable due to their respective falls. Yet both women also assert themselves as autonomous beings through their vulnerability and shame: while Hero and Leander are ultimately killed by the Destinies and Adam and Eve are banished from Eden, with the prior subjugation of Eve more firmly asserted, both women can

[48] Swann, p. 184.

[49] William Keach, "Marlowe's Hero as 'Venus' Nun"', *English Literary Renaissance*, 2 (1972): 307-20.

[50] James M. Bromley, *Intimacy and Sexuality in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chapter 1, esp. pp. 32-42.

be viewed as exercising free will.[51] As such, trust, risk, autonomy, shame and vulnerability become closely intertwined.

Shame is closely aligned to, yet distinct from, the sensation of guilt and shapes our sense of self; in Eve Kofosky Sedgwick's words, "Shame is a bad feeling attaching to what one is" and it is "the place of identity".[52] In this reading of shame, shame is less about the sensation that comes with remorse from misdeeds or the fear of public humiliation and the consequences of transgressing and instead is fundamental to what makes us human. It is both a sensation caused by social conditioning and by self-introspection or our conscience. It lies at the heart of our identity formation and also diminishes our sense of self and self-worth. Shame is gendered. It connotes a variety of paradoxical sensations that both define the subject and fragments identity-making and selfhood. For Kaye Mitchell, "the acute self-consciousness of shame announces a moment in which the self comes into being (through this consciousness, this viewing of oneself as object for one's own gaze) and is undone by the intensity, the intimacy of that self-scrutiny".[53] In this reading of shame and selfhood, Hero's and Eve's blushes are the visible signs of their subjectivity coming into being while simultaneously being symbolic of their vulnerability as their sense of self fractures under the introverted gaze of self-scrutiny. While some have argued that shame is empowering and prevents us from becoming vulnerable, here shame and vulnerability go hand in glove.[54]

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[51] While the biblical narrative directs us to the exclusion from the Garden of Eden as the point at which Eve is told she is to obey Adam, the narrative of *Paradise Lost* frequently alludes to a hierarchy in Eden where Even is subordinate to Adam.

[52] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity: Henry James's *The Art of the Novel*", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 1 (1993): 1–16, p. 12.

[53] Kaye Mitchell, *Writing Shame: Gender, Contemporary Literature and Negative Affect* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), p. 5.

[54] Gabriele Taylor proposes the value of shame lies in its ability to help us measure our self-worth and influence our moral attitude, protecting those who experience it from putting themselves in a position that makes them vulnerable or through helping them to recognise the need to escape such situations (Taylor, Pride, *Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self Assessment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) and "Shame, Integrity, and Self-Respect", in *Dignity, Character, and Self-Respect*, edited by Robin S. Dillon. (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 157-179). Such a view is contested by Jennifer C. Manion, "Girls Blush, Sometimes: Gender, Moral Agency, and the Problem of Shame", *Hypatia*, 18 (2003): 21–41.

Vulnerability tends to connote weakness and dependency; it suggests the subject can be wounded easily and lacks the power to fight the situation that makes them vulnerable. It implies a fragility that means the vulnerable subject ought to be protected from harm and that being vulnerable is, in itself, a form of harm where external forces act on us.[55] Conversely, James Kuzner notes how vulnerability can be positive and even pleasurable. Kuzner argues vulnerability forms part of prelapsarian existence and also leads to the Fall in *Paradise Lost* due to the relationship between vulnerability, rational discourse, and debate. Yet there are two falls in *Paradise Lost*, and the fallen angels are also vulnerable. In Kuzner's reading of Pandemonium, the fallen angels take pleasure in debate for its own sake.[56] Vulnerability is linked to public discourse and public speech; due to its role in the public sphere, vulnerability can cause pain and shame, but it can also be enriching through intersubjective communication revealing the self to others. To be vulnerable is to have an openness to other people and a willingness to trust, love, and communicate with them. As Eric Langley writes, "[t]o participate in communication…is a real risk…and therefore represents a hazardous investment of faith in uncertain contracts and taut links of obligation…which sometimes seem too costly, sometimes cruelly ridiculous."[57]

To communicate is to trust. Trusting people makes us vulnerable, but trust is also necessary to be in the world and to interact with others. This points to the symbiotic quality of vulnerability, where the subjective I is vulnerable to those it addresses. The addressee may not necessarily be equally vulnerable but in being receptive to such communication, they are allowing a space to be made where mutual or competing vulnerabilities coincide. Due to this recognition of competing vulnerability, recent theories of vulnerability have attempted to dissociate it from ideas of victimhood and instead consider the relationship between vulnerability and autonomy.[58] In recognising how mutual vulnerability and interdependency coincide, Danielle Petherbridge

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[55] Erin Cunniff Gilson examines the relationship between vulnerability and victimisation in connection to sexual violence, illustrating how the pursuit of invulnerability erroneously posits vulnerability as a negative ("Vulnerability and Victimisation: Rethinking Key Concepts in Feminist Discourse on Sexual Violence", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 42 (2016): 71-98).

[56] James Kuzner, "Habermas Goes to Hell: Pleasure, Public Reason, and the Republicanism of *Paradise Lost*", *Criticism*, 51 (2009): 105-45 (116-17).

[57] Eric Langley, *Shakespeare's Contagious Sympathies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 46.

[58] See, for example, *Vulnerability: New Essays in Ethics and Feminist Philosophy*, edited by Catriona Mackenzie, Wendy Rogers, and Susan Dodds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

seeks to move discussions about ethics and vulnerability away from discourses of violence and power to consider the how vulnerability is both normative and yet can also be "conditioned by power". In so doing, Petherbridge notes "the fragility of intersubjective relations…[revealing] the tensions and ambiguities as well as the richness and perplexity of social relations".[59] Trust and risk also highlights the richness and perplexity of social relations, and suggest these social relations are fragile, contingent and open to re-evaluation. Verbal communication, rhetoric and utterance form part of this interplay, but so too does embodied sensory experience as intentional and unintentional nonverbal communication conveys feeling. In turn, feeling is received and interpreted. The complex interplay of trust, risk and vulnerability in social relations lies at the heart of *Paradise Lost* and *Hero and Leander*. Through language communication and bodily feeling, the two poems trace a range of sensations that suggest trust and risk is central to being human.

[59] Danielle Petherbridge, "What's Critical About Vulnerability? Rethinking Interdependence, Recognition and Power", *Hypatia*, 31 (2016): 589-604 (601).