Transgressional paradise: gender and dichotomy in the illustrations and text of the 1688 edition of Paradise Lost

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Transgressional Paradise: Gender and Dichotomy in the Illustrations and Text of the 1688 Edition of Paradise Lost

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Introduction

There is limited information on and analysis of what is perhaps arguably the most interesting edition of all prints of *Paradise Lost*, the fourth edition. The 4th edition was published in 1688, and what sets it apart from its predecessors, and its subsequent successors, is not just the intricate and detailed illustrations what were called sculptures that precede each book of the poem, but also the signatures at the back of the volume. The sculptures are illustrations done by several different artists that give the reader an idea of what is going to happen in each book of *Paradise Lost*. Some are just illustrations of a single moment from the book, while others encompass various, important events that take place. They are called sculptures as they were actually copperplate engravings, and not just illustrations. The signatures are important as well and can be found at the back of the fourth edition. The signatures are better described as a list of names of the patrons of the fourth edition specifically. The publisher sought out individuals who were willing to pay for the new version of the poem, the illustrations, and the sheer size of it, and as thanks, their names were included in the back of each edition. This was fairly revolutionary for its time, and signified the work was important enough to be supported or need support.

While the fourth edition of *Paradise Lost* is certainly revolutionary for its illustrations and utilization of signatures, it is also special for the unique analysis and point of view it provides readers. The illustrations are the first thing the reader sees, before the text of the poem itself. As a result, the illustrations inform the reader of what is happening or what is supposed to happen in the epic before reading Milton’s work. What makes this so interesting
and particular to the 1688 edition is that the illustrations do not always agree with the text itself. In fact, they often directly contradict what the text is saying, especially when it comes to gender: Adam, Eve, and the angels are sometimes illustrated more masculine or more feminine than the poem depicts them. This thesis explores the dichotomy, or lack thereof, between the illustrations and the text in the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost*, paying particular attention to gender and gender expression, especially in how they relate to Adam.
The First Three Editions of *Paradise Lost*

Milton first thought of *Paradise Lost* in 1640, “which he then imagined as a five-act tragedy titled ‘Adam Unparadiz’d.’”¹ He wrote what we recognize as *Paradise Lost* between 1658 and 1665, in hopes of creating a Christian poem that could compare to the Greek and Roman epics written by Homer and Virgil. He also, in epic tradition, started his poem “in medias res,” starting his poem in the thick of the action, rather than following a more traditional prose or poem format of starting at the beginning.² *Paradise Lost*, like all other epics, was and still is meant to be transmitted from generation to generation, a story with a moral to be shared. Milton, following the format of these other epics, chose to write *Paradise Lost* in a rhymeless format, but still in iambic pentameter, a big difference from other English poets at the time that set him and his poem apart.

*The First Edition*

The first edition of *Paradise Lost* was published in 1667, while Milton was still alive. Milton’s publishing agreement with his publisher, Samuel Simmons, has been well documented and discussed. The agreement, dated April 27th, 1667, “assigned the manuscript of *Paradise Lost*, ‘lately licensed,’ outright to Simmons, ‘in consideration of five pounds to him now paid by the said Samuel Symons,’ on the condition that another five pounds should be paid to him when ‘the first impression,’ to be accounted as 1300, should have been sold,

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² Ibid.
and thereafter a further five pounds at the end of each the second and third impressions, the said three impressions not to exceed 1500 copies each.” In exchange for an upfront payment of five pounds, Milton gave Simmons “the ‘Booke, Copy or Manuscript of a Poem intituled Paradise Lost’ and the right to print to work, even if the ‘title or name’ was changed…Simmons would get the ‘full benefit, profit, and advantage,’ and Milton would need consent if he wanted to publish another work on the same subject.” While exact dates and numbers are not known, it is estimated that *Paradise Lost* was published around August 20th, 1667, and that approximately 1300 copies were sold, with another 200 being used for presentation; 1500 books are all that encompassed the entirety of the first edition. Ultimately, Milton would only receive a total of ten pounds for *Paradise Lost*.

The first edition of *Paradise Lost* was not particularly popular, and actually caused anxiety for the publisher, Simmons, who was concerned with how much money *Paradise Lost* was making on the market. The first edition was best described as “small and plain, with no preface or portrait of the author,’ making for an unremarkable book.” Between 1667 and 1669, Simmons reprinted and reissued this first edition with seven different title pages, in an effort to increase sales. In 1668, Simmons added “a further note from ‘The Printer to the Reader.’” Milton also provided a “justification of ‘The Verse’ to explain how in his practice ‘ancient library [is] recover’d to Heroic Poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of Reiming,” in acknowledgement to his use of blank verse, instead of rhyming verse. In 1669,

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the reissue included, “as per Simmons’s note to the reader, a 14-page ‘Argument’ that provided a prose summary of each book’s plot.” This strategy apparently worked, and sales of the poem began to increase, perhaps due in part to the royal library accepting a copy of *Paradise Lost* for presentation.8

*The Second Edition*

The second edition, unlike the first, was divided into 12, instead of 10 books, in an effort to emulate Virgil’s great epic, *The Aeneid*. To do this, the original Book 7 was divided into Books 7 and 8, and the original Book 10 was divided into Books 11 and 12. Also dissimilar to the first edition, the second contained an engraved portrait of Milton himself, opposite the title page.9 Simmons, in complete control of Milton’s poem, did nothing with it for five years, since 1669, the last release of the first edition, but was likely spurred into publishing a “new” version, as a result of John Dryden announcing his ‘‘Heroick Opera,’ based on *Paradise Lost.’”10 The second edition was published in 1674 and very little is known about this edition compared to some of its counterparts; “almost no attention has been paid to this book by bibliographers.”11 The second edition was, again, printed by Samuel Simmons, but little else seems to be known. Harris Fletcher claims “only fifty or sixty copies of [the second

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9 Ibid.
edition] could be located, and if, because it has never been intensively collected and sought after, the number is doubled, perhaps about only one hundred copies of [the edition] exist today."

Whether that is because there were so few copies of the second edition printed, as there were only a couple of years between the last version of the first edition, and the publication of the third edition, or if many were lost or destroyed over time, is unknown. Milton died soon after the second edition was published. The second edition also contains two commendations preceding the verse, written by Andrew Marvell and an S. Barrow.

**The Third Edition**

The third edition of *Paradise Lost* was published in 1678. Like the first two editions, the third edition was printed by the same publisher, Simmons. This edition also contains a frontispiece, like the second, and is also broken up into twelve separate books. In fact, there is no difference between the second and third editions of *Paradise Lost*. The two editions are virtually identical, except for their cover and bindings, and even then, both are still small and published in octavo format. It is unclear, since the second and third editions are essentially the exact same, why the third edition was even published. It is probable that Simmons released a third edition four years after the second edition to "reintroduce" *Paradise Lost* in an effort to make more money. Unfortunately for Simmons, the first three editions of *Paradise Lost* were not very popular and were not a commercial success.

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13 Ibid.
The Publishing and Illustration of the Fourth Edition

The Publisher

The fourth edition of *Paradise Lost* built upon the highlighters of the first, second, and third editions. It was very popular upon its release. Unlike the first three editions of the poem, this fourth edition was published by Jacob Tonson. Tonson is widely viewed as a founder of literary publishing in the English language. Born in 1655, he came from a Puritan background, just like Milton himself. Well-educated, he first was apprenticed into the publishing industry in 1670, at age 14, to Thomas Basset. Basset was a well-known publisher at the time, and Tonson served as his apprentice for 8 years before being released into the trade on his own. At this time, “government control of the press had necessarily weakened by the turmoil of the late cataclysm of the civil war,” an important development that allowed Tonson more flexibility in what he chose to publish and how he published it.\(^\text{14}\) Previously, the Printing Act, also known as the Licensing Act, passed by the Stuart regime in 1662, had severely suppressed printing opportunities, limiting printing privileges to only twenty “master” printers, four “master” type founders, and printing was only allowed in London, Oxford, Cambridge, and York.\(^\text{15}\) It’s interesting to note that Tonson became a printer right as printing regulations were loosening, something that Milton advocated for much of his life, as evidenced by his well-known essay, “Areopagitica.” In fact, it only makes sense that Tonson

\(^{14}\) Walker, Keith. “Publishing: Jacob Tonson, Bookseller”. 425

\(^{15}\) Ibid, 425.
would become a huge advocate and publisher of Milton’s work; Milton was viewed as a
highly controversial author because of his personal beliefs, so it is in the spirit of all that he
stands for Tonson to publish a celebratory and successful version of *Paradise Lost.*

During Tonson’s time, money in the publishing industry lay in publishing medical
textbooks, law books, and theological works, like the Bible. However, as a new publisher,
Tonson was forced to make his start in literature. Tonson was most certainly interested in
literary texts, as he was well educated in Latin and had an interest in Roman poets and
poetry, which he later capitalized on. However, it’s likely that his novelty to the craft actually
required him to start in his publishing ventures in literature, which, at the time, was of
“relative insignificance [to the public and market] in publishing terms.”16 In fact, it was
Tonson’s connection to literature, not any publishing of medical or theological works, that
really started his career. At the start of his publishing career, Tonson mainly published play
scripts, “ephemeral octavos,” which were cheap and easy to print. And yet, even after he was
rich and successful, Tonson continued to buy, sell, and publish mainly works of literature,
and occasionally history, almost exclusively.

Tonson had a long, familiar relationship with the poet John Dryden. Dryden is
notable not just for his poetry, but for his translations of epic works such Virgil’s *Aeneid* and
Homer’s *Odyssey.* This is an important connection to note, as Milton wanted *Paradise Lost*
to emulate both Virgil and Homer’s work, and Tonson was the publisher of Dryden’s
translations. Tonson and Dryden first met in 1678, four years after Milton’s death. Dryden
was, perhaps, the most important poet at the time, and Tonson and Dryden’s association, and
consequent partnership was “a testament to Tonson’s business acumen,” which would come

16 Ibid, 425.
into play later when Tonson published the fourth edition of *Paradise Lost*.\textsuperscript{17} Tonson’s association with Dryden is important in considering the fourth edition of *Paradise Lost*, as many of Tonson’s actions popularized the literature he published, and “did much to remove what J. W. Sanders has called (in *Essays in Criticism*, 1951) ‘the stigma of print.’”\textsuperscript{18} These “popularizing activities” included writing prefaces and soliciting contributors, both of which Tonson would utilize when he published Milton’s epic poem in 1688.

As he did with many of his other works, Tonson published this fourth edition by subscription, which is illustrated by the signatures at the back of the folio. Publishing by subscription requires the publisher to gain support for his project before it is even complete. To gain subscribers, the work has to be something outstanding, or at the very least different, in order to generate interest before it is published. Many of the individuals who supported the fourth edition were of “nobility and gentry.”\textsuperscript{19} Some believe that Tonson published by subscription as a result of his Whig-party sympathies, and as a celebration of William of Orange’s accession to the throne in 1688, a Whig triumph, referred to as the Glorious Revolution. However, while a popular theory (even Milton’s biographer, W.R. Parker believes the 1688 edition is “an event of both social and patriotic, as well as, literary significance [due to the coincidence of the Revolution]”), there is no evidence to support these supposed connections.\textsuperscript{20}

Considering Tonson’s close association with Dryden, Dryden and Milton’s shared love of Virgil and Homer, Tonson’s appreciation for poetry, in particular Roman poetry, and

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 426.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 426.
\textsuperscript{19} Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. 1688.
\textsuperscript{20} Walker, Keith. “Publishing: Jacob Tonson, Bookseller”. 428.
his innovative approach to publishing, it is no surprise that Tonson had deep interest in, and involvement with, Milton’s work. The third edition of *Paradise Lost* was published the same year Tonson began his solo publishing career, and Tonson began buying not just the copyright to *Paradise Lost*, but all of Milton’s work. After attaining the copyright to *Paradise Lost*, Tonson began to leave his mark, and create a completely different edition of the poem, unseen in Simmons’s previous versions and publishing work. Simmons’s editions were published as quartos or octavos. Tonson’s edition “was [a] large folio, with high-quality paper, wide margins, and clear type, and with twelve ‘sculptures’.”21 This was revolutionary for *Paradise Lost*. The previous three editions were small and plain, published as octavos, resembling Bibles more than poetic homages to biblical works. Their size made them portable, and the paper used for printing was thin and cheap. Tonson’s edition, however, was and is the exact antithesis of its predecessors. It was not meant to be carried around, but rather, displayed. The illustrations are large, detailed, and descriptive of the events of the poem, Milton’s words. It is important that Tonson chose to publish his edition of *Paradise Lost* as a folio, not an octavo. The utility of an octavo is very different than the utility of a folio, which means folios and octavos held different literary status. Folio works at the time normally included Bibles and various other religious texts. Occasionally, some great pieces of literature, like Shakespeare’s works, were published in folio format as well; the publication of his first folio in 1623 is when he truly gained traction and popularity. By publishing *Paradise Lost* as a folio, Tonson was, and still is, signaling to the fourth edition’s readers that this is an important and influential work of literature, of comparable significance.

21 Ibid, 428.
to the Bible and other popular works previously published in folio format. All of this was designed to truly celebrate Milton as a poet, something not previously seen for his works.

Tonson’s friendship with Dryden is apparent in his edition of *Paradise Lost*, as well. Below Milton’s portrait, which can be found opposite the title page, at the front of the folio, is the following engraving, commissioned by Tonson, written by Dryden (Figure 1):

Three Poets, in three distant Ages born,
*Greece, Italy,* and *England* did adorn.
The *First* [Homer] in loftiness of thought surpass’d;
The *Next* [Virgil] in Majesty; in both the *Last.*
The force of *Nature* cou’d no farther goe:
To make a *Third* [Milton] she joynd the former two.  

While the second and third editions both had frontispieces of Milton’s likeness, neither had such an epithet attached to them. Dryden held Milton in high respect, and his epigram demonstrates that. In it, he not just compares, but names Milton as the successors to both Homer and Virgil. This is important, as anyone who picks up the fourth edition of *Paradise Lost*, before even getting to the poem, will form an idea based on Milton’s association with Virgil and Homer, and *Paradise Lost’s* comparison to *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Milton was certainly a polarizing figure at the time, mainly for his very public, published political opinions. However, in this epithet, Dryden is calling for the reader to ignore Milton’s controversial status. Instead, the reader should recognize Milton’s greatness as a writer; Milton is a canonical author equal to, if not better than, both Virgil and Homer. It was the

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highest praise, and is part of the reason *Paradise Lost* remains in the conversation as one of the greatest poetic epics ever written.

**The Illustrators**

When the 1688 edition is discussed in academia and academic literature, the illustrators are often the primary subject. In particular, there are four illustrations that are not signed by an illustrator, and there is much debate as to who this artist could be. However, it is important to briefly touch upon the two known illustrators. This is especially important for this thesis when considering the difference between the illustrations.

The illustrations, or sculptures, in the fourth edition of *Paradise Lost* are actually “twelve copperplate engravings, [that serve as] frontispieces for the twelve books into which the epic is divided.”23 Of the eight sculptures with known illustrators, seven are signed by John Baptiste de Medina, and one is signed by Bernard Lens. Medina illustrated Books III, V, VI, VII, IX, X, and XI, while Lens illustrated Book IV, which leaves Books I, II, VIII, and XII as the books with the unknown artist illustrations. All of the illustrations created by de Medina, as well as the four unsigned illustrations, were engraved by “Michael Burghers, or Burgesse, except for the Lens design, [which was] engraved by P.P. Bouche.”24 The engravings served as templates for the illustrations to be copied via printing press.

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24 Ibid, 133.
The Fourth Edition of *Paradise Lost*

*Book IV*

The physical book itself is large; it is not something that is easily transported outside the house, which should be taken into consideration when thinking about its purpose and how to read it. While it is important to note that Vassar’s copy is not in its complete, original form, the front of the book is plain, with no embellishments or title listed on the front cover.

This thesis focuses on Books IV, VIII, and XII, and their depiction of gender. In order to properly analyze the 1688 edition and the unique reading it provides, the text needs to be considered in context with the sculptures that are seen at the beginning of each Book. We as readers are first introduced to Adam and Eve in Book IV. Adam and Eve are then described in tandem:

> Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,  
> Godlike erect, with native Honour clad  
> In naked Majestie seemd Lords of all,  
> And worthie seemd, for in thir looks Divine  
> The image of thir glorious Maker shon,  
> Truth, wisdome, Sancitude severe and pure  
> Severe but in true filial freedom plac’t.²⁵

Both Adam and Eve share a “godlike” form, “divine” and clad in “native honour.” They are inseparable in their virtues; one is not more predisposed to sin than the other, both are “the image of thir glorious Maker,” shining with “truth, wisdom, Sancitude severe and pure.”

There, at first glance, is no difference in their character, which is important to consider when thinking about the inevitable conclusion of the poem. Adam and Eve, man and woman, are equal in this description. In fact, this is very much in line with T. E’s “The Lawes Resolutions of Women’s Rights,” particularly the section on “The Creation of Man and Woman.” This work was meant to serve as a reference work for women, pieced together out of various legal treaties.”

Within “The Lawes Resolutions of Women’s Rights,” T.E attempts to reconcile the “first” creation story, which is prominent in Protestant Bibles, and the “second” creation story, which is more present in other biblical iterations. The first creation story states that Adam and Eve were brought into existence at the same time, and are automatically equal.

The second creation story, the more popular and more cited of the two for patriarchal connotations, states that Adam was created first, with Eve a secondary creation, an afterthought. In Book one of T.E’s work, he refers to Genesis, in which woman, Eve, “was ordained to bee with a man as a helpe and a companion, because God saw it was not good that Man should bee alone.” Eve was created as a “helpe,” but also as a “companion,” an equal for Adam to spend his time with. Eve, here, is not a lesser being than Adam, but rather a double made in his and God’s likeness; she comes from him, and, as a result, is “one” with him. This is a reoccurring theme throughout Paradise Lost, this idea that Eve is from Adam, and therefore is a part of him, sharing his values and beliefs. Both Adam and Eve are ultimately from God, and instilled with his virtues, so what is special about Eve that she ultimately is the one that is tempted into committing mankind’s greatest sin, and eating the

apple from the Tree of Knowledge? There, in this first depiction of Adam and Eve, is seemingly no great difference between the attitudes and character of men and women that would lead to such an apocalyptic event; Milton seems to be following the first creation story, rather than the second.

However, Milton then seems to contradict himself within his next few lines. He separates Adam from Eve, after essentially claiming they are of the same stock, come from the same maker with the same values, by situating Adam above Eve:

Whence true autoritie in men; though both  
Not equal, as thir sex not equal seemd;  
For contemplation hee and valour formd,  
For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,  
Hee for God only, shee for God in him.\textsuperscript{28}

Adam is now described as having “true autoritie,” and Adam and Eve are no longer considered equals. They are quickly distinguished from each other from their previous dual description, Adam now being contemplative and of “valour formd,” and Eve of “softness” and “sweet attractive Grace.” Milton even goes so far to directly state that their genders are a source of inequality between the two; “not equal, as thir sex not equal seemd.” Milton ascribes more traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine traits to Adam and Eve, respectively. These are associations that seem more typical when considering the Bible and the source material Milton is pulling from. Here, it seems as if Milton is following the patriarchal second creation story, rather than the first, which is the Protestant iteration of

Adam and Eve’s “birth.” However, referring back to “The Lawes Resolutions of Women’s Rights,” T.E writes that “a writ of conspiracy doth not lye against one onely….against baron and feme, for they are but one person.”\textsuperscript{29} Here, Adam and Eve are described as being one unit, one person, which raises the question, how can there be inequalities if Adam and Eve are supposed to be the same individual?

“The Lawes Resolutions of Women’s Rights” attempts to reconcile these two ideas, that Adam and Eve can simultaneously be equal while unequal; “they bee by intent….one person, yet in nature and some other cases….they remain divers, like Adams punishment was severall from Eves.”\textsuperscript{30} “The Lawes” attempt to recognize that there is some sort of difference between man and woman, Adam and Eve, but is still adamant they are one person. It says nothing about whether or not man and woman carry different values or virtues based on their sex, which, again, leads back to Milton’s argument that there is a difference. A difference between their virtues makes it easier to accept and believe that Eve, the “softer” of the two, will fall prey to sin, even if they are supposed to “bee by intent,” one unit. Milton, like T.E, starts by grappling with both of these creation stories; the readers first impression of Adam and Eve is that they are on equal footing. However, unlike T.E, Milton seemingly chooses to follow more in line with the second, unequal creation story instead.

Finally, after having their characters judged, both Adam and Eve’s physical appearance is described:


\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, 4.
Adam is best described as “manly.” He is the epitome of what it means to be a perfect, male specimen. His shoulders are broad and his hair curled in “Hyacinthin” style, like that of Odysseus, a man who is considered great and is a stereotypical masculine figure in classic literature. The distinction is made that Adam’s curls do not fall below his shoulders, as anything falling below his shoulders could make him look feminine. Eve, on the other hand, is the physical opposite of Adam. Where he is broad, she is slender, where his hair is short, hers falls “as a vail,” all the way down to her waist. She is the picture of femininity, her looks even implying “subjection” to her masculine counterpart. While Adam and Eve both may be “of God,” Milton makes it clear within the text that there is a definite difference in their status as man and woman, both in their defining characteristics and physical appearance. This is particularly important when considering the illustrations. Milton has essentially provided a guideline for any illustrator in how to draw both Adam and Eve, if the text is supposed to inspire the illustrations. However, when actually looking at the sculptures found at the front of each book, there are noticeable differences between how Adam and Eve are described and depicted in the poem versus how they are illustrated in the sculptures.

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While the text places Adam and Eve in the main focus of the poem at the forefront of the Book, the illustration (Figure 2) actually seems to do the opposite. This sculpture is the only one illustrated by Bernard Lens. At the forefront of the sculpture is the brief scene in which Uriel tells Gabriel and the other angels of Satan’s deception and intrusion into the Garden of Paradise. There are three angels sitting and standing on the ground, while Uriel floats above all of them. This is definitely an interesting decision, as the introduction to Adam and Eve, and Satan’s lamentations at his first glimpse of those meant to replace him and his fellow fallen angels, are the focus of this Book of the poem. Something to note, however, is that Uriel has long, curly hair that flows past his shoulders. While angels, typically in biblical literature, are viewed as genderless and sexless, in *Paradise Lost*, Uriel is referred to as a “he.” This is intriguing, when considering how explicit Milton was that Adam, another masculine figure in the poem, had short hair, that most certainly did not go past his shoulders. In addition to an ambiguous hairstyle, Uriel’s face and body are also fairly ambiguous if he is to be viewed as a “he.” While his body is covered by clothing, the lines of his illustration are soft, leading to a fuller, suppler figure. His face is also soft, and he is drawn with some typically feminine traits, like fuller lips. With Lens’s angels, there is a conscious indifference to stereotypical gender traits. The angels represent a sort of hermaphroditic perfection that allows them to toe the line between what is inherently female and what is inherently masculine. This is important when analyzing Adam and how he is depicted, as, in Lens’s sculpture, the lines seem to be blurred between what is masculine and what is feminine when drawing masculine characters. Where Milton wants to emphasize a sexual difference between man and woman, Lens does not.
Adam and Eve are still included in this illustration, albeit in the background. They can be seen first to the right, closest to the front of the illustration, lying down, with Satan disguised as a frog or toad of some sort, whispering into Eve’s ear. Standing over top of Adam and Eve are two angels with spears pointed towards Satan, as they have just caught him in his act of deception. In front of Adam and Eve, in the foreground, are two different types of animals: two rabbits, and what appears to be a goat. While there is some distance between the goat and the rabbits, the positioning almost mirrors that of Adam and Eve and Satan. Goats are often associated with the devil, which means the rabbits are meant to represent, or be associated with, Adam and Eve. Still on the right side of the sculpture, but further back, they can be seen again, in the Garden amongst some trees and what appears to be a camel-like creature. Adam is on the left, while Eve is on the right. In line with their image, to the left of the page, there are several more animals. These animals appear to include an elephant and some sort of two-headed tiger. Their last depiction is in the middle of the page, just to the left of where they are illustrated lying down. This image details Adam and Eve, again, in the midst of the Garden, surrounded by more animals, looking upwards, in prayer towards God. They, like in the other two depictions, are, again, surrounded by animals; the animals are a unicorn, a stag, a rhino, and some sort of bird. In all of these depictions, Adam and Eve are fairly small compared to what is going on around them. The angels are bigger than them, the flora and fauna tower over them, but the animals actually seem to be the same size as they are.

While it can be hard to analyze exactly what this illustration says about how we should look at and consider Adam and Eve, and how the reader should read the text as a result, there is one main illustrative choice that sticks out: Adam and Eve look nearly
identical. The only way to tell the two apart is the fact that Eve has longer hair than Adam. In the first image, the one closest to the front and at the right of the page, Eve, with long hair, is the closest to the front, while Adam is behind her. They share very similar facial features, but it is hard to describe any other physical similarities because of the position they are lying in. Interesting to note is that Eve is the “base” of their sleeping position, with Adam curled on top of and over her chest. This is an inherently more feminine position, while Eve seems to be taking on the masculine role in this particular glimpse into their relationship. Moving then to the left, to the third depiction of Adam and Eve, they are, again, astonishingly, physically similar. Eve is behind Adam, with flowing long hair, but that is where their differences end. Their body shapes, and actually their heights as well, difficult to differentiate from each other. In the second illustration, in the back to the right, is even harder to identify who is who. The only clue, again, is Eve’s long hair, and what seems to be a slight formation of breast on her body.

Adam and Eve’s similarities, again, can be related to T. E’s “The Lawes Resolutions of Women’s Rights,” and its relation of Adam and Eve as one person. In the creation story, “God brought Woman to Man to bee named by him, hee found straight way that she was bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh, giving her a name, testifying shee was taken out of Man.” Eve is physically taken and created from Adam, just like how a child is physically taken from and created by its mother. This infers some sort of femininity to Adam, as he is like an acting mother to Eve; he is the vessel in which she is “carried,” in the form of his rib, and ultimately comes from him. Creation and creating things are often associated with women, and here, Adam is the creator of womankind. Eve, in turn, has some sort of

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masculinity to her as a result of her being from Adam. She is “bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh,” “taken out of Man,” meaning that some part of her is “Man,” or masculine. The text goes on in an effort to continue to advance the idea that Adam and Eve are interchangeable, stating that it is “pronounced that man and wife shall be but one flesh.” It therefore, in terms of “The Lawes Resolutions of Women’s Rights,” makes sense that it is hard to differentiate between the physical forms of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve are of one flesh, inseparable form, and therefore, look similar to each other.

However, Milton took great effort to physically, and even slightly emotionally, separate the two from each other. Adam was certainly supposed to look “manly,” while Eve is described as “womanly.” And yet, this illustration does very little to set the two apart. In fact, it reaffirms Milton’s first description of Adam and Eve as being of similar stature, both “godlike” and “noble.” Missing from the illustration are Adam’s “shoulders broad,” “fair large Front,” and “manly forelock.” Also absent is Eve’s “slender waste,” her “softness” and “sweet attractive Grace.” While it could have been difficult to really add the masculine and feminine details depicted in the text, because of how small the images of Adam and Eve are, there are most certainly actions Lens as the illustrator could have taken to make Adam look more masculine, or Eve look more feminine. They are illustrated as having a similar stature and build. Eve carries herself in a similar manner to Adam and is of a similar height in both of the depictions in which they are standing up. Adam is even postured in a feminine position in the illustration of the two lovers lying down. It lends a sort of innocence to the two characters as well, that there is no perception or differentiation of gender between the Adam and Eve because there is no knowledge of differentiation of gender. Adam and Eve certainly

33 Ibid, 4.
have different roles, different parts to play in Eden, but it isn’t perceived as a deficit or lack of something one has that the other does not. This was most certainly a conscious decision that follows more in line with Milton’s first description of Adam and Eve as being similar in shape and manner and the first creation story.

In her “Evil as Parody in the Paradise That Was Lost: Three Illustrators Interpret Milton’s Book 4,” Virginia Tufte takes a look at how different illustrators, including Lens, and their take on the contents of Book IV and Eden. While she focuses more on Satan and evil than she does on gender and Adam, she makes an important point about Lens’s work on the whole; “What is more important, [is that] Lens appears to have read Milton’s text thoughtfully, with attention to detail.”34 Lens’s illustration is a very direct interpretation of the text, particularly in its depiction of Uriel and the other angels in the middle of the illustration, and Satan corrupting Eve’s dreams to the right of the illustration. However, within this adherence to the poem, there is flexibility in Lens’s analysis and interpretation. In the Biblical story’s depiction and visualization Eden may be depicted exactly as it is described in Book IV, but Lens’s takes some liberty with his illustration of Adam, Eve, and the angels that allows for a different take on Paradise Lost and gender.

Book VIII

Books VI, VII, and VIII of Paradise Lost are, in contrast to Book IV, which focuses on both inhabitants of Paradise, Adam-centric. In the Books VI and VII, the angel Raphael comes

down to Adam and Eve’s home, to tell them of the impending threat of Satan, talking of Satan’s history and revolt against Heaven as background information for Adam and Eve. On Raphael’s arrival, it is Adam who receives him into the home, while Eve acts as a hostess, gathering food for the two men and then leaving them alone to talk. She isn’t seen or heard from for almost all of Books VI and VII, but reappears briefly in Book VIII. Adam, on the other hand, is an active presence in Books VI and VII, and is the leading narrator of Book VIII. There is a clear difference, within these three books, in Adam and Eve’s status and hierarchy. Adam is the one who directly converses with Raphael, a messenger from Heaven. Even though his message is supposedly for the two of them, Raphael reaffirms Adam’s status, as he addresses just Adam, not both Adam and Eve. Eve is virtually silenced in these books, while Adam is a focal point, and drives the poem forward. In Book VIII, specifically, the story of Adam’s own Creation is related, as well as how Eve came to be (as a result of Adam). Adam, here, embodies more of his previously described masculinity.

While in Books VI and VII, Adam is the picture-perfect man of the house, the story of his creation in Book VIII provides an interesting contrast to his previously affirmed masculinity. Adam, when he first “awakes,” describes first seeing himself: “My self I then perus’d, and Limb by Limb / Survey’d, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran / With supple joints, as lively vigour led: / But who I was, or where, or from what cause, / Knew Not.”

35 Sticking out most in Adam’s first encounter with himself is his contrasting self-description; he is simultaneously “supple” and full of “vigour.” While supple and vigor are not antonyms of each other, both are traditionally gender-coded. More often than not, women are described as being supple, whereas men are lauded on their vigor. Here, Adam is

described as having both, which is contradictory, considering his position in the previous two books as a patriarch and leading figure of his household, as well as having authority over Eve as he is her creator.

Adam’s masculinity can be further scrutinized, in a flashback to his creation, just lines later:

Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?
Not of my self; by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power preeminent;
Tell me, how I may know him, how adore,
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier then I know. \(^{36}\)

Adam expresses submissive behavior previously, in the poem, only seen or described in Eve. Religious worship, even though it isn’t described as such, is the very act of submitting to something greater than oneself. Here, Adam recognizes that “some great Maker” is what brought him into being, “in goodness and power preeminent.” As a result, by some innate desire, he wants to “know [his maker]” and “adore” him for all that he has given him. Even though Adam has no idea who this great Maker is, he knows that it is natural and good to praise whoever it is; the Maker is responsible for and is the reason “that thus [Adam] move[s] and live[s] and feel[s] that [he is] happier than [he] know[s].” In the Books preceding Book VIII, Books VI and VII in particular, the reader is introduced to Eve and Adam’s dynamic as husband and wife, more so than in Book IV, where they are just introduced without much emphasis on the hierarchy between them. As previously mentioned, Eve is silenced and

\(^{36}\) Ibid, VIII, 277-282
submissive to her partner, while Adam rules and reigns as the man of the house. However, here, Adam desires to submit to a higher power in the same way in which Eve submits to Adam as her higher power. Adam not just wants to show his praise and adoration for his greater Maker, but it is also expected of him, as his greater Maker is God himself. There is a balance that appears through this depiction of Adam; he is simultaneously a masculine force and presence, while retaining some feminine qualities and ideologies.

In the illustration for Book VIII (Figure 3), the Adam depicted is much bigger than any of the Adams drawn in the illustration for Book IV (Figure 2). Unlike the Book IV illustration, Book VIII’s is one of several who’s illustrator is Unknown. It is evident that these two illustrations are very different from each other, particularly in drawing technique and stylistic choices. Book IV’s picture is shaded with darker lines, particularly when it comes to the humans and angels being depicted. The shapes of all of the figures, animals, Adam and Eve, and angels alike, are generally softer and rounder than their depiction in Book VIII’s sculpture. Book VIII is all-around brighter, and its lines are sharper. However, both illustrations still manage to convey a similar air of gender-fluidity for both of their depictions of Adam and Eve.

The Book VIII sculpture depicts the story of Adam’s creation in several different, individual portrayals. In the Book VIII sculpture, there are, what looks like, four different depictions of Adam, that shrink in size from the forefront to the background. The first Adam depicted is the biggest, at the front and to the right of the illustration. He is very masculine in his stature, unlike the previous illustration discussed above; his lines are sharper, which aid his air of masculinity. He is muscular, and even though he is reclining, it seems as if he is of a greater stature than when depicted in the previous sculpture. His hair is very clearly short,
an important and defining characteristic for Milton and his textual Adam. What is most interesting about this first Adam is the animals he is surrounded by. In the bottom right corner, there is a ram. To his left, there is a stag, a unicorn, and some sort of dog with a short and pinched face. Behind Adam, in the top of the tree he is sitting on, there are various different birds, only two of which are of a discernable species; a peacock and an owl.

Adam displays both masculine and feminine traits throughout his telling of his Creation, which makes the animals surrounding him intriguing. Easiest to understand are the stag and the ram; both are the masculine form of their animals, and are, obviously, traditionally associated with men and masculine traits. They are also animals with horns, which is associated with virility and vigor, two traits that are typically intrinsic to masculinity. Owls represent wisdom, which is a desirable trait in general. It is interesting to note that, considering Milton’s obvious admiration and appreciation for Greek mythology and epics, that owls are associated with Athena, the goddess of wisdom, a woman. Hardest to place or understand is the presence of the dog, unicorn, and peacock. Certain dogs have ties to different genders, based on build and character traits. This dog depicted doesn’t seem to be of a specific breed, so it is hard to tell what the presence of the dog means in terms of gender identity and conformity. Unicorns and peacocks, on the other hand, are typically feminine-associated creatures, so their proximity to Adam in the forefront of this illustration is curious. Peacocks are associated with vanity and unicorns are associated with virginity and purity, both of which is more often associated with women than it is with men. They do, however, also have masculine-coded traits in addition to their feminine ones. Unicorns have horns, like rams and stags. Male peacocks are the ones with larger, colorful plumage, and it is a male peacock that is being depicted in the illustration of Book VIII. However, on the whole, the
menagerie of animals surrounding him, plus his general appearance, how he was drawn, allow Adam to retain this dual masculinity and femininity that seems to be present in the text of *Paradise Lost*.

The next depiction of Adam in this illustration is to the left of the first Adam, in the middle of the overall sculpture. Whereas the first Adam is undeniably masculine in his physique, the second Adam lacks his definition and frame. Also in this small image is Eve, who is standing over Adam with her hand out in a manner that says “no thank you.” Her physique seems more similar to Adam, and, as seen previously in the illustration in Book IV, her only true defining characteristic is her long hair. Eve’s stance is one of power, as she is the one who is towering over Adam as he lies prone on the ground. Adam, in particular, the way he is lying, is in a suggestively submissive position, something that screams the opposite of the “Father of all of Mankind” moniker he is given by God himself.

The third depiction of Adam is behind, and to the left of, the second. Here, Adam is reclining in the shade while Eve works in the garden to his left. Adam, again, looks nothing like the muscular, toned Adam at the forefront of the illustration. This seems simultaneously contradictory and in line with the characterization seen of Adam and Eve in Book VIII, and several of the Books prior to Book VIII. Eve is the one who brings food to Adam and Raphael when Raphael first appears at their home to warn them of the dangerous Satan, so it makes sense to see her working in the Garden, seemingly harvesting food. However, this would make her the supposed “bread-winner” of the family, which is against the submissive attitude she is supposed to have. Throughout the poem, the reader does catch glimpses of independence and free thought from Eve, early in the poem, in Book IV, when she is depicted running away from Adam when she firsts sees him, and later in the poem, in Books
IX onwards, right before and after she eats the apple; she has both traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine traits at different points in *Paradise Lost*. The same can be said for Adam. He sits reclining because it is Eve’s job, as his wife, to serve him. However, it is also considered a man’s job to provide for his wife and his family, and his relaxing and reclining could be seen as a lack of masculinity on his part. He, like Eve, is expressing both masculine and feminine characteristics, throughout the poem and throughout this illustration.

The fourth depiction of Adam in the Book VIII illustration is the hardest to discern, and may not be Adam at all. However, as Book VIII is narrated by Adam, and about Adam, it most likely is him in the very back of the sculpture, talking to an angel, perhaps Raphael. Adam, like in the third depiction, is sitting down, while the angel is standing up. Adam and Raphael are very ambiguous in their gender traits; where the first depiction of Adam is obviously masculine, this last depiction is not. Both Adam and Raphael are drawn much softer, with curves that make them look more feminine than the harsher, stronger lines normally associated with muscle and muscle definition would. In fact, their overall design is ambiguous; the only way the viewer is able to tell that this is Michael and Raphael is from the poem and the story of Book XIII itself. This depiction is much more in line with Bernard Lens’s interpretation of Adam and the angels in Book IV. However, while most of the unknown illustrator’s stylistic choices are vastly different from those of Lens’s, there is a similar sense of gender ambiguity that permeates both illustrations. In the unknown’s, it is seen less in the physical depictions of Adam, but rather, in the actions and surroundings of his physical depictions of Adam.

This is best noted in Thomas Anderson’s scholarly article, “All Things Visible in Heaven or Earth: Reading the Illustrations of the 1688 Edition of Paradise Lost.” Anderson,
in his argument, focuses his analysis through William Shullenberger’s argument on “the ‘terror’ and ‘amazement’ of Milton’s representation of gendered relations in *Paradise Lost*.” Shullenberger and Anderson apply this line of thinking to the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost*; “The illustrations of the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost* confirm what Shullenberger intuits – that is, gendered relations in Eden are far more dynamic…than contemporary criticism suggests.” Anderson’s paper mainly focuses its argument on Eve and her representation in the poem versus the illustrations. He does so using the idea of voyeurism, desire, and the “objectifying gaze” to quantify her agency; how women are looked at and objectified by those around them is an important topic for discussion in feminist critiques and analysis of classic literature. Although there is a focus and emphasis on Eve’s position in the poem, Anderson also applies this line of thinking to Adam and his depiction in Book VIII.

Adam’s reclining position at the front of the illustration is important to consider; “Reclining in the sun’s warm gaze in the design to Book [VIII], Adam can be said to be both the subject and the object of a specular transaction.” Being the subject of a “specular transaction,” the one doing the viewing, is a position of authority. The viewer is allowed to perceive and see whatever objects however they desire. Viewers have the power to manipulate meaning of the subject based upon personal perception. More often than not, especially in literature and works of art, the viewer is male; there is an inherent association between authority and masculine traits. As a result, Adam as the “subject” of specular transaction, in his first, most prominent depiction, radiates an air of masculine authority. This

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38 Ibid, 163.
39 Ibid, 170.
Adam is the one doing the viewing, looking out at all that surrounds him. However, this Adam also serves as the “object” of specular transaction. Adam is lounging in a vulnerable position, which leaves him open to be viewed and gazed upon. This reclining position is rooted more in femininity and feminine traits, rather than masculinity. As men are often the subject doing the viewing, women are often the object of their viewing and their gaze. As an object, Adam can be perceived and judged in his femininity and his feminine traits.

This duality of gender and gender-identification is further seen when comparing Adam and his depiction to Eve and her depiction; “The Eve of [this illustration] seems not the passive object of Adam’s gaze; instead, her positions in the background scenes suggest her adventurous, indeed active, disposition, which contrasts with Adam’s relatively passive posture.”

40 This analysis is very much in line with what not only the unknown illustrator, but also Lens seems to be doing with their drawings and depictions of not just Adam, but Eve and the angels, in their respective illustrations. Gender and gender expression of Adam and Eve are much more fluid than the poem itself would suggest. In fact, “the illustrations of the 1688 edition challeng[e] traditional interpretations” of Paradise Lost that position Adam as the sole figure of authority and Eve as the sole figure of objection and subjection.

41 In fact, particularly in the illustration for Book VIII, “the various lines of vision that position [Adam] as a shifting subject/object in Paradise [show that he] clearly lacks the authority in the images of Eden.”

42 In these illustrations, Adam is not the traditional male authority figure, the father of the patriarchy, that the poem tries to suggest he is.

40 Ibid, 171.
41 Ibid, 173.
42 Ibid, 173.
While the illustrations and the poem preceding Book IX promote some sort of gender ambiguity and fluidity, there is a definite shift after Book IX, the Book in which Eve and Adam eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. By Book XII, the final Book of the poem, Adam, in the text, has emerged as a concrete masculine, authority figure. There is no question that he is a man, and any feminine traits previously hinted at or suggested are done away with. This shift starts in Book X, after God shames Adam for listening to Eve, rather than himself. Adam, as a result, starts to assert himself more, particularly over Eve. Eve, on the other hand, loses any agency that she may have had, completely submitting to Adam, which only serves to reaffirm his concrete masculine authority. The culmination of all of this, of Adam and Eve’s actions and their fall, is best seen in Book XII, the finale of *Paradise Lost*.

In Book XI, Michael, the archangel, shows Adam the future of humanity, and this continues in Book XII. It is important to note, when analyzing and considering how Adam responds to Michael in the poem, Eve’s thoughts on her own punishment, her response, and her and Adam’s combined punishment. Eve, while meek and submissive to Adam, begging for his forgiveness, does not want to abide or follow through with God’s prophecy that her progeny will “bruise [the serpent’s] head, [and he] bruise [their] heel;” she suggests they kill themselves instead. Adam discards her desires and is, instead, enthusiastic and excited about God’s prophecy and Michael’s visions and promises:

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Enlightener of my darkness, gracious things
Thou hast revealed, those chiefly which concerne
Just Abraham and his Seed: now first I finde
Mine eyes true op’ning, and my heart much eas’d,
Erwhile perplext with thoughts what would becom
Of mee and all Mankind; but now I see
His day, in whom all Nations shall be blest,
Favour unmerited by me, who sought
Forbidd’n knowledge by forbidd’n means. 44

Michael has given Adam a glimpse of what his “seed” will accomplish, as long as he abides by God’s wishes, and Adam could not be more excited. He exalts Michael as the “Enlightener of [his] darkness,” “darkness” referring to his fallen state. Even though he has fallen, Adam can still achieve some sort of “enlightenment.” Adam acknowledges that he has done nothing to warrant any mercy or favor from God, because of his disobedience and actions in Book IX; “Favour unmerited by me, who sought forbidd’n knowledge by forbidd’n means.” As a result, Adam was “perplext with thoughts what would becom / Of [him] and all Mankind.” However, Michael’s promises of a future for not just Adam, but all of the human race, have eased Adam’s heart and opened his eyes to what he needs to do. Adam must obey God and have progeny, and therefore, he must ignore Eve and her reservations about their punishment. Adam is excited by the possibilities the future holds, and is willing to obey and follow God’s will. He has seemingly accepted his fate, whereas Eve has not.

This is further confirmed by Adam in his response to Michael as he concludes his speech and visions of the future:

44 Ibid, XII, 271-279.
Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
Of knowledge, what this Vessel can containe;
Beyond which was my folly to aspire.
Henceforth I learne, that to obey is best,
And love with feare the onely God, to walk
As in his presence, ever to observe
His providence, and on him sole depend.45

Adam, “greatly instructed,” has accepted that it is his time to depart Eden, and he does so “greatly in peace of thought” because of what Michael has told him and shown him. Instead of moping about his fate, lamenting what has happened to him and how far he has fallen, Adam has decided to listen and learn instead. He will use his “fill of knowledge” that he has acquired not just from the Tree of Knowledge, but from Michael as well. He will obey, as “to obey is best,” God and adhere to his prophecy and punishment. Adam has learned his lesson from listening to Eve instead of his Creator, and that he should “on [God] sole depend” and “love with feare the onely God to walk.” These are not the words of a man who is defeated, a man who is unoptimistic about his future and what awaits him outside the confines of Eden. Rather, this is a man who has heard of and sees himself a future that is promising, welcoming the change without concern or argument. Adam is ready to commit himself to living a life committed to God and his teachings, “ever [observing] his providence” for the rest of his life.

This uplifting sentiment is echoed in the final lines of the poem: “The World was all before them, where to choose / Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide: / They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow, / Through Eden took their solitarie way.”46 It is a

46 Ibid, XII, 646-649.
pleasing image, to imagine Adam and Eve, optimistic “with wandering steps and slow” venturing their way out of Eden, with the whole world “all before them.” It seems, that by the end of Book XII, Adam, and perhaps Eve as well, has come to terms with their expulsion from paradise and their future as the parents of all of mankind. However, Book XII’s illustration (Figure 4) provides a vastly different take on the poem’s events and ultimate outcome. This illustration, like the illustration for Book VIII, was done by an unknown illustrator, seemingly a different one than those of both Book VIII and Book IV, based upon the style of illustration. Book XII’s illustration was engraved by Michael Burghers, also unlike the previous two illustrations as well.

The first major difference between Book XII’s illustration and those of Book IV and Book VIII is that Book XII depicts one scene. The illustrations for Book IV and Book VII are multiple different mini-scenes and episodes that make up one larger picture. The focus of Book XII’s singular episode is an angel, most likely the archangel Michael, guiding Adam and Eve out of Eden. Above the expulsion, there are six angels lying in various positions on clouds. These angels are reminiscent of the angels in Lens’s Book IV illustration. They are softly drawn, like the clouds they are resting on, with similar facial features and body structure. They also have similar, shoulder length hair. Short hair, by Milton’s logic, indicates that the angels are supposed to be masculine and male. However, they lack the hard, masculine lines that can be seen in this illustrator’s Adam and Michael at the center of the page. In fact, the angels in the clouds are illustrated fairly femininely, similar to this illustrator’s Eve. One of the angels, on the cloud to the top right of the illustration, seems to have breasts; smaller than Eve, but there nevertheless.
The main focus of the illustration is Adam, Eve, and Michael. Michael is clothed in a long tunic, and lacks the softness of the other angels in the illustration. While less of his actual body is visible to the viewer, it is easy to see that Michael the archangel is much more defined than the other angels; he is more muscular, and drawn with harder lines than the angels that are depicted in the clouds. Whereas the other angels are passive, lounging in the sky, content to watch Adam and Eve’s expulsion from up above, Michael is an active figure in the act. He is positioned slightly above them, elevated on a step, so that he can look down on them as they leave. It is an important contrast between Michael and Adam and Eve that he is situated above them in the illustration, as it positions him as the authority figure in the engraving. If his elevated status were not enough, Michael is carrying a sword, something no other individual in the illustration has, which also represents his status as the one in command. It is also important to notice that Michael is fully clothed, whereas Adam and Eve are not. This puts Adam and Eve in a position of vulnerability, compared to Michael, where they are exposed not just to the angels in the poem, but the reader and viewer as well. While the poem certainly places Michael as an authority figure in Book XII, and the Books preceding it, it is not at the expense of Adam’s authority. In fact, Michael serves more as a guide, affirming Adam’s confidence in his decision to leave Eden and fulfill God’s prophecy, rather than listen to Eve and forgo redemption.

This illustration provides a contradictory Adam to that of the poem and of Book XII. Adam in the poem is not only accepting of God’s decision to expel him and his wife from the Garden of Eden, he is confident, and even excited for all the possibilities it brings; their future is bright. Adam takes responsibility for his actions and Eve’s actions, and is the authority figure, the leader, in their departure from Paradise. Eve lacks his confidence in this
situation and turns to him for guidance. She did not and does not want to leave Eden or follow God’s plan and have children. As a result, she turns to Adam for guidance and comfort. He takes on the role of the typical man of the house, while she is his stereotypical housewife, meek and submissive. However, completely contrary to anything in the poem at this point, the Adam in the illustration is not a masculine authority figure.

Adam in the illustration certainly has the physique of a powerful man. He is very muscular; his physique reminiscent of the central Adam in Book VIII’s illustration. Particularly when compared to Eve, who is drawn much softer, with womanly curves. This Adam, like all the other Adams, has short hair, another Milton male characteristic, while this Eve has long hair. Both Adam and Eve wear vines and fig leaves to cover their lower halves. This is where Adam’s masculinity ends. Adam is depicted with his head in his hands, face covered, shoulders slouched as he departs Eden. This is not the confident, ready to embrace the future Adam the poem describes in Book XII; this Adam is the antithesis of that Adam. The Adam in the illustration cannot comfort Eve, as he is too busy feeling sorry for himself, and is not even looking or paying attention to his surroundings. In fact, this Adam cannot give comfort because he needs comfort, which he is receiving from Michael, who has his hand on his shoulder. Whereas Adam is the one guiding Eve and himself out of Eden in the poem, in the illustration, it is Michael who has to guide them instead; the hand on Adam’s shoulder is both a comfort and a command to leave. His posture is more reminiscent of a grieving widow than it is of a man in charge, someone who is submitting to and grieving, not accepting or welcoming, his fate. Adam’s muscular and masculine physique is offset by his submissive, more classically feminine posture.
Not only does Michael and his comforting hand affirm and place Adam in a womanlier position than the poem suggests, but Eve’s depiction and posture do as well. Eve has a feminine physique, but a more confident, masculine posture; Adam is the opposite. In Book XII of the poem, Eve is barely a presence. She speaks only once, towards the end of the Book, and it is to reaffirm her devotion and dedication to Adam, confirming she will do whatever he says, no matter her thoughts or feelings, because he is the one who said to do it. Here, however, Eve seems more comfortable and accepting of their expulsion than Adam does. While he hides his face, Eve’s is open, looking upwards and outwards towards their future outside of Eden. Eve’s body language is generally more open than Adam’s, signifying a greater acceptance of their expulsion than the poem suggests she has. Confidence is often associated positively with masculinity, and negatively with femininity, so the fact that Eve displays both feminine and masculine traits makes it complicated to provide one definite reading of her body language and confidence. The same can be said for Adam and his closed off, submissive posture, but masculine physique.

This contrast is noted in Anderson’s analysis. Eve has a fairly calm disposition, her gaze open, in the illustration, compared to Adam; “By contrast, Michael, with his hand on Adam’s shoulder, physically directs the fallen man out of Eden, and Adam lacks the strength to return the gaze of those who look at his postlapsarian condition.” Adam is defeated, vulnerable, and weak, and therefore cannot look up towards the angels or his future. Adam’s downturned gaze “and covered eyes suggest his willingness to be objectified as sinner, fallen man.” Eve’s expression reads differently than Adam’s. Her “return gaze insists that she is

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47 Anderson, Thomas. ""All Things Visible in Heaven, or Earth": Reading the Illustrations of the 1688 Edition of "Paradise Lost". 180.
48 Ibid, 180.
not a willing martyr, not wanting to be objectified as spectacle of the Fall.”49 Women are often the subjects of objectification, expected to passively accept it, even in literature and art. However, in Book XII’s illustration, Eve is refusing to be a passive subject, choosing to look up at the angels who are taking part in her and Adam’s expulsion from Eden; “Her calm expression suggests her strength as she prepares for her next role as the mother of mankind.”50 Adam, not Eve, is the passive subject who is objectified in this illustration. The angels in the clouds and Michael are looking down on him, in all his shame, as he dejectedly leaves paradise. Illustrated Eve has all the strength and confidence of the poem’s Adam, whereas illustrated Adam has a lack of agency, ambition, and authority that the poem’s Eve lacks. There is a clear dichotomy, in Book XII in particular, between how the poem depicts Adam and Eve, and how the illustration depicts Adam and Eve.

49 Ibid, 180.
50 Ibid, 180.
Conclusion

The fourth edition of *Paradise Lost* is arguably the most important of all the editions, and that’s not just because it was a commercial success. What makes the fourth edition so important is the illustrations that precede each book in the poem. Not only are these illustrations detailed and intricate odes to Milton’s epic poem, but they are also additional avenues through which the reader can understand and find meaning in *Paradise Lost*.

Anyone who owned, owns, or has access to the fourth edition has access to multiple versions and multiple narratives of the poem. In particular, multiple narratives and versions that deal with gender and gender fluidity. While the illustrations can add to and amplify the poem’s narration, these narratives are not always in agreement with each other; in fact, more often than not, the illustrations contradict the poem’s ideas and ideologies on gender and gender expression.

In Book IV of the poem, Adam and Eve start off on a similar footing, with seemingly no differences between their status. That changes quickly, as Milton differentiates Adam and Eve based upon their gender. The illustration by Bernard Lens, at first glance, does little to contradict what Milton’s epic is saying, as it focuses mainly on Uriel and the other angels. However, the illustration actually plays with gender and gender fluidity through the illustrative techniques used to depict both the angels and Adam and Eve. Similar techniques can be seen in the Book VIII illustration, which goes even further to muddle the poem’s depiction of gender, male gender and masculinity in particular. Book VIII, which is all about Adam and his creation, and its illustration are simultaneously in agreement and at odds with each other. While the poem certainly cements Adam as a patriarchal authority figure, it also depicts him as having moments of femininity, or more feminine associated traits, like
submission and subjective behavior. The illustration captures this tension, the balance of femininity and masculinity, through both Adam’s depiction and his surroundings. The culmination of *Paradise Lost* is Book XII, whose illustration is perhaps the most contradictory of any of the engravings. The poem’s Adam, in Book XII, is confident, at his most masculine and authoritative status in the entirety of the epic. He has taken charge and is ready for his and Eve’s future outside of Eden. The illustrative Adam, in contrast is the weakest, most submissive Adam seen not just compared to the poem’s narrative, but also all the other illustrations’ Adams as well.

There is a tension between the illustrations and the poem that makes the fourth edition, of all the editions of *Paradise Lost*, the most unique and comprehensive reading of the poem. The illustrations and narrative are not always in agreement and that is what makes the fourth edition so special. Reading the 1688 version of *Paradise Lost* is like reading several different takes on the same poem, and it is due, in large part, to the presence of the illustrations; the reader can have a different experience, a different narrative, every time they read the fourth edition of *Paradise Lost*. It is impossible to isolate the visual image from the written image, which makes for a richer, more interesting reading experience of Milton’s classic epic. The fourth edition of *Paradise Lost* is so successful because of the illustrations and the various narratives it provides on gender and gender fluidity, focusing on Adam in particular. It is a unique reading experience that cannot be replicated by any other edition.

Between different versions and editions, the “abstract” story of *Paradise Lost* remains the same; the content of the story itself is consistent from edition to edition of the poem. However, each edition, each specific book, are unique and offer their own individual reading experience. A reader’s approach to the text is different based upon the physical object in
which they have access to the text. That is why having different versions of *Paradise Lost* are so important. The 1688 version in particular, because of its illustrations, is a perfect example of this concept. Illustrations are often considered secondary to the text. For many people, the text has been around longer, and therefore is considered the “correct” narrative, leaving little room for other interpretations or analyses. However, the illustrations in the fourth edition of *Paradise Lost* were included for a reason. They were not an afterthought and are meant to be considered and analyzed just like the text always is. In fact, these illustrations are the most important part of the 1688 version. They provide their own narratives on the events of the poem, and they precede the text itself. While the illustrations are certainly interesting on their own, what ultimately makes the fourth edition so special is that their narratives generate meaning with and within the text; it is a visual text. All in all, the 1688 edition of *Paradise Lost* has played a huge part in modifying the reception of the poem and creating a unique and individual reading experience.
Figure 1. Portrait of John Milton, with epigram by John Dryden. Fourth Edition of *Paradise Lost*. British Library.
Figure 2. Book IV Sculpture. Illustrated by Bernard Lens and sculpted by P. P. Bouche. Vassar Thompson Memorial Library Special Collections.
Figure 3. Book VIII Sculpture. Illustrated by Unknown and sculpted by Unknown. Victoria and Albert Museum.
Figure 4. Book XII Sculpture. Illustrated by Unknown and sculpted by Michael Burghers. University of Tulsa Library.
Bibliography


