



A University of Sussex PhD thesis

Available online via Sussex Research Online:

<http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/>

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Please visit Sussex Research Online for more information and further details

**Peripheral Vision:
The Miltonic in Victorian Painting,
Poetry, and Prose, 1825–1901**

Laura Fox Gill

Submitted for the examination of Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of Sussex

May 2017

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

LAURA FOX GILL

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**PERIPHERAL VISION: THE MILTONIC IN VICTORIAN PAINTING,
POETRY, AND PROSE, 1825–1901**

SUMMARY

This thesis explores the influence of John Milton on the edges of Victorian culture, addressing temporal, geographical, bodily, and sexual thresholds in Victorian poetry, painting, and prose. Where previous studies of Milton's Victorian influence have focused on the poetic legacy of *Paradise Lost*, this project identifies traces of Miltonic concepts across aesthetic borders, analysing an interdisciplinary cultural sample in order to state anew Milton's significance in the period between British Romanticism and early twentieth-century critical debates about the value of *Paradise Lost*.

The project is divided into four chapters. The first explores apocalyptic images and texts from the 1820s—Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826) and the paintings of John Martin—in relation to Miltonic aetiology and eschatology. These texts offer a complex re-thinking of the relation between personal loss and universal catastrophe, which draws on and positions itself against prophecy and apocalypse in *Paradise Lost*. In the second chapter I address conceptual connections that cross boundaries of medium and nationality, identifying the presence of a Miltonic notion of powerful passivity in the writing and marginalia of Herman Melville and the paintings and anecdotal appendages of J. M. W. Turner. In the third chapter I consider Milton's importance for A. C. Swinburne's poetic presentation of peripheral sexualities, identifying in Milton's poetry a pervasive metaphysics of bodily 'melting' or 'cleaving' which is essential to Swinburne's poetic project. The final chapter analyses the presence of the Miltonic in the fiction of Thomas Hardy, whose repeated readings of Milton contributed to both establishing his poetic vocabulary, and prompting a career-long engagement with Miltonic ideas. The thesis refocuses attention on peripheral elements of the work of these writers and artists to re-articulate Milton's importance for the Victorians, whilst bringing together models of influence which show the Victorian Milton to be at once liminal and galvanising.

CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	i
<i>List of Illustrations</i>	ii
Introduction	1
Milton and the Victorians	3
Selection and Structure of the Thesis	10
1 Beginning at the End: Apocalyptic Failures in 1826	15
Mary Shelley and Miltonic Beginnings	22
<i>The Last Man</i> as Failure	28
Fragments in the Frame: Epigraph and Introduction	34
Editing Shelley	43
Martin and Milton: False Starts and Dead Ends	47
2 ‘Only Stand and Wait’: Passive Power in Milton, Melville, and Turner	57
The Maze and the Snake: Structures of Psychic Experience	59
Milton’s Passive Power	66
Milton in Melville’s Marks and Marginalia	68
Speech and Stillness	72
Turner, Chaos, and the Anecdote	83
Conclusion	91
3 Melting Bodies: The Dissolution of Bodily Boundaries in Milton and Swinburne	93
The Miltonic and Swinburne’s Sexual Bodies	97
Milton’s Bodies, Cleaving Together	101
Swinburne’s Miltonic Melting Bodies	112
Milton’s Poetics of Melting	122
Conclusion	129
4 Milton Regained: Thomas Hardy	131
Milton’s Wessex	136
Sensation Fiction and the Myth of the Fallen Woman	144
Hardy’s Miltonic Hands	156
The Hand and the Will	170
Conclusion	174
Conclusion: Graves, Words, Images, Margins	175
<i>Bibliography</i>	180

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due first to my supervisor Lindsay Smith, whose unfailing enthusiasm and encouragement have been invaluable. This project originated in your undergraduate seminars on Thomas Hardy, and it's been a pleasure to have your guidance in developing those embryonic ideas into this thesis.

I would like to thank the brilliant postgraduate community at the University of Sussex for their support and companionship, especially (though not exclusively) Camilla Bostock, Katie Da Cunha Lewin, Lana Harper, Tom Houlton, Mike Rowland, Charlotte Terrell, and Kiron Ward. I've learned as much from you over the last four years as from the books in this bibliography. Thanks also to family and friends outside of academia whose support I have depended on in all sorts of ways.

I owe thanks to the staff at the Huntington Library and Art Collections in San Marino, California, the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, and the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester. An early version of Chapter 3 was previously published in *Victorian Network* 6.1, Bodies and Body Parts (2015)—thanks to the journal and to the guest editor Pamela K. Gilbert for her comments.

Finally, my deepest thanks to Andrew Key, who first nudged me towards nineteenth-century literature, and who has kept me company in this endeavour even from five thousand miles away.

FUNDING

This work was supported by the School of English at the University of Sussex and the Arts and Humanities Research Council [grant number AH/K503319/1].

LIST OF FIGURES

- 1 William Finden after Richard Westall, 'Milton's reconciliation to his wife' and 'Paradise Lost, Book X', pub. in *Paradise Lost* (London: J. Sharpe, 1822) inserted into John Milton, *The Paradise Lost of Milton with Illustrations by John Martin*, 2 vols (London: Septimus Prowett, 1826), pl. 65 + 66. RB 110034, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California. 5
- 2 Mihály Munkácsy, *Milton Dictating 'Paradise Lost' to His Two Daughters*, 1878, oil on canvas, 93.5 × 122.5 cm. Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest, Collection of Paintings. Photo © Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest. 8
- 3 John Martin, *The Last Man*, 1849, oil on canvas, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Photo © Walker Art Gallery. 16
- 4 Louis Édouard Fournier, *The Funeral of Shelley*, 1889, oil on canvas, 129.5 × 123.4 cm. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Photo © Walker Art Gallery. 20
- 5 John Martin, 'Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise', plate from *The Paradise Lost of Milton, with illustrations designed and engraved by John Martin*, 2 vols (London: Septimus Prowett, 1827), mezzotint, 25.4 × 35.6 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London, Department of Prints and Drawings and Department of Paintings. Photo © V&A. 49
- 6 John Martin, *Belsazzar's Feast*, 1820, oil on canvas, 80 × 120.7 cm. Yale Center for British Art, CT, Paul Mellon Collection. Photo © Yale. 53
- 7 J. M. W. Turner, *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps*, exh. 1812, oil on canvas, 146 × 237.5 cm. The Tate Gallery, London. Photo © Tate. 56
- 8 John Martin, *The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*, 1852, oil on canvas, 136.3 × 212.3 cm. Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne. Photo © Laing Art Gallery. 56
- 9 Melville's note in his copy of Thomas Beale, *The Natural History of the Sperm Whale*, 2nd edn (London: John Van Voorst, 1839), p. III. Houghton Library, Harvard College, MA. AC85 M4977 Zz839b. 002163880. Photo © Houghton Library. 58
- 10 J. M. W. Turner, 'A Harpooned Whale' in *Ambletuse and Wimereux Sketchbook*, 1845, graphite and watercolour on paper, 23.8 x 33.6 cm. The Tate Gallery, London, D35391, Turner Bequest CCCLVII 6. Photo © Tate. 61
- 11 Thomas Milton after Edward Burney, 'Eve Tempted', *Paradise Lost* (London: T. Heptinstall, 1799), pl. facing p. 257. Photo © Sanders of Oxford. 78
- 12 George Jones, *Turner's Body lying in State, 29 December 1851, c. 1851*, oil on millboard, 14 × 23 cm. The Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford. Photo © The Ashmolean. 87

- 13 J. M. W. Turner, *Snow Storm: Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*, exh. 1842, oil on canvas, 91.5 × 122 cm. The Tate Gallery, London. Photo © Tate. 89
- 14 Francis Bartolozzi after Thomas Stothard, 'Sin and Death' in *Graphic Illustrations of Milton's Paradise Lost* (London: John Hill, 1818). RB 621779, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California. 115
- 15 Title page, John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, facsimile of the 1st edn (London: Elliot Stock, 1877), signed by Thomas Hardy. Courtesy of the Thomas Hardy Collection, Dorset County Museum. 133
- 16 Richard Redgrave, *The Outcast*, 1851, oil on canvas, 78.4 × 107.1 cm. Royal Academy of the Arts, London. Photo © R.A./John Hammond 147
- 17 N. Schiavonetti after Henry Tresham, 'Illustration to *Paradise Lost* V.9–13' (detail), in John Kitto, and J. Gibbs, eds, *The Holy Bible* (The Extra-Illustrated 'Kitto Bible'), 60 vols (London, 1835 [1850?]), II, pl. 212. RB 49000 The Huntington Library, San Marino, California. 163
- 18 John Martin, *The Expulsion*, 1831, mezzotint with etching, 19.5 × 29.0 cm, from Martin's *Illustrations of the Bible* (1831–35). Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 368.2009. Photo © Art Gallery NSW. 163
- 19 William Blake, *The Expulsion* (Illustration to Milton's *Paradise Lost*), 1807 (Thomas set), pen and watercolour, 24.9 × 20.5 cm. The Huntington Library and Art Collection, San Marino, California. William Blake Collection, 000.13 (Butlin 529.12). Copyright © Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. Photo © The Huntington Library, 2008. 165
- 20 William Blake, *The Temptation and Fall of Eve* (Illustration to Milton's *Paradise Lost*), 1808 (Butts set), pen and watercolor on paper, 49.7 × 38.7 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA. Prints and Drawings, 90.99 (Butlin 536.9). Copyright © Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. Photo © MFA Boston, 2008. 172
- 21 William Blake, *Satan Watching the Endearments of Adam and Eve* (Illustration to Milton's *Paradise Lost*), 1807 (Thomas set), pen and watercolour, 25.7 × 21.8 cm. The Huntington Library and Art Collection, San Marino, California. William Blake Collection, 000.6 (Butlin 529.5). Copyright © Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. Photo © The Huntington Library, 2008. 173
- 22 Frontispiece and title page, *Poems of Mr. John Milton* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1645), with engraved portrait by William Marshall. PR 3550 .C45, Milton Collection, Columbia Rare Books and Special Collections, University of South Carolina. Photo © University of South Carolina, 2004. 178

Introduction

The most striking characteristic of the poetry of Milton is the extreme remoteness of the associations by means of which it acts on the reader. Its effect is produced, not so much by what it expresses, as by what it suggests; not so much by the ideas which it directly conveys, as by other ideas which are connected with them. He electrifies the mind through conductors.¹

This passage from Thomas Babington Macaulay's 1825 essay on Milton has often been employed in studies of Miltonic influence.² Macaulay is concerned with the power of Milton's poetry working through suggestion and association, but it is the notion of writers or painters coming after Milton as 'conductors' through which Milton 'electrifies the mind' that proves attractive to scholars of literary and cultural influence. This interpretation of Macaulay suggests rather powerfully the way in which figures influenced by Milton convey and transform Miltonic ideas and energy. Macaulay's words also prompt thinking about the strength of indirect influence that works through suggestion, appealing to the idea that Miltonic influence after 1825 becomes interestingly oblique. Looking at nineteenth-century texts indirectly, then, may reveal through 'peripheral vision'—a vision concerned with edges—overlooked modes of engagement with Miltonic ideas. My contention is that this is a particularly useful way of accessing the Miltonic in Victorian culture, specifically in the work of Mary Shelley, John Martin, Herman Melville, J. M. W. Turner, A. C. Swinburne, and Thomas Hardy.

Macaulay's notion of 'conductors', which identifies writers engaging with the Miltonic as both electrifying and electrified, is developed by Robert K. Wallace in the largest work to date on the relationship between Melville and Turner.³ Wallace uses similarly 'electrical' language, drawn from Melville's prose, to introduce the idea that his work is imbued with Turnerian energy:

In the 1850 essay "Hawthorne and His Mosses," [Melville] wrote that "genius, all over the world, stands hand in hand, and one shock of recognition runs the whole circle round" [...]. Melville's "recognition" of Hawthorne in August 1850 had been preceded by his recognition of Shakespeare in February 1849; the shocks from each run directly from the "Mosses" essay into the heart of *Moby-Dick*. The shock induced

¹ 'Milton' [August, 1825], in *Critical and Historical Essays: Contributed to 'The Edinburgh Review'* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1877), pp. 1–28 (p. 6).

² John Leonard mentions that 'several twentieth-century critics, including Ricks, Gardner, and Fish, will applaud this comment' in *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost, 1667–1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 106. See also Erik Gray, *Milton and the Victorians* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 26–30. I am frequently indebted to Gray's excellent study.

³ *Melville and Turner: Spheres of Love and Fright* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

by his recognition of Turner was equally strong, discharging energies of comparable power and significance into the heart of his masterpiece.⁴

Why is this metaphor of conductive energy so useful for theories of influence? Firstly, because in transfer energy is repeatedly transformed without loss; secondly, because electricity is linked to galvanization, which can mean both creative stimulation and a bringing-(back)-to-life. Conduction here involves galvanization in both directions: creative energy is transferred from Milton to his successors, and Milton is revived in his successors' use of his ideas and in critical work attending to those ideas. I consider here Milton's *Paradise Lost* as the source of 'energies of [...] power and significance' discharged into the work of his nineteenth-century successors. In looking at texts peripherally, we find that this energy often makes its mark at the edges.

This thesis explores the influence of the poetry of Milton on Victorian culture, paying attention particularly to the edges of that culture, in order to state anew Milton's significance in the period between British Romanticism and early twentieth-century critical debates about the value of *Paradise Lost*. The thresholds I address in Victorian poetry, painting, and prose are temporal, topographical, and bodily. I begin with images and texts that are concerned with a Miltonic lastness—elegy and the end of the world in Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826) and the paintings of Martin—and end with the fiction of Hardy, whose work and life spans the end of the nineteenth-century (making him a 'time-torn man').⁵ In between, I address connections that cross boundaries of medium and nationality, identifying a conceptualisation of power central to the writing of Melville and the paintings of Turner which draws on a Miltonic model of passivity. I then look at Swinburne's presentation of desire and consider Milton's presence in Swinburne's poetic presentation of peripheral sexualities. There are, of course, many other thresholds, or sites of boundary-breaking, that could be addressed, but those outlined here are particularly pertinent to a study of Victorian culture; a culture overtly concerned with temporality, nationality, and sexuality.

⁴ Ibid., p. 14. Melville grapples with a conflicting desire to stand 'hand in hand' with 'genius, all over the world', and to see a great American literature differentiate itself from British and European writing—'we want no American Goldsmiths; nay, we want no American Miltons'. Melville, 'Hawthorne and his Mosses' in *Pierre; Israel Potter; The Piazza Tales; The Confidence-Man; Uncollected Prose; Billy Budd, Sailor*, ed. by Harrison Hayford (New York: Library of America, 1984), pp. 1163–64.

⁵ See Claire Tomalin, *Thomas Hardy: The Time-Torn Man* (London: Viking, 2006).

MILTON AND THE VICTORIANS

The scholars that have dealt most explicitly with Milton's Victorian influence—James G. Nelson and Erik Gray—assert that relatively little attention has been paid to the area of study. Nelson writes in 1963:

A detailed study of Milton's fortunes among the Victorians is not to be found. In fact, little else besides a few brief summaries of Milton's reputation during the period is in print. Certainly there is not enough detailed material to afford us the knowledge of Milton and the Victorians which we would wish to have.⁶

Gray maintains that, fifty years on, very little has been done to stimulate the spark that Nelson kindled.⁷ Other significant recent contributions are Catherine Maxwell's *The Female Sublime from Milton to Swinburne: Bearing Blindness* (2001) and Anna K. Nardo's *George Eliot's Dialogue with John Milton* (2003).⁸ The publication of the studies of Gray, Maxwell, and Nardo within the same decade indicates an increase in interest in work on the Victorian Milton, to which this thesis contributes. What is it, then, that draws these various critics to claim that Miltonic influence in the Victorian era deserves more attention?

This critical lack is accentuated through juxtaposition with the substantial criticism produced on Milton and the British Romantics, alongside a more general recognition of the importance of Milton for writers and artists working across the turn of the nineteenth century.⁹ In the shadow of the Romantics, who overtly claimed Milton as one of their own, Milton's presence in the mid- and late-nineteenth century appears muted. Commentaries on the reception history of Milton often focus on the Romantics and the critical controversies of the early twentieth century, leaving the years 1825–1901 as seeming comparatively unworthy of analysis. This can be partly explained away by the comparative unity of thought that comes under the banner of 'Romanticism' as an aesthetic movement rather than a period. However, the Victorians do, of course, maintain some literary unities and aesthetic tendencies which allow us to engage with them as a cultural community.

⁶ James G. Nelson, *The Sublime Puritan: Milton and the Victorians* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), p. vii.

⁷ Gray, *Milton*, p. 3.

⁸ Nardo, *George Eliot's Dialogue with John Milton* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003); Maxwell, *The Female Sublime from Milton to Swinburne: Bearing Blindness* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2001).

⁹ Significant scholarship on Milton and the Romantics includes: Joseph Anthony Wittreich, ed., *The Romantics on Milton: Formal Essays and Critical Asides* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970); Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* [1973], 2nd edn (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Lucy Newlyn, *Paradise Lost and the Romantic Reader* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1993). In relation to the Victorians, see Gray, 'Dark with Excessive Bright: The Victorian Milton' in *Milton*, pp. 1–24.

A key figure for thinking about nineteenth-century Miltonic influence from an interdisciplinary angle is William Blake, whose genre-defying work, and death in 1827 (at approximately the start of this study), make him particularly suitable to begin with. The intricacies and paradoxes of Blake's life and work mean that he is a singularly difficult figure to write about. Restrictions of time and space (those concepts Blake himself had so little respect for) mean that I cannot give Blake the treatment in this introduction that he deserves. I would like to note, however, that the ghost of his poetry will haunt the rest of this thesis, not simply because of his relationship with Milton, but also because his work contains so much of relevance to thinking about the apocalypse, the vortex, the hermaphrodite, and the body: some central concepts with which this thesis will be working.

Where Blake's idiosyncratic vision of Milton recreates the poet as an almost unrecognizable mythic figure, I want to consider here the biographical Milton in Victorian literature and culture; as Nelson writes, 'throughout most of the nineteenth century Milton was the model of the poet whose life was mirrored in his work'.¹⁰ Milton's corporeal existence is central to much thinking about his reception in the long nineteenth century, from his experience of disability to his exhumation in 1790. George Eliot, Nardo tells us, considered that 'every schoolboy' knew the 'stories' of 'the principle phases of Milton's life' and consequently Nardo's aim has been 'to uncover the stories told about Milton embedded within the stories Eliot told'.¹¹ Nardo writes:

As the cult of Milton grew from the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century, two intertwined cycles of stories evolved—one imagining Milton as a passionate young lover, then as an unfortunate husband, and another imagining Milton as an aging father of teenage daughters.¹²

My readings of the Victorian cultural figures that respond to him are often bound up in some way with the 'cult of Milton' and the man himself.

There is a nineteenth-century tradition of fictionalising Milton which includes such works as Walter Savage Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* (1824–53), Edward Bulwer-Lytton's 'Milton' (1831), the play *Milton at Rome* (1851), *John Milton and His Times* by German writer Max Ring (translated in 1868), and *The Maiden and Married Life of Mary Powell, afterwards Mistress Milton* (1855) by Anne Manning.¹³ Manning's novel was so successful as to grant a sequel,

¹⁰ Nelson, p. 12.

¹¹ Nardo, pp. 31–32. These 'principle phases' include his meeting with Galileo in Italy, his troubled family marriage to Mary Powell, and his difficult relationship with his daughters, usually pictured listening to their blind father's dictation of *Paradise Lost*.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37.

Deborah's Diary, written from the perspective of one of Milton's daughters. These two texts 'reframed the debate by imagining what stories the women in Milton's household might have to tell', introducing the idea that Milton's daughters might not have both responded in the same way to their father and his demands, giving them a sense of independent existence within the mythology of the Victorian Milton.¹⁴ This emerges too in George Romney's painting of the family, where 'the illuminated face of one daughter and the bent back of another suggest that they too have a story to tell'.¹⁵ Robert Graves continued this tradition in the first half of the twentieth century (*Wife to Mr Milton*, 1944) and Peter Ackroyd in the second (*Milton in America*, 1997).

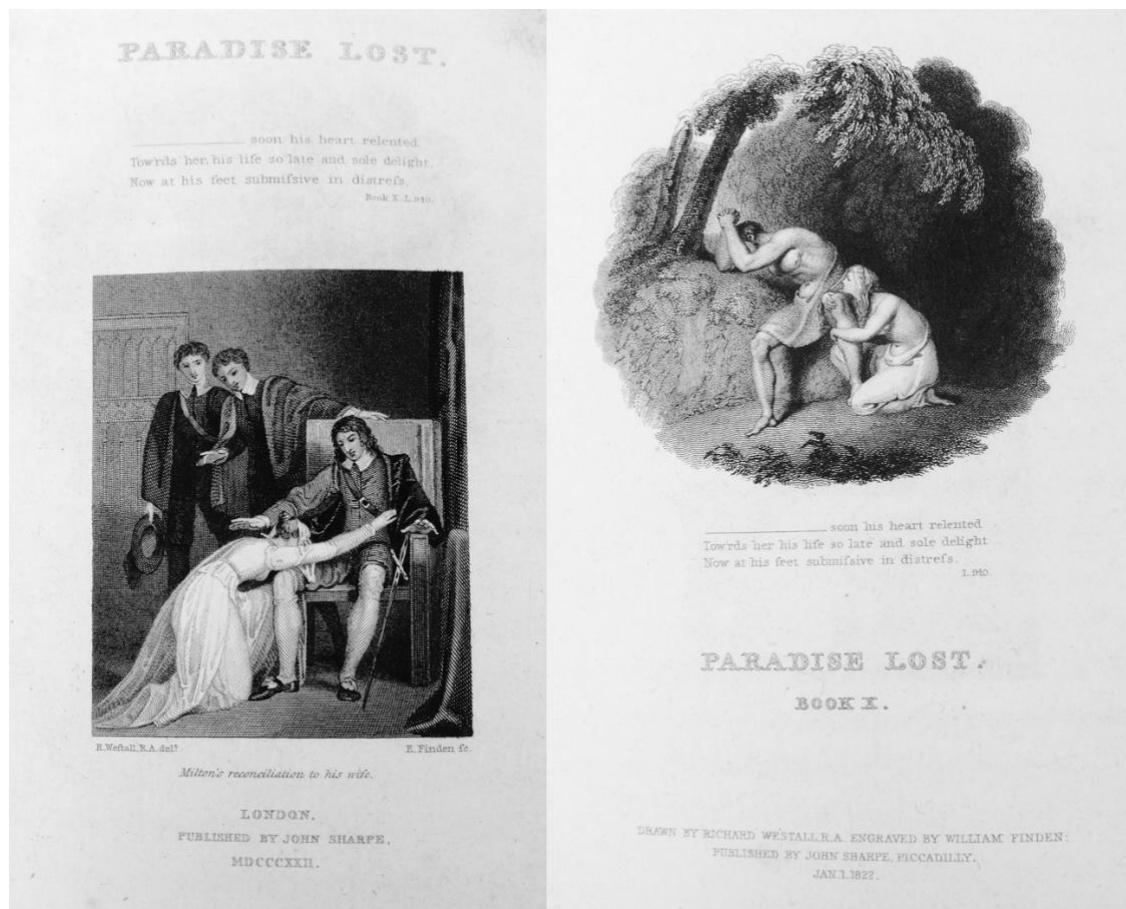


Figure 1. William Finden after Richard Westall, 'Milton's reconciliation to his wife' and 'Paradise Lost, Book X', first publ. in *Paradise Lost* (London: J. Sharpe, 1822).

The commingling of Milton's poetry with his life by his nineteenth-century readers can be confirmed by looking at their copies of *Paradise Lost*. An interesting example can be found at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California: an extra-illustrated copy of *Paradise Lost*,

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁵ Ibid.

published in 1826 with illustrations by John Martin, with illustrations by artists such as Frances Hayman inserted in the 1850s.¹⁶ The first volume of this two-volume set—both of which contain varied illustrations of *Paradise Lost*—additionally ends and begins each chapter with engravings depicting moments in Milton’s life. These are largely illustrations of Milton with his daughters, or portraits of Milton, but also included are illustrations of his home and his meeting with Galileo. The most interesting of the extra-illustrations are two engravings after Richard Westall placed next to each other in the second volume, where the tendency to group biographical illustrations at the end of each chapter collapses (see Figure 1). The first image shows Mary Powell—Milton’s first wife—atoning at his feet; the second is a strikingly similar engraving illustrating the moment in *Paradise Lost* where Eve atones at the feet of Adam. Both are accompanied by lines from the text: ‘soon his heart relented | Towards her, his life so late and sole delight, | Now at his feet submissive in distress’.¹⁷ The placement of these illustrations after Westall next to each other amid Milton’s words enhances what is already suggested by the first image alone: a tangling-up of Milton’s life and poetry.¹⁸

The engravings, both published in 1822 by John Sharpe, and collected here in an 1826 illustrated edition reconstructed in the 1850s, bridge the gap between what might be divided into the Romantic and Victorian periods. How then can we delineate attitudes to Milton, when the works that respond to him are constructed and re-constructed over a 30-year period? Responses to Milton are not static. Rather, as Nardo comments referring to Milton and Eliot, ‘genuine dialogue seldom takes a clear shape; it does not advance in discrete increments toward a *telos*; rather, it meanders and skips and circles back on itself’.¹⁹ Whilst acknowledging the limitations of dividing the Victorians from their predecessors in this way, I have followed Nelson and Gray in demarcating the period of study for this thesis. Gray aligns a cultural shift with the publication of *De Doctrina Christiana*, writing that:

The year 1825, which saw the publication of Milton’s treatise *Christian Doctrine*, marks a watershed in the history of the poet’s reception; it therefore seems a natural point from which to date the beginning of the new, Victorian perception of Milton.²⁰

¹⁶ John Milton, *The Paradise Lost of Milton with Illustrations by John Martin*, 2 vols (London: S. Prowett, 1826), RB 110034, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

¹⁷ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Alastair Fowler, 2nd edn (London; New York: Longman, 2007), x. 940–42. Further references to *Paradise Lost* are to this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text.

¹⁸ Following William Hayley’s suggestion in *Life of Milton* that Eve’s repentant return to Adam in Book X was based in Mary Powell’s return to Milton after their early separation, Victorian writers ‘suspected that his life story also included clues to his representation of the sensuous love between the prelapsarian Adam and Eve’. Nardo, pp. 35–36.

¹⁹ Nardo, p. 2.

²⁰ Gray, *Milton*, p. 26.

Nelson also recognises the formative nature of the publication, writing that it ‘initiated a relatively silent but certain change in sentiment on the part of many devout people, and that in many homes *Paradise Lost* “could no longer be considered a safe soporific for Sunday afternoons.”’²¹ Nelson adds that ‘by the third decade, a new and radically different approach to Milton biography was being employed’ prompted partially by Macaulay’s essay on Milton in the same year.²²

An alignment of the beginning of the era based on a change in the public ‘perception of Milton’ suits the project at hand partly because of its grounding in Miltonic revivification, as the new approach to biography and posthumous publication of the *Christian Doctrine* could both be read as bringing-back-to-life. In one of his *Imaginary Conversations*, Landor conceived of Milton saying to Andrew Marvell:

My opinions in theology have undergone a change. What they are will be known hereafter; I have written them in Latin, and I shall leave them behind me. For I would not anger any on this side of the grave. Resentment and controversy cool in the churchyard.²³

There is a Victorian notion, then, that this text comes from Milton on the *other* side of the grave. It is important, too, that this change is one located in the response of the reading public and not just the literary community.

Nardo writes of the familiar scene of Milton dictating to his daughters that it ‘fascinated the eighteenth-century imagination and would continue to fascinate the nineteenth’.²⁴ If the scene is one that was fascinating for both the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century imagination, what changes can we identify in the biographical understanding of Milton? Nardo goes on to say that the scene ‘had taken on a life of its own—from its origin in the debates conducted by Milton’s seventeenth- and eighteenth-century biographers, to its sentimentalization in nineteenth-century biography, painting, and fiction’.²⁵ Its use in the nineteenth century, then, is more to do with *feeling*. Nardo’s implication is that this carries a negative weight. My contention, however, is that the sentimentalisation of Milton himself in the Victorian cultural imagination arises alongside a literary and artistic use of Milton’s ideas which is grounded in an emotional transfer of energy.

²¹ Nelson, p. 139.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 77.

²³ *Imaginary Conversations*, ed. by Charles G. Crump, 6 vols (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1891), v, p. 37.

²⁴ Nardo, p. 48. See also Marcia R. Pointon, who states it was ‘the most popular of all the anecdotal subjects’ in *Milton & English Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 252.

²⁵ Nardo, pp. 48–49.



Figure 2. Mihály Munkácsy, *Milton Dictating 'Paradise Lost' to His Two Daughters*, 1878.

This form of biographical mythology is key to understanding the instances of Miltonic literary influence that I discuss in this thesis, from Mary Shelley through Turner to Hardy. Nardo makes clear the artistic value of this wealth of sentimental feeling connected to the anecdote by addressing Mihály Munkácsy's *Milton Dictating 'Paradise Lost' to His Two Daughters* (see Figure 2):

one critic could claim, "If the truth were known I dare say [Munkácsy] is perfectly ignorant both about Milton and about his 'Paradise Lost,' although such is the subject of his best picture. But how could he conceive the picture, then? By choosing a well-known anecdote a painter avoids a great deal of the difficulty of conception. . . . [T]he public, on reading the title, reflected into the picture all the souvenirs, all the intensity, all the poetical connections which the subject calls up in the popular mind." Neither painter nor viewer need have even read Milton's poetry to be moved by what had become by the end of the century a widely current sentimental legend.²⁶

The potential power of sentimentality here is made clear: both 'painter' and 'viewer' cannot fail to be moved by the 'intensity' and 'poetical connections' recalled by the anecdote. Victorian aesthetic experiences of depictions of Milton can be described in the same terms

²⁶ Nardo, pp. 56–57. Nardo quotes Theodore Child in *Art and Criticism: Monographs and Studies* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1892), pp. 157–58.

as Macaulay's electrical metaphors, and Wallace's 'energies of comparable power and significance' discussed above.

The idea that paintings and texts carry with them the emotional power of associated narratives is essential to my thinking below, especially regarding the Miltonic and Turner's paintings. Nardo writes of the interdisciplinary spread of this particular anecdote that 'in between Macaulay in 1825 and Munkácsy in 1878, this legend had migrated from biography, criticism, and painting into fiction, drama, and even opera'.²⁷ Kester Svendsen writes that: 'The critical history of a great literary work is incomplete unless it incorporates inferences from the interpretation put upon the masterpiece by artists.'²⁸ In pushing beyond illustration into Milton's influence on other visual art, the critical history is made even more complete. Support for this way of approaching the Miltonic in the Victorian period can be drawn from Gillian Beer's work on Darwin and nineteenth-century literature, in which she has demonstrated both that the Victorians' engagement with Milton is not easily, neatly categorised (as Beer presents Darwin as a both a literary and scientific writer) and that subsequently Miltonic ideas are pervasive and worthy of critical attention outside poetry.²⁹ Beer's reflections on Darwin's use of Milton, and the ways in which his early readings of Milton's poetry (especially *Comus* and *Paradise Lost*) 'contributed to [Darwin's] imaginative intellectual development', highlights the importance of not only including poetry, or even only literature, in an exploration of Milton's significance for the Victorians.³⁰ In order to address the diffuse and peripheral nature of Milton's influence in the period, it is necessary to look beyond the confines of his legacy in poetry.

Beer writes that 'Darwin's crucial insight into the mechanism of evolutionary change' resulted, at least in part, 'from his reading of the one book he never left behind during his expeditions from the *Beagle: The Poetical Works of John Milton*'.³¹ If Milton's influence on such a prominent Victorian thinker is openly acknowledged, why is our sense of Milton's presence

²⁷ Ibid. An interesting feature of Nardo's argument is that in these Victorian works Milton is portrayed as being the object of an erotic gaze (see pp. 43–44).

²⁸ 'John Martin and the Expulsion Scene of *Paradise Lost*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 1 (1961), 63–73 (p. 64).

²⁹ Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

³⁰ Beer, p. 27. Beer writes: 'The debate in *Comus* provided Darwin with a vantage point from which to consider problems formulated by Malthus: problems of increase, profusion and penury. [...] In *Paradise Lost* Darwin met the full poetic expression of "separate creation", of fully formed, full-grown species. Sexuality there expresses itself as lyrical union, rather than as generation, descent. [...] [Milton's] language made manifest to Darwin, in its concurrence with his own sense of profusion, density, and articulation of the particular, how much could survive, how much could be held in common and in continuity from the past' (pp. 31–32).

³¹ Ibid., p. 5.

in Victorian culture still so uncertain? Perhaps it is because ways of thinking about influence have been too readily constricted to separate spheres of cultural production. However, the choice to address the images and texts below is also partially guided by an interest in the dialogue between popular culture, those works of literature and art that the nineteenth century public identified as representative of Victorian Britain, and, conversely, works that escaped such public attention or attracted substantial criticism. It seems appropriate, in a project that aims to identify cultural influence, to inspect different *levels* of culture and works of various levels of commercial success.

An additional problem for building a cohesive picture of Milton's Victorian standing is that critics offer conflicting views on matters such as Milton's approval by the Victorian family. For example, Nardo writes that '*Paradise Lost*, along with *Pilgrim's Progress*, was one of the few storybooks allowed to children on the Victorian Sunday', whereas Nelson, as quoted above, writes that after 1825 in many homes *Paradise Lost* 'could no longer be considered a safe soporific for Sunday afternoons'.³² Getting a clear grasp on the Victorian attitude to Milton from the extant literature is challenging and, I would suggest, this is often a case of absence being mixed up with presence. This duality is made clear by Nardo, who writes that:

Closer analysis of Eliot's language will demonstrate that she subtly, but persistently, evokes Miltonic patterns in situations that expose their absence, leaving not the denial of these patterns, but their echo. Beneath Eliot's insistent realism, this Miltonic reverberation—recalled and cancelled simultaneously—sounds clearly.³³

The power of Eliot's dialogue with Milton is that she recalls him to then diverge from him. As Nardo points out, though, this does not constitute a denial but rather a complex, multifaceted response.

SELECTION AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis addresses the work of writers and artists roughly chronologically. This is not to convey progression or development in appearances of the Miltonic throughout the nineteenth century, but simply because Milton's Victorian successors engaged with each other's work, and this structure allows for a sense of conceptual exchange between them. Melville had read Shelley, and owned prints by Martin; Hardy wrote an elegy for Swinburne, and much admired his work. The connections between the figures in this thesis are manifold and often surprising. Throughout I acknowledge the fact that Milton is a voice among many

³² Nardo, p. 3; Nelson, p. 139.

³³ Nardo, p. 25.

for these novelists, poets, and painters. At many points, another voice seems to demand attention, but the scope of this thesis does not allow focus to wander from Milton: so, Dante, Spenser, and Shakespeare, among others, are all limited here to passing consideration.

Nelson writes that his ‘great problem has been one of selection’ indicating that his choice of texts (almost exclusively poetry) aims to ‘bring together the truly noteworthy opinions and responses which indicate to us the Victorian attitude toward Milton’.³⁴ I have chosen here to focus on the inheritance of Milton’s *conceptual* influence, which is of necessity not confined to one genre or medium. These texts and images are noteworthy not because of their widely acknowledged debt to Milton, but instead because of the unacknowledged, subversive, or revelatory ways in which they engage with Milton’s work. Previous critics have looked almost solely at Victorian poetry—Tennyson, Arnold, Browning—and paid limited attention to fiction. The main distinction of this project, then, lies in its attempt to explore Milton’s conceptual influence across aesthetic borders. This involves engaging with texts that sit at the thresholds of Victorian culture, and analysing appearances of Miltonic concepts in fiction and painting as well as poetry. Working with images and novels as well as poetry better allows me to consider Milton’s influence as suggestive and indirect, and to understand how Victorian writers and painters engage with Milton’s work in-and-beyond the ‘word as word’.³⁵

The texts I consider in this thesis are clearly linked to each other, but are also distinctly diverse, and this is important for what they suggest about Milton’s influence in the Victorian period. One of the key facts of Milton’s influence is that it has equal force in texts that are in many other ways incomparable. There is so much to be found in Milton, and within *Paradise Lost*, that reading and rereading it provides energy for an exceptionally diverse range of thinking. Within this thesis, where texts are considered that do not sit easily next to each other, the lines that *can* be drawn between them are often Miltonic. Milton’s handprints can be found in the sensation fiction of the late-nineteenth century as much as the apocalyptic productions of the ‘end’ of the Romantic period.

The first chapter explores apocalyptic images and texts from the 1820s in relation to Miltonic aetiology and eschatology; primarily this involves reading the Miltonic in Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man*, framed through a discussion of paintings by John Martin. Though Shelley is, of course, primarily associated with Romanticism, much like Hardy’s temporally ambiguous position at the end of the Victorian period, her writing crosses both culturally imposed and conceptually grounded temporal thresholds. These images and texts, I argue,

³⁴ Nelson, p. ix.

³⁵ Dennis Taylor, ‘Hardy’s Missing Poem and His Copy of Milton’, *The Thomas Hardy Journal*, 1 (1990), 50–60 (p. 52).

offer a complex re-thinking of the relation between personal loss and universal catastrophe which draws on and positions itself against Milton's vision of prophecy and apocalypse in *Paradise Lost*. These apocalyptic texts, which also demonstrate a pervasive engagement with beginnings, are cultural documents of loss, and I suggest that they identify and respond to a similar concern with loss in Milton's poetry. The affective power of *The Last Man*—Shelley's myth of endings—lies in its engagement with ideas also central to Milton's *Paradise Lost*: authority, family, beginnings, and endings. This engagement extends to form: the fragmented form in which Mary Shelley explores these ideas can be related to a persistent and Miltonic multiplicity. Shelley both uses and resists fragmentation—and likewise both uses and subverts the Miltonic ontological model—in portrayals of her late husband, as part of a project of revivification and memorialization which challenges more conventional memorialization narratives.

In the second chapter I trace Macaulay's electric metaphor for influence in the work of Melville and Turner. The transfer of Miltonic ideas figured as the transfer of energy is linked to revivification, so that the monster of *Frankenstein* becomes a model of galvanic influence: readers are made of what they read, and are electrified by their reading. Melville and Turner, I suggest, are important conductors for Miltonic ideas and energy. I demonstrate their shared investment in a Miltonic system of passive power, which is manifest visually as a vortex (the vortex as I conceive it is inclusive of other centripetal circular shapes such as labyrinths and whirlwinds). Critics have acknowledged the centrality of a powerful weakness in Milton's thought, and I trace interest in this notion of strength characterised by weakness in Melville's fiction and marginalia, and anecdotal appendages which supplement Turner's paintings. Drawing on the 'indirect' nature of the metaphor of suggestive shock shifts attention to influence revealed in these peripheral materials.

It seems at once useful and unnecessary to offer a justification of the use of Melville in a thesis concerned primarily with Victorian art and literature. The inclusion of Melville in this project is a way of playing with the boundaries of 'Victorian', just as the inclusion of Turner plays with the boundaries of 'literary influence'. In writing about Melville in relation to Milton and Turner, I am not considering critically his Americanism (he writes in his manifesto for American literature 'believe it or not England, after all, is, in many things, an alien to us').³⁶ Instead, I view Melville through his relationship with the work of British figures, as a nineteenth-century writer of the vortex.

³⁶ Melville, 'Hawthorne', p. 1163.

The third chapter turns to the Miltonic in A. C. Swinburne's poetics of peripheral sexuality. I argue that where Swinburne's depiction of the desiring body has been primarily linked to the influence of Baudelaire and Sappho, Milton's texts offer a supplementary and significant erotic model. I frame this discussion by considering the exhumation of Milton's coffin at the end of the eighteenth century, and introduce a second metaphor for Miltonic influence in the Victorian period, which understands the relationship between Milton and his successors in terms of the body. My argument grows out of Gray's identification of hair as an apt metaphor for the *duality* of Milton's Victorian legacy.

However, my focus is not on Milton's body itself, but on Swinburne's engagement with the bodies and bodily desires manifest in Milton's poetry. Because Swinburne's presentation of desiring bodies can be considered essential for an understanding of Victorian tensions around peripheral sexuality, identifying his debt to Milton reveals a new significance for Milton in Victorian culture. I identify in Milton's poetry a pervasive metaphysics of bodily 'melting' or 'cleaving' which in turn is central to Swinburne's poetic project, and I suggest that Milton's conception of permeable bodily boundaries before the Fall would be read by Swinburne as a model of absolute mutability of the sexual body which stands in relation to—but also goes beyond—Greek notions of eros.

The final chapter analyses the fiction of Thomas Hardy, whose repeated readings of Milton contributed to the establishment of both his poetic vocabulary, and a career-long engagement with Miltonic ideas. I focus here on moments which reveal both Hardy's Miltonic debt and his literary idiosyncrasy: in his extensive use of shifting perspective and his treatment of landscape, character, and peripheral phenomena, especially Miltonic handed moments. I suggest that a relation to the Fall—as well as an arguably Miltonic aetiological concern—is inherent in Hardy's Wessex landscapes. The way relationships between character and landscape are constructed in Hardy's writing involves shifts in spatiotemporal scale which I argue are Miltonic. These create a backdrop against which the Fall is re-lived by his characters; particularly his female characters, who identify themselves within a cyclical Miltonic genealogy. My reading of the Miltonic in Hardy finds parallels in broader Victorian narratives, seen at work in the sensation fiction of the 1860s, in which the myth of the 'fallen woman' is generated and sustained. Hardy's fiction deviates from the pattern set in these texts, but the fact that the presence of Milton's poetry can be identified in a variety of popular fiction in the late nineteenth century demonstrates its broad importance for Victorian cultural production.

Hardy is a writer deeply interested in events which occur at thresholds, and again Miltonic connections are often revealed at liminal moments in his texts, at the edges of landscapes and the body. In the second half of this chapter I address Hardy's engagement with a Miltonic focus on the *hand*. I argue that Hardy's use of hands intentionally recalls *Paradise Lost* to recreate an unstable Eden in Wessex, revealing a persistent engagement with Milton's system of significant touch. I refer to the history of Milton illustration to explicate the complex function of haptic moments in *Paradise Lost*, especially making use of the iconographic sample in the Kitto Bible. I show that Hardy and Milton have a somewhat paradoxical shared idiosyncrasy in a common use of trivial moments of hand-touching and hand-holding. Addressing the Miltonic in Hardy refocuses attention on peripheral elements of his writing which contain much of its emotional energy, bringing together models of influence which show the Miltonic in Victorian culture to be at once liminal and galvanizing. Though the project reveals a multitude of ways that these Victorian writers and artists could be brought together, I suggest that it is in their engagement with the peripheral Milton, and in their status as conductors of the Miltonic, that they are most powerfully connected. This thesis thus both extends and encourages scholarship on the Victorian Milton.

1 Beginning at the End

Apocalyptic Failures in 1826

Grief is fantastic; it weaves a web on which to trace the history of its woe from every form and change around; it incorporates itself with all living nature; it finds sustenance in every object; as light, it fills all things, and, like light, it gives its own colours to all.

(Shelley, *The Last Man*, p. 446)

How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
Depopulation; thee another flood,
Of tears and sorrow a flood thee also drowned,
And sunk thee as thy sons; till gently reared
By the angel, on thy feet thou stoodst at last,
Though comfortless, as when a father mourns
His children, all in view destroyed at once.

(*Paradise Lost*, XI. 754–61)

This chapter primarily explores Mary Shelley's use of *Paradise Lost* in her engagement with ideas of authority, family, beginnings, and endings. Central to this discussion is her 1826 apocalyptic novel *The Last Man*, in which techniques of fragmentation and framing are related to a persistent and Miltonic multiplicity. The suitability of these texts for the project at hand is related to the way fragments themselves, as Maxwell writes, 'occupy the borders of vision'.³⁷ Critics have broadly acknowledged various aspects of *The Last Man* as resistant to singular interpretation or explanation, and this multiplicity is linked to readings of Shelley's text as a 'failure', which I read here as a form of apocalypse. For Shelley, apocalypse occurs on the level of the individual so that, as I will discuss below, an image depicting her husband's funeral and another imagining the death of the sun can both be considered apocalyptic. In Shelley's novel the birth and death of mankind is connected to personal, familial loss; as Maggie Kilgour writes, 'the loss of the beloved *is* the end of the world'.³⁸ These images also tie the horror of the body—or the mortality of the individual—to narratives of national or universal death. I address below how we can read the 'apocalypse' in these texts, and argue that related ideas of 'failure' can be reclaimed to address Shelley's complex and distinctive approach to the eschatological.

Where scholarly attention on the Miltonic in *The Last Man* has been largely (though not entirely) limited to the epigraph, I argue that the whole text is engaged with Milton's poetry.

³⁷ *Bearing Blindness*, p. 78.

³⁸ "'One Immortality': The Shaping of The Shelleys in *The Last Man*", *European Romantic Review*, 16.5 (2005), 563–88 (p. 567).

I will also address Shelley's return to Milton in her personal writing about the loss of her husband and children, to demonstrate that in the nineteenth century Milton is used not only in overt literary allusions to establish writers in an acknowledged system of cultural inheritance, but his poetry is also quietly, implicitly present in some of the most moving expressions of personal loss. One of the ways in which Shelley rethinks Milton and surpasses a more public narrative of mourning is in the fragmented complication of her representations of her late husband. I am interested here, as with regards to J. M. W. Turner in the next chapter, in literary mythology. *Paradise Lost* is a text which provides a language for thinking about personal apocalypse and failure as well as the fate of mankind collectively; it provides a framework of familial loss which is at once intensely individual and universal. Shelley's engagement with Milton is tied to a very personal understanding of beginnings and endings.

In examining Milton's influence on Shelley's fiction, editorial work, and private writing, I also consider the ways in which nineteenth-century painting can illuminate the place of the personal in apocalypse. The paintings of John Martin (who has been seen primarily as an artist concerned with destruction on a grand scale) provide a frame and aid my consideration of the broader connections between Milton's poetry and 1820s apocalypse narratives, as well as linking the concerns of this chapter to those of the following.



Figure 3. John Martin, *The Last Man*, 1849.

In the first half of the nineteenth century Martin produced at least three works on the theme of 'The Last Man': a watercolour in *c.* 1832; an 1826 study which is now lost; and an

oil painting in 1849 (see Figure 3). This set of images is based on the short poem ‘The Last Man’ by Thomas Campbell, published in 1823, but they are also part of a broader nineteenth-century trend of apocalyptic work, the production of which peaked in the 1820s. Martin’s oil painting of *The Last Man* is currently housed in the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, hung in a high, dark corner above Turner’s *Linlithgow Palace* (1807). In 1850, Charlotte Brontë described *The Last Man* as ‘a grand, wonderful picture [...] showing the red sun fading out of the sky, and all the soil of the foreground made up of bones and skulls’.³⁹ The landscape of the ‘soil of the foreground’, which frames the limited human action at the centre, is created out of bodily fragments; in William Feaver’s words, ‘The bodies are already merging with the bedrock’.⁴⁰ Brontë’s description, and Martin’s painting itself, usefully synthesise some unifying themes of this chapter: apocalypse, framing, fragments, and the body. The body is tied here to landscape, important in Shelley’s *The Last Man* from before it begins: as I will discuss below, the epigraph takes us to the top of a mountain where Milton’s Michael gives Adam a vision of the history of humanity; the ‘Author’s Introduction’ then embeds textual fragmentation into a distinctly female, fragmented landscape.

Beneath Martin’s painting, Turner’s *Linlithgow* is characteristically awash with golden light. In contrast, from below, *The Last Man* appears almost completely black, with the florescent gallery lighting reflecting off the top half of the glass and obscuring the image, which is already dark in both colour and content since it depicts, after all, the death of the sun. Standing directly below Martin’s painting, the only detail discernible in the shadowy top half is the glowing skeleton of the red sun, and what seems to be moonlight hitting the edges of clouds looming in the top right corner. In the middle, to the left, is an empty city of dark windows and simple outlines, falling into a valley. On the right of the painting a man stands with his arms up to the dying star. As Martin Myrone and Anna Austen write, this ‘lone figure’ seen ‘standing on a high promontory [is] a consistent feature of Martin’s imagery’.⁴¹ On the ground behind him lies the ambiguous shape of a collapsed woman who (because of her proximity to the man) we presume to be only recently deceased. The foliage behind them

³⁹ *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: With a Selection of Letters by Family and Friends*, ed. by Margaret Smith, 3 vols (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), II, p. 411 (4 June 1850). For more on Brontë and Martin, see Christine Alexander, ‘“The Burning Clime”: Charlotte Brontë and John Martin’, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 50 (1995), 285–321, where Alexander deals briefly with Brontë’s response to Martin’s Milton illustrations; and more recently Heather Glen, *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), especially pp. 167–76.

⁴⁰ *The Art of John Martin* (Oxford; London: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 186–87.

⁴¹ ‘Catalogue’ in *John Martin: Apocalypse*, ed. by Martin Myrone (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), pp. 61–212 (p. 156).

could be mistaken for a herd of sheep if it were not for the dark red colour which reflects the dying tones of the sun and makes clear their lack of life.

If you walk to the left and away from the glare of the lighting, you can see more detail in the sky. No longer entirely black, subtle shades of orange on the clouds around the sun appear, and a deep royal blue is discernible, scattered with what looks like silver stars. From this position, we're more likely to agree with Feaver's description of the painting as 'a sombre, weather-beaten nocturne in silver, blue, and smouldering crimson'.⁴² Above the lone man are sweeping shapes which could be mountains, or mountainous clouds, though they could just as easily be great, destructive waves. The darkness in this image has secret tones, like the monochromatic paintings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁴³ Looking at the painting requires a viewer to strain and move around, but it also requires viewing from more than one angle. This positioning seems almost a direct and maliciously humorous response to Martin's complaint that at the Royal Academy his paintings, which due to their size and detail needed 'to be placed with the horizontal level with the eye, and in a strong light', had always been 'hung high or in the dark'.⁴⁴ Here, *The Last Man* is high *and* in the dark.

At the other end of this room, there are three large paintings illuminated by a more natural light. The third of these, on the right, is Louis Édouard Fournier's 1889 depiction of the funeral of Percy Bysshe Shelley (see Figure 4).⁴⁵ On the left is Louis Daguerre's *The Ruins of Holyrood Chapel* (1824).⁴⁶ In beginning with these images I highlight, again, that Milton's nineteenth-century influence is not confined to the written word, and that considerations of cultural import cannot reasonably be limited likewise. These works of Martin and Fournier, in their content and their relation to each other in the gallery space in which they are currently hung, make manifest conflicts between national and personal mourning narratives. Both Daguerre's and Fournier's paintings, like Martin's, are filled with different tones of black. In *Ruins* the edges of fragments of rock are illuminated and light reveals the mixed jagged and

⁴² *Art*, p. 184.

⁴³ In the Royal Academy's recent 'Abstract Expressionism' exhibition (from 24 September 2016 to 2 January 2017) a room in which such monochromatic paintings were hung took its title from *Paradise Lost*: 'Darkness Visible'. Milton remains important for articulating cultural engagement with darkness and light.

⁴⁴ Evidence to the Select Committee on 24 June 1836 (*Report of the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures* 1836, question 817), quoted in Myrone, 'John Martin: Art, Taste, and the Spectacle of Culture' in *Apocalypse*, ed. by Myrone, pp. 11–21 (p. 18).

⁴⁵ In this chapter I refer to both Mary Shelley and Percy Bysshe Shelley as Shelley, except where there is a potential for confusion, where I refer to them as Shelley and P. B. Shelley.

⁴⁶ Recently *The Last Man* was temporarily moved to the same wall as Fournier's painting, while Daguerre's *Hollyrood Chapel* was on loan to another gallery, so that the paintings by Martin and Fournier (similar in shape and size) seemed to mirror each other. All three are now back in the positions described in this chapter.

smooth surfaces of the ruin (the gallery label refers to the ‘romanticism of the moonlit ruin’).⁴⁷ In Fournier’s image the illuminated areas include: a thin line of glowing sky along the horizon in the distance; the collar of Edward John Trelawny; the face and handkerchief of Leigh Hunt; Lord Byron’s neck-tie; and the small flickering flames surrounding Shelley’s pyre. His body is dark, including his bruised blue hand, and is almost indistinguishable from the pile of charred wood. No eye in this image meets our own. Trelawny and Hunt look down as though to avoid each other’s gaze as well as that of the viewer, but Byron looks towards the heavens, in the direction of the smoke blowing from the pyre. Shelley’s hair is Medusan amid the greenish greys around his face and the violent orange tint of the fire; the logs and fragments of branch on the sand look like snakes, and his hair merges into the broken pieces of wood beneath the smoke.

These serpentine shapes and grey-green tones recall his own ekphrastic poem ‘On the Medusa of Leonardo Da Vinci’, producing a suggestive connection between Fournier’s painting of Shelley on his funeral pyre, and a poem in which Shelley himself plays with the boundaries between image and text, life and death. Shelley’s complex and elusive poem describes a painting of the Medusa displayed in the Uffizi, Florence (now known to be not by Da Vinci) which depicts, in Maxwell’s words, the ‘fragment of a body, bordering the spheres of life and death’.⁴⁸ The poem is interesting in relation to this chapter in its interrogation of boundaries of mortality—‘Death has met life, but there is life in death’ (l. 46)—and presentation of a convoluted relationship between image, text, and audience.⁴⁹ Carol Jacobs reads the poem as ‘placing the reader at several levels of remove from the object of artistic representation’, and presenting ‘unending problems in situating ourselves, in fixing the object of our scrutiny as text, painting, or Medusa to the exclusion of the other two’.⁵⁰ Where Shelley writes that ‘upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie | loveliness like a shadow’ (ll. 5–6) the contrast between fear and wonder is highlighted specifically at the thresholds of the body—the lips and eyelids—at once points of entry and protection. Shelley’s description

⁴⁷ For recent work on fragmentation in Romanticism more broadly—particularly in the relation of the fragment to the ruin—see Sophie Thomas, *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Spectacle* (New York; London: Routledge, 2008).

⁴⁸ *Bearing Blindness*, p. 83. See pp. 80–87 for Maxwell’s detailed analysis of the poem and painting.

⁴⁹ ‘On the Medusa’ as published with the additional stanza in Carol Jacobs, ‘On Looking at Shelley’s Medusa’, *Yale French Studies* 69: The Lesson of Paul de Man (1985), 163–79 (p. 65). Further quotations from the poetry of P. B. Shelley are taken from *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson (London; New York; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1952), line numbers given parenthetically in the text.

⁵⁰ ‘On Looking’, p. 166.

of the Medusa's serpentine hair ties the image of the Medusa to that of wet organic material, to 'grass out of a watery rock' (l. 18). These associations are all recalled by Fournier's painting.



Figure 4. Louis Édouard Fournier, *The Funeral of Shelley*, 1889.

The Funeral of Shelley is based on descriptions of Shelley's cremation which are themselves a fragmented assortment of partially fabricated recollections. Where the image depicts Shelley whole with the three witnesses looking on, accounts of the cremation variously attest to the fact that Hunt was too horrified to witness the burning and Byron was, in fact, swimming at the time. Byron is reported to have said the body was indistinguishable from a sheep's carcase, while the face was 'entirely destroyed and fleshless' and the hands were 'parted at the wrists'.⁵¹ Fournier depicts a scene steeped in mythology, which portrays a fictionalised version of P. B. Shelley's funeral as a markedly male construction of cultural mourning. Mary Shelley is inserted into the scene, but is kept at the far left of the image, at the edge and in darkness, 'barely distinguishable from a shadowy mass of nameless

⁵¹ Though the 'first-hand' accounts of the cremation tend towards contradiction and aestheticizing. Kim Wheatley has explored in-depth the ways in which accounts of Shelley's cremation (published accounts by Medwin, Hunt and Trelawny—comments by Byron) variously idealise and fictionalise the scene. "'Attracted by the Body": Accounts of Shelley's Cremation', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 49 (2000), 162–82. The accounts merge the details of Shelley's funeral with that of Williams on the previous day; rewrite the scene with Shelley's poetry in mind; make use of 'the conventions of Romantic-era fiction'; and display an 'obtrusive impulse to fictionalize' (pp. 168, 170). Wheatley writes that in Fournier's image 'Shelley is not only re-clothed, but his hands are put back on, and he is given his face and features' (p. 175).

observers'.⁵² How then can we think about cultural documents of loss in relation to personal grief? If this image makes manifest an aesthetic de-centring or marginalisation of female mourning, Shelley's revivification of her husband in her fiction, as well as in her editorial work and private writing, is distinct in its resistance to this exclusion.⁵³ Fournier's image is deeply embedded in myth but makes no acknowledgement of this fact. By rewriting her loss as fiction in *The Last Man*, Shelley comes closer to an acknowledgement of the ways in which mythology and mourning are inextricable. Where, as Kim Wheatley has argued, the written accounts of P. B. Shelley's cremation (and Fournier's subsequent visualisation) reconstruct his body to then etherealise him, Shelley fragments her husband as part of a more complex project of revivification and memorialisation, using disintegration as a tool to complicate both Victorian representations of him and Miltonic tropes.⁵⁴

In the first half of this chapter I will focus on *The Last Man* and the ways in which Shelley's novel draws together the death of the world and the death of the individual, 'recognizing each individual as a world, and each death an apocalypse in the lives of surviving friends and family'.⁵⁵ The shared apocalyptic imaginary of Martin and Shelley is one that is connected by visions of the end and beginning of man, but also by a distinct sense of personal loss: their visions of Last Men focus on a 'mournful and baffling experience of isolation'.⁵⁶ Feaver has claimed that Martin 'liked to see himself [...] as *The Last Man*, the lone survivor on a planet ravaged by men's follies,' but instead of reading Martin as an eager intrepid witness to apocalypse, we might understand him as another creator working through personal loss, painting the 'baffling experience of isolation' into the centre of his apocalyptic vision.⁵⁷

⁵² Bette London, 'Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, and the Spectacle of Masculinity', *PMLA*, 108.2 (1993), 253–67 (p. 253).

⁵³ Wheatley comments on a possible reading of the gendered nature of these accounts: 'At first sight, the accounts of the cremation by Medwin, Hunt, and Trelawny would seem to be exploiting Shelley to the same end: the fragmentation of Shelley serves to shore up their masculinity even while their insistence on the recovery of his body disunites and feminizes them by contrast' (p. 181). London writes that Fournier's painting 'binds Shelley's pre-eminence (public and private) to the lasting rites of masculinity' and goes on to say in relation to *Frankenstein* that 'the woman at the extremities can point to the fractures in the unified male image: the excesses and deficiencies that disturb the surface of masculinity' (pp. 253, 264).

⁵⁴ Fragmentation is present in both these paintings and is linked in both to the body: P. B. Shelley's body disintegrates atop a pyre of broken wood; the foreground of Martin's painting is 'made up of bones and skulls'.

⁵⁵ Melissa Bailes, 'The Psychologization of Geological Catastrophe in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *ELH*, 82.2 (2015), 671–99 (p. 688).

⁵⁶ Robert Lance Snyder, 'Apocalypse and Indeterminacy in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *Studies in Romanticism*, 17 (1978), 435–52 (p. 447).

⁵⁷ Feaver, 'Introduction' in *John Martin, 1789–1854: Loan Exhibition, Oil Paintings, Watercolours, Prints, 30th October–21st November, 1975* (London: Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, 1975), p. 12.

Fournier's painting is an archetypal manifestation of Victorian thinking about P. B. Shelley, grounded in thanatography.⁵⁸ At the same time, however, written accounts of him (that of Thomas Jefferson Hogg, specifically), 'set out to reanimate the poet by making his body come to life'.⁵⁹ The second part of this chapter will thus be largely concerned with Shelley's fragmented resurrections of P. B. Shelley in writing, and with the ways in which her biographical reanimation makes use of Milton, particularly *Paradise Lost*.

MARY SHELLEY AND MILTONIC BEGINNINGS

Shelley's critically unsuccessful novel *The Last Man* was published eight years after her celebrated *Frankenstein* (1818); both novels take quotations from Milton as their epigraphs. In *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that while it is a critical commonplace to claim Shelley's *Frankenstein* as 'one of the key Romantic "readings" of *Paradise Lost*' it is also a rewriting of the 'male culture myth of *Paradise Lost*'; a parody which 'may have begun as a secret, barely conscious attempt to subvert Milton' that 'ended up telling, too, the central story of *Paradise Lost*'.⁶⁰ The perspective of Shelley's reading and retelling of *Paradise Lost* stems in part, they argue, from the fact that when reading the works of Milton between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one, she was 'almost continually pregnant, "confined," or nursing'.⁶¹ Her 'emerging self-definition as daughter, mistress, wife, and mother' occurred at the same time that she was consuming the works of Milton, and so 'she cast her birth myth—her myth of origins [in] the terms of *Paradise Lost*'.⁶² In contrast,

⁵⁸ W. B. Yeats reports: 'When I was in my early twenties [...] forbidden, provincial sketching clubs displayed pictures by young women of the burning of Shelley's body.' 'Prometheus Unbound', in *Essays and Introductions* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1961), pp. 419–25 (p. 424).

⁵⁹ Julian North, 'Shelley Revitalized: Biography and the Reanimated Body', *European Romantic Review*, 21 (2010), 751–70 (p. 759). North notes that 'Victorian biographies of Shelley have often been associated with the death scene' (p. 752).

⁶⁰ *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edn (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 220–21. In *Madwoman*, Gilbert and Gubar discuss both *The Last Man* and *Frankenstein*. The latter is analysed in-depth in relation to *Paradise Lost*, but *The Last Man* is read much more in terms of Shelley's position as a nineteenth-century woman writer, and in secondary relation to *Frankenstein*. In Chapter 3, 'The Parables of the Cave', Gilbert and Gubar discuss the 'Author's Introduction' without connecting it to the central narrative of *The Last Man* or *Paradise Lost*. In Chapter 7, 'Horror's Twin: Mary Shelley's Monstrous Eve' they turn to the central narrative to characterise the female PLAGUE as a reconstruction of Frankenstein's monster, the 'Monstrous Eve': 'PLAGUE's story ends with a vision of last things, a vision of judgement and of paradise nihilistically restored that balances *Frankenstein's* vision of first things. [...] the annihilation of history may well be the final revenge of the monster who has been denied a true place in history: the moral is one that Mary Shelley's first hideous progeny, like Milton's Eve, seems to have understood from the beginning' (p. 247).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁶² *Ibid.*

The Last Man is a novel concerned with death, a story of apocalypse conceived during a period of extreme bereavement. And so, although *Frankenstein* expresses more clearly and candidly its Miltonic inheritance, it is my contention that Shelley's myth of endings, as well as her 'myth of origins', can be understood as cast in the 'terms of *Paradise Lost*'.⁶³

Critics have primarily understood Milton's importance for *The Last Man* in terms of prophecy, drawing on the epigraph to make connections between the texts' treatments of fate and foreknowledge.⁶⁴ The epigraph is taken from the penultimate book of *Paradise Lost* and openly invites a comparison of this eschatological novel with Milton's aetiological epic (though, of course, Shelley's text is also aetiological in important ways, and Milton's is significantly eschatological). The epigraph draws a distinct connection between prophecy as a matter of progeny in both texts:

Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall

⁶³ Kilgour's essay "'One Immortality': The Shaping of The Shelleys in *The Last Man*" is, to date, the most detailed and extensive consideration of the Miltonic in Shelley's apocalyptic novel, going so far as to claim that '*The Last Man* is a revision of *Paradise Lost*, which reveals the scandal that Milton carefully suppressed: the creature always creates the myth of its own creation—and therefore makes its own creator' (p. 582). Kilgour links 'Lycidas' and P. B. Shelley's 'Adonais' as 'important subtexts for *The Last Man*, which reworks the elegiac tradition of lamentation and consolation'; compares the 'interesting opposition[s]' of Adrian/Lionel and Idris/Perdita with Milton's 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso'; and sees in 'the transformation of England, once a paradise, into a wasteland' an echo of 'Milton's description of the consequences of the flood' (pp. 570–77). Kilgour's thorough reading of *The Last Man* lays an important foundation for discussions of the Miltonic in the novel, and my argument builds on this while dwelling on different aspects of the text. Where Kilgour primarily addresses a shared use of water imagery, my concern is with Shelley's use of fragmentation, multiplicity, and margins; Kilgour focusses on the desires driving Shelley's production, and I extend this to a consideration of the reception of the text and its relation to other memorialization narratives. Kilgour suggests that Shelley uses a variety of literary sources to form a myth of the Shelleys' romantic oneness, primarily paying attention to her use of Milton. This argument could be extended by highlighting the ways in which cleaving is at the core of Milton's poetic presentation of desire; this is one of the aims of Chapter 3.

⁶⁴ Morton D. Paley writes that the epigraph 'has a particular bearing on *The Last Man*' because 'Michael has in Adam's view shown him disasters he cannot prevent, the knowledge of which can only torment him'. 'Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*: Apocalypse Without Millennium', in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, ed. by Audrey A. Fisch, Anne K. Mellor, and Esther H. Schor (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 107–23 (p. 115). Timothy Ruppert, too, addresses the importance of the epigraph for 'illuminat[ing] *The Last Man*'s shape and tone' but disagrees regarding the deterministic implications, suggesting instead that 'literary prophecy in fact disallows the closure of history to possibilities'. 'Time and the Sibyl in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *Studies in the Novel*, 41.2 (2009) 141–156, (p. 148). Ruppert considers 'Miltonic literary prophecy' as offering a model for Romantic writers 'who sought not simply to describe their times but to remake them' (p. 143). The future in both texts is at once prophesied and offered up for intervention, as Ruppert suggests. He compares the narrator of the 'Author's Introduction' to Milton's Michael, as both seek 'to move [their] audience[s] to rethink human community against the image of its discontinuation' (p. 149). See also Snyder, pp. 130, 438. Kilgour follows the line that the primary importance of Milton is that the 'problem of seeing an already determined future is prophesied in the text's epigraph from *Paradise Lost* [...], like Adam, the reader sees a future already written: knowledge of what is coming does not, alas, confer the power to change it' (p. 568).

Him or his children. (XI. 770-72)

Shelley takes her epigraph from the moment in which Michael shows Adam what will befall his offspring in the penultimate book of *Paradise Lost*. Here Adam is given his first vision of death. This is the first frame through which we enter *The Last Man*: a fragment of a text which both takes us back to the beginning and forward to the end. Shelley's use of Milton at the very beginning of *The Last Man* is not simple, and points to a sustained engagement with a Miltonic, prophetic temporality embedded in the central narrative.

We are called to read *The Last Man* in the terms of *Paradise Lost*, too, because both texts are deeply concerned with authority, family, and beginnings.⁶⁵ Erin Murphy discusses the role of genealogy in the last books of *Paradise Lost*, which opens Milton's epic up to comparisons with Shelley's novel. Michael reveals human history to Adam as the father of mankind before he even knows what it is to be a father, and much of this vision of the future involves biblical narratives of suffering and sorrow.⁶⁶ Murphy writes that in these last books 'the epic plunges us into an engagement with reproductive time', and this 'plunge' occurs not just to the reader, but to Adam and Eve, too. Thus, Eve's resistance to the Fall is also a resistance to falling 'into mortal reproductive time': Eve's fear—also a fear at the heart of *The Last Man*—is of movement into a new kind of temporality, measured by a 'proliferation of bodies that die'.⁶⁷

The opening passage of Milton's epic offers itself up as a superlative literary beginning. A. D. Nuttall writes that Milton 'like Virgil and unlike Homer, continually and strenuously reaches towards genesis, towards a natural beginning'.⁶⁸ His 'poetic achievement' is 'one of comprehensiveness' (the word 'all' is the 'great Miltonic word') and this comprehensiveness is partly temporal, so that the 'arbitrary intervention of the human poet' is united 'with the necessary beginning of all humanity, all poetry'.⁶⁹ In a genre overtly concerned with firsts, Milton surpasses his epic predecessors to tell of 'things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme'

⁶⁵ London has said that Shelley scholars show 'relentless concern with questions of authority and bodily limits', a concern founded in the text of *Frankenstein* (p. 256).

⁶⁶ Erin Murphy, 'Milton's "Birth Abortive": Remaking Family at the End of *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Studies*, 43, ed. by Albert C. Labriola (2004)

<http://literature.proquest.com/contents/abl_toc/MiltonStudiesPittsburghPA/20040101.jsp> [accessed 4/5/2017].

⁶⁷ Murphy argues this is a fear of reproduction which 'recurs in Milton's writings and mirrors his fear of a royalist government that uses the reproduction of bodies to authorize political power'.

⁶⁸ A. D. Nuttall, *Openings: Narrative Beginnings from the Epic to the Novel* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 93.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 113. As William Empson writes in 1935, Milton 'does not use *all*, his key word, for any but a wholesale and unquestioned emotion'. *Some Versions of Pastoral* (London; New York: Penguin, 1995), p. 138.

(l. 16): the story of man's first disobedience. Yet the story begins earlier than this anthropocentric 'first'. Instead, it begins with the rebel angels' fall from heaven, and later returns to a point earlier still when Raphael relates the creation of the world to Adam in Book VII.

Much has been said about the playful delay in the first sentence of *Paradise Lost*, where Milton holds back the verb 'Sing' until the sixth line, the thirty-ninth word, embedding suspense into the reader's experience of the text from the very start. This beginning reinforces Milton's concern with aetiology, as 'the hammer descends, over and over again, this way and that, on the idea of inception' as well as looking forward to the End ('till one greater man | Restore us', l. 4–5).⁷⁰ The many 'firsts' contained within the opening involve different kinds of inception, some to do with the actions of man, some to do with the shaping of creation out of chaos. Nuttall points out that the opening of *Paradise Lost* utilises 'Miltonic epic multiplication', which primarily takes the form of doubling: we are told of Satan's fall as well as man's, and likewise we are given two *in medias res* beginnings. The movement from the opening to Satan's narrative (a break 'marked in minimal fashion, by a transition from past to present tense') is followed by 'a second *in medias res*—some would say the true one—at the beginning of Book V, where Adam and Eve are shown together in Paradise'.⁷¹ Milton's opening acknowledges this subsequent pattern of recurring firsts and echoed beginnings, and multiplication runs through the text.

Milton's temporal playfulness, made manifest through convoluted syntax and structural delay, does not occur only in *Paradise Lost*. 'Singing' is also a temporal turning point in 'Lycidas':

There, "Thus sang the uncouth swain", at line 186, retrospectively frames the entire preceding poem, turns it into a dramatic utterance, delivered at some time in the poem's past; yet this information comes so late that the retroactive convulsion required in the reader's understanding can barely be achieved.⁷²

'Lycidas', then, 'begins, so to speak, before its own beginning, with the poet casting about for his poem, for his own voice'.⁷³ There is a gap in both 'Lycidas' and *The Last Man* between the 'reader's understanding' and the temporality that claims to frame what comes before or after. In Milton this is a retrospective framing; in Shelley a proleptic one. Shelley's use of Milton at the (first) beginning of *The Last Man*—a text full of beginnings and unease about the narrative 'now'—is then clearly an engagement with Miltonic temporal layering. As

⁷⁰ Nuttall, pp. 79–80.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 87.

⁷² Ibid., p. 132.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 149.

Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle write of Milton's epic opening that it 'unsettles any simple notion of opening or beginning', the same can be said of *The Last Man*, which also, as I will discuss below, unsettles the idea of a simple, single narrator.⁷⁴

Beyond Shelley's Miltonic epigraph, there are several direct references to *Paradise Lost* in *The Last Man*. When the dreaded plague finally enters England its arrival is compared to Satan's 'one slight bound high overleaped all bound' into Eden (IV. 181): 'the earth's desolator had at last, even as an arch-fiend, lightly over-leaped the boundaries our precautions raised, and at once enthroned himself in the full and beating heart of our country'.⁷⁵ Like the epic similes which occur throughout *Paradise Lost*, this comparison is multifaceted: Shelley's plague is Satanic in its deviousness, in the seeming ease with which it traverses protective bounds, in its intent to be 'enthroned', but also, most powerfully, in its function as 'desolator' of the entire human race. The reference to *Paradise Lost* here also draws attention to 'bound' as both the threshold and the means of crossing it. 'Bound', like 'all', is a recurring word in *Paradise Lost* with suggestive implications; this persistent play between 'limits' and 'leaps' betrays Milton's fascination with boundary-crossing (this is central to my argument in Chapter 3).⁷⁶ The presence of Milton at a point of boundary-crossing is not exceptional in the novel, and in fact begins a pattern. Three chapters later, 'England's imperial policy turns back upon itself in the form of an Irish invasion'.⁷⁷ The enemy ships approach the English shore, a terrible noise is made by their sails, violently torn by the wind which 'rend[s] them with horrid split, and such whirl as may have visited the dreams of Milton, when he imagined the winnowing of the arch-fiend's van-like wings, which encreased the uproar of wild chaos' (297). This allusion binds together images directly from the text of *Paradise Lost* with their imagined origin: the dreams of Milton himself. A third reference compares Verney's journey away from England to that of 'our first parents expelled from Paradise':

Alas! to enumerate the adornments of humanity, shews, by what we have lost, how supremely great man was. It is all over now. He is solitary; like our first parents expelled from Paradise, he looks back towards the scene he has quitted. The high walls of the tomb, and the flaming sword of plague, lie between it and him. Like to our first parents, the whole earth is before him, a vast desert. (322)

⁷⁴ *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 5th edn (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 2.

⁷⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *The Last Man*, ed. by Morton D. Paley (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 245. Further references to this edition are given parenthetically in the text.

⁷⁶ Leonard notes that "'Bounds'" means both "limits" and "leaps" (p. 245), discussing Isabel Gamble MacCaffrey's close reading of 'bounds' and 'boundless'. MacCaffrey, *Paradise Lost as Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 104.

⁷⁷ Kari E. Lokke, 'The Last Man', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley*, ed. by Esther Schor (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 116–34 (p. 130).

As Verney flees, the walls of Eden—so easily ‘lightly over-leaped’ by ‘the earth’s desolator’—rise up to create a crypt, guarded by ‘the flaming sword of plague’.

We can draw much from the fact that Shelley’s direct references to *Paradise Lost* within the text occur at a point of crossing geographical thresholds, or a threat to national boundaries. They all involve a crossing of England’s borders, the edges of which are made primary in the very first sentence of Verney’s narrative, which begins ‘I am the native of a sea-surrounded nook, a cloud-enshadowed land’ (9). These direct references to Milton’s epic cover the period in the centre of the novel from the plague’s entry into England and Verney’s departure (from the middle of the second book to the beginning of the third). Overt reference to Milton is linked implicitly to English suffering on English soil: a scene of affliction that supplants an English Paradise and is followed by expulsion. The plague, as Milton’s Satan, overleaps the protective boundaries around the Eden-like England, and the Irish approach across the sea is accompanied by Satanic sounds. When the border-crossing is reversed and Verney abandons England, he is as Adam expelled from Eden, although as Paley points out, the ‘last lines of *Paradise Lost* are reshaped with bitter irony’, and Verney’s ultimate isolation is prefigured in the use of ‘him’ in place of ‘them’ in the last line.⁷⁸ England is figured as Paradise in all of these comparisons, and Milton is always invoked at a point where thresholds are constructed and crossed, even in the epigraph, where we first enter into the text. Where Gilbert and Gubar have read *Frankenstein* as a rewriting of the ‘male culture myth of *Paradise Lost*’, I suggest that Shelley uses *Paradise Lost* repeatedly in *The Last Man* to proclaim the complexity of her grief in contrast to the reductive ‘male culture myth’ of P. B. Shelley expressed in works such as Fournier’s painting.⁷⁹

Paley writes that ‘although Mary Shelley’s novel has [...] echoes of the Bible and of Milton, these are fewer and more peripheral’ than echoes in other ‘Last Man’ texts.⁸⁰ I suggest that they are peripheral in a more significant sense, in that they occur at important moments where boundaries are broken. Indeed, these ‘peripheral’ moments are *central*, as the breaching of borders and the failure of national limits to halt the spread of the plague are crucial in the novel. Paley suggests that in *The Last Man* the epigraph and the ‘several memorable similitudes’ listed above are the limit of Shelley’s engagement with *Paradise Lost*. I want to go beyond this perceived threshold to address the peripheral echoes of Milton in *The Last Man*.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Paley, p. 118. See also Kilgour, p. 578.

⁷⁹ Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 220–21.

⁸⁰ Paley, p. 118.

⁸¹ One of the peripheral echoes which I will not discuss in detail, but is worth noting, is the haunting performance of Joseph Haydn’s *Creation* (420), the libretto for which is based on *Paradise Lost* and Genesis. Elizabeth Effinger discusses the importance of the oratorio among other sounds in the

Again, Milton is to be found at the edges of nineteenth-century texts. It is not Shelley's debt to Milton that is limited to the epigraph and direct allusions; it is merely that scholarly attention to such a debt has been largely limited to these instances. Below I explore Shelley's Miltonic inheritance in *The Last Man*, particularly in relation to framing, fragmentation, and failure.

THE LAST MAN AS FAILURE

Rosalie Glynn Grylls's 1938 biography of Shelley begins 'whatever her limitations and *in whatever she may have failed*, Mary Shelley remains an Individual'.⁸² Whilst this seems a strange (if not outright offensive) way to begin a biography, it does foreground the centrality of 'failure' in thinking more widely about Shelley and her writing.⁸³ We may then reclaim such a notion of failure as a point of interest rather than insult in Shelley's work; 'failure' is useful for thinking about her place in a system of literary influence, and essential for understanding her writing in the years after the drowning of her husband. Beyond this, 'failure' is conceptually connected to the notion of 'apocalypse' and so can be placed centrally in a reading of *The Last Man*.

Failure functions in many ways in *The Last Man*. Most obviously, in that it has been considered a failed literary endeavour and has only relatively recently been awarded critical value. Still, acknowledgement of such value often makes note of the text's 'formal weaknesses of tone and plot'.⁸⁴ *The Last Man* is also itself concerned with failure in different forms. The narrator begins by apologising for the potential failures of the translation, as the novel is posited as a text translated from found fragments of ancient prophecy. The central narrative is about the failure of mankind to survive a plague, but beyond this it involves the failure of imagination and of art. Recent critics of *The Last Man* all seem to deal with at least one element of failure in the novel. Lauren Cameron points to critics' recognition of Shelley's 'radical vision of the failure of all governments to enact any significant change' and Raymond's numerical view of soldiers is 'shown to be not just a failing of Raymond, but a

novel in 'A Clandestine Catastrophe: Disciplinary Dissolution in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *European Romantic Review*, 25 (2014), 19–34.

⁸² My emphasis. Being an 'Individual', for Grylls, was what made Mary a suitable partner, as the second line reads: 'And it places her alone among the women [P. B.] Shelley knew and at times loved, as the one worthy to be his wife.' *Mary Shelley: A Biography* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1938), p. xiv.

⁸³ Biographies of Shelley have turned away from this belittling approach, but failure is a firm part of the critical history.

⁸⁴ Snyder, p. 448.

failing of the military mindset generally'; Fuson Wang speaks of 'Verney's failure' as 'the inability to transform [...] species shame into a familial embrace of the diseased negro'.⁸⁵ This list could be vastly expansive because the novel is a flawed text concerned with political, philosophical and personal failure.

The Last Man can be read not only as a novel about the failure of mankind, but the failure of apocalypse itself. Robert Lance Snyder suggests that Shelley's apocalypse denies the very meaning of the word, because in *The Last Man* 'apocalypse, which in the Greek means a revelation or unveiling, itself brings no enlightenment'.⁸⁶ The plague at the centre of the narrative 'stubbornly resists interpretation', it is a 'grotesque enigma mocking all assumptions of order, meaning, purpose, and causality'.⁸⁷ Shelley's apocalypse is one that 'resists an interpretative closure' as well as interpretative *disclosure*.⁸⁸ It is also an instance of fragmentation: in *The Last Man* 'Plague' is a broad term which involves fatality in forms ranging from hypothermia and typhus to old age. Cameron demonstrates that the Satanic feminised force which destroys humanity but leaves the rest of the natural world intact is a composite of multiple manifestations of death rather than a single unified plague. This multiplicity—which could be (mis)read as a failure to conjure a coherent apocalypse—is identifiable more broadly in Shelley's work. Cameron suggests that 'any claim to a singular viewpoint should be distrusted in Shelley's works' because as Betty T. Bennet notes, 'indeterminacy is at the heart of the novel, [...] parallel visions, in different guises, are at the core of all of Mary Shelley's major fiction'.⁸⁹ This multiplicity is inherently related to the fragment as foundation for this text: when fragments are joined together, when gaps are filled in, a multiplicity of reading proliferates. There is certainly little order in the plague itself, though we might argue Shelley's depiction of the end of mankind does reveal something about the futility of imagination and politics in the face of an indifferent Nature.

To return to Grylls's biographical beginning, the words 'failure and limitation' can clarify the relation of 'failure' to Shelley's apocalypse. The *OED* gives one meaning of 'fail' as 'To become exhausted, come to an end, run short'; 'to become extinct, to die out, lose vitality,

⁸⁵ Lauren Cameron, 'Mary Shelley's Malthusian Objections in *The Last Man*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 67.2 (2012), 177–203 (pp. 182, 197); Fuson Wang, 'We Must Live Elsewhere: The Social Construction of Natural Immunity in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *European Romantic Review*, 22.2 (2011), 235–55 (p. 243).

⁸⁶ Snyder, p. 445.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 436.

⁸⁸ Young-Ok An, "'Read Your Fall': The Signs of Plague in *The Last Man*", *Studies in Romanticism*, 44.4 (2005), 581–604 (p. 581).

⁸⁹ Cameron, p. 194; Betty T. Bennett, 'Radical Imaginings: Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 26.3 (1995), 147–52 (p. 148).

pass away'; 'to come to an end, expire'. Thinking about 'ending' and thinking about 'failure' then go hand-in-hand. Failure in this sense encompasses the modern, secular conception of apocalypse as an end with no subsequent renewal, an end of the world at odds with the original Greek 'Apocalypse', which involves revelation, or an uncovering. 'Failure' comes to stand in for 'apocalypse' in *The Last Man*. Of course, 'limitation' is also at the heart of this project—limitations are thresholds or margins—so that in the same way that I adapt Paley's claim that Milton's presence in *The Last Man* is 'peripheral', 'failure' and 'limitation' can be also reclaimed from the sphere of denigration and made central to analysis of Shelley's writing.

Shelley's apocalypse is not easily interpreted, understood, or described in terms of systematised belief. Multiplicity resists revelation: the plague is many things and sends with it no message of redemption; the narrative can be read many ways and delivers no clear message of renewal. At the centre of much critical writing on *The Last Man* is a grappling with the text as 'a vehicle for a powerful and complex textual indeterminacy'.⁹⁰ What Shelley presents us with, then, *is* a failure, but she is worth reading not *despite this* as Grylls might have us believe; her very engagement with the notion of 'failure' gives us another way of thinking through apocalypse and what it is to come to an end.

Paley suggests that the negative reception of the novel was provoked partly because 'its subject matter was so threatening, and partly because it came not early but relatively late as a presentation of the subject'.⁹¹ *The Last Man* arrived on a literary scene at once oversaturated with the notion of a lone survivor of apocalypse, and unwilling to accept this very notion of Lastness.⁹² In a saturated marketplace, Lastness was not to last, and at the point of Shelley's publication the subject 'had come to seem not apocalyptic but ridiculous'.⁹³ Paley suggests that concealed behind this ridicule lies recognition of the *threat* of Lastness: the 'very subject

⁹⁰ Lokke, p. 126

⁹¹ 'Introduction', *The Last Man*, p. xxi

⁹² The founding of this subgenre of secular apocalypse fiction is now generally credited to Jean-Baptiste François Xavier Cousin de Grainville who published *Le Dernier Homme* in 1805, translated into English in an uncredited edition the following year under the title *Omegarus and Syderia, a Romance in Futurity*. Then came Byron's 'Darkness' in the Year Without a Summer (1816) and Thomas Campbell's 'The Last Man' in 1823. In the year that Shelley published her apocalypse narrative, 'Last Men' proliferated: Thomas Hood published the aforementioned satirical 'The Last Man', *Blackwood's* published two anonymous pieces on the theme (a tale 'The Last Man' and a poem 'The City of the Dead'), and John Martin made his now lost original study for *The Last Man*. Cameron adds to this list James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), John Galt's *The Last of the Lairds* (1826), and Thomas Lovell Beddoes's abandoned play, *The Last Man* (1824–25) (p. 179). For an overview of this period of literary production see Fiona J. Stafford, *The Last of The Race: The Growth of a Myth from Milton to Darwin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 197–231. Stafford also discusses the Flood and the final books of *Paradise Lost*, pp. 12–33.

⁹³ Paley, 'Apocalypse', p. 107.

seemed to invite derision, although behind that derision one senses a certain eschatological anxiety that may account for the virulence of some of the reviews'.⁹⁴ Lastness came to be seen both as something to fear and something to deny the very possibility of. How can we conceive of Lastness in literature when the very act of reading presupposes an audience for the Last Man? This is a problem Shelley deals with in the frame narrative, which makes her Last Man from the beginning paradoxically *not* Last.

Paley points out that the majority of contemporary reviews of *The Last Man* were 'derisory' and 'much of its reception belongs not to the realm of literary criticism but to that of invective'.⁹⁵ *The Literary Gazette* called the second two books of the novel a 'sickening repetition of horrors'.⁹⁶ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in an 1827 review of Hood's *Whim's and Oddities* (1826) claimed that if Hood's 'The Last Man' had been published two years earlier it 'would have saved Mrs Shelley from the perpetration of her stupid cruelties' and 'Mr Hood's Last Man is, in our opinion, worth [...] five hundred of Mrs Shelly's abortion [*sic*]'.⁹⁷ *The Monthly Review* remarked that 'the whole appears to us to be the offspring of a diseased imagination, and of a most polluted taste', and while the 'powers of composition' do 'bear the impress of genius' they are unfortunately 'perverted and spoiled by morbid affectation'.⁹⁸

It is not a picture which she gives us, but a lecture in anatomy, in which every part of the human frame is laid bare to the eye, in its most putrid state of corruption. In this part of her subject, as indeed in every other, she amplifies beyond all the bounds of moderation. We are reluctantly obliged to pronounce the work a dedicated failure.⁹⁹

Not only are these comments firmly in the 'realm' of 'invective', they are ironic in expressing disgust at bodily 'corruption' through a use of critical metaphors of the diseased body. The horror of the body is here connected to failure and boundary-crossing, as Shelley 'amplifies' the 'putrid' state of the human body '*beyond all the bounds of moderation*'. Where *The Monthly Review* criticises Mary Shelley's detailed anatomy of apocalypse, in which 'every part of the human frame is laid bare to the eye, in its most putrid state of corruption', the reviews of the text seem similarly preoccupied with sickly semantics. Words such as 'sickness', 'diseased',

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 108.

⁹⁵ 'Introduction', *The Last Man*, p. xxi.

⁹⁶ 'Review of *The Last Man*', *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c.*, 473 (1826), 102–3. *The Literary Gazette's* damning review returns several times to the gender of its author, at one point exclaiming that 'Were this not written by a woman, it would be sad, vapid impertinence: as it is written by a woman, we male critics do not know what it is', and asking 'Why not *the last Woman*? she would have known better how to paint her distress at having nobody left to talk to: we are sure the tale would have been more interesting.'

⁹⁷ 'Hood's *Whims and Oddities*', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 21 (1827), 45–60 (p. 54).

⁹⁸ 'Review of *The Last Man*', *The Monthly Review, Or Literary Journal*, n. s. 1 (1826), 333–35.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

and ‘polluted’ could be reimagined as praise of the intensity of Shelley’s representation of a contaminated community.

The use of the language of the body in critique of Shelley is not altogether surprising. She is a writer of the body, and particularly a writer of bodies that disturb the division between dead and live matter. Both her biography and these literary tendencies steer critical work on her writing and life towards metaphors of the dead and reanimated corpse (both helpfully and unsympathetically), and a focus on the relationship between books and flesh. This relationship, in the case of Shelley, is also tied intimately to matters of family. As Gilbert and Gubar write:

Endlessly studying her mother’s works and her father’s, Mary Shelley may be said to have “read” her family and to have been related to her reading, for books appear to have functioned as her surrogate parents, pages and words standing in for flesh and blood.¹⁰⁰

Significantly the language of disease used in these contemporary reviews often veers in the direction of motherhood, in the gendered critique of the text as ‘offspring of a diseased imagination’ and, shockingly, an ‘abortion’.¹⁰¹ Attacks on Shelley as a writer but also as a mother, particularly in *Blackwood’s* labelling of the novel an ‘abortion’, seem particularly cruel in light of her position in writing, which is one of almost unmitigated loss.

At the time of the conception of *The Last Man*, Shelley writes in the shadow of the deaths of her children and the death of her husband and intellectual partner, and of the other British Romantics. She famously wrote in her journal the day before she first received word of Byron’s death: ‘The last man! Yes I may well describe that solitary being’s feelings, feeling myself as the last relic of a beloved race, my companions, extinct before me’.¹⁰² By the time *The Last Man* was published in 1826 the personal death toll of Shelley’s companions included

¹⁰⁰ Gilbert and Gubar, p. 223.

¹⁰¹ ‘Abortion’ is a form of ‘failure’, as the *OED* gives one meaning of fail as ‘Of an action, design, etc.: To miscarry, not to succeed’, followed by ‘Of crops, seeds, etc.: To be abortive or unproductive,’ connecting the very apocalypse within *The Last Man* with *Blackwood’s* description of the text as an ‘abortion’. Still, ‘Abortion’ has been in use as meaning more precisely ‘The expulsion or removal from the womb of a developing embryo or fetus’ since at least 1538, and give examples from either side of *Blackwood’s* use. So, the term here is certainly gendered and refers not simply to failure but also to a loss of progeny. Interestingly, Shelley herself uses similar terms in letters to Leigh Hunt when she is enraged. On the attempts by ‘George Byron’ to sell her lost letters of P. B. Shelley, she writes that ‘his attempt is quite abortive’ and on Medwin’s *Life*, she writes ‘I must earnestly desire that it may fall dead born’. *Letters*, III, pp. 287; 319 ([3?] June 1846; 11 July 1847).

¹⁰² *The Journals of Mary Shelley 1814–1844*, ed. by Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), II, pp. 476–77 (14 May 1824).

her husband, three of her children, Byron, Fanny, Keats, Harriet and of course her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, who died ten days after giving birth from related complications.¹⁰³

Likewise, Milton endured many periods of intense grief. It is because of this, writes Paul Stevens, that the ‘immediacy and power of death haunts Milton’s works’, and ‘informs his most creative moments’, giving *Paradise Lost* ‘the ground of its authenticity’.¹⁰⁴ In 1652 he suffered a remarkably relentless series of losses: he finally lost his vision after a slow deterioration, his wife Mary died three days after giving birth to his third daughter, and soon afterwards his son John died at less than two years old. When Milton married again in 1656, his young wife lived just over a year. Katherine gave him a fourth daughter in 1657 and died ‘probably of consumption’ in 1658.¹⁰⁵ In this period Milton’s experience of the world was irretrievably altered, so that grieving for his family was parallel with the loss of—in terms of vision—everything.¹⁰⁶

Shelley’s loss is evident in her use of the novel as a space to explore the disappearance of so many aspects of the world she knew; not only personal deaths, but also a loss of faith in the possibility of revolution. Lee Sterrenburg calls Shelley’s response to this in *The Last Man* ‘a melodrama of failed expectations’.¹⁰⁷ This is manifested in the finale of *The Last Man*:

The death toll dwarfs that of *Frankenstein*, and instead of a fortunate Fall that promises future redemption, the novel ends with a quasi-nihilistic scene of the last man, running around Rome with his dog and shouting in Italian at the ruins of civilization.¹⁰⁸

The ‘fortunate Fall that promises future redemption’ is, of course, Milton’s *felix culpa*, so that Shelley’s ‘quasi-nihilistic’ ending stands in direct contrast to the ambivalently hopeful ending of *Paradise Lost*. Where Shelley’s beginnings often call us to make comparisons with Milton, Wang sees that the ending of *The Last Man* is comparatively hopeless—unless we consider it

¹⁰³ *The Last Man* is thus a text written by Shelley without collaboration; not with P. B. as partner and reader, as in the case of *Frankenstein*, nor with Godwin as editor as in the case of *Valperga*: ‘with *The Last Man*, she found herself completely alone’ (Wang, p. 236). This is not to suggest that Shelley was disproportionately dependent on the literary skills of her husband, but instead to note that the work produced by both was collaborative. This collaboration continues beyond P. B. Shelley’s death, in Shelley’s editorial work.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Milton’s Nationalism and the Rights of Memory’, in *Imagining Death in Spenser and Milton*, ed. by Elizabeth Jane Bellamy, Patrick Cheney, and Michael Schoenfeldt (Basingstoke, UK; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 171–84 (p. 171).

¹⁰⁵ Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 245, 268.

¹⁰⁶ Milton’s poetics of loss can be further linked to that of the Shelleys in his depictions of death by water. See Kilgour, pp. 573–77, and Christine Mohanty, ‘Death by Water in Milton’, *Milton Quarterly*, 14 (1980), 122–26.

¹⁰⁷ ‘*The Last Man*: Anatomy of Failed Revolutions’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 33.3 (1978), 324–47 (p. 337).

¹⁰⁸ Wang, p. 243.

mitigated by the novel's beginning: the temporally convoluted prophetic frame narrative, or 'Author's Introduction'.

FRAGMENTS IN THE FRAME: EPIGRAPH AND INTRODUCTION

As with the epic multiplication in *Paradise Lost*, there are several beginnings in *The Last Man*. The epigraph from Milton is followed by an 'Author's Introduction', then the start of Lionel Verney's central account, the point at which the gradual destruction of humankind by plague actually begins, and finally the moment when Lionel gathers his writing materials and begins to record his narrative. The Introduction and Verney's narrative are difficult to place in relation to one another. To borrow a phrase from Edward Said, *The Last Man* is (like *Paradise Lost*) a work that 'seems to infect and render exceedingly problematic the location of a beginning', as it starts and restarts in order to end with the End, which itself recalls the Beginning.¹⁰⁹ This in turn recalls Shelley's statement in the 1831 introduction to *Frankenstein* that a 'beginning must be linked to something that went before'.¹¹⁰ Indeed Milton's beginning ('In the beginning', l. 9) is, as Catherine Belsey points out, 'already a quotation' from the Bible, 'and thus a re-inscription'.¹¹¹

So, Shelley 'begins' by quoting Milton and then establishes the prophetic nature of the central narrative. In *Beginnings* Said connects quotation and prophecy by their power to disturb the text around them. He writes that 'the quoted passage symbolizes other writing as encroachment, as a disturbing force moving potentially to take over what is presently being written'.¹¹² Quotation confuses authorial power and threatens the edges of a text, so that Shelley's beginning posits Milton as a 'potentially' 'disturbing force' pushing at the edges of *The Last Man*. Said deems prophecy 'a type of language around which [this same] issue of originality perpetually lurks'.¹¹³ There is no point at which the authorial voice in *The Last Man* is secure, from the outer epigraph where Milton's voice encroaches, to the central narrative in which the very nature of prophecy is destabilising. Said asks: 'To what extent is a text so discontinuous a series of subtexts or pre-texts or paratexts or surtexts as to beggar the idea of an author as simple producer?'¹¹⁴ Shelley certainly collapses any sense of a 'simple'

¹⁰⁹ *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, 2nd edn (London: Granta Books, 1997), p. 76.

¹¹⁰ 'Author's Introduction to the Standard Novels Edition (1831)' in *Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus*, ed. by Maurice Hindle, revised edn (New York: Penguin, 2003), p. 8.

¹¹¹ *John Milton: Language, Gender, Power* (Oxford; New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 40.

¹¹² Said, p. 22.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Said, p. 58.

producer behind *The Last Man*. It has been widely acknowledged that the 'Author' of the 'Introduction' cannot be read simply as a proxy for Shelley: the voice is that of a genderless, nameless, perhaps necessarily non-human figure, apologetic and doubtful of the task at hand.

We could consider the aetiology of Shelley's apocalypse architecturally. As Said claims, 'a work's beginning is, practically speaking, the main entrance to what it offers', and Gérard Genette has spoken of the paratext in terms of Borges' 'vestible'; it is a threshold that 'offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back'.¹¹⁵ If we imagine Shelley's text as a complex walled structure (a labyrinth, perhaps), with the frame narrative 'the main entrance', then the central narrative is what is contained within. The suggestion in Said's deeming the beginning the 'main' entrance is that there are other ways of entering. Like Shelley's Plague, taking the form of the 'arch-fiend, lightly over-leap[ing] the boundaries' of England-as-Eden (245), we might enter over the wall, and bypass the main entrance completely; the internal world of the novel could be read with no recourse to the frame narrative, and indeed, once we are inside it demands to be read as such. The Cumaean Sibyl's voice and authority do not penetrate the walls of the central text. There is no singular definitive way in which we can, or should, relate the frame narrative to Lionel Verney's account of his life and the eventual destruction of mankind.

There are several ways of reading the frame, which establishes a foundation of fragmented multiplicity for interpretation of the subsequent apocalypse narrative (though 'subsequent' here is a problematic word). First, the sense given in the frame narrative as a self-contained text (and the generally accepted reading) is that the events within the subsequent narrative are a translation of the prophetic fragments of the Cumaean Sibyl. Of course, this reading is not without its temporal complications, as Barbara Johnson highlights in her summary of the text as 'a translation made in the nineteenth century of a prophecy uttered in Antiquity which takes the form of a narrative written by a man of the twenty-first century on the subject of the end of man'.¹¹⁶ Yet, the central narrative works *against* acceptance of the prophetic claims of the introduction, and could push the reader to retrospectively regulate the frame narrative in order to read it as the discovery of an ancient autobiography of the Last Man. This potential reading is offered by Verney at the end of the novel, when he asks: 'will not this world be re-peopled' and this narrative be found by 'the children of a saved pair of lovers, in some to me unknown and unattainable seclusion' (466)?

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 3; Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 2.

¹¹⁶ Barbara Johnson, 'The Last Man', in *The Other Mary Shelley*, ed. by Fisch, Mellor, and Schor, pp. 258–66 (p. 266).

The problem for an interpretation of the central narrative which accepts the introduction's claims to prophecy is simply that Verney's narrative does not read as prophecy; it reads as autobiography. It leaves the reader with the impression that this catastrophe has *already happened* in a deep past which mimics the near future. In addition to the novelistic and personal tone of the text, it draws so heavily on Shelley's life that it seems to refuse to be read as divination instead of diary. When the 'author' apologises, and explains the flawed process of 'filling in' the fragments, it is not clear to what extent this filling-in determines the autobiographical rather than prophetic tone of the central narrative.

There are alternate temporal possibilities contained within *The Last Man*, then: in all cases, we begin by knowing that the last man cannot truly be last because the record of his lastness finds an audience. At the end of the novel, travelling alone towards the fractured landscape of Rome, Verney scrawls two messages in three languages: he writes 'Verney, the last of the race of Englishmen, had taken up his abode in Rome' and then 'Friend, come! I wait for thee!' (456). Barbara Johnson comments on the juxtaposition of these two statements and the inherent conflict in Verney's words:

To speak of oneself in the third person of the past tense is to take oneself for a historical character, that is, a dead man. To make an invitation in the second person, in the other's language, is still to expect to live.¹¹⁷

This fracture in temporality stands for the entirety of the novel and returns us to the unsettling frame of the 'Author's Introduction'. Verney is both always already dead, and not yet even alive.

One contemporary review in the *Panoramic Miscellany* raises an interesting critique: once Shelley decides upon the 'machine' of the Sibyl's prophecy, there would be two ways to construct the central narrative which 'would obviously present themselves': 'The sibyl might either be feigned to have written in her own person, prophetically, the history that was to follow, or prophetically to have pre-transcribed the history that some future historian was to write.'¹¹⁸ Shelley chooses the second of these, and the more temporally convoluted of the two. The reviewer suggests that she chose wrongly, and that the first of these options would have offered a greater drama with a more effective omniscience. Instead, though 'the revelation is prophetic, it becomes [merely] a revelation not of what is to be done, but of that only which shall be narrated'.¹¹⁹ There is 'but one heart, but one mind—nothing, in reality,

¹¹⁷ Johnson, p. 263.

¹¹⁸ 'Review of *The Last Man*', *The Panoramic Miscellany, or Monthly Magazine and Review of Literature, Sciences, Arts, Inventions, and Occurrences*, 1 (1826), 380–86.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

but what might occur under the eye of one observer'.¹²⁰ The reviewer does not consider that this autobiographical, single, personal narrative better describes the horror of a population reduced to one than a 'supernatural perception' would have.¹²¹ This, again, is a supposed failure that is connected to Shelley's writing from a position of great loss. In describing the end of the human race from the perspective of one man, Shelley enacts a reversal which recalls the moments early in the text itself where Verney speaks about the reassuring fact that while one man is mortal, *mankind* continues beyond the lifespan of a single generation.¹²² The perspective of the 'future historian' writing for no-one makes clear the immensity of what has been lost. In choosing the second narrative technique Shelley also ensures that nothing about the 'voice' of *The Last Man* is clear, and indeed this 'failure' to posit a determinate narrative voice is where the unsettling power of the novel lies.

Whether the narrative begins with a reaching into the past for a prophecy of the end, a record of circular apocalypse, or a combination of the two, it certainly begins by weaving together failure and fragmentation. A focus on the latter in the frame narrative is indicative of the broader multiplicities in the text, which simultaneously distance us from lastness and deny the possibility of revelation. Shelley's second beginning weaves together failure and fragment primarily through the landscape, which is disjointed from the outset (again, think of the importance of geographical thresholds to the disruption of national boundaries that are repeatedly Miltonic). Crafted out of a recollection of Shelley's own travels in Italy with P. B. Shelley, the nameless and genderless narrator and a companion travel to seek out the cave of the Cumaean Sibyl across a sea which 'covered fragments of old Roman villas, which were interlaced by seaweed, and received diamond tints from the chequering of the sunbeams' (3). In these opening scenes 'fragments' of ancient buildings are visible and break the surface of the water. The landscape they travel across both covers and reveals the remnants of ancient architecture, which is again broken up with ('interlaced by') strings of seaweed, under a light that is divisive in its 'chequering' nature (to 'chequer' is to 'divide' or 'partition'; 'diamond tints' is also suggestive of cutting, shards). In framing a text rich with the significance of landscape—including mountains that recall the Romantic sublime which cannot defend humanity from the plague, and an angry sea which reclaims Adrian—Shelley details a landscape which is fractured and distinctly female. The Sibyl's labyrinthine cave is not only, as Gilbert and Gubar have pointed out, *womb-like*, but the external landscape is also

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Reflections on the disturbing shift in the usual relationship between the lifespan of the individual and that of species occur at several points in the novel (see pp. 227–28).

figured in terms of mythical and historical women: ‘the blue and pellucid element was such as Galatea might have skimmed in her car of mother of pearl; or Cleopatra, more fitly than the Nile, have chosen as the path of her magic ship’ (3).¹²³ I have discussed above the fragmented nature of Plague in the novel, which is also depicted as female.¹²⁴ Landscape and Plague are then two facets of the same fragmented feminine Nature.

The fragmented landscape of the frame is mirrored in the central text, at the end of Lionel Verney’s narrative when he finds himself at the end of the novel in Rome, where the ‘streets are strewn with truncated columns, broken capitals [...] and sparkling fragments’ and ‘the voice of dead time, in still vibrations, is breathed from these dumb things, animated and glorified as they were by man’ (461). Again, we can imagine these ‘sparkling fragments’ lying under the very water that the narrator and companion travel across in the introduction.

Back at the beginning, the narrator and companion ‘arrived at a large, desert, dark cavern’, ‘the Sibyl’s Cave.’ They ‘were sufficiently disappointed’, but ‘examined it with care, as if its blank, rocky walls could still bear trace of celestial visitant’ (4). Met with ‘blank’ walls, the tourists face an interpretative dead-end. Though their search begins with disappointment, and their guides threaten inevitable failure, they press on:

With great volubility, in their native Neapolitan dialect, with which we were not very familiar, [the guides] told us that there were specters, that the roof would fall in, that it was too narrow to admit us, that there was a deep hole within, filled with water, and we might be drowned. My friend shortened the harangue, by taking the man’s torch from him; and we proceeded alone. (4)

What they discover in their perseverance seems at first to be a cavern merely furnished in ‘piles of leaves, fragments of bark, and a white filmy substance’ (5). Paley writes that ‘they enter “a wide cavern with an arched dome-like roof” (2), a setting worthy of a painting by John Martin’, and it seems likely he is thinking of the dome-like shape of Martin’s illustration of Satan in Pandemonium.¹²⁵ The explorers’ entry into the cave mirrors our entry into the narrative, as they move through a threshold to repeatedly recognise their surroundings as not the ‘real cavern’. They ‘groped round the widened space to find the entrance’ but found instead ‘a second passage, which evidently ascended’ (4). There is a ‘succession’ of such movements from space to space, crossing thresholds repeatedly until the genuine, authoritative Sibyl’s cave is discovered, which holds the pure ‘sacred remains’ (that the narrator refers to the writing in this way first reveals Mary Shelley’s pervasive tendency to link corpse with corpus) (5). The reading process is reflected in this exploration which moves

¹²³ Gilbert and Gubar, p. 95.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 246–47.

¹²⁵ Paley, ‘Apocalypse’, p. 111.

frame-by-frame towards a sacred narrative, though one significant difference between the explorer's experience and our own as readers of the text is that we never gain access to the original material, as we are told that it must be translated and re-organised. 'The organic 'fragments' turn out to be 'traced with written characters' (5), written in languages both ancient and modern:

What appeared to us more astonishing, was that these writings were expressed in various languages: some unknown to my companion, ancient Chaldee, and Egyptian hieroglyphics, old as the Pyramids. Stranger still, some were in modern dialects, English and Italian. (5)

The coexistence of these various languages is another way in which the temporal placement of the writing is disturbed, as it cannot be linked to a particular moment or geography. Can we imagine Lionel Verney's narrative having its roots in this scattering of multilingual fragments? A reading of the frame narrative as offering dual possibilities is strengthened by this mixing of old and new. Still, again, *any* reading of the frame narrative prevents the last man from being the Last Man. He is either not yet born and his tale is safely placed in the realm of mere possibility, or he has been succeeded by people who have survived to read the record of his apocalypse, which has somehow come to exist in this fragmented, trans-temporal set of languages.

Said notes that in *Paradise Lost*, 'Milton's theme is loss, or absence, and his whole poem represents and commemorates the loss at the most literal level'.¹²⁶ The way this absence is embedded in the text, as Said reads it, is in the repeated remove of 'origin' or 'truth' from the reader—through the mediation of Raphael, Adam, Milton, time, and language itself—so that 'words stand for words which stand for other words, and so on'.¹²⁷ But the fact of this absence is what drives the poem: 'only because man has lost does he write about it, must be write about it, can he only write about it'.¹²⁸ The same can be said for Shelley's relation to loss in *The Last Man*, not only in terms of her motivation in writing, but the form that her elegiac novel takes, with a multitude of beginnings and a narrative layering which creates a temporally and emotionally complex text.

The narrator ends the 'introduction' by commenting on her role in translating the fragments into the form that the central narrative takes. She writes that she has taken up the 'scattered and unconnected' fragments, and is 'obliged to add links, and model the work into a consistent form' (6). Critics have noted that the narrator's hesitant work of translation is

¹²⁶ Said, p. 280.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

comparable to the much less tentative work Shelley undertakes as editor of her husband's posthumous poetry, a task which itself involves her creating a frame through which his Victorian readers can access *his* 'sacred remains' (6); I discuss this in more detail below. In the introduction, the narrator comments on the role of the translator and composition and compares herself to an artist reassembling the mosaic copy of Raphael's 'The Transfiguration', suggesting that in reconstructing the mosaic 'he would put them together in form, whose mode would be fashioned by his own peculiar mind and talent' (6).¹²⁹ Again, the narrative contains so much of Shelley's 'own peculiar mind and talent' that dividing divination from diary in *The Last Man* is impossible.

This comparison, however, is followed by an apology, an admission of the narrator's failure as translator:

Doubtless the leaves of the Cumaean Sibyl have suffered distortion and diminution of interest and excellence in my hands. My only excuse for thus transforming them, is that they were unintelligible in their pristine condition. [...] I hardly know whether this apology is necessary. For the merits of my adaptation and translation must decide how far I have well bestowed my time and imperfect powers, in giving form and substance to the frail and attenuated Leaves of the Sibyl. (6–7)

The narrator-as-translator admits guilt of causing 'distortion and diminution of interest and excellence', which is at first 'doubtless', but this confession is followed by further doubt in the narrator's ability not only to translate the fragments, but also to judge whether the result of the translation deems this apology necessary. To return to the architectural model offered by Said and Genette, if we enter through this 'main entrance' instead of leaping the wall, this is the foundation on which our reading of *The Last Man* rests: a temporally dislocated frame in which fragment and failure are bound together. We approach the text unsure of its contents, its contexts, and its quality. Certainty is replaced by impossibility. As Barbara Johnson writes, it 'is manifestly an impossible book', referring again to the problem of recording lastness: 'If the last man is a "he", who is writing the book? If the last man is an "I", who is reading it?' Johnson posits a possible answer to this question, though it is an answer which provokes more questions: 'the reader is dead'.¹³⁰

Audrey A. Fisch writes the following at the end of her essay on AIDS and deconstruction in relation to *The Last Man*:

Everyone is not dead at the end of the novel. The frame narrator of the "Author's Introduction" in 1818, before the events of Lionel's narrative, finds, translates, and gives shape to a manuscript—Lionel's narrative—which begins in 2073. Lionel's

¹²⁹ The mosaic copy of the painting Shelley refers to was completed in 1774 by Stefano Pozzi, in St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City.

¹³⁰ Johnson, p. 265.

narrative we now realize is really a prophecy, found inscribed on scattered Sybilline leaves and bark in the cave of the Cumaean Sybil. The “Author’s Introduction” is thus positioned as a prophecy of the ends of man, intended to warn “man” so that the end of “mankind” can be averted. No one, then, is dead yet.¹³¹

I am particularly interested here in Fisch’s use of ‘now’ in the assertion that ‘we now realize’ the narrative is ‘really a prophecy’. When exactly does this realisation occur? For Fisch it arrives after a lengthy discussion of the end of the central narrative, when ‘everyone is dead save Lionel’.¹³² Though Fisch is positing that the central narrative is merely a prophecy and ‘no one, then, is dead yet’, temporality and the order of reading is still skewed. We ‘realize’ the prophetic nature of the narrative only after, or ‘outside’ the central text, despite its foregrounding at the very beginning. My contention is that it is only in a *synthetic* reading experience in which we could ‘keep in mind’ the prophetic nature of the central text. We might ‘realize’ it again after reading, looking back at the text with a critical eye, but when confronted with Lionel’s narrative the prophetic authority is lost. Shelley disrupts the expected order of apocalypse and revelation, that the novel begins as prophecy, and so the central narrative itself is an unveiling. It is not the plague, but the prophecy, which holds the key to Shelley’s apocalypse (and here prophecy, as critics have established, is expressed in relation to Milton).

These problems of temporality and history are central to the last books of *Paradise Lost*, as Murphy writes:

The narrative problem of representing history has long been recognized as one of the major issues of the end of *Paradise Lost*. Whether it is Michael’s shift from visual to verbal representation, the tension between tragic emplotment and apocalyptic promise, or the style of a flattened poetry, the difficulty of storytelling in Books Eleven and Twelve has been a crucial element in critical discussions of the poem. In these final scenes, the poem shifts to position the reader in a startlingly peculiar moment in time. Like Adam poised on the mountaintop, we are lifted out of the dramatic moment which the previous books have given us into a position of temporal exile. Rather than enjoying the fiction of having Eden made present, or our typical historical struggle to look backward, we are forced to strain our necks to see our own past as future.¹³³

The phrase ‘temporal exile’ to describe the position of readers confronting a fractured temporality is particularly useful for thinking about *The Last Man* as it connects temporal and geographical dislocation. Temporality is linked with landscape here, as in *Paradise Lost*, in the

¹³¹ ‘Plaguening Politics: AIDS, Deconstruction, and *The Last Man*’, in *The Other Mary Shelley*, ed. by Fisch, Mellor, and Schor, pp. 267–86 (p. 279).

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 278.

¹³³ Murphy’s image of the audience ‘strain[ing] our necks to see our own past as future’ recalls the need to strain to see the details in the darkness of Martin’s *The Last Man*.

comparison between our position and Adam's, 'poised on the mountaintop'. We might think back to the moments where Milton appears most overtly in *The Last Man*, when geographical boundaries are crossed.

Murphy suggests that Adam's frustration at the end of *Paradise Lost*, much like Verney's at the end of *The Last Man*, is the epistemological and historical break between himself and his progeny; it is 'his inability to represent the past to his progeny, the breaking of the chain of historical memory before it is even formed'. The story that is told—not by Adam, but by Michael—steps away from the 'dramatic unfolding of earlier books' and towards a pervasive 'fragmentation'. Adam speaks of his vision of the future of mankind as 'abortive' because of the 'impotence of foreknowledge', but his use of 'embodied language calls attention to his consciousness that he is entering a biologically reproduced history'. As Murphy writes: 'In these final moments of the poem, Milton constantly thematises the narrative lines of family as a site for political control, as Michael and Adam negotiate who gets to tell the story of the human family.' At the end of their stories both Adam and Verney struggle with how to be a storyteller. It is particularly revealing, considering the discussion above regarding Shelley's 'abortive' text, that Adam speaks about this difficulty not in terms of male impotence but female reproductive failure: 'birth | Abortive' (XI. 768–69). The line break separates and connects these two ideas that are, in a parallel sense, opposed and related. The two men are connected, through their inability to find an audience for their stories, to the figure of the maternal oracle (though they are more akin to Cassandra than the Cumean Sibyl).¹³⁴ This unstable authority of apocalyptic narration is prefigured earlier in the novel, where Verney writes:

As my authorship increased, I [...] found another and a valuable link to enchain me to my fellow-creatures; my point of sight was extended, and the inclinations and capacities of all human beings became deeply interesting to me. [...] Suddenly I became as it were the father of all mankind. Posterity became my heirs. (157)

Kari E. Lokke highlights the reader's awareness of Verney's mistake here, as 'of course, posterity will not exist, is indeed a fiction in the context of this novel'.¹³⁵ Verney likens himself to Adam—'the father of all mankind'—but as Murphy has argued, Adam's narrative authority in the final books of *Paradise Lost* deteriorates, and 'his inability to represent the past to his progeny' is made central. Verney is linked to Adam, then, in their parallel relation to a prophecy of destruction. When Shelley uses lines from Adam's lament as epigraph to

¹³⁴ Lokke compares Shelley to Cassandra: 'in *The Last Man*, Shelley's sibylline invocation of the vortex created by the human passion for power as it cuts a path of universal destruction becomes the voice of a Cassandra that we ignore at our peril' (p. 133).

¹³⁵ Lokke, p. 131.

the novel concerned with prophecy, family, and apocalypse, these associated concerns are carried with it.

EDITING SHELLEY

Critics have aligned the fragments found in the Sibyl's cave with the fragmented remains of P. B. Shelley's poetry, out of which Mary Shelley crafts a poetic legacy after his death in writing the preface to *Posthumous Poems* (1824) and the extensive notes to *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1839).¹³⁶ This editorial project has been likened to a work of reanimation, drawing on Shelley's galvanic writing for a creative conceptual model. Yet, it is also a project bound up in the Miltonic, as she says—echoing Milton's beginning—"I am to justify his ways; I am to make him beloved to all posterity".¹³⁷ Mary's *Frankenstein*, a text in which death and birth come together, provides the metaphor of resurrection for her various projects of writing and reconstructing the public image of Shelley in prose after his death. Mary Favret writes:

Not only does she piece together and transcribe Percy's poetry, which she calls, elsewhere, "so confused a mass, interlined and broken into fragments," that "the wonder would be how any eyes or patience were capable of extracting [a volume]" from these scattered remains. [...] Most significantly, she "animates" this body of work. The woman who wrote *Frankenstein* now constructs a life that holds together these scattered pieces; these "component parts [are] ... endued with vital warmth."¹³⁸

Clearly connections can be made between Shelley's editorial project, the creation of Frankenstein's monster, and the narrator's prophetic translation in the 'Author's Introduction'. Favret reveals the bodily focus of Shelley's editorial work: her prose commentary is grounded in matter, while P. B. Shelley's poetry is made ethereal. At constant play in commentary on this connection is punning on corpse/corpus, and the recollection that Shelley's literary fame centres around the reanimation of fragments of corpse: 'she depicts her prose as the medium for making sense of and giving life to the fragments of Percy's corpus'.¹³⁹ Again, book and body are irresistibly drawn together.

¹³⁶ See most recently Wang, pp. 238–39. See also Susan J. Wolfson, 'Editorial Privilege: Mary Shelley and Percy Shelley's Audiences', in *The Other Mary Shelley*, pp. 39–72 and Jeremy Davies, 'The Shelleys and the Art of Suffering', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34.2 (2011), 267–80.

¹³⁷ Shelley quoted in Thomas Jefferson Hogg, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1906), p. 2.

¹³⁸ Mary Favret, 'Mary Shelley's Sympathy and Irony: The Editor and Her Corpus', in *The Other Mary Shelley*, ed. Fisch, Mellor, and Schor, pp. 17–38 (p. 17).

¹³⁹ Favret, p. 34.

Shelley's project in *The Last Man*, the building of an impossible monument to P. B. Shelley, is a precursor to her later project in editing his poetry, in which she resurrects an idealised version of him from the dead. Julian North has discussed Shelley's varied literary output (both personal and private) as an instance 'of the biographical act recreating itself in the period as a form of secularized bodily resurrection'.¹⁴⁰ North suggests that the distribution of Shelley's biographical project across writing both 'private and public, should be viewed together as forming [a] fragmentary biography of [P. B.] Shelley', a continuation of the pervasive presence of the fragment in Shelley's approach to fiction and life writing.¹⁴¹

Hugh J. Luke writes of Shelley's portrait of P. B. Shelley in *The Last Man* that it is 'indeed inadequate, because it is abstracted and idealized' though 'nonetheless easily recognizable and, so far as it goes, both true and just'.¹⁴² He goes on to point out, however, that P. B. Shelley's presence in *The Last Man* is not limited to the character of Adrian. In writing her late husband into *The Last Man*, Luke suggests

Mary was less reserved than she perhaps intended to be: consciously or only half-consciously, she allowed many of these feelings to spill over into *The Last Man*—still veiled, to be sure, but far from indiscernible to the present-day reader [...] she desired the release of self-revelation without its consequences, [and] her way out of the dilemma required a fragmentation of the complex personality of Shelley, as well as the complexities of her attitude towards him. Unwilling, and possibly unable, to express her total attitude toward her husband within the limits of a single fictional character, she found it necessary to make use of several.¹⁴³

Luke goes on to suggest that the 'fragmentary portrait[s]' of Percy we find in characters such as Idris and the astronomer Merrival are redeeming for Mary's text, as they offer a potential complexity not first apparent in the idealised figure of Adrian.¹⁴⁴ These 'veiled portraits'

may serve to add depth and complexity to the abstracted and idealized Shelley whom we see pictured as Adrian: they show clearly that Mary, too intensely loyal to expose all her feelings to the public, was fully aware of her husband's human imperfections.

¹⁴⁰ North, p. 751.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 753.

¹⁴² Hugh J. Luke, Jr, 'The Last Man: Mary Shelley's Myth of the Solitary', *Prairie Schooner*, 39.4 (1965), 316–27 (p. 318).

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 320.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 321. Gilbert and Gubar suggest the central problem facing students of the Miltonic in *Frankenstein* is 'the symbolic slipperiness [...] at the heart of all the characterizations': is the monster Satan, or Adam? Is he both? Is Victor God, Satan, Adam, or all? 'Like figures in a dream, all the people in *Frankenstein* have different bodies and somehow, horribly, the same face, or worse—the same two faces. [...] *Frankenstein* is ultimately a mock *Paradise Lost* in which both Victor and his monster, together with a number of secondary characters, play all the neo-biblical parts over and over again—all except, it seems at first, the part of Eve. [However] for Mary Shelley the part of Eve *is* all the parts' (pp. 229–30).

But it must not be forgotten that in the composite portrait the novel projects, it is Shelley as Adrian who shines through.¹⁴⁵

The image presented is of P. B. Shelley as a diamond split into shards: his smaller fragments are scattered among the other characters of *The Last Man* but the largest fragment remaining is the problematic and disappointing Adrian ('who shines through').

John B. Lamb asks similar questions of *Frankenstein*: why do these instances of character identification simultaneously demand notice and elude us? Lamb suggests that the monster, in his search for an identity, falls 'into the limited and limiting ontology of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. [...] As *Frankenstein* makes quite clear, the monster's identity has been shaped by a cultural myth in which the fallen can be *only* Adam or Lucifer'.¹⁴⁶ Extending the reading of *Frankenstein* as a subversion of *Paradise Lost*, Lamb calls us to read it 'as an attack upon the monologic and monolithic voice of *Paradise Lost*'.¹⁴⁷ Shelley's novel was not merely 'a secret, barely conscious attempt to subvert Milton': 'Milton bequeathed to the world a text on which were inscribed the cultural commandments of being, and Mary Shelley set out to break those stone tablets and to expose the illusory nature of bourgeois individualism'.¹⁴⁸ *The Last Man* is read in direct conflict with the perceived hegemony of Milton's epic, revealing the limitations of Milton's text as a basis for narratives of personal identity and personal freedom. Yet, in this analysis the very power of *Paradise Lost* as a basis for these departures lies in its hegemony, as it allows these subsequent narratives to carve a complex ontology in relation to an archetypal story.

This fragmentation leads to a vision of P. B. Shelley divided into body and mind: an oscillation between appeal to his physical self and his spirit 'liberated from the prison of flesh'.¹⁴⁹ This is the same oscillation occurring in the accounts of P. B. Shelley's cremation discussed above. However, in making use of the Miltonic as a framework for this ontological duplicity, Shelley's portrait of him maintains (paradoxically) a fragmented unity. As Favret writes that in Shelley's editorial work she is 'writing not as guiding spirit but as the means of connection—the mediating body between life and death, present and past, real and ideal', Shelley herself becomes the uniting force between the fractured visions of her late husband.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Luke, p. 322.

¹⁴⁶ 'Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Milton's Monstrous Myth', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47.3 (1992), 303–19 (p. 303).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

¹⁴⁸ Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 220–21; Lamb, p. 306.

¹⁴⁹ North, p. 754.

¹⁵⁰ Favret, p. 26.

In a letter to Jane Williams in the aftermath of the death of their husbands, Shelley writes of P. B. Shelley as ‘an angel’ who, in life, had been ‘imprisoned in flesh’, and both relationships are described in the language of *Paradise Lost*:

You the Eve of a fair Paradise—Now through Eden take your solitary way. I was never the Eve of any Paradise, but a human creature blessed by an elemental spirit’s company & love—an angel who imprisoned in flesh could not adapt himself to his clay shrine & so has flown & left it—and I feel as poets have described those loved by superhuman creatures & then deserted by them.¹⁵¹

Again, Shelley diverges from Milton’s ontology, placing Jane and Edward Williams in the roles of Adam and Eve, and carving a new space for herself as ‘a human creature’ in love with ‘an angel’. North points to a moment in the preface to the *Posthumous Poems* where Mary declares that to see her husband ‘was to love him’, but in place of a physical description, she ‘slides past the visible and into a defensive tropological substitution’.¹⁵²

Before the critics contradict me, let them appeal to any one who had ever known him: to see him was to love him; and his presence, like Ithuriel’s spear, was alone sufficient to disclose the falsehood of the tale, which his enemies whispered in the ear of the ignorant world.¹⁵³

Again P. B. Shelley is aligned with one of Milton’s angels, or at least with one of his angels’ instruments: Ithuriel’s spear. The revelatory spear which exposes Satan disguised as a toad at the ear of Eve at the end of Book IV becomes a metaphor for the power of P. B. Shelley’s mere presence as proof of worth.¹⁵⁴

We can see the importance of Milton for Shelley’s thinking about loss in the regularity with which she writes about P. B. Shelley’s incorporeality through Miltonic allusion. *Paradise Lost* depicts a world in which the divine and the human interact; in which man and angel interact. Milton provides a language through which Shelley speaks of the semi-divine presence of P. B. Shelley as well as the conflict between body and spirit that is a lasting focus (and problem) for his biographers. In Hogg’s terms, the biographical conflict is between the ‘earthy’ and the ‘heavenly’, two realms that are acknowledged as at once distinct in quality and united in kind in Milton’s monistic *Paradise Lost*.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ *Letters*, I, p. 264 (18 September 1822).

¹⁵² *Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (London: John and Henry L. Hunt, 1824), p. iv; North, p. 757.

¹⁵³ *Posthumous Poems*, p. iv.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear | Touched lightly; for no falsehood can endure | Touch of celestial temper, but returns | Of force to its own likeness’ (IV. 810–13).

¹⁵⁵ North quotes Hogg speaking of ‘himself as “of the earth, earthy” [...] Shelley by contrast is “of the heaven, heavenly”’ (p. 763). I will discuss the Victorian influence of Milton’s monism in more depth in Chapter 3.

Some of Shelley's most moving writing regarding her loss is directly reminiscent of Milton. In a journal entry after the death of her first child, she writes:

Dream that my little baby came to life again — that it had only been cold & that we rubbed it by the fire & it lived — I ~~am~~ awake & find no baby — I think about the little thing all day.¹⁵⁶

Though it must be by no means unusual to speak of dreams of lost loved ones and the pain of awaking to find them still lost, any reader familiar with Milton's Sonnet 23 would think of the final line 'I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night' (l. 14). Shelley writes too of dreams 'and waking visitations where [P. B.] Shelley reappeared to her, both ending inevitably in a renewed sense of loss'.¹⁵⁷

The complexities of Shelley's repeated, fragmented revivification of her husband stands in contrast with Fournier's posthumous painting, in which her perspective is conspicuously marginalised. Painted at the end of the nineteenth century, Fournier's depiction of the pyre positions itself as a celebration of P. B. Shelley's literary and cultural significance, making Byron, Trelawny and Hunt central. If we understand Shelley's editorial work as being undertaken both in order to reanimate her late husband and to secure and direct his Victorian reputation, Fournier's image, which confirms that reputation, dismisses her essential role in his commemoration.

MARTIN AND MILTON: FALSE STARTS AND DEAD ENDS

In returning to Fournier's painting we are also returned to the work of John Martin. Below I address the ways in which the work of this other apocalyptic imagination in the 1820s and onwards is also connected to the above discussion of fragmentation, failure, and loss (it is also spoken about in the terms of Milton's *Paradise Lost*). Subsequently, I use Martin's work to link the central conceptual concerns of this chapter to those of the following.

Martin's illustrations of Milton's epic (commissioned by Septimus Prowett for 'the enormous sum of 2,000 guineas') were begun in 1823, with the last of the series published in 1827, a period of gestation which parallels that of Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*.¹⁵⁸ The success of the illustrations has been attributed partially to his use of mezzotint, which involved both designing the prints directly onto plates and utilizing the intense chiaroscuro

¹⁵⁶ *Journals*, I, p. 70 (19 March 1815).

¹⁵⁷ North, p. 754. See Gray pp. 113–14 for a discussion of an echo of this in Tennyson, which sits within a discussion of the material/ethereal in Tennyson and Milton.

¹⁵⁸ Michael J. Campbell, 'John Martin as a Commercial Printmaker' in *Apocalypse*, ed. by Myrone, pp. 23–33 (p. 25).

that mezzotint can produce: ‘rich velvety blacks and bright white highlights’ which ‘provided a drama perfectly suited to his subjects’.¹⁵⁹ Although he enjoyed ‘periods of affluence’ (in particular through the grand sum he received for the *Paradise Lost* illustrations) as Myrone writes, ‘these are not the signs of a steady, successfully commercial operator; there are too many false starts, dead ends, unfinished projects and mistaken ventures’.¹⁶⁰ ‘False starts’ and ‘dead ends’ are very apt phrases for discussing an artist whose work is, like Milton’s and Shelley’s, deeply concerned with aetiology and eschatology.

David Bindman suggests that it is in his *Paradise Lost* mezzotints that Martin first displays ‘knowledge of contemporary geology and palaeontology’ and that Martin was ‘certainly the first imaginative artist’ to ‘make images of dinosaurs as they might have looked in their living state’.¹⁶¹ A painter primarily known for his dramatic apocalyptic landscapes, he also showed a keen interest in geological developments, which left a strong trace in the products of his visual imagination. Another similarity between Martin’s work and that of Shelley and Milton, then, is in this crossing-over of beginnings and endings.¹⁶² Like Shelley, Milton, and as we will later see, Thomas Hardy, Martin is an artist concerned both explicitly and implicitly with the deep past and genesis. Edward Bulwer-Lytton describes his artistic journey in terms comparable to that of Shelley’s ‘author’ exploring the caves of the Sibyl, except that Martin is ‘alone and guideless’ when he ‘penetrate[s] the remotest caverns of the past, and gaze[s] on the primæval shapes of the gone world’.¹⁶³

In *Adam and Eve Driven out of Paradise* (see Figure 5), Bindman identifies the silhouette of a large animal in the middle distance (which looks much like a dinosaur) as belonging to ‘a mammoth or mastodon, which Cuvier had identified from fossil bones and teeth to be a different species from an elephant, although not dissimilar except that it was considerably larger’.¹⁶⁴ This interest in newly discovered forms of early life, in the creatures of ‘deep time’, brings together beginnings and endings in a new way; these skeletal remains of ancient, extinct creatures prompts thinking simultaneously about a time far beyond the beginning of mankind, but also brings up the threat of extinction. As Bindman notes: ‘it was only at the end of the eighteenth century with the work of Cuvier that skeletons of extinct creatures began to be reconstructed convincingly, and that the very idea of extinction became generally

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Myrone, ‘John Martin’, p. 21.

¹⁶¹ ‘Deep Time, Dragons and Dinosaurs’ in *Apocalypse*, ed. by Myrone, pp. 43–51 (p. 46).

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁶³ *England and the English* (Paris, Baudry’s European Library: 1833), p. 384.

¹⁶⁴ Bindman, p. 46.

accepted.¹⁶⁵ Bindman writes that at this point in the nineteenth century the information that Martin would have had to work from, the data at the foundation of his imaginative recreations, would have been often merely ‘incomplete skeletal fragments’, so that Martin’s illustrations of ancient creatures can be considered the filling in of fragmented skeletal remains.¹⁶⁶ This process of filling-in mimics Shelley’s transformation of the fragment into narrative, it is a galvanic bringing back to life through the visual imagination, and it is pertinent, then, that this resurrection occurs in the peripheral zones of his illustrations of Milton, at the edge of paradise.



Figure 5. John Martin, ‘Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise’, 1827.

Martin’s illustrations of Milton were part of his concerted effort to engage with popular literary and cultural materials. Myrone writes that ‘Martin was determinedly populist in his choice of subject matter’, and that Milton was one of the ‘popular writers’ amongst artists ‘in the fullest sense of the term [...] by the early nineteenth century’.¹⁶⁷ But it is not only in his illustrations of *Paradise Lost* that Martin is Miltonic. In the same way that I have attempted to

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁶⁷ Myrone, ‘John Martin’, p. 18.

reclaim Shelley's 'failures' and 'limitations' as something worthy of critical interest, and in some important sense connected to her relationship with Milton, Martin's failures (as conceived by his contemporaries, and expanded by myself below) are comparably productive for thinking about failure and the Mil tonic.

Martin's failure in the eyes of his contemporary artists is paradoxically bound up in his great success with the public during his own lifetime and in the years following his death, as paintings toured the country to large audiences. He was a victim of 'prejudice against the popular'.¹⁶⁸ The scope and endurance of the public's awareness of Martin's work in the nineteenth century is evidenced by Ellen Wood's reference to his Last Judgement triptych in *East Lynne*, her 1861 bestselling Victorian sensation novel, in which Martin's paintings 'are employed for emotive purposes as being within the terms of reference understood by the general public'.¹⁶⁹ In direct reference to public reaction to his works, Ruthven Todd recounts that 'so dense were the crowds that thronged' to see *Belshazzar's Feast* 'that it had to be specially railed off, to protect it from the enthusiastic crush'.¹⁷⁰ However, Martin was brushed aside by the art-world as a figure whose pictures were 'of the deepest interest to a very large circle, beyond those who are usually the lovers, admirers, or patrons of art', but amongst the latter he was dismissed (partly because of this popularity with the general public) 'as at best a curiosity and often enough as a simple fraud or eccentric'.¹⁷¹ The public here, 'a very large circle', are described as a kind of large peripheral audience encircling the smaller central art-world of experts and patrons. Martin's audience in the nineteenth century was considered to be at once outside the cultural core, and much larger than that core.

Martin's paintings and engravings often depict events in complex narrative arrangements. Several of his large biblical paintings depict multiple events that occur in succession in the narrative, but in the image appear simultaneously. Of *The Fall of Babylon* (1819) the *Observer* noted that 'The Picture, like superior and finished works in literature, embraces all the requisites of its subject, having a beginning, a middle, and an end'.¹⁷² *Belshazzar's Feast* (see Figure 6) was likewise described in its accompanying pamphlet as having three acts:

the 'protasis', the completion of the writing on the wall [...] and the resulting 'scintillating beams' illuminating 'the whole of the Atrium with awful resplendency, and the whole assembly with horror and distress'; the 'epistasis', which comprises the

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁶⁹ Todd, p. 96.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁷¹ 'The Late John Martin's Three Great Pictures', *Manchester Guardian* (17 February 1855), p. 8; Myrone, 'John Martin', p. 12.

¹⁷² *Observer* (8 February 1819), quoted in Myrone and Austen, p. 97.

astonished but stubborn response of Belshazzar [...], and the ‘wonder and dread, eagerness and curiosity; that spreads through the vast crowd; and the ‘catastrophe’, with Daniel [...] offering his bleak interpretation of the writing on the wall [...] The movement of our eye back and forth across the painting, and into the projected space of the image, is thus also a movement through time and emotions (back and forth in the narrative).¹⁷³

Temporality interrupts the static space of the single image, introducing a drama which ‘conflicted with the insistence on the spatial, temporal and compositional unity of pictures within traditional academic art theory’.¹⁷⁴ It is ‘compositional unity’ that is at risk, as is perhaps the case in Shelley’s *The Last Man*. Myrone writes that Martin’s ‘most energetic opponents’ focused on his lack of focus, ‘instead offer[ing] confusion and multiplicity, [...] vastness, repetition and fragmentation’.¹⁷⁵ Charles Lamb wrote of Martin’s *Joshua* that it is ‘a confused piece ... frittered into 1000 pieces, little armies here, little armies there – you should only see the *Sun* and *Joshua*’.¹⁷⁶ This sense of fragmentation is sometimes repeated in the very fabric of the image, as the surface of *The Last Judgement* is a collage, ‘bizarrely, partly comprised of cut-out paper shapes pasted on to the canvas’.¹⁷⁷ In this painting, Martin portrays thirty-four historical figures amongst the saved and as noted by a critic in the *Huddersfield Chronicle* ‘the blessed [...] consist for the most part of painters and poets’, including Milton.¹⁷⁸

Martin’s ambition and ‘limitations’ are described by Myrone in terms reminiscent of Milton’s tempted figures: he had ‘an aspirational quality that leads him into error’.¹⁷⁹ Martin has been variously described elsewhere in Miltonic terms, as akin to Eve or Satan. According to Charles Molloy Westmacott, ‘ill-judged praise bestowed upon this florid style [...] has already done serious injury to the rising artist, who, naturally fond of commendation, without considering the source from which it flows, has in many instances fallen into this seductive error’.¹⁸⁰ The language is Miltonic: Martin is *seduced* into ‘error’ through misdirected egotism and aspiration. ‘Error’ is a particularly important word in *Paradise Lost*. In his note to the lines ‘Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold, | With mazy error under pendant shades | Ran

¹⁷³ Myrone and Austen, p. 100.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *The Letters of Charles Lamb*, ed. by E. V. Lucas, 3 vols (London: J. M. Dent & Sons; Methuen & Co., 1935), I, pp. 97–8 (11 June 1827), quoted in Myrone and Austen, p. 201.

¹⁷⁷ Myrone and Austen, p. 147.

¹⁷⁸ ‘Notes of Art and Artists’, *Huddersfield Chronicle* (22 September 1855), p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *A Descriptive and Critical Catalogue to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy* (London: n. p. 1823), pp. 19–20, quoted in Myrone and Austen, p. 90.

nectar' (IV. 238–40), Fowler notes that 'error' is one of the epic's 'most resonant words'.¹⁸¹ Its power lies in the way it recalls the postlapsarian meaning in order to dismiss it. Arnold Stein writes:

Here, before the Fall, the word *error* argues, from its original meaning, for the order in irregularity, for the rightness in wandering—before the concept of error is introduced into man's world and comes to signify wrong wandering. Back of the phrase are the echoes from hell, Belial's precious thoughts that wander, and the debates of the philosophical angels "in wandering mazes lost."¹⁸²

Christopher Ricks comments that prelapsarian use of 'error' in Milton is neither innocent 'wandering', nor guilty 'error', but a word which conveys the unimaginable presence of the former and the absence of the latter: 'wandering (not error)'.¹⁸³ The use of 'error' before the fall contains within it for us—the fallen audience—a postlapsarian taint. What we find here is a multiplication of meaning that comes out the complexity of failure, or 'wrong wandering'. I will return to 'wandering' and 'mazes' in Chapter 2, and the multiplication of meaning in Milton's poetics of melting in Chapter 3.

There are three features of Martin's painting that are particularly useful for linking the above discussion of Miltonic beginnings, apocalypse, framing and failure in Shelley and Martin to the work below addressing Miltonic margins, passivity, power and geometry in Melville and Turner. These are: first, the anecdote; second, galvanism or electricity; third, the form of the vortex.

Writing about Last Men then seems to be largely an occupation of those that see themselves in the position that Feaver outlines, 'the lone survivor on a planet ravaged by men's follies'.¹⁸⁴ I have shown above the parallels between this state of universal catastrophe and the solitude of grief. Martin's life, too, is marked by suffering on a personal, familial level. Ruthven Todd writes (with suitably apocalyptic imagery) that Martin 'lived all his life in the shadow of the toppling tower of lunacy' referring to his circle of remarkably mad relatives, 'all wildish in the head', according to Thomas Carlyle.¹⁸⁵ His eldest brother William declared himself 'PHILOSOPHICAL CONQUEROR OF ALL NATIONS' and:

walked about the streets of Newcastle with his breast hung with an immense home-made gong, a decoration bestowed by himself for his contributions to science and

¹⁸¹ Fowler, *Paradise Lost*, p. 232 n.239.

¹⁸² *Answerable Style: Essays on 'Paradise Lost'* (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 1967), pp. 66–67.

¹⁸³ Ricks, p. 110.

¹⁸⁴ Feaver, p. 12.

¹⁸⁵ Todd, p. 97; *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. by Clyde de L. Ryals and Kenneth J. Fielding, 25 vols (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1990), XVII, p. 67 (16 August 1843).

philosophy; on his head he wore a helmet of tortoise-shell, mounted and bound in brass.¹⁸⁶



Figure 6. John Martin, *Belshazzar's Feast*, 1820.

Another of his three brothers, Jonathan, is well known for having attempted to burn down York Minster (he did at least warn the clergy, ‘you blind Hypocrits, you Serpents and vipers of Hell, you wine bibbers and beef eaters, whose eyes stand out with fatness’) and being subsequently committed to Bethlem psychiatric hospital (‘Bedlam’).¹⁸⁷ Jonathan’s nickname ‘Mad Martin’ was subsequently misattributed to John.¹⁸⁸ Jonathan’s son, who lived with John after this incident, killed himself soon afterwards having become convinced ‘that he had contracted typhus and that his breath was turning those around him black’.¹⁸⁹ The ‘lone survivor’ that Martin depicts in *The Last Man*, standing next to the body of his last companion, can be read in terms of the grief suggested by this anecdotal biography.

Martin’s interest in artificial light and technologies that mimic and distort the visual effects of nature connects him again with Shelley. The two are not linked only by their apocalyptic imagery and entanglement with failure and the Miltonic, but as Ruthven Todd notes,

[It] is perhaps with the belated Gothic of *Frankenstein*, aware of the rumbling engines outside the window and the galvanic experiments in the next room, that we should

¹⁸⁶ Todd, p. 98.

¹⁸⁷ Bindman, p. 45.

¹⁸⁸ Myrone, ‘John Martin’, p. 15.

¹⁸⁹ Todd, p. 101.

associate Martin's painting rather than with the purer Gothic of Strawberry Hill and of the followers of Salvator Rosa with their bandits in landscapes.¹⁹⁰

Though their work is often discussed in tandem because of their engagement with Last Men, it is particularly their engagement with nineteenth century technologies—'the rumbling engines' and 'galvanic experiments'—that place the apocalyptic Gothic imaginary of Shelley and Martin in parallel with one another.

One feature of Martin's illustrations which is particularly idiosyncratic is his clear use of gas lights to embody the 'darkness visible' of Milton's hell (l. 63). As well as depicting the gas-lit chambers of Pandemonium, Martin's paintings themselves could be viewed by gaslight at evening shows. Myrone writes on the 'special appeal' of these gas-lit viewings:

The visual impact of the painting at these evening viewings must have been striking, given the contrasts between gaslight and the inconsistent, unpredictable, more variegated illumination of candlelight by which pictures would previously have been viewed. The alienating impact of Martin's creation may in fact have been intensified by artificial lighting.¹⁹¹

The use of gas, too, is linked to an animated quality in Martin's images, as we can see in an extract from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*: 'Ingenuous gas! Never was coal vapour generated to such purpose. Without gas it is impossible to fancy these pictures. In yellow gas at morning, they live and move and have their being.'¹⁹² Where Miltonic influence is often described in terms of electricity, and metaphors of galvanization apply to Shelley's life and work, Martin's imaginative energy is one of coal and gas. Martin's interest in artificial illumination is as pervasive in his works as Turner's interest in the light of the sun, and reflects parallel powers in their work: the power of artifice and industry; the power of nature. In Martin and Shelley, we see that Miltonic texts in the early nineteenth century are often engaged with ideas of industrial and technological progress, just as Milton's rebel angels are the creators of new weaponry and Satan's children are cosmic engineers.¹⁹³ Here Milton's aetiological successors are distinctly forward-looking, both in terms of apocalypse and the complex possibilities opened up by scientific and technological developments.

I began this chapter by considering the position of one of Martin's paintings in a gallery, and I will end it in the same way. In the following chapter, I will discuss the importance of

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁹¹ Myrone and Austen, p. 104.

¹⁹² 'Editor's Easy Chair', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 14 (January 1857) pp. 270–280 (p. 273).

¹⁹³ See VI. 437–520, particularly 'the deep | Shall yield us [...] Such implements of mischief as shall dash | To pieces, and o'erwhelm whatever stands | Adverse' (VI. 482–90); and X. 235–324 where Death and Sin 'found a path | over this main from hell to that new world | Where Satan now prevails' (X. 256–58).

the figure of the vortex and the labyrinth for drawing a Miltonic connection between the writing of Herman Melville and the painting of J. M. W. Turner. Both Myrone and Alan Moore have identified the centrality of the vortex in Martin's works, referring to its appearances variously as 'vortex-like atmospheric structures' and a 'vortex-like composition, where only the central, dense tangle of violent activity is fully in focus and the horizon has been utterly dissolved'.¹⁹⁴ In *The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*, urban space is 'not merely subjected to liquid fire but seeming to fold in on itself'.¹⁹⁵

Moore's commentary on Martin's 'annihilating vortex' came out of a 'unique convergence' in which art, music and literature united in a multifaceted performance, an event in 2010 at which Alan Moore and Stephen O'Malley responded to Turner's *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps* and John Martin's *Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah* (see Figures 7 and 8). The paintings were displayed side by side, and Moore spoke on the 'many similarities' between the paintings ('though painted 40 years apart by men of wildly different temperament, and age, and style'). Moore observes:

Over all this, in the upper background whirl, a spectacle, Martin and Turner both depict the same annihilating vortex, one with flame and one with snow. Some say the world will end in fire, some in ice, but both factions in the debate agree that it will end: Rome's rule, Napoleon's, Gomorrah, the industrially warmed world that we inhabit straining at the end of their respective tethers, facing the same whirlpool of demise. This is a terror of the world's edge, it's the vertigo of an accelerated culture. Out beyond the lights of every city, every town and every century, this is the abyss that abides.

It is worth keeping in mind, then, that the vortical in both Martin and Turner can be directly linked to apocalypse (the world's end) and to peripheries (the world's edges).

¹⁹⁴ Myrone and Austen, p. 146; Moore, 'Simultaneous Conjugation of Four Spirits in a Room, 2010' (Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, 2010) <<https://vimeo.com/11849343>> [accessed 14 May 2017].

¹⁹⁵ Myrone and Austen, pp. 208–210.



Figure 7. J. M. W. Turner, *Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps*, exh. 1812.



Figure 8. John Martin, *The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*, 1852.

2 'Only Stand and Wait'

Passive Power in Milton, Melville, and Turner

We feel a delicious, subversive joy in the way
the man who won't work works wonderfully well.

(Dan McCall, *The Silence of Bartleby*, p. 145)

with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small
Accomplishing great things, by things deemed weak
Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
By simply meek.

(*Paradise Lost*, XII. 565–69)

This chapter draws on the metaphor of suggestive shock, outlined in the introduction in relation to Macaulay and Wallace, to newly articulate commonalities in the work of Milton, Melville and Turner. The foundation of this chapter is the idea that engaging with the edges of texts and images (for instance, reading someone's marginalia) involves a strange transfer of energy, or contributes to the construction of a network for currents of shock between writers, readers, and painters. I address the broad ways in which the texts of Melville, Milton, and Turner have been found to intersect, then use the idea of peripheral 'energies' to shift attention to a specific connection that is revealed particularly in marginal spaces. This connection is a shared concern with a dynamic system of power which is importantly produced by *active passivity*. Critics have acknowledged that weakness, or 'the refusal to work' is key to Milton's poetry, and I argue that not only is this feature also key to the work of Melville and Turner, but it can be understood in common visual terms as a *vortex*, a form separately acknowledged by critics to be pervasive in these images and texts. The vortex in the work of all three figures consists of an actively passive centre, around which revolves an other, over which the passive centre has power. This vortical passive power is persistently present in the work of Milton, Melville, and Turner, in a variety of forms, so that the vortex can be thought of as a shared 'structure of psychic experience' in the words of Wallace, but also as a shared structure for portraying power.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Wallace, *Spheres*, p. 13. Mentions of Milton in Wallace's *Spheres* are surprisingly limited, and often occur within a list of other literary figures; these limited mentions are largely references to Turner's illustrations of literary works and Melville's varied allusions. At points Wallace seems to purposefully distance Melville and Turner from Milton, through his focus on Melville's enjoyment of Shakespeare, and his alignment of Turner with Shakespearean obscurity (pp. 167, 342–43, 174). When discussing Melville's allusion to *Paradise Lost* in his 1849 journal, when Melville and Adler 'walked the deck ... till a late hour, talking of "Fixed Fate, Free-will, foreknowledge absolute' &c', Wallace attributes the

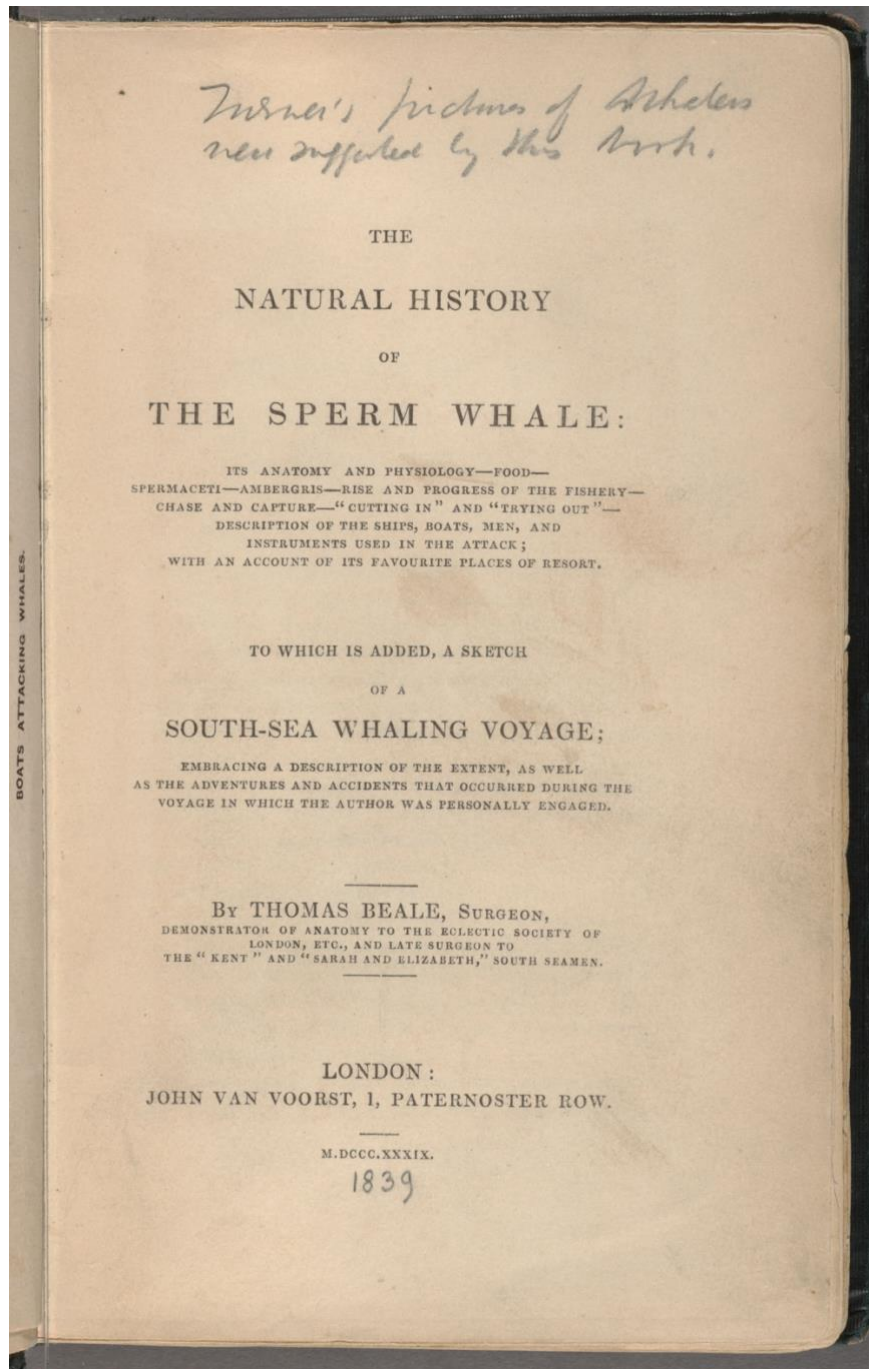


Figure 9. Melville's note in his copy of *The Natural History of the Sperm Whale* (London: John Van Voorst, 1839).

A focus on the vortex carries with it a concern for the place of 'the centre' and 'the edge' in a reading concerned with a particularly spatial construction of power and energy. Many of the foundational connections between Milton, Melville, and Turner are founded in marginal material: Turner provided supplemental illustrations to *Paradise Lost* and appended Milton's

significance of this phrase to its popularity as a quote used by Hazlitt, and disregards its importance as evidence of the direct influence of Milton (p. 255).

poetry to his paintings; Melville alluded to and annotated Milton intensively, and wrote on the title page of his copy of Beale's *Natural History of the Sperm Whale* 'Turner's pictures of whalers were suggested by this book' (see Figure 9).¹⁹⁷ These instances in which Milton, Turner, and Melville—known primarily for their work in poetry, painting, and prose respectively—supplement, or are supplemented by, marginal material in a different medium highlight an attraction of looking at the work of all three, as it makes clear their common challenge to the boundaries between the visual and verbal spheres.¹⁹⁸

I begin below by exploring the manifold presence of the vortex in Milton, which is linked to his poetics of disrupted bodily boundaries and dual identity that lays an important foundation for the following chapter on Swinburne and the Miltonic body. Following this, I address demonstrations of affinity with Miltonic passivity in Melville's marginalia. Subsequently, I explicate Miltonic 'passive power' as a vortical form of active inaction that generates power over an external other. I then turn to instances of passivity in Melville's fiction, arguing that the refusal to work that is at the centre of Melville's 1853 short story 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' and the violent silence of the whale both demonstrate an engagement with Miltonic, vortical passive power. Melville's texts illustrate the maddening effect that passivity has on the revolving other—on the narrator, the critic, and Ahab—which mirrors Satan's frustrated oscillation around Jesus at the centre of *Paradise Regained*. Lastly, I address the ways in which the vortex with a powerfully passive centre is manifest in the mythological margins of Turner's paintings, in which Turner imbues himself with a Miltonic powerful passivity. Turner's self-mythology is Miltonic, so as well as the explicit influence expressed in Turner's attaching extracts from *Paradise Lost* to his paintings, Turner's connection to Milton can be found in peripheral extensions of his visual work.

THE MAZE AND THE SNAKE: STRUCTURES OF PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE

Wallace argues that Melville and Turner 'each eventually found the vortex to be the deep structure of his own psychic experience' and I want to extend the attribution of this aesthetic

¹⁹⁷ Turner appended poetry to his images at least partially so that the entries in the Royal Academy catalogue would take up more space. Appending Milton's poetry thus becomes part of Turner's self-advertisement.

¹⁹⁸ As Wallace writes, 'Turner and Melville were each impatient of the boundaries between their separate arts' (*Spheres*, p. 6). Beyond moments of literary allusion in Turner's images themselves, his poetry, 'elaborate' titles and 'appended literary references' point to a constant engagement with the written word.

psychical connection to Milton.¹⁹⁹ Wallace suggests that for Melville the vortex ‘is as central to the telling of the tale as it is to climactic action’, and ‘it helps Ishmael to open up the invisible psychic spheres as well as the visible liquid ones’.²⁰⁰ I understand a ‘structure of psychic experience’ to be one that is persistent in its appearances throughout an oeuvre, which indicates a lasting preoccupation with the form, and which relates the structure of visual experience (‘the visible liquid’ spheres) to the structure of internal, psychological events (‘the invisible psychic spheres’).

Critics have identified the dynamic geometry of the vortex as central to Melville’s writing from the early works onwards.²⁰¹ Wallace writes that ‘whirlpools and vortices—at once aquatic, psychic, and indistinct—whirl through [the waters in *Mardi*] to the very end’.²⁰² Forms of the vortex appear as early as *Omoo* (1847), in which ‘eddies were whirling upon all sides’ and (during a whale hunt) ‘nothing was seen but a red whirlpool of blood and brine’.²⁰³ Indeed, it is at the ‘very end’ of *Moby-Dick* (1851) that the vortex appears most powerfully: ‘concentric circles seized the lone boat itself, and all its crew, and each floating oar, and every lance-pole, and spinning, animate and inanimate, all round and round in one vortex, carried the smallest chip of the Pequod out of sight’.²⁰⁴ The vortex is undoubtedly also a recognisable visual signature for Turner as many of his canvases are entirely taken up by ‘vortical chaos’.²⁰⁵ The line from *Omoo* quoted above—‘nothing was seen but a red whirlpool of blood and brine’—could be suitably appended to Turner’s ‘A Harpooned Whale’ (1845) from the *Ambleteuse and Wimereux* sketchbook, in which the eye is drawn in by Turner’s curved lines from the faint outline of a ship and whale’s flukes into a swirling mass of bright red, an off-centre nucleus, from which circular ripple-like brush strokes emanate outward (see Figure 10).²⁰⁶ In Turner’s *Snow Storm—Steam-Boat off a Harbour’s Mouth* (exh. 1842) the mixed elements of water, air, clouds and steam twist inwards in a circular motion to the boat at its

¹⁹⁹ *Spheres*, p. 13.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 567.

²⁰¹ On the significance of Descartes’ vortices in Melville, see David Charles Leonard, ‘The Cartesian Vortex in *Moby-Dick*’, *American Literature*, 51 (1979), 105–9 and ‘Descartes, Melville, and the Mardian Vortex’, *South Atlantic Bulletin*, 45.2 (1980), 13–25; and, more recently, ‘Bartleby or the Cloud’ in Branka Arsić, *Passive Constitutions or 7 1/2 Times Bartleby* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 156–65.

²⁰² *Spheres*, p. 91.

²⁰³ *Omoo: A Narrative of Adventures in the South Seas*, ed. by Mary K. Bercaw Edwards (New York: Penguin, 2007), pp. 31, 78.

²⁰⁴ *Moby-Dick* (London: Penguin, 2013), p. 623. Further references to this edition are given parenthetically in the text.

²⁰⁵ *Spheres*, p. 92.

²⁰⁶ The OED gives ‘thirlepole’ as an archaic term for a whale, with a note on the etymology stating that ‘the first element was sometimes taken as THIRL *v.*³ to hurl, whirl, and the name thus apparently identified with WHIRLPOOL *n.*² a vortex, from the commotion caused by its spouting or blowing.’

centre (see Figure 13). Wallace comments that ‘the pitch of the sea, the whirl of the snow, the flares from the boat, and the smoke of its stack are all caught up in one swirling vortex of storm’.²⁰⁷ It has become commonplace to speak of the pervasive presence of the ‘elemental vortex’ in Turner’s late paintings.²⁰⁸



Figure 10. J. M. W. Turner, ‘A Harpooned Whale’ in *Ambletuse and Wimereux Sketchbook*, 1845.

In Milton’s writing the vortex appears in several guises. Christopher Ricks draws us to the simplest of these when he points to the whirlwind as a recurring form in Milton’s poetry: ‘in *Paradise Lost* whirlwinds are always one of the torments that pursue the fallen angels’.²⁰⁹ Satan’s host are ‘o’erwhelmed | With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire’ (I. 76–77); they are ‘the sport and prey | Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk | Under yon boiling ocean, wrapped in chains’ (II. 181–83). Christ on his chariot, rushing toward them on the third day of battle in heaven ‘forth rushed with whirlwind sound’ (VI. 749).²¹⁰ Another form

²⁰⁷ *Spheres*, p. 63.

²⁰⁸ The Tate display caption for *Snow Storm* states ‘Turner painted many pictures exploring the effects of an elemental vortex’ <<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-snow-storm-steam-boat-off-a-harbours-mouth-n00530>> [accessed 9 May 2017].

²⁰⁹ *Milton’s Grand Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 44.

²¹⁰ See also II. 540–41, 588–89. The whirlpool also makes appearances: Satan’s journey across chaos is compared to that of Ulysses, who ‘on the larboard shunned | Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool steered’ (II. 1019–20).

of the vortex that appears in Milton's oeuvre with similar regularity and force is the labyrinth.²¹¹ The labyrinth is a circular form with a centripetal attraction that draws in what lies at its edges; it is difficult to escape, and provides a way of thinking through passive power spatially, as it involves a vortical 'pulling in' to, or motion around, a powerful pivotal centre.²¹² In *Paradise Lost* Milton describes the waterways in Hell as a 'watery labyrinth' (II. 584), discussions of free will are deemed 'wandering mazes lost' (II. 561), and Book IX alone has provided Kathleen M. Swaim with ample examples to trace the occurrences of this 'small but significant element'.²¹³ In her detailed reading of Milton's mazes (in which she includes formulations of 'amazed') Swaim writes that the '*Maze* may be seen as capturing in miniature the concept of the Fall and the artistry of the epic'.²¹⁴ For Swaim the word 'maze' as it appears throughout the poem—particularly at the moment of temptation—is a point of concentration within *Paradise Lost*. The word itself is a vortical centre of sorts, into which the 'pervasive and wide-ranging concepts and themes of the whole poem' are drawn. The sense that Milton's use of 'maze' is tied to the concept of the Fall is supported by Ricks and Stein in their readings of his use of 'error' which is associated with 'maze': 'With mazy error under pendant shades' (IV. 239); 'in wandering mazes lost' (II. 561); 'wandering this woody maze' (PR, II. 246). These words, 'mazy error', could then be considered a concentrated centre of the rest of the epic.

Reflection on the multicursal and unicursal forms of the labyrinth leads us to identify a pervasive tendency in Milton's Latinate writing; his poetry can be considered fundamentally labyrinthine (and so, vortical). Thomas M. Greene draws our attention to a moment in which the maze is prominent: in Book V 'the angels in heaven perform a labyrinth dance, which is

²¹¹ The maze is equally prevalent in *Paradise Regained*—'Where will this end? Four times ten days I have passed | Wand'ring this woody maze' (PR, II. 245–46)—and in the 'leafy labyrinth' and 'blind mazes of this tangled wood' of *Comus* (II. 278, 181). Quotations from Milton's poetry beyond *Paradise Lost* are taken from *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed. by William Kerrigan, John Peter Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon (New York: Modern Library, 2007). Further references to this edition are given as line numbers parenthetically in the text, *Paradise Regained* indicated as PR.

²¹² On the labyrinth in Melville's *Clarel*, see Douglas Robillard, *Melville and the Visual Arts: Ionian Form, Venetian Tint* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997), pp. 153–54.

²¹³ 'The Art of the Maze in Book IX of *Paradise Lost*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 12 (1972), 129–40 (p. 129). Milton scholars have long noted the importance of the image of the labyrinth in his poetry. For example, MacCaffrey has explored the place of the labyrinth in relation to mythology in Milton, and Wittreich considers the labyrinth related to prophecy in the poetry: see MacCaffrey, pp. 188–89; Wittreich, "'A Poet Among Poets': Milton and the Tradition of Prophecy" in *Milton and the Line of Vision*, ed. by Joseph Anthony Wittreich (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), pp. 97–142. The labyrinth is also one of many points of connection to Dante's *Divine Comedy*; see Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 271–306.

²¹⁴ Swaim, p. 132.

said to resemble the movements of celestial bodies' (a passage marked by Melville in his copy of Milton):²¹⁵

That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance about the sacred hill,
Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
Of planets and of fixed in all her wheels
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem. (v. 618–24)

Greene points out the labyrinthine syntax at work, in which Milton's words try 'to act out the physical movements [they] evoke':

The syntactic function of the very word "mazes" (622) is uncertain, since it could stand in apposition either to "dance" or to "Wheels," referring either to the angelic evolutions or to the astronomic movements they imitate. In any case, Milton's language as he describes the dance in lines 620–24 becomes noticeably more intricate and intervolved than usual; the syntax seems to imitate the angelic indirections in its twisted irregularity.²¹⁶

Greene's comments here can be extended to Milton's syntax in general, as this kind of 'intervolved language' is a regular occurrence in *Paradise Lost*. This sort of syntactical device, where meaning is heightened by a word's referent being both the word preceding it and following it, is a common feature of Milton's writing. It is closely related to his use of synaloepha and punning, discussed in the following chapter in relation to the dissolution of boundaries, and to softness in the fourth chapter. The labyrinth is pervasively subterranean in Milton's texts; his syntactical tendency to offer us multiple readings, figured in terms of turning to the left or the right in search of a referent, mimics the experience of being lost in a multicursal maze. Milton's labyrinthine syntax does, however, offer us something the maze does not: we can follow both paths at once, as in 'error' where wandering is both innocent and guilty.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Thomas M. Greene, 'Labyrinth Dances in the French and English Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54.4 (2001), 1403–66, (p. 1456). v. 619–24 are shown to be marked in Robin Grey, Douglas Robillard and Hershel Parker, 'Melville's Milton: A Transcription of Melville's Marginalia in His Copy of *The Poetical Works of John Milton*', *Leviathan*, 4 (2002), 117–204 (p. 139). *Leviathan*, 4.1–2, repr. as Robin Grey, ed., *Melville and Milton: An Edition and Analysis of Melville's Annotations on Milton* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2004).

²¹⁶ Greene, p. 1457.

²¹⁷ The stylistic labyrinth appears in Melville too: Andrew Delbanco writes that his style is 'ambulatory [...] always digressive, never consecutive—he was happier to wander than to go straight'. *Melville: His World and Work* (London: Picador, 2005), p. 11.

Milton's interest in the labyrinth is widespread and pervasive, not limited to instances in which the maze is dealt with directly.²¹⁸ This sense of doubling, of a combination of opposites, of merging, leads us to an incarnation of the maze in *Paradise Lost* which solidifies the centrality of the vortical labyrinth in Milton's work: Satan's serpent form. As Ann Gossman writes: 'The serpent is the best natural symbol of the circular maze of error.'²¹⁹ Milton's snake links the vortex to power and control, which I will discuss further when addressing Turner's work below. In Book IX Satan hopes to find 'The serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds | To hide me, and the dark intent I bring' (IX. 161–62) and is described as speaking to Eve 'on his rear, | Circular base of rising folds, that towered | Fold above fold a surging maze' (IX. 497–99). Satan's movement when he leads Eve toward the fateful tree recalls the labyrinth: 'He leading swiftly rolled | In tangles, and made intricate seem straight, | To mischief swift' (IX. 631–33).²²⁰

T. J. Clark's study of Poussin's *Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake* prompts connections between the Miltonic serpent with the structure of the vortical labyrinth.²²¹ According to Clark, in early Greek religious iconography the snake 'presided over the threshold between life and death, light and darkness. And the great sign of its power over death was its movement: its wavelike, limbless, self-generated coiling. [...] The snake is total plasticity.'²²² The snake has no bodily limitations and seems to reproduce itself as it moves. The shedding of its skin and the movement of the snake is both 'self-generated' and 'self-generating'. Milton's Satan supports his argument for rebellion—proleptically revealing his snake-like nature—by claiming that his company of angels owe nothing to God and the Son, as they were 'self-begot, self-raised | by our own quickening power' (v. 860–61). The snake's skin-shedding seen as regeneration is the root of its use as a symbol of eternal life: the *ouroboros*. There is no single determined form for a snake and its involutions defy permanence. The live snake is not the long, straight, thin line that it becomes when we strip it of its skin, but an endless coiling and encircling, a circular 'pulling inwards'. Clark writes that the snake's body is singular in that it is 'designed to slide endlessly over and under all other sections of

²¹⁸ The discussion of Milton's bodies in the following chapter reinforces our sense of his interest in the vortex and labyrinth.

²¹⁹ 'The Ring Pattern: Image, Structure, and Theme in *Paradise Lost*', *Studies in Philology*, 68 (1971), 326–39 (p. 330).

²²⁰ The serpent is linked outright to the labyrinth by Ackroyd's fictional Milton when he shouts at a snake 'You labyrinth of many rounds self-rolled! You creature slyly stored with poison!' Ackroyd, p. 123.

²²¹ Both Melville and Turner were familiar with the work of Poussin. Melville owned prints of his works and displayed several them in his home. See Wallace, 'Melville's Prints: The E. Barton Chapin, Jr., Family Collection', *Leviathan*, 2 (2000), 5–65 (pp. 11–12).

²²² *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 172.

itself.²²³ His descriptions of Poussin's snake and its coiling motions connects the snake to the liquid vortex, as it recalls Ruskin's description of sea storms in 'Of Water, as Painted by Turner': 'I believe it must be unimaginable [...] from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air. [...] The water [is] taken up by the wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses' (Ruskin, too, is a conductor of Turnerian energy).²²⁴ The circular enveloping movement described here at once encompasses the structure of the vortex and of the labyrinth. The vortex is a structure which pulls matter into its centre in a continual circular motion, and the labyrinth is a structure which similarly 'ingests'; the snake, the labyrinth and the vortex are all claustrophobic, and do not provide opportunity for escape. It is primarily in the sense of 'pulling inwards', however, that the vortex can be identified as the deep structure of the psychic experiences of Milton, Turner, and Melville. 'Pulling inwards' is to do with a power that draws the edges into an engagement with the centre.

However, the vortex in these works is significant as more than just dynamic geometry. It is linked distinctly to a particular structure of power. In a study of Faulkner, Marilyn R. Chandler repeatedly returns to the form of the vortex as an empty space that draws narrative action inwards. The action she identifies 'is centripetal: a "round orifice in nothingness" becomes a magnetic force. [...] all action is reaction—a response to the negative or lack'.²²⁵ She writes:

The compelling absence is, ultimately, an invitation to death: a maelstrom drawing those at its edges into oblivion, sucking them into an ever-narrowing circle. We see them circling: much of the action moves round and round [...] pointlessly encircling the thing that is not there in an effort either to escape or to break the pattern.²²⁶

'The thing that is not there' in the discussion that follows is the lack of action on behalf of Milton's Son, Melville's Bartleby, Turner himself. The structure of action at the centre of her essay could easily be describing that of *Paradise Regained*, or 'Bartleby, the Scrivener'. This lack of action results in an 'encircling' of the 'compelling absence' by the agents or causes that stand in relation to these actively inactive beings. This absence of action is magnetic and draws the action of others towards it and against it: 'it is almost as though the very motive of all action [...] is negative—the vortex of a great black hole which allows one to dance

²²³ Ibid., p. 180.

²²⁴ *Modern Painters*, 3rd edn, 6 vols (London: George Allen, 1900), I, p. 403, §38.

²²⁵ 'The Space Makers: Passive Power in Faulkner's Novels', *College Literature*, 14.2 (1987), 120–27 (p. 120).

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 122.

around its edges for a little while before being pulled in'.²²⁷ The effects and manifestations of this vortical powerful passivity will become clearer in what follows.

MILTON'S PASSIVE POWER

Erik Gray speaks of what he calls 'the Might of Weakness' (or 'The Mr. Harding Principle') in relation to Milton and Anthony Trollope in *Milton and the Victorians* (and then in relation to the poetry of Matthew Arnold). Gray establishes a connection between Trollope's *Barchester Towers* and Milton's *Of Reformation*, which both question 'the church's traditional manner of making bishops'.²²⁸ Gray does not read this as Miltonic allusion, but instead states that:

both Trollope and Milton are puzzling over the same phenomenon, that the only way to become a bishop in the Church of England is to refuse to become a bishop [...] Trollope's narrative imitates Milton most closely in its fascination with this paradox: that the way to achieve power is to refuse it.²²⁹

The principle, as Gray notes, is also identified by Stanley Fish, in *Surprised by Sin* (1967), where Fish discusses how 'the reader comes to understand heroism by repeatedly adjusting his idea of what makes one hero heroic'.²³⁰ Fish suggests that heroism in Christianity 'more often requires one to stand still than take action' and that 'to do nothing—or rather, to do one thing (be obedient), which usually means to stand and wait, or to sit in order serviceable [...] is the key to everything' for Milton, who 'works by apparently refusing to work'.²³¹ Gray writes that the 'principle that Mr. Harding illustrates—that the meek shall inherit the earth—is Christian, not specifically Miltonic', but that it is Miltonic 'as a literary device and a method of constructing narrative'.²³² I suggest that there is another way in which this passivity in Melville and Turner is Miltonic rather than more broadly Christian, and that is in its manifestation in the form of a vortex.

Gray points out that except for the Son's eventual action in chasing the rebel angels to Hell at the end of the war in Heaven, Milton's heroes each conquer their enemies not in combat, but through resistance and refusal: the Lady in *Comus*, after getting lost in the 'leafy

²²⁷ Ibid., pp. 126–27.

²²⁸ Gray, *Milton*, p. 61.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 62.

²³⁰ *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1967), p. 184. See especially Chapter 4, 'Standing Only: Christian Heroism', pp. 158–207. This thinking is extended by Fish in *How Milton Works* (Cambridge, MA; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

²³¹ Cited in Gray, *Milton*, p. 64.

²³² Ibid., p. 63.

labyrinth' (ll. 278) repeatedly refuses to drink, and 'Samson's early career [is] a demonstration of the futility of direct fight'.²³³ These recurring instances of 'refusing combat' peak with Jesus' resistance of Satan's temptations in *Paradise Regained*. Jesus has 'willingly abdicated Godhead to be incarnated', then after 'retreating from his place among his disciples to expose himself alone in the wilderness' he finally 'further resigns himself to suffer Satan's punishments and temptations [...] the result is a nearly plotless poem consisting of a series of refusals but ending, nevertheless, with triumph'.²³⁴ Even the Son's heroic defeat of the rebels in *Paradise Lost* can be read as an example of powerful passivity, as Melville's annotations to the poem highlight. He notes the Son's restraint in this moment of violence, placing a double line against these lines: 'Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked | His thunder in mid-volley, for he meant | Not to destroy, but root them out of heaven' (VI. 853–55). This comes directly after the rebel angels are described as 'drained | Exhausted, spiritless' (VI. 851–52), so that their involuntary loss of strength is juxtaposed with the Son's intentional reduction of his own.²³⁵

Gray's writing on this subject links his Miltonic principle with the phrase 'the Might of Weakness', drawing from Milton's lines 'His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength | And all the world' (*PR*, I. 161–62) which in turn are founded in the biblical 'God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty' (I Cor. 1.27).²³⁶ This Miltonic focus on the power of weakness is made clear, too, in the epigraph to this chapter: 'by things deemed weak | Subverting worldly strong' (XII. 567–68). In place of *weakness* I use here *passivity*, as it most closely conveys the various forms of inaction that constitute Miltonic power. The *OED* gives multiple definitions of *passivity* as including 'the quality or condition of being subject to an external force; the state of being affected or acted upon by an external cause or agent', 'absence of activity, involvement, participation, or exertion; inertness; inertia' and 'Submission or tendency to submit to external force or to another's will; absence of resistance or opposition; submissiveness'. Involved in these definitions is 'an external force', 'external cause or agent'. Passivity is central, and there is an active world engaged with its

²³³ Gray, p. 72.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²³⁵ Gray suggests that the Son's action here is *God's* passivity. God asserts himself by refusing action himself and delegating combat to the Son, after having waited while Michael and Satan's armies engaged in futile battle for days: 'God always works by relinquishing his power' (p. 66).

²³⁶ Kerrigan, Rumrich, Fallon, eds., *Complete Poetry*, p. 640 n.161.

passivity in a swirling mass of action that surrounds it. It is this that gives the passive centre power over an active other.²³⁷

Crucially, in order for passivity to be powerful, it must result from a *decision* to not act, or to refuse, or to stay silent. It is, as Gray puts it, 'active nonparticipation'.²³⁸ Yet, Gray notes that Milton addresses 'the difficulties attendant upon weakness' as well as its virtues.²³⁹ The power embedded in passivity and weakness does not always align with *goodness* and for Milton 'self-destruction is a sin', while 'winning by weakness [...] is an attribute as much of the evil characters as the good'.²⁴⁰ This highlights a useful distinction in how the figures in this chapter—and more broadly in the thesis—engage with the Miltonic. As I will show, the way in which Bartleby and the white whale replicate Christ is not in his goodness, but in his power. The sublime power of Turner's seascapes is secular. Thus, passive power, irrespective of goodness, is strength characterised by weakness that results from an active mental or physical refusal (retreat, denial, inaction, inertness, submission) held in relation to an external force.

MILTON IN MELVILLE'S MARKS AND MARGINALIA

Two types of text predominantly testify to Milton's influence on Melville: firstly, Melville's works themselves; secondly, his annotated editions of Milton's poetry.²⁴¹ Melville's early works (*Typee*, *Omoo*, *Mardi*) all attempt in some way to return or connect to a prelapsarian human existence, and Eden haunts these early sea-stories. However, it is *Moby-Dick* that has (unsurprisingly) drawn the most attention in terms of Miltonic influence. Allusions to *Paradise Lost* in *Moby-Dick* have long been recognised, and they are too countless to note here in their entirety. Predominantly, critics have aligned Ahab with Satan and the white whale with Christ, as Ahab and Satan are both trapped in a fight with an inevitably pre-determined victor: 'Vindicating his pride against almightiness, Lucifer is overthrown but unsubdued; by vindicating his perverted spirit against a malignity not less perverse, Ahab is slain by the

²³⁷ Comparable though distinct ideas include Keats's 'negative capability', Wordsworth's 'wise passiveness', and the feminising disfiguration which Maxwell discusses in *Bearing Blindness*.

²³⁸ Gray, *Milton*, p. 83.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Signs of Milton's influence are not limited to Melville's texts, they also appear in his decorating: a large wash drawing of John Martin's *Satan Exalted Sat* at one point hung above a sofa at Arrowhead, where Melville produced his most famous works. See Henry Francis Pommer, *Milton and Melville* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1950), pp. 10–12.

White Whale.²⁴² Leslie E. Sheldon draws our attention to one of the most interesting moments of parallel passivity in *Moby-Dick*, when a rope-ladder is thrown down to Ahab so he may climb aboard the *Samuel Enderby*. The peg-legged Ahab encounters his own incapability in a scene that replicates the image in *Paradise Lost* of the ‘towering, insurmountable ladder’ to Heaven, which Satan passes on his way to Earth.²⁴³ Sheldon writes that Ahab—like Satan—confronts a ‘tantalizing ladder [...] which insults his pride, tempts him with succor almost within reach, and yet reminds him of his physical and spiritual loss’.²⁴⁴ Both moments of physical immobility are witnessed from above: two mariners look down upon Ahab from the deck above; Satan is watched from Heaven by God and the Son. This moment illustrates the distinction between inactive and active passivity, as although these situations involve an almost palpable passivity, inaction here is forced upon the pair by circumstance or higher power: their passivity is not self-imposed. Despite the fact that their physical incapacity results directly from their own actions—Ahab is immobilised because of his dangerous desire to kill the white whale and Satan is unable to climb to heaven because he has been cast out after rebelling—it involves no decision not to act.

Melville’s vociferous reading means his marginalia are of particular interest for scholars, who ‘have tried to track down every check mark, underlining, and marginal jotting in every book whose pages Melville may have turned’.²⁴⁵ The significance of these marks at the edges of texts lies partly in their ability to conduct and reveal influence; the margin is the place in which connections—shocks—are made and acknowledged. Andrew Delbanco writes that Shelley’s *Frankenstein* ‘so captured Melville’s imagination that when he read in Lamb’s *Final Memorials* about William Godwin’s [...] gift for creating characters “marvellously endowed with galvanic life,” he wrote in the margin: “*Frankenstein*.”’.²⁴⁶ Galvanic life surges from Milton’s texts to Melville’s texts, directly, but also through conductors—and the evidence for this animation lies partly in Melville’s marginalia.

Melville’s marks in his two-volume, thoroughly-annotated copy of *The Poetical Works of John Milton* suggests at once affinity with and opposition to Milton’s poetic presentation of passivity.²⁴⁷ In their introduction to the transcription of Melville’s annotations, Robin Grey and Douglas Robillard acknowledge the hieroglyphic and phantasmal nature of Melville’s markings. They write that readers who ‘inspect the artifact in person’ will ‘experience the

²⁴² John Freeman, *Herman Melville* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1926), pp. 116–17.

²⁴³ ‘Messianic Power and Satanic Decay: Milton in *Moby-Dick*’, *Leviathan*, 4 (2002), 29–50 (p. 36).

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Delbanco, p. 8.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 129.

²⁴⁷ The volumes, lost since Melville’s death, resurfaced in the early 1980s.

thrill and frustration of confronting Melville's hand and trying to make sense of its hieroglyphics'.²⁴⁸ They also note that the marks that Melville intends to make inadvertently create a set of ghostly mirror-images, where 'heavy marginal scoring has created a fainter but quite discernible mirror-image of itself on the facing page. These offset impressions should not be taken as intended annotations; they are not even actual markings, but phantoms'.²⁴⁹ The division between 'markings' and 'phantoms' is one that could be questioned, as Melville's intended marks themselves have something of the ghostly about them. Many of his notes on Milton's poetry are the names of Milton's predecessors (Dante's name appears often, alongside Spenser, Tasso, Virgil and Shakespeare) and successors (he mentions Byron several times): Melville's reading of Milton is full of ghosts.

Commenting on this text, William Giraldi writes that 'Checkmarks, underscores, annotations, and Xs reveal the passages in *Paradise Lost* and other poems that would have such a determining effect on Melville's own work'.²⁵⁰ It is the first of these, the checkmark, which is of particular interest here, as Melville places one next to the final line from Milton's Sonnet 19, 'On His Blindness':²⁵¹

"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask; but patience to prevent
That murmur soon replies: "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state
Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait." (ll. 7–14)

This is Milton's declaration, in the voice of Patience, that though he is unable to *actively* serve God, there is great value placed in his *inaction*. This simple annotation supports the view at the centre of this chapter, that Melville felt affinity with Miltonic active passivity.

Other conclusions can be drawn from addressing Melville's marginalia. Robin Grey writes on Melville's annotations of *Paradise Regained* that 'clearly, Melville disagreed with, even despised, the choices of the Son in rejecting [Satan's] temptations'.²⁵² Grey suggests that Melville found Satan's alternative paths to salvation attractive, that the possibility of an active

²⁴⁸ Grey, Robillard and Parker, 'Melville's Milton', p. 117.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ 'The Writer as Reader: Melville and His Marginalia', *LA Review of Books*, 18 August 2013 <<http://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/the-writer-as-reader-melville-and-his-marginalia/>> [accessed 28 January 2014].

²⁵¹ 'Melville's Milton', p. 204.

²⁵² 'Introduction' in *Melville and Milton: An Edition and Analysis of Melville's Annotations on Milton* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2004), xvii–xxviii (p. xxv).

Son of God as opposed to a passive one appealed to him, and that he took issue with the inaction of Milton's Jesus. Grey's reading is based on these remaining 'fragments of Melville's 18-line comment' on *Paradise Regained*:

Who can read ... w ... g ... without ... discerning / What Milton ... this time ... there seems ... of the ... no Paradise / Regained. Essentially ^ it is little more than a ... of the Gospels. His ... grand ... there and of his ... Left but some proper names. Subjects that mainly constitute ... Lost ... J. M. and enough.²⁵³

Grey's interpretation that Melville thought *Paradise Regained* offered 'only an inadequately reworked version of the Gospels' finds fair basis in this disordered segment of text, but Melville's response to Jesus' (in)actions is more ambiguous.²⁵⁴

There is little sense in assigning Melville any firm position, as he writes himself on Milton: 'He who thinks for himself never can remain of the same mind'.²⁵⁵ That his annotations are dated to three separate readings—and many have been wholly or partially erased—indicates that the marks in Melville's copy of Milton's poems do not represent 'the same mind'. Melville underlines and places an 'X' next to the phrase 'All wickedness is weakness' in *Samson Agonistes* (ll. 834), but his adjoining annotation was then erased. My argument cannot encompass all of Melville's thinking, varied as it was, but there is a consistency in Melville's marks that suggests a lasting interest in Milton's representations of strength and weakness, and investment in the relationship between power and passivity.

Grey's comments are useful in calling our attention to the significance of the fragmented marginal mark in reading the Miltonic in Melville. The partially-erased annotation is hieroglyphic, and it recalls Melville's discussion in *Redburn* of an old book belonging to Redburn's father, which retains traces of his markings within it. The book is full of 'scrawls in the fly-leaves', and Redburn asks 'what incorrigible pupil of a writing-master has been here? what crayon sketcher of wild animals and falling air-castles?'²⁵⁶ (Much of the act of tracing influence is asking; 'who has been here?') Alongside the childish scribbles he finds the signature of his father, and his 'half-effaced miscellaneous memoranda in pencil'. Redburn pores over these 'numerous effacements' though 'it is much like cross-reading to make them out'—he 'can just decipher' a weekly plan or diary jotted down by his father. This attempt to read a textured, marked surface will be familiar to readers of Melville: it occurs in every form imaginable, and democratises surfaces so that paper, skin, and artwork are all

²⁵³ Ibid., p. xxiv.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ 'Melville's Milton', p. 123.

²⁵⁶ *Redburn; White-Jacket; Moby-Dick*, ed. by G. Thomas Tanselle (New York: Library of America, 1983), pp. 157–59.

worth attention. In *Moby-Dick*, Melville discusses the act of reading mysterious marks in relation to the stripped skin of the dead whale, which is ‘all over obliquely crossed and re-crossed with numberless straight marks in thick array, something like those in the finest Italian line engravings’: ‘In some instances, to the quick, observant eye, those linear marks, as in a veritable engraving, but afford the ground for other delineations. These are hieroglyphical [...] the mystic-marked whale remains undecipherable’ (333). The challenge of the annotation and the hieroglyph is linked to the task of confronting an image, of engaging with and attempting to read the ‘palpable obscure’, a phrase that Melville marked in his copy of *Paradise Lost* (II. 406). This is the difficulty that Shelley’s narrator faces when faced with ‘scattered and unconnected’ fragments, and ‘obliged to add links, and model the work into a consistent form’ (6). As Melville pays attention to these marginal marks, so should we.

Melville’s marking of the line ‘They also serve who only stand and wait’ is hardly ‘hieroglyphic’—a simple ‘✓’ at the side of the line seems to be an uncomplicated instance of his tendency to mark ‘passages that were meaningful for him in his work as an author’.²⁵⁷ The strength of this simple mark, ‘✓’, is further solidified by the discussion that is to follow; primarily, Melville’s translation of ‘passive power’ into Bartleby’s repeated sentiment ‘I would prefer not to.’

SPEECH AND STILLNESS

A chiasmatic structure relating work to power exists between Gray’s Miltonic principle and the essence of Melville’s Bartleby, who is characterised through his repeated refusals and unresponsiveness, and particularly his resistant catch-phrase ‘I would prefer not to’. As Gray writes that ‘God always works by relinquishing his power’, and, paraphrasing Fish, that ‘Milton works by apparently refusing to work’, Bartleby gains his power by relinquishing his work.²⁵⁸ Christopher Kendrick comments on this connection, observing that ‘Bartleby’ is, at least in part, a retelling of *Paradise Regained* ‘as an allegory of capitalism’.²⁵⁹ He writes that ‘Bartleby is like Milton’s Jesus, fasting and saving, one gathers, for an uncertain future, holding to his vocation even as he discovers it, a vocation of this world that consists in

²⁵⁷ Robillard, ‘Melville’s Marginalia: Milton’s *Poems*’, *Leviathan*, 4 (2002), 113–16 (p. 113).

²⁵⁸ Gray, p. 64.

²⁵⁹ ‘Un-American Milton: Milton’s Reputation and Reception in the Early United States’, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 77.3 (2008), 903–22 (p. 903).

resisting the world.²⁶⁰ Melville's *Billy Budd* is also read as 'a second Christ' by critics.²⁶¹ Kendrick aligns Melville's narrator with Milton's fallen Satan, as he is the figure whose temptations and provocations Bartleby refuses. His commentary on the relationship between the two works picks up on an element that is also present in *Moby-Dick*:

[In the] motif of Bartleby as the narrator's double, Melville is rewriting an aspect of the relationship between Satan and the Son in *Paradise Regained*, an aspect evoked strikingly, for example, in the ambiguous reference of the two similes that caps the pinnacle temptation [...], which suggests that they are interchangeable somehow, both monsters, both riddles.²⁶²

The narrator and the scrivener, Ahab and the white whale, Satan and the Son—each pair 'interchangeable somehow'—plays upon a mixture of identification and difference, in which the shared differentiating factor is passivity: one tempts, or acts; the other refuses, is passive.

The text of 'Bartleby' is tremendously rich both with connections to *Paradise Regained* and the Bible, and illustrations of passive power. Bruce Franklin and Donald Fiene have explored Bartleby's similarities to Christ in depth, paying particular attention to the dialogue, such as the narrator's denial of Bartleby, which mirrors Peter's denial of Christ.²⁶³ The narrator asserts that 'really, the man you allude to is nothing to me—he is no relation or apprentice of mine, that you should hold me responsible for him'.²⁶⁴ More generally, the text is imbued with the power of Bartleby's physical passivity as his material presence in the story is relentlessly motionless. He is rarely seen moving, and 'arrives all of a sudden as someone who stands still'.²⁶⁵ His first appearance is described as follows: 'In answer to my advertisement, a motionless young man one morning, stood upon my office threshold, the door being open'.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 916.

²⁶¹ Richard Harter Fogle, 'Billy Budd: The Order of the Fall', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 15.3 (1960), 189–205 (p. 205). Silence or passivity is important in Melville's other writing, too. Shari Goldberg reads silence in *Benito Cereno* politically, arguing that it centres 'itself around what is unspoken and unverified in American history, but that it avoids the moral repugnance of over- or under-writing slave silences, through its insistence on muteness'. 'Benito Cereno's Mute Testimony: On the Politics of Reading Melville's Silences', *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture and Theory*, 65.2 (2009), 1–26 (p. 8).

²⁶² Kendrick, 'Un-American Milton', p. 919.

²⁶³ Franklin, *The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963); Fiene, 'Bartleby the Christ', *American Transcendental Quarterly: A Journal of New England Writers*, 7 (1970), 18–23. See more recently Richard J. Zlogar, 'Body Politics in "Bartleby": Leprosy, Healing, and Christ-Ness in Melville's "Story of Wall-Street"', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 53 (1999), 505–29.

²⁶⁴ 'Bartleby, The Scrivener', in *Billy Budd, Sailor and Selected Tales*, ed. by Robert Milder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 3–41 (p. 34).

²⁶⁵ Arsic, p. 54.

²⁶⁶ 'Bartleby', p. 10.

Bartleby's colleagues and the narrator are affected and *infected* by his maddening refusals—'Bartlebian passivity leaves its mark on everything it touches', as Peggy Kamuf writes—and this is the form that the power over the other takes, an enforced silence of sorts.²⁶⁷ Bartleby's limited language and physical lack (of movement, presence, action) are contagious. The line from Dan McCall that is the epigraph to this chapter—'We feel a delicious, subversive joy in the way the man who won't work works wonderfully well'—is a comment on this infection; the way in which Bartleby is 'work[ing] wonderfully well' is that he is 'catching', and 'we root for the spread of the bug'.²⁶⁸ There are moments like this littered through the tale with increasing regularity as the narrator and his workers are contaminated. The narrator recognises this, and is struck by fear at the sudden infiltration of the word 'prefer' into everyone's vocabulary: 'I trembled to think that my contact with the scrivener had already and seriously affected me in a mental way'.²⁶⁹ The *effect* of Bartleby on the other characters is important; he remains stationary, while they whirl and oscillate around him. After Bartleby's first declaration that he 'would prefer not to', the narrator 'sat awhile in perfect silence, rallying [his] stunned faculties'.²⁷⁰ When Bartleby next repeats the phrase, the narrator is found 'rising in high excitement, and crossing the room with a stride,' and when the event is repeated 'a few days after this' the narrator states that 'for a few moments I was turned into a pillar of salt, standing at the head of my seated column of clerks'.²⁷¹ Bartleby keeps the narrator in a vortical spin, fluctuating between 'high excitement' and immobility, which Andrew Knighton discerns, writing that 'the attorney is drawn into a vortex of uncertainty and fear [where] he equivocates between hostility and sympathy'.²⁷² I will show below how this mimics the power structure in Milton's *Paradise Regained*.²⁷³

'I would prefer not to' is practically impossible to respond to. As J. Hillis Miller writes, 'There is nothing you can do with it. It is like an endless loop in a process of reasoning. The disruptive energy of this extraordinary group of everyday words is limitless. [...] You can neither deny it or accept it. [...] It is a use of words to make something

²⁶⁷ "'Bartleby", or Decision: A Note on Allegory', in *To Follow: The Wake of Jacques Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 34–42 (p. 34).

²⁶⁸ *The Silence of Bartleby* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 145.

²⁶⁹ 'Bartleby', p. 24.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 13.

²⁷² 'The Bartleby Industry and Bartleby's Idleness', *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, 53.2 (2007), 184–215 (p. 193).

²⁷³ Gilles Deleuze writes that Bartleby 'can survive only by whirling in a suspense that keeps everyone at a distance'; I suggest it forces them away at the same time as drawing them in. 'Bartleby; Or, The Formula', in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 68–90 (p. 71).

happen, but what it makes happen is to bring about the impossibility of making anything happen with words.²⁷⁴

The circle returns and we (the narrator and readers) are kept in an ‘endless loop’.²⁷⁵ This infectious lack of vocal control mirrors the way in which Melville’s whale renders its ‘audience’ speechless. Despite the white whale’s violence, his defining feature is his duality: destructive, and quiet. Melville asks ‘Has the Sperm Whale ever written a book, spoken a speech? No, his great genius is declared in his pyramidal silence’ (380).²⁷⁶ This dualism comes to the fore when Ishmael describes the sight of a tormented (and voiceless) whale:

So have I seen a bird with clipped wing, making affrighted broken circles in the air, vainly striving to escape the piratical hawks. But the bird has a voice, and with plaintive cries will make known her fear; but the fear of this vast dumb brute of the sea, was chained up and enchanted in him; he had no voice, save that choking respiration through his spiracle, and this made the sight of him unspeakably pitiable; while still, in his amazing bulk, portcullis jaw, and omnipotent tail, there was enough to appal the stoutest man who so pitied. (388)

Melville’s whale does not speak, and yet maintains its power and ability to ‘appal the stoutest man’. In fact, the terror of the whale in pain is so much as to transfer this denial of language to the audience, as ‘the sight of him’ was ‘unspeakably pitiable’.²⁷⁷ Silence is enforced upon the viewer.²⁷⁸

In *Paradise Lost*, it is Satan whose speeches are most memorable, largely for their rhetorical power. His language contains a snakelike sliding between truth and deception even before he takes on the form of the serpent. Furthermore, it is significant that in a text so concerned with firsts, as I discussed in Chapter 1, ‘the first spoken words in the poem belong

²⁷⁴ Miller, ‘Who Is He? Melville’s “Bartleby the Scrivener”’, in *Versions of Pygmalion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 141–78 (p. 156).

²⁷⁵ See Arsić pp. 146–47 on ‘the affect of astonishment’ in ‘Bartleby’.

²⁷⁶ In a review of J. Ross Browne’s *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise* (1846), Melville complains of Browne’s error in writing ‘of a whale’s *roaring* when wounded by the harpoon’, when in fact ‘the creature is as dumb as a shad’: ‘if Jonah himself could be summoned to the stand, he would cheerfully testify to his not having heard a single syllable, growl, grunt or bellow engendered in the ventricle cells of the leviathan, during the irksome period of his incarceration therein’ (*Uncollected Prose*, p. 1118).

²⁷⁷ Wallace argues that ‘The voiceless whale of *The Whale Ship* is a pictorial condensation of the unspeakable and inarticulate emotion of a stout man [Turner] whose most powerful works had been subjected to un pitying ridicule. The lances and harpoons that have exasperated this painted whale into its present pitch of fright and fight correspond in the psychic spheres to the journalistic barbs with which the “yes-gentry” had cut into the aged painter’s most powerfully indistinct canvases’ (*Spheres*, pp. 552–53). The voicelessness of Turner’s whale suggests a connection to Melville’s silent giant.

²⁷⁸ In the final moments of the final chase, at the climax of *Moby-Dick*, Ahab is silenced by the white whale for good. Significantly, though, he is silenced by his own actions, caught by the line of his own harpoon. In the death of Ahab, the whale is passive.

to Satan', as Aaron Urbanczyk notes.²⁷⁹ Interestingly, Urbanczyk adds that 'Satan's rhetorical powers [...] parallel his increasingly degrading bodily transformations. [...] As the poem progresses, Satan exhibits persuasive powers over qualitatively fewer and fewer people' (I return to Satan's 'degrading bodily transformations' in Chapter 4).²⁸⁰ Satan's two 'greatest' actions—the labyrinthine temptation of Eve and the persuasion of the angels to rebel—are both performed in speech, and it is partially his ability to speak which convinces Eve of the truth of his argument.²⁸¹ In this we are prompted to connect Satan with Melville's talkative narrator who, like the archangel, is an eager wordsmith; a storyteller bursting with words, who takes joy in the very sound of them: 'I was not unemployed in my profession by the late John Jacob Astor; a name which, I admit, I love to repeat, for it hath a rounded and orbicular sound to it, and rings like unto bullion.'²⁸² The lawyer and Satan relish oration, and are skilled in it. McCall talks about the 'profoundly spoken quality' of the narrator's words and notes that 'throughout Melville's work one finds him deeply interested in rhetorical performance'.²⁸³

The power of Satan's speech draws us back into Milton's vortical labyrinth. In her review of the uses of maze at the moment of Satan's temptation of Eve, Swaim aligns the labyrinthine nature of Satan's speech with its persuasive influence. The words Satan uses in conversation with Eve, while familiar to the reader, are unknown to her, and so an epistemological gap between reader and character is enforced as we read. As Swaim points out, there is a precision in Satan's flattery as he 'treats Eve's limited reasoning powers as unlimited': 'the tortuous path of Satan's labyrinthine persuasion is constructed skillfully out of the blank walls of Eve's linguistic naiveté'.²⁸⁴ Satan's rhetorical questions and simple language assumes understanding on Eve's part—an understanding that she cannot possibly have—of words such as 'ignorance', 'fear', 'death', and 'evil'.²⁸⁵ Swaim's driving point comes when she shows that in the process of the temptation, Eve begins to mimic Satan's language, in 'careful syllogisms based on words apparently simple but not understood and rhetorical

²⁷⁹ Aaron Urbanczyk, 'Melville's Debt to Milton: Inverted Satanic Morphology and Rhetoric in *The Confidence-Man*', *Papers on Language and Literature: A Quarterly Journal for Scholars of Language and Literature*, 39.3 (2003), 281–306 (p. 293).

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Eve's immediate reaction to Satan's first words to her is amazement at the serpent's ability to speak: 'Not unamazed she thus in answer spake. | What may this mean? Language of man pronounced | By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed?' (IX. 552–54).

²⁸² 'Bartleby', p. 4.

²⁸³ McCall, pp. 117, 114.

²⁸⁴ Swaim, p. 138.

²⁸⁵ 'What fear I then, rather what know to fear | Under this ignorance of good and evil, | Of God or death, of law or penalty?' (IX. 773–75).

questions with resounding, simplified answers'.²⁸⁶ She echoes his 'idolatry of the tree': Satan's proclamation of 'O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving plant, | Mother of science' (IX. 679–80) is imitated by Eve: 'O sovereign, virtuous, precious of all trees | In Paradise' (IX. 795–96).²⁸⁷ Swaim figures this imitation in terms of the labyrinth: Satan has created a maze of words in which Eve might get lost, but 'in fact to become lost in a maze requires the expenditure of one's own energies'.²⁸⁸ Swaim notes that someone who is lost in a labyrinth re-creates it in their own steps; Satan is the Daedalean architect of the temptation, and Eve actively follows the twisting, winding paths he has built for her—she speaks 'not unamazed' (IX. 552).

In Edward Burney's illustration of the scene (see Figure 11), Satan is depicted just as Milton describes him, speaking to Eve 'on his rear, | Circular base of rising folds that towered | Fold above fold, a surging maze' (IX. 497–99). In light of Swaim's analysis, Satan's exaggerated coils can be seen to convey not only the 'mazy folds' of the serpent's body, but additionally the 'mazy folds' of Satan's speech. We can then read in the unnatural curve of Eve's body—in the backwards 'S' produced by her outstretched arm, her bent knee and neck—her attempt to mimic Satan's veering vocal path.

It is in his silence, in addition to his whiteness and sublimity, that *Moby Dick* resembles Milton's Christ.²⁸⁹ In contrast with the moments of Satan's rhetoric in *Paradise Lost*, important moments of the Son's speech in the same text are often silent or simple: conversation between God and the Son is barely extended from the doctrinal text of Genesis. After the speech in which he volunteers to sacrifice himself for mankind in the third book, his message continues to flow beyond his words: 'His words here ended, but his meek aspect | Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love | To mortal men' (III. 266–68). The Son is the quiet centre of *Paradise Lost*. In fact, critics of *Paradise Lost* have noted that the structure of the first edition places him at the very centre: 'the centre of the entire poem by line-count comes in 1667 immediately after VI 761, where Messiah ascends his triumphal throne'.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶ See *Paradise Lost*, IX. 756–60.

²⁸⁷ Swaim, p. 139.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

²⁸⁹ The complexities of connecting Milton and Melville through their treatment of 'whiteness' (as a shroud over evil) are dealt with by John T. Shawcross in "'Too Intellectual a Poet Ever to Be Popular": Herman Melville and the Miltonic Dimension of *Clarel*, *Leviathan*, 4 (2002), 71–90. See also Philip Hoare in *Leviathan, Or, The Whale* (London: Fourth Estate, 2009): 'Whiteness for Ishmael is as much the colour of evil as of good; it is an intimidating absence' (p. 264).

²⁹⁰ Fowler, 'Introduction', *Paradise Lost*, p. 26. MacCaffrey has discussed the epic's structure as one in which 'architectural power [is] applied to protean material' (p. 2). MacCaffrey identifies in Milton's epic an engagement with 'a threefold pattern' of 'separation – initiation – return' which 'follow[s] a cyclical or spiral path' and this structure is 'carried by patterns of verbal and imagistic echoes as well as by a careful architectural plan' (p. 6). MacCaffrey argues that the structure of *Paradise Lost* is an



Figure 11. Thomas Milton after Edward Burney, 'Eve Tempted' in *Paradise Lost* (London: T. Heptinstall, 1799).

Paradise Regained affirms the power of discourse. Yet at the same time it highlights the weakness of Satan's rhetoric in the face of Jesus' resistance, and the power of a reserved wisdom to overcome active temptation: 'the persuasive rhetoric | that sleeked his tongue, and won so much on Eve, | So little here' (IV. 4–5). Although Jesus has much to say in *Paradise Regained*, he retains a connection to silence and passivity.²⁹¹ His speech is necessarily more detailed, in part because he is human here, and because he is called to respond directly to the wily words of Satan. Nevertheless, there are aspects of his dialogue with Satan which

inverted cone, circular but also involving depth and height, allowing circular ascent and descent, as 'the whole is a great vision of rising and falling action' (p. 56).

²⁹¹ In *On Revolution* (1963) Hannah Arendt comments on the 'curious muteness' that is 'the sign of goodness' in Jesus and Melville's Billy Budd. She suggests that there is a common language of compassion that 'consists in gestures and expressions of countenance rather than in words', and the words that end Billy Budd's life, 'God bless Captain Vere!' are 'certainly closer to a gesture than to a speech' (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 83. Certain spoken words are more closely aligned with mute 'gesture' than 'speech' in Melville and narratives of Christ.

position him firmly as the passive party within the schema I am establishing. First, the lengths of Satan's attempted temptations often eclipse his responses. Second, Jesus' speech in *Paradise Regained* is largely made up of questions. Third, the effect that Christ's refusals have on Satan recalls that of Bartleby on Melville's narrator.

When Jesus rejects Satan's temptation of wealth, 'Satan stood | A while as mute confounded what to say, | What to reply, confuted' (III. 1–3) before attempting to tempt with glory, after which he 'had not to answer, but stood struck | With guilt of his own sin' (III. 146–47). Again, at the beginning of the final book, 'Perplexed and troubled at his bad success | The tempter stood, nor had what to reply, | Discovered in his fraud' (IV. 1–3). In a reversal that also reflects, Satan's temptations are met with a comparable arrest of movement, but with significant difference, as Milton writes: 'To whom our Saviour answered thus unmoved' (III. 386); 'To whom the Son of God unmoved replied' (IV. 109). Jesus is repeatedly 'unmoved' and this unchanging motionlessness comes from within; he is the source of his own stillness and the intermittent stillness of Satan. Satan's final challenge places Jesus at a mountain peak, inviting Jesus to leap. Jesus simply responds 'tempt not the Lord' (IV. 561). His final refusal, which defeats Satan, takes the form of intentional physical immobility, as atop the mountain he retains the unmoving power of the mountain.

There are moments in Milton's poetry that threaten to collapse the coherence of this image of the powerfully passive Christ, such as at the end of *Paradise Regained*, as when angelic choirs sing 'hereafter learn with awe | To dread the Son of God: he all unarmed | Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice | From thy demoniac holds' (IV. 625–28). Although his voice is to be 'dread[ed]', his force is modified with an acknowledgement that he remains 'unarmed' and so he remains associated with passivity. This moment of the-disarming-unarmed which breaks through passivity is repeated in the other texts under consideration: as the Son in the battle of heaven finally chases the rebel angels down to hell; as Billy Budd unleashes a deadly blow in self-defence; and as the white whale transforms from victim into victor. As mentioned above, and marked by Melville, these instances are still tempered, restrained. It is the fundamental passivity of Christ that makes these moments of violence all the more terrible.

In the final book of *Paradise Regained* Jesus proclaims that 'of my kingdom there shall be no end: | Means there shall be to this, but what the means, | Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell' (IV. 151–53). The primary function of Jesus' speech here is not to inform but to match and repel that of Satan and the result is his repeated paralysis. Jesus temporarily rids Satan of his words: each of the moments in which Satan is struck still is followed by a line

like ‘Yet of another plea bethought him soon’ (III. 149). Momentary arrest is followed by a renewal of action and aggression. The recurring form of this interaction which makes up the bulk of the poem follows the form of the vortex, as Satan is kept in a revolving cycle of motion and arrest around the still centre of Jesus’ refusals.²⁹² Both Satan and the narrator of ‘Bartleby’ are left ‘rallying [their] stunned faculties’, and likewise, the effect Bartleby has on the narrator takes a vortical form.²⁹³

The vortical shape of *Paradise Regained* is revealed in the pervasive presence of *revolution* in the text. Revolution is present at the level of both structure and word, as there is a repeated use of ‘revolve’: ‘Musing and much revolving in his breast, | How best the mighty work he might begin’ (I. 185–86); ‘This having heard, straight I again revolved | The law and prophets, searching what was writ | Concerning the Messiah’ (I. 259–61) (both these instances are Jesus ‘revolving’).²⁹⁴ Here multiple meanings of ‘revolve’ are present (I cite the *OED*): ‘to move in a circle or to travel in an orbit around a central point’ (as an example for which *Paradise Lost* VII. 381 is given, ‘Then in the East her turn she shines, Revolv’d on Heavn’s great Axle’) is joined with ‘to turn (something) over in the mind’ (as an example for which *Paradise Regained* I. 185 is given, see above). Another meaning of ‘revolve’ is given in this entry in the *OED* with an example of use from *Paradise Regained*—‘to search through, study, or read’ is found in I. 259, ‘straight I again revolved’. ‘Revolve’ occurs at several points in Melville’s ‘Bartleby’, drawing a link between Melville’s Bartleby and Milton’s Jesus. Revolving appears four times in ‘Bartleby’, once as the narrator attempts to describe Bartleby’s inner life (‘while I had been addressing him, he carefully revolved every statement that I made; fully comprehended the meaning’) and thrice as the narrator himself ‘turns over’ in his mind the problem of Bartleby:

Revolving all these things, and coupling them with the recently discovered fact that he made my office his constant abiding place and home, and not forgetful of his morbid moodiness; revolving all these things, a prudential feeling began to steal over me.²⁹⁵

Revolving, then, is tied up in the story with the narrator’s attempt to answer the problem of Bartleby.²⁹⁶ Important, then, is the sense of circularity and endlessness suggested by the *OED*

²⁹² Catherine Belsey connects representations of Christ in Milton’s earlier poetry to a vortex-like passivity: the Nativity Ode is as to ‘a baroque painting’ which is ‘crowded with grand figures in swirling movement round a still centre’. The still centre is Christ, ‘the smiling child’ (pp. 18, 20).

²⁹³ ‘Bartleby’, p. 12.

²⁹⁴ See also instances of Satan ‘revolving’ in *Paradise Lost*, such as: ‘his grieved look he fixes sad, | Sometimes towards heaven and the full-blazing sun, | [...] Then much revolving, thus in sighs began’ (IV. 28–31).

²⁹⁵ ‘Bartleby’, p. 21–22.

²⁹⁶ Melville’s concern with ‘revolving’ has been linked by Robillard to the early cinematic medium of the panorama (*Melville and the Visual Arts*, p. 96).

definition of ‘revolve’, from the Latin *revolvere*: ‘to roll back to the start, to roll back (a scroll) in order to read it, to go back over in thought or speech, to travel in a circular course, to cause to return (to a point in a cycle)’. Revolving is circular and potentially endless, as is the task of interpreting Bartleby—and interpreting ‘Bartleby’.²⁹⁷ This recalls Miller’s claim above regarding ‘I would prefer not to’ that ‘there is nothing you can do with it’, that ‘it is like an *endless loop* in a process of reasoning’.²⁹⁸

In writing about this potentially endless task, the contagious silence found *in* the text extends to critical writing *on* the text: Royle writes that he ‘cannot think of any other text, in fact, that seems to have had such a disarming effect on [his] ability to write about it’.²⁹⁹ Bartleby’s passivity is powerful because even outside of the text, those who come into contact with him are ‘disarmed’: ‘In the end, and in fact all along the way, the reader, no matter how voluble, is turned to stone’.³⁰⁰ Much of this difficulty surely stems from Bartleby himself. McCall writes:

When we ask what is wrong with him, Bartleby will not tell us, the Lawyer cannot tell us, and the story itself does not tell us. It is enigmatic at the core. The repeated answer to our question, and the profoundest, is silence.³⁰¹

The form of this interpretative effort is vortical: readers are drawn to comment but are subsequently silenced by his own fundamental refusal to cooperate.

In her 1940 debut novel, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, Carson McCullers created a twentieth-century Bartleby in Singer, the mute man that people and action are drawn towards and the vortical centre of the book.³⁰² McCullers comments that Singer’s predominance is founded on his significance for the characters around him:

the story *pivots* about him. In reality each one of his satellites is of far more importance than himself. The book will take all of its body and strength in the development of the four people who *revolve* about the mute.³⁰³

²⁹⁷ I owe much of this thinking to Andrew Key, ‘Infinite Restlessness: Beckett, Bad Infinity and the Dialectic’ (unpublished MA thesis, University of Sussex, 2013), pp. 44–45.

²⁹⁸ ‘Who’, p. 156. My emphasis.

²⁹⁹ *Veering*, p. 157.

³⁰⁰ Miller, ‘Who’, p. 178.

³⁰¹ McCall, p. 58.

³⁰² *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, ed. by Kasia Boddy (London: Penguin, 2008). Like Bartleby, Singer holds a strange power over the other characters in the novel, particularly Mick. She begins to mimic his habits, follows him as he walks around the town, and stops eating the food she finds out he doesn’t like. Significantly, however, it is not that she ‘wouldn’t’ eat the food, it’s that she ‘couldn’t’, whilst he simply doesn’t like it (or, prefers not to eat it) she *can’t* eat it: ‘He didn’t like cabbage. Harry, who worked for Mister Brannon, mentioned that to her. Now, she couldn’t eat cabbage either’ (p. 214). Mick senses that this tendency to mimic is out of her control somehow, it has gone beyond her desire: ‘Mick still followed Mister Singer. But she didn’t want to’ (p. 272.).

³⁰³ ‘Author’s Outline of “The Mute”’, in *The Mortgaged Heart* (London: Penguin, 1975), p. 138. My emphasis.

The structure that McCullers gives to the relationships between her characters is clearly conceived as vortical, where people ‘revolve about’ the ‘pivot[al]’ core. More explicitly, McCullers relates the structure of these relations to a circular form with Singer in the middle when she writes that ‘on the whole the interrelations between the people of this book can be described as being like the spokes of a wheel—with Singer representing the centre point’.³⁰⁴ The reactions of these other characters to the pivotal mute mimic those of literary critics to Melville’s *Bartleby*; as McCullers asks, ‘why did everyone persist in thinking the mute was exactly as they wanted him to be?’³⁰⁵ The people of the town ‘each [...] described the mute as he wished him to be’, and each wished him to be *like them*; ‘the rich thought that he was rich and the poor considered him a poor man like themselves.’³⁰⁶ One character responds to the question (‘why did everyone persist in thinking the mute was exactly what they wanted him to be?’) by suggesting that ‘most likely it was all a very queer mistake’.³⁰⁷ ‘Damn me, but all things are queer’, as Melville’s Stubb says (139).

McCullers’s southern town bears an uncanny resemblance to what Dan McCall speaks of as ‘The Bartleby Industry’, the group of Melville critics who all attempt to explain Bartleby and (unsurprisingly) come to different conclusions. The identification of McCullers’s townfolk with Singer is akin to the ‘helpless reaching’ of Melville’s narrator in his attempt to explain Bartleby through his role at the Dead Letter Office.³⁰⁸ Characters and critics both attempt and fail to fill up the silences: ‘Somewhere there has to be a meaning to Bartleby.’³⁰⁹ As Arsić writes—bringing us back to the form of the labyrinth, with Bartleby at the passive centre—there are ‘various paths that could lead to an interpretation of him’.³¹⁰ According to the Bartleby Industry, Bartleby is Dickens, he is Emerson, he is Irving, he is Hawthorne, ‘and Jesus Christ, of course’.³¹¹ The uncomfortable feeling that comes with attempting to write critically about Melville’s mysterious scrivener arises from the attempt to ‘[describe] the mute as [you] wished him to be’ whilst simultaneously being aware of the distinct possibility that it’s ‘all a very queer mistake’. One way of responding to this problem in reading *Bartleby* is to point out that this is also a problem with reading Christ. The central problem for

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 154. McCullers makes several other comments which draw parallels between Singer and Milton’s Christ, such as ‘All of the parts dealing directly with Singer are written in the simple style of a parable’ (p. 137).

³⁰⁵ *Heart*, p. 197.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ McCall, p. 77.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Arsić, p. 134.

³¹¹ Ibid., p. 15.

representations of Christ is that he must at once encompass the universal and the particular, the divine and the human. Arguably, it is necessary in thinking about the problem of Christ's identity to consider Christ as more than one thing. In this understanding of Christ, the very fact that *Bartleby* can be read in many different ways confirms his nature as Christ-like.³¹²

Still, McCall writes that we read Melville wrong when we try to assign *Bartleby* a particular identity or meaning. More precisely, we *read his reading wrong*, that is, we 'fail to show the extent of Melville's wide-ranging indebtedness' to texts other than that which we are intent on identifying as a source.³¹³

Taken whole, the *Bartleby* Industry persuades us of the truly omnivorous quality of Melville's reading, the uncanny way virtually everything he read stayed with him and found a home somewhere in his magnificently capacious and retentive mind. [...] He played widely and energetically with all sorts of books. We may quarrel over how important any one of them was to him, but we will never get him right if we fail to see that he read them all and that his genius shattered his reading in the very act of incorporating it.³¹⁴

McCall prompts a connection between Melville's 'wide' and 'energetic' play with 'all sorts of books' and the galvanic nature of Milton's influence as discussed in the introduction. An acknowledgement of Melville's 'omnivorous' reading involves considering the energy he derives from Milton and returns to him. We might also revisit the quote above from Delbanco's biography, where Melville marks in the margin the connection between Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Godwin's 'gift for creating characters "marvellously endowed with galvanic life"'.³¹⁵ McCall also returns us to the notion of 'conductors', as clearly Milton's influence, particularly on writers like Melville who 'played' so 'widely and energetically' with the texts he read, exists alongside but also *through* the influence of other figures. Milton and Turner both 'found a home somewhere in [Melville's] magnificently capacious and retentive mind'.

TURNER, CHAOS, AND THE ANECDOTE

Within a discussion of passivity and the vortex, Turner is one of the central Miltonic conductors for Melville. Turner's influence on Melville lies alongside that of Milton, but he also conducts Miltonic ideas for Melville, is read alongside Milton by Melville, and his life and works can be used by us alongside those of Melville to 'think with' regarding Miltonic

³¹² This thinking came out of discussion following a paper given at 'The Figure of Christ in the Long Nineteenth-Century' at Anglia Ruskin, Cambridge, May 2016, for which I thank the participants.

³¹³ McCall, p. 28.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³¹⁵ Delbanco, p. 129.

influence. Taking this spatial alignment a step further we can consider the marginal text itself a conductor for Milton—the ‘marginal text’ here meaning material at or beyond the edges of a text, such as annotations, appended poetry, and in Turner’s case, the anecdote. In the final section of this chapter I dwell on the anecdote as a site of conductive creative energy, where Turner’s images are galvanised by peripheral narratives that are founded in Miltonic passive power.

The many ways of understanding the ‘dynamical interactions’ between these three men are sure to surpass the spatial limitations of this study.³¹⁶ Scholars acknowledge the unifying status of visual incomprehensibility in their work. Wallace in particular highlights appearances of the aesthetic of the indistinct in *Moby-Dick* as expressions of Turner’s influence. One of these occurs early in Melville’s encyclopaedic epic, when Ishmael comes across a painting in the entrance to the Spouter-Inn. The image is

a very large oil-painting so thoroughly besmoked, and every way defaced, that in the unequal cross-lights by which you viewed it, it was only by diligent study and a series of systematic visits to it, and careful enquiry of the neighbours, that you could any way arrive at an understanding of its purpose. Such unaccountable masses of shades and shadows, that at first you almost thought some ambitious young artist, in the time of the New England hags, had endeavoured to delineate chaos bewitched. (13)

It has been noted that the painting Ishmael describes bears a striking similarity to images by Turner, several of which require ‘diligent study’ to identify meaning in the ‘unaccountable masses of shades and shadows’. Ishmael goes on:

But what most puzzled and confounded you was a long, limber, portentous, black mass of something hovering in the centre of the picture over three blue, dim, perpendicular lines floating in a nameless yeast. A boggy, soggy, squitchy picture truly, enough to drive a nervous man distracted. Yet there was a sort of indefinite, half-attained, unimaginable sublimity about it that fairly froze you to it, till you involuntarily took an oath with yourself to find out what that marvelous painting meant. Ever and anon a bright, but, alas, deceptive idea would dart you through.—It’s the Black Sea in a midnight gale.—It’s the unnatural combat of the four primal elements.—It’s a blasted heath.—It’s a Hyperborean winter scene.—It’s the breaking-up of the ice-bound stream of Time. [In fact] The picture represents a Cape-Horner in a great hurricane; the half-foundered ship weltering there with its three dismantled masts alone visible; and an exasperated whale, purposing to spring clean over the craft, is in the enormous act of impaling himself upon the three mast-heads. (13–14)³¹⁷

If the painting is an attempt to ‘delineate chaos bewitched’, it follows Milton in the passages of *Paradise Lost* which attempt to ‘delineate chaos’, to put into poetry the ‘shades and

³¹⁶ To borrow a phrase from Eldon Leader, ‘Moby-Book, or The Dinosaur’, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 17 (1993), 65–70 (p. 70).

³¹⁷ Wallace mentions the Spouter-Inn painting in *Spheres* several times, see especially pp. 325–29.

shadows' of cosmology. The moment of formation for each of these figures is an attempt to simultaneously create and control chaos. Melville's ekphrastic passage brings to mind William Hazlitt's commentary on Turner, in which he states that:

The artist delights to go back to the first chaos of the world, or to that state of things when the waters were separated from the dry land, and light from darkness, but as yet no living thing or tree bearing fruit was seen upon the face of the earth.³¹⁸

This 'delight' in a return to 'the first chaos of the world' must surely involve a delight in such passages as Satan passing through Chaos in the second book of *Paradise Lost* (ll. 890–1033). These chaotic passages from Milton could, much like Melville's description of the Spouter-Inn painting, function as ekphrastic renditions of one of Turner's oil paintings:

Into this wild abyss,
The womb of Nature and perhaps her grave,
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confusedly. (ll. 910–14)

'Neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire' could be a poetic performance of the process of reading a Turner painting: as the eyes rest upon a brushstroke, deeming its object to be organic, the viewer considers what it might represent: sea? Shore? Air? Fire? Each of these is denied, as the image doesn't quite seem to be one or the other. It is 'all these in their pregnant causes mixed | Confusedly' (in other words, an 'elemental vortex', as the Tate display caption of *Snow Storm* states). This process of reading Milton's chaos or Turner's *Snow Storm* is the same process that Melville describes in attending to the Spouter Inn painting, when a series of 'deceptive idea[s] would dart you through'—neither 'Black Sea in a midnight gale', nor 'the unnatural combat of the four primal elements', nor 'a blasted heath', nor 'a Hyperborean winter scene', nor 'the breaking-up of the ice-bound stream of Time'.³¹⁹

The artists themselves, however, are one step removed from this process of reading the unreadable. A better understanding of the potential power to be drawn from depicting the vortex can be gained from a return to Greene's essay on labyrinthine dances. Greene's dances (from those of classical mythology to Renaissance celebrations which '[involve] the magical creation of an invisible labyrinth through the interweaving of lines and paths' share labyrinthine choreographic elements such as 'the reversal or abrupt change of direction' and

³¹⁸ *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. by P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London; Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1930), IV, p. 76.

³¹⁹ Ovid's description of chaos at the beginning of *Metamorphoses* follows a similar structure of several refusals followed by a positive identification of the scene with a medley of elements. This is most clear in John Dryden's translation, ll. 13–18 <<http://classics.mit.edu/Ovid/metam.1.first.html>> [accessed 24 May 2017].

‘complex interweaving’ of the dancers’ paths, but the significant connection between them is the sense in which the viewer of a strictly controlled choreography is paradoxically impressed with a sense of ‘confusion and disorder’.³²⁰ There is a point of difference between the disordered experience of the labyrinth and the planned steps of the choreographer. The dancers, too, share the controlling perspective of the choreographer, as Greene notes, creating the labyrinth itself with their steps—‘they *are* a labyrinth’—and in this act they place themselves in a position of knowledge and power, in contrast to an audience *viewing* the labyrinth.³²¹ Greene suggests that within this choreographed creation of labyrinthine shapes, there is a wider purpose of correcting cosmic irregularities. He writes that

The metaphor of the labyrinth recalls the vulnerability of humans to confusion, but the balletic mastery of labyrinthine evolutions declares the possibility of human control. However bewildering, the balletic intricacy has been designed; everyone follows a plan, which is by definition a plan under control; the dance acts out a victory of the brilliant unicursal over the entrapments of the multicursal. Thus the irregularity is reassuring and healing.³²²

If, as Greene suggests earlier in his article, labyrinthine dances drew inspiration from the confusing movements of celestial bodies, ‘this imitation would only assist further the realization of a liberated human power’.³²³ Recreating the labyrinth in dance is then a way to correct the fearful irregularities of nature, to take control of the labyrinthine cosmos and gain power over nature. In aligning the labyrinth with the vortex, then, I also suggest that when Turner paints the vortex, and Melville and Milton create it in words, they control the vortex, through forming *stable* depictions of something unstable.

Control is also important in Turner’s vortical self-mythology; the biographical, anecdotal narrative that whirls around writing on his work. Phillipa Simpson writes that ‘since his earliest years the artist had been a keen self-publicist’.³²⁴ Both the beginning and end of Turner’s life are marked by this awareness of his own mythology. James Hamilton suggests that he *selected* his birth date as St George’s Day, ‘a good day for a true patriot to choose, after some reflection, to be born upon’.³²⁵ Simpson cites his ‘final “exhibition”’ as the ultimate end to an artist’s life indivisible from anecdote: the display of his corpse in his gallery at Queen Anne Street surrounded by his paintings in the days before his funeral. Simpson comments that this ‘underscores a crucial aspect of his work’s reception—the central place of the man

³²⁰ Greene, pp. 1409, 1405.

³²¹ Ibid., p. 1410.

³²² Ibid., pp. 1459–60.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ ‘Turner on Show’ in *Turner & The Sea*, ed. by Riding and Johns, pp. 163–200 (p. 163).

³²⁵ *Turner: A Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997), pp. 11–12.

himself.³²⁶ This moment was immortalised by George Jones in ‘Turner’s Body Lying in State’ (see Figure 12), in which Turner’s body is barely visible at the centre of the image but nonetheless seems to give off a white glow (entirely suitable for an artist maligned for his over-use of white paint).³²⁷



Figure 12. George Jones, *Turner's Body lying in State*, 29 December 1851, c. 1851.

The mythological is central in thinking about Turner because of the place of the anecdote in the creation of his public image. Hamilton writes that ‘a seedbed of colourful legends grew up around Turner’, and ‘as a result there grew a temptation to map his life by anecdote’.³²⁸ Since then, Turner’s sketchbooks have become available to provide insight on Turner as both painter and man, because they are ‘intensely autobiographical’, containing travel itineraries, poetry, ‘studies of genitalia and copulation [that] jostle for space alongside harbour views’.³²⁹ Still, the anecdote retains its hold on the public perception of Turner.

New Historicism conceptualised the anecdote in language that circles around galvanization. In arguing the importance of paying attention to the connections between writers and the ‘life-world’ their works ‘draw upon’, Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt use the language of revivification to explain the effects (and affects) of the use of

³²⁶ Simpson, p. 163.

³²⁷ On whiteness in Melville and Milton, see n.288 above.

³²⁸ Hamilton, p. 2.

³²⁹ Ibid.

anecdote, 'the touch of the real'.³³⁰ They write that 'the wish of the anecdotalist may always have been to *revivify*, to *bring something back to life* that had been buried deep in oblivion'.³³¹ Revivification finds its place in this approach to literature because new historicists aimed to recall the stories of 'real bodies and living voices'. Gallagher and Greenblatt write that 'if we knew that we could not find these—the bodies having long moldered away and the voices fallen silent—we could at least seize upon those traces that seemed to be close to actual experience'.³³² The anecdote:

could somehow be turned toward a revivification of a canonical work, provided that the canonical work lent some of its prestige, its self-justifying importance, to the marginal anecdote. And the anecdote satisfied the desire for something outside the literary, something indeed that would challenge the boundaries of the literary. It offered access to the everyday, the place where things are actually done, the sphere of practice.³³³

The 'marginal anecdote' in relation to Turner might necessarily be doing something different, while still having some relation to this discourse of revivification and the galvanic. Anecdotes, in Turner's case, are not 'traces [...] close to actual experience' but narratives that weave fiction around the 'actual experience' of artistic endeavour. Anecdotes do not necessarily 'offer access' truthfully to Turner's 'sphere of practice', but they do revivify a mythologised Turner on his own terms. Anecdotes about Turner's creative experience are conveyed as a recollection of conversation at a significant distance from events that, as many have said, probably never happened.

Turner's self-mythology can be considered a marginal supplement that is added to the image both at the moment of making and in ongoing storytelling about the process of its creation. These artistic anecdotes become akin to the marginalia at the edges of texts in interesting ways, particularly in that they allow conduction of Miltonic ideas. What is Miltonic in Turner exists in the margins, in the stories of his methodology and his relation both to nature and painting. These marginal narratives are galvanic devices that revivify the image in giving us new ways to think about its form and production: the Miltonic presence in this marginalia allows us to think through the functions of power and passivity in Turner's images.

³³⁰ *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 13.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71. My emphasis.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 47–48.



Figure 13. J. M. W. Turner, *Snow Storm: Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*, exh. 1842.

The most repeated anecdote about Turner is that, following in the footsteps of Vernet and Backhuysen, his most famous work *Snow Storm* was conceived whilst he was tied to the mast of the ship *Ariel* during a storm. Fifteen years after the painting was made, Ruskin recorded a conversation supposedly held between Turner and Reverend William Kingsley, whose mother was a fan:

[Turner] then said, "I did not paint it to be understood, but I wished to show what such a scene was like; I got the sailors to lash me to the mast to observe it; I was lashed for four hours, and I did not expect to escape, but I felt bound to record it if I did. But no one had any business to like the picture." "But," said I, "my mother once went through just such a scene, and it brought it all back to her." "Is your mother a painter?" "No." "Then she ought to have been thinking of something else."³³⁴

Regardless of the truth of the story of the *Ariel* (Hamilton calls it 'a deliberate invention, intended both to confuse and impress') this particular image of Turner as a passive observer of violent seas 'was to become vital to the subsequent reception of his marine paintings'.³³⁵ The story has not lost force. Despite the likelihood that the story is fiction, a scene of Turner

³³⁴ Quoted in Riding, 'Making Waves', p. 246.

³³⁵ Hamilton, p. 290; Simpson, p. 173. Riding writes that 'there is no evidence that a ship of that name left that port on that date in those weather condition' ('Making Waves', p. 246).

tied to the mast of a ship in a storm was still included in the recent biopic *Mr. Turner*.³³⁶ There are other, less dramatic, recorded instances of Turner's physical immovability when watching the sea in stormy weather. For example, Cyrus Redding recalled that on a journey at sea, while other passengers on the vessel were ill, 'Turner sat watching the waves and the headlands, "like Atlas, unremoved."'”³³⁷ (This last phrase is a misquotation of Satan in *Paradise Lost*, IV. 987.) The public image of Turner is that of a painter subjecting himself to the sublime force of marine nature whilst physically restrained; unmovable, faced by the hostile might of nature. These anecdotes can be easily read as a demonstration of Turner's dedication to his creative work within the framework of the Kantian sublime.³³⁸ Turner places himself in a position which would normally be one of weakness (subjection, incapacity) to observe a natural event which would reveal to him simultaneously the power of nature and the power of the human mind, and substantiate his claim to artistic truth. Physical weakness is transformed into creative power. Although the immediate reason for Turner's lashing himself to the mast would be most simply so that he would have two hands free to scrawl in a notebook, and not be carried away by the storm, it is also the case that through this self-restraint and passivity Turner makes himself open to truly sublime experience. The *Ariel* anecdote taps into another powerful literary image: that of Ulysses in the twelfth book of the *Odyssey*, who escapes the mesmerizing song of the sirens by stuffing the ears of his crew with wax, and having himself bound to the mast of his ship. The image of Turner repeating this command evokes the same sense of defeat of the hostile other through self-imposed immobility.

I have suggested that Melville's *Bartleby* and Milton's *Son* are passive beings at the centre of a vortex of oscillating action and arrest. We might add to Melville's *Bartleby* and Milton's *Son*, in our list of passive beings at the centre of narrative vortexes, 'Turner's Turner'. Turner, in his self-mythology, is more literally pictured as a passive being at the centre of a vortex, in *Snow Storm*. This autobiographical narrative is a text knowingly and purposefully attached to the image akin to the way in which segments of poetry are appended, as it acts upon the image and extends the reach of the image beyond the confines of the frame.

³³⁶ *Mr. Turner*, dir. by Mike Leigh (Entertainment One, 2014).

³³⁷ 'The Late Joseph Mallord William Turner', *Fraser's Magazine*, 45 (1852), 150–56 (p. 152).

³³⁸ Andrew Wilton writes that 'there can be no doubt that he gauged his own most serious and powerful works by the notion of the sublime as it had been [...] formulated by the theorists of the period'. *Turner and The Sublime* (London: British Museum Publications, 1980), p. 105.

CONCLUSION

Christine Riding writes, commenting on Turner's three snow storm paintings exhibited between 1812 and 1842, that 'all three focus on man's vulnerability in the face of the sublime forces of nature' and 'this is underlined above all by the dramatic vortex that dominates each composition, suggesting overwhelming elemental motion'.³³⁹ Here the vortex is simply thought of as conveying 'overwhelming elemental motion', the power of nature, and so by contrast 'man's vulnerability'. The texts I have considered in this chapter all convey an omnipresent concern with the vortex—in weather, dialogue, and psychological events—as a form of 'overwhelming elemental motion', but beyond this the vortex is, for Milton, Melville, and Turner, the form of power.

Sam Smiles considers the relationship between Turner's vortices and Edgar Allan Poe's story 'A Descent into the Maelström' (1841), the tale of a survivor of an enormous whirlpool 'who had plunged into its depths and at the moment of greatest peril had rationally scrutinized its workings'.³⁴⁰ Smiles denies that 'what unites these engagements with the natural world' is 'creative influence' or 'a preoccupation with similar phenomena', and instead suggests that the connection points to a shared interest in 'the idea of the singular observer, who had confronted nature at its most extreme and now attempts to make that experience tangible'.³⁴¹ Smiles denies the uniting force of 'creative influence' because 'Turner and Poe probably did not know one another's work'.³⁴² My argument here, taking into account that Melville *did* know Turner's images and Milton's poetry, and that Turner, in turn, had gone so far as to illustrate and attach Milton's poetry to his paintings, is exactly the opposite: that the recurring form of the vortex is a signal of at once Milton's creative influence, and a shared preoccupation of Milton and his nineteenth-century successors.

Addressing Milton's influence on Melville is particularly useful for demonstrating Milton's lasting importance. In the 1920s and 1930s Milton's significance and skill was being called into question by F. R. Leavis and T. S. Eliot. Melville was simultaneously being rediscovered by critics—by Viola Meynell in the 1920s and Charles Olson in the 1930s—and held up as a forgotten genius. Meynell wrote of *Moby-Dick* that 'to read it and absorb it is the crown of one's reading life' and of Melville that 'his fame may still be restricted, but it

³³⁹ Riding, 'Making Waves', p. 258.

³⁴⁰ 'Atlantic Crossings', in *Turner & The Sea*, ed. by Riding and Johns, pp. 270–72 (p. 270).

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid.

is intense, for to know him is to be partly made of him for ever'.³⁴³ Frankenstein's monster becomes here a model of galvanic influence, where readers are at once 'partly made' of what they read, and are electrified in their reading. There is a satisfying balance in this; that while the value of Milton's poetry is seriously doubted, a work which bears unquestionable evidence of his influence is being held up as 'the crown of one's reading life'. This askew moment in Milton's and Melville's reception recalls the actions of Melville's widow regarding his old books, with which she filled her library. She had marked the following passage in his copy of Isaac Disraeli's *The Literary Character* (itself written by Disraeli's widow):

My ideas of my husband ... are so much associated with his *books*, that to part with them would be as it were breaking some of the last ties which still connect me with so beloved an object. The being in the midst of books he has been accustomed to read, and which contain his *marks* and *notes*, will still give him a *sort of existence* with me.³⁴⁴

Through Melville's books, in which we find his marks and notes, not only is *he* given a 'sort of existence', but Milton and Turner are also galvanised. They too are given 'a sort of existence' through Melville the conductor.

³⁴³ 'Introduction' in *Moby-Dick, Or, The Whale*, ed. by Viola Meynell (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), p. vi.

³⁴⁴ Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *Melville's Reading* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 4–5. Emphasis in original.

3 Melting Bodies

The Dissolution of Bodily Boundaries in Milton and Swinburne

I collected bones from charnel-houses; and disturbed, with profane fingers, the
tremendous secrets of the human frame.

(Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p. 55)

Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one spirit meet and mingle.
Why not I with thine?—

(P. B. Shelley, 'Love's Philosophy', ll. 5–8)

In 1790, a coffin thought to hold the corpse of John Milton was dug up from underneath the church at St. Giles Cripplegate, and opened to reveal a body which at first 'appeared perfect, and completely enveloped in the shroud, which was of many folds; the ribs standing-up regularly'.³⁴⁵ There was no inscription found on the coffin and its authenticity was questioned, but it is now generally accepted to have contained Milton's remains. Allen Walker Read writes in 1930 'this conclusion is inescapable' and recent biographers state without hesitation that 'Milton's own mortal remains [...] were dug up and parts were sold as mementos by an enterprising sexton in 1790'.³⁴⁶ The initially dignified state of Milton's remains was not to last, as 'when they disturbed the shroud, the ribs fell'.³⁴⁷ Philip Neve, who published a pamphlet documenting the event (based largely on reports from witnesses) continues:

Laming and *Taylor* went home to get scissors to cut-off some of the hair: they returned about ten; when Mr. *Laming* poked his stick against the head, and brought some of the hair over the forehead; but, as they saw the scissors were not necessary, Mr. *Taylor* took up the hair, as it laid on the forehead, and carried it home. The water, which had got into the coffin, on the Tuesday afternoon, had made a sludge at the bottom of it, emitting a nauseous smell, and which occasioned Mr. *Laming* to use his stick to procure the hair, and not to lift up the head a second time. Mr *Laming* also took out one of the leg bones, but threw it in again.³⁴⁸

Teeth were 'knocked out [...] with a stone', though the jaw was left.³⁴⁹ The pieces retrieved from the coffin were sold on as mementos, with much joking in the press that Milton must

³⁴⁵ *A Narrative of the Disinterment of Milton's Coffin, in the Parish-Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, On Wednesday, 4th of August, 1790*, 2nd edn (London: n.p., 1790), p. 17.

³⁴⁶ 'The Disinterment of Milton's Remains', *PMLA*, 45 (1930), 1050–68 (p. 1068); Campbell and Corns, p. 382.

³⁴⁷ Neve, p. 17.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

³⁴⁹ Howell, A. C., 'Milton's Mortal Remains and Their Literary Echoes', *Forum*, 4.2 (1963), 17–30, (p. 19).

have been blessed with an uncommon number of teeth, as the *English Chronicle* stated: ‘Milton’s *teeth* are now hawked about [...] in every part of the town. Several *thousands* have already been purchased—*by the curious!*’³⁵⁰ B. B. of Pembroke wrote in *Notes and Queries* in 1852 ‘it may not be out of place to tell you that I have handled one of Milton’s ribs’.³⁵¹ Neve notes that ‘one of the hands [was] gone’, but I have not yet been able to find where it ended up.³⁵²

The account of the treatment of Milton’s corpse—at once disturbing and humorous—provoked some public controversy, translated into literary concern in works such as William Cowper’s 1803 poem ‘On the Late Indecent Liberties Taken with The Remains of the Great Milton, Anno 1790’.³⁵³ Cowper’s poem is similar in content and tone to Neve’s pamphlet; both express the belief that it is a disgrace for the bard’s resting place to have been disturbed and imply that it is a point of honour to divulge and circulate one’s own disgust at the act and its perpetrators. In Cowper’s words,

Ill fare the hands that heaved the stones
Where Milton's ashes lay,
That trembled not to grasp his bones
And steal his dust away!³⁵⁴

Yet, the most famous poem on Milton’s body parts produced at the start of the nineteenth century would likely not be Cowper’s response to Milton’s festering corpse, but Keats’s 1818 poem ‘On Seeing a Lock of Milton’s Hair’.³⁵⁵ In this poem Keats writes about the transcendent experience of viewing a relic of Milton, and it matters to both Keats and Leigh Hunt, who gave him the lock, that the hair which Keats gazed upon was *not* taken from the

³⁵⁰ Neve, p. 44.

³⁵¹ B. B., ‘Minor Notes: Milton’s Rib-Bone’, ed. by George Bell, *Notes and Queries: A Medium of Inter-Communication for Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, Etc.*, 5 (1852), p. 368.

³⁵² Neve, p. 44.

³⁵³ Cowper’s poem was written almost immediately after the event, in response to Neve’s pamphlet and contemporary newspaper reports, but publication was delayed by a decade.

³⁵⁴ Quoted in Howell, p. 23, ll. 17–20.

³⁵⁵ In turn, Swinburne’s poetic protest against the posthumous publication of Keats’s letters to Fanny Brawne in ‘In Sepulcretis’ conflates ‘textual ethics’ with ‘burial ethics’. Samantha Matthews, *Poetical Remains: Poets’ Graves, Bodies, and Books in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 45–46, 24. Swinburne’s poem ends: ‘If thankfulness nor pity bids them think | What work is this of theirs, and pause betimes, | Not Shakespeare’s grave would scare them off with rhymes’ (ll. 54–56). *The Poems of Algernon Charles Swinburne*, 6 vols (London: Chatto & Windus, 1905), VI, p. 87. Further references from this edition are given as line numbers parenthetically in the text. The warning rhyme of Shakespeare’s grave reads: ‘BLEST BE YE MAN YT SPARES THES STONES, | AND CURSED BE HE YT MOVES MY BONES’.

coffin disinterred in 1790, but had been in circulation since Milton's lifetime.³⁵⁶ Hunt says of the hair that

It is remarkable for its excessive and almost preternatural fineness—we mean the softness and slenderness of its individual hairs. [...] There is no grey in the lock. It must have been cut when the poet was in the vigour of life, before he wrote “Paradise Lost”; and we may indulge our fancy by supposing it was cut off as a present to his wife.³⁵⁷

Hunt wrote three sonnets on it himself, wondering whether Milton might have touched the lock while composing *Paradise Lost* and distinctly connecting it to the living Milton instead of his mortal remains:³⁵⁸

It lies before me there, and my own breath
 Stirs its thin outer threads, as though beside
 The living head I stood in honour'd pride,
 Talking of lovely things that conquer death.
 Perhaps he press'd it once, or underneath
 Ran his fine fingers, when he leant, blank-eyed,
 And saw, in fancy, Adam and his bride
 With their heaped locks, or his own Delphic wreath.³⁵⁹

In such a scheme, Keats's poem remains uncontaminated by the nauseating 'sludge' contained in the coffin at Cripplegate and claims a direct link to the living Milton, and even more distinctly to the image of Milton alive and in the act of poetic composition. Milton's hair when he was alive was considered his distinguishing feature and by some, suitably for the writer of *Samson Agonistes*, the source of his poetic power. The importance of Milton's hair for nineteenth-century poets can be seen manifest in its presence in the Keats-Shelley House in Rome, where the lock looked upon by Keats is entwined with a lock of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's.³⁶⁰

These instances of body-worship mark the literary response to Milton at the start of the nineteenth century, as his body parts have been repeatedly used by his readers ever since to connect the poet with his audience. The body parts that Miltonists utilise in writing about influence are often those that Milton himself was concerned with. Landor presents a clear example of this, writing in 1846: 'A rib of Shakespeare would have made a Milton: the same

³⁵⁶ See Gray, *Milton*, p. 167.

³⁵⁷ Hunt, 'The Wishing-Cap, No. 1', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, o. s. 2 (1833), 435–52 (pp. 439–40).

³⁵⁸ Stephen B. Dobranski, 'Clustering and Curling Locks: The Matter of Hair in *Paradise Lost*', *PMLA*, 125.2 (2010), 337–53 (p. 350).

³⁵⁹ *The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt*, ed. by Thornton Hunt (London; New York: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1860), p. 238, ll. 1–8.

³⁶⁰ For more on the significance of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's lock, see Gray, *Milton*, pp. 167–69.

portion of Milton, all poets born ever since.³⁶¹ Gray writes about this pattern in Milton criticism more generally, pointing out that critics ‘seem to agree that the influence of Milton can most fruitfully be understood through models drawn from Milton’s own work’.³⁶² In his poetry Milton provides the conceptual materials for a wealth of critical readings of his own work, particularly in relation to nineteenth-century texts. For example, Gray writes of Harold Bloom that he ‘views later poets as responding to Milton precisely as Milton’s Satan does to God’ and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar claim ‘nineteenth-century women writers relate to Milton either as Eve does to God [or] as Milton’s daughters did to their father’.³⁶³

Drawing on this critical tradition in his own work on Milton and the Victorians, Gray conceives of Milton’s influence in terms of hair; his own, as well as that found in his poetry. It was ribs and hair, after all, which were mostly extracted from Milton’s grave. Gray connects Milton’s ‘fascination with hair’ and ‘the fascination later ages have shown with Milton’s hair’ with a theory of influence in which hair as a part of the body with a ‘dual nature’—both ‘intensely personal or peculiar and also interpersonal and alienable’—resembles Milton’s literary presence for (and power over) the Victorians.³⁶⁴ Hair holds a strange relationship to selfhood, as it both belongs to us and is beyond us. It is often used as a marker of identity and an externalisation of personality (we might think of Swinburne’s famously large red hair, expressive of his excitable nature), but because hair also decomposes much slower than flesh it can easily be transformed from bodily product into sentimental object, fashioned into jewellery or mourning wreaths to commemorate lost loved ones (a popular form of craft in the nineteenth century). Hair, for the Victorians, is a bridge between self and other, a portion of the self that can be given freely as a symbol of affection. As Hunt says ‘Love and locks of hair, the most touching, the most beautiful, and the most lasting of keepsakes, naturally go together’.³⁶⁵ This practice of gifting hair, and its long-lasting chemical composition, goes some way to explaining why Milton’s hair was the item most eagerly extracted from his coffin: Gray writes that ‘at the same time that the hair is more intimately identifiable with Milton than any other part, the taking of hair from the coffin does not seem as great a despoliation [...] the relic seekers concentrated on Milton’s hair, both because it was more legitimately his and because it was more legitimately theirs’.³⁶⁶

³⁶¹ ‘XVIII. Southey and Landor’ in *Imaginary Conversations*, ed. by Charles G. Crump, 6 vols (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1891), IV, pp. 193–246 (p. 246).

³⁶² Gray, *Milton*, p. 153.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 161, 163.

³⁶⁵ Hunt, ‘The Wishing-Cap’, p. 440.

³⁶⁶ Gray, *Milton*, p. 163.

Gray's claim that hair is critically useful for a conceptualization of Miltonic influence highlights various ways in which Milton's influence can be thought of as dual: as personal and impersonal; familiar and unfamiliar; invisible and all-encompassing; contextually embedded and individually important. Gray compares this Victorian recognition of the dual legacy of Milton with the seventeenth-century tendency to 'firmly embed' his poetry within his political and literary contexts, and the Romantic tendency to 'admire Milton above all as an originator', a figure whose significance propels him beyond those political and literary contexts.³⁶⁷ In contrast:

Victorian writers managed to emphasize the two sides of Milton's position—his self-relying agency and his historical contingency—equally. The more Milton was viewed as part of a wider context, the more singular he seemed to be in his tendency to stand out from that context; the more he appeared to blend into the literary background, the more poetic influence he exerted. [...] Milton's influence on the Victorians was simultaneously diluted and concentrated, and that critics, including Masson, recognized this duality.³⁶⁸

Milton's power can be read as a meeting point between influence conceived as a single line of relation drawn between individually important literary figures and intertextuality. Gray argues that the Victorians recognise this in Milton, that he is 'a singular force: unmistakeable, self-sufficient, autonomous. Yet he is also, perhaps more than any other poet, enmeshed in history, subject to influence, interpretation, and intertextual diffusion' and it is Gray's contention that 'a single symbol, hair, aptly represents both these aspects of Milton'.³⁶⁹

THE MILTONIC AND SWINBURNE'S SEXUAL BODIES

In the poetry of Algernon Charles Swinburne connections to Milton's bodily concerns are similarly simultaneously muted and strikingly pervasive. In Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*, Milton is imagined conversing with Marvell about 'hair which had been taken from a tomb containing the bones of a Norman':

It is worthy of a thought and a reflection that a lock of hair, such as what you mention, should remain unchanged in color and substance when body, bones, and brains had become earth. Thus it often happens that the vile outlasts the valuable; and what is shorn off and thrown away is gathered up and treasured.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 155–56.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 156.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 167.

³⁷⁰ 'XXVIII. Milton and Marvell (second conversation)' in *Imaginary Conversations*, v, pp. 40–49 (p. 48).

This chapter considers the relationship between Milton and Swinburne in light of ‘the vile’ and ‘the valuable’. In what follows I explore the ways in which the work of Swinburne dwells not upon Milton’s body itself—not his ribs, nor hands, nor hair—but instead expresses a preoccupation with the metaphysics of the *literary* Miltonic body and its boundaries, particularly those found in *Paradise Lost*. Swinburne’s interest in Milton’s body occurs only in so far as Milton’s interest in bodies (including his own) is manifested in his poetic representations of divine, celestial and human bodies. Swinburne’s poetry can then be read as another example of the way in which Milton’s interests determine the forms his influence takes.

A reading of the Miltonic body and its boundaries in Swinburne’s poetry has additional benefits for the study of Miltonic influence, as it reveals a connection between Milton’s representations of the body and representations of the sexual body in Victorian poetry. The writing of Swinburne—‘first and foremost a poet of the body’—can be identified as vital for an understanding of the Victorian sexual body, and I aim here to illuminate the significance of Milton’s poetry in Swinburne’s conception of sexual bodies.³⁷¹ Victorian conceptions of the sexual body simultaneously involve an anxious desire to clearly delineate the sexes, and a sense that such a project might be founded on fallacy. The sexual body is a site of tension: in both medical and cultural discourse the dissolution of bodily boundaries, or what I refer to here as ‘melting bodies’, is central to a Victorian fascination with, and fear of, the sexual body and its mutability.³⁷² This mid- and late-nineteenth-century anxiety is centred around a notion of bodily ‘melting’ or ‘cleaving’, and it is this ‘melting’ which I argue is primary in Miltonic metaphysics of the body, and that Swinburne takes up as central to his poetic project. As with all the figures in this thesis, Milton is a voice among many for Swinburne, who read extensively and used his reading expansively.³⁷³ However, I will argue that Milton should be understood as a central voice for our understanding of Swinburne. Milton’s conceptual influence on Swinburne’s imagining of the sexual body significantly supplements

³⁷¹ Richard Sieburth, ‘Poetry and Obscenity: Baudelaire and Swinburne’, *Comparative Literature*, 36.4 (1984), 343–53 (p. 351).

³⁷² ‘Tension’ seems to be a key word for modern understanding of Victorian sexual attitudes. It forms the basis of Steven Seidman’s conception of the nineteenth century belief that sexuality was simultaneously ‘a benevolent power’ and ‘potentially a principal source of misfortune and evil’: ‘Its very capacity to shape the destiny of humanity rendered sex a potentially menacing force. The belief in the danger of sex was simply the reverse side of believing in its power.’ Seidman, ‘The Power of Desire and the Danger of Pleasure: Victorian Sexuality Reconsidered’, *Journal of Social History*, 24 (1990), 47–67 (p. 50).

³⁷³ The sense of Milton as a voice among many is a point Gray returns to repeatedly in *Milton and the Victorians*.

(and, in select ways, surpasses) that of Sappho and Baudelaire, both already recognised as crucial in Swinburne's poetic development.³⁷⁴

Swinburne's poetry questions the stability of sexual difference, which Jill L. Matus identifies as a primary anxiety in her work addressing Victorian literary and medical representations of sexuality. She writes that 'while Victorian theories of sexual differentiation certainly emphasized the great difference between the sexes and the natural complementarity of male and female, they were also very much concerned with the instability of that difference'.³⁷⁵ Upholding the rigidity of the boundaries between the sexes (in connection to societal roles as well as sexual activity) was 'Victorian cultural imperative', but when the biomedical discourses of the mid- and late-nineteenth century are analysed, we find uncertainty in this rigidity, and instead belief in mutability is rife. This can be identified in 'the Darwinian notion that humankind's ancestors were hermaphroditic, the late nineteenth-century interest in the "man-woman" and androgyny, and the Freudian concern with bisexuality and a genderless libido'.³⁷⁶

Swinburne's poetry can also be considered a primary discourse of nineteenth-century peripheral sexualities. This discourse was also a central concern of Foucault, who, in his argument against the understanding of nineteenth-century sexuality as 'repressed', considers sexuality in the period as being expressed, assessed, and obsessed over through engagement in a multitude of discourses: 'sex—be it refined or rustic—had to be put into words'.³⁷⁷ Of the 'discursive explosion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries', Foucault writes that it was the age in which discourses of sexual transgressions became central—'time for all these figures, scarcely noticed in the past, to step forward and speak, to make the difficult confession of what they were'—and as these 'peripheral sexualities' were the focus of sexual discourse, eyes were drawn to the edges of sexual society.³⁷⁸ Significantly, the way Foucault discusses these 'peripheral sexualities' is already bound up with the idea of permeable fleshly

³⁷⁴ See, for example Tony W. Garland, 'Brothers in Paradox: Swinburne, Baudelaire, and the Paradox of Sin', *Victorian Poetry*, 47.4 (2009), 633–45; Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999) and more recently Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Solomon, Swinburne, Sappho', *Victorian Review*, 34.2 (2008), 103–28.

³⁷⁵ Jill L. Matus, *Unstable Bodies: Victorian Representations of Sexuality and Maternity* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 21.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³⁷⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality Volume 1* [1976], trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 32.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 38–39.

boundaries; he goes on to say that 'From the end of the eighteenth century to our own, they *circulated through the pores* of society'.³⁷⁹

Swinburne's 'peripheral' bodies challenge boundaries of sexual difference as they crave to cleave to one another with bodies that merge, and beyond this literal 'melting' of boundaries his sexual figures represent forms of desire that disrupt a sexual system built on binary and difference. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to suggest that Swinburne's poetry is essential for an understanding of Victorian thinking about the sexual body, which involves both fascination and fear. The dual nature of attitudes to the sexual body is replicated in Swinburne's interest in sexuality itself; an understanding of fascination and fear as connected components of sexual feeling are central to Swinburne's writing and are played out through his interest in sadomasochism as a simultaneous experience of pleasure and pain, beauty and terror, fear and fascination.

So, Swinburne can be considered central to an understanding of the Victorian body as a site of tension, duality, and anxiety about 'melting'. It is then important to identify a Miltonic source of his conception of 'melting' and to explore how his use of melting bodies adapts or reconfigures such a conception. The melting bodily boundaries that can be found in the poetry of Milton is pervasive in Swinburne's poetic representation of the body. However, extant studies of Swinburne's relationship to Milton appear both uncommon and elusive. Nelson writes in his pioneering study of Milton and the Victorians:

Tennyson, as we have seen, anticipated Hopkins and Bridges in his simultaneous devotion to both the ancient Greek and Roman poets and Milton. But he was not alone in this. Walter Savage Landor and Matthew Arnold, as well as Swinburne to some extent, exhibit the same devotion.³⁸⁰

Swinburne's name appears almost as an afterthought. His 'simultaneous devotion' to Milton and the ancients is only 'to some extent' comparable to that of Landor and Arnold, who themselves are positioned as secondary to Tennyson, Hopkins and Bridges. This is typical of the way in which Swinburne's relationship to Milton is discussed: it is an addendum, peripheral. Nelson does helpfully suggest that the Victorians' response to Milton is related closely to their embrace of classical literature; below, Greek models of desire will be compared with Miltonic sexuality. In other criticism investigating Milton and Swinburne, writers such as Arnold again interrupt and become primary. William Wilson looks at Miltonic influence through Swinburne's critical response to Arnold, focusing on the claim that 'to

³⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 40. My emphasis. In the French, this is 'ils courent dans les interstices de la société': whether we read 'interstices' or 'pores', the relevance remains for this discussion of bodily liminality.

³⁸⁰ Nelson, p. 142.

Swinburne, Arnold was disturbingly un-Miltonic'.³⁸¹ Swinburne's relationship with Milton is presented as circuitous. More recently, Maxwell brings Swinburne to the forefront of studies of Milton's influence, whilst presenting another way of reading the centrality of passivity and power in Milton through an English poetic tradition of sublime and disfiguring feminisation. As Maxwell writes, 'Swinburne is best read with reference to the poetic past which he absorbed and represented in his work'; this chapter builds upon Maxwell's consideration of Milton and Swinburne—particularly her discussion of androgyny and the hermaphroditic—to suggest we can gain much from reading similarities in their treatments of the sexual body.³⁸² I will argue that the poetry of Milton provides Swinburne with a blueprint for his melting bodies, and so more broadly Milton's bodily metaphysics can be understood as a vehicle for Victorian tensions concerning desiring bodies. I argue that the Swinburnian body—and moreover, that of Victorian culture more generally—can be framed by a reading of Milton; that it is Miltonic in fundamental ways.

What exactly does this blueprint involve? What does Swinburne find in Milton? Primarily, Swinburne accesses a model of melting bodies and boundaries that supplements and surpasses the Sapphic model. Milton offers a system in which the fluidity of sexuality and desire is unlimited by postlapsarian human biology. Swinburne also finds in Milton's system of bodily metaphysics the prelapsarian potential for combining 'the vile and the valuable' in a way that surpasses the similar potential offered by Baudelaire. Where Baudelaire mixes the vile and the valuable, there is conflict between the two; Milton's aetiological world contains instances of the vile (for example, excretion) that is valuable.

MILTON'S BODIES, CLEAVING TOGETHER

First, then, to identify Milton's bodily metaphysics as one of 'melting' or 'cleaving', in which the boundaries of the body dissolve. There are three primary forms of boundary dissolution in *Paradise Lost*: the hermaphroditic; digestion and excretion; sexuality and desire. The first of these is a concentrated representation of the collapse of the boundary between male and female, and one that haunts Victorian visions of the sexual body.³⁸³ Milton describes the

³⁸¹ William Wilson, 'Algernon Agonistes: "Thalassius", Visionary Strength, and Swinburne's Critique of Arnold's "Sweetness and Light"', *Victorian Poetry*, 19.4 (1981), 381–95 (p. 382).

³⁸² Maxwell, *Bearing Blindness*, p. 37.

³⁸³ The nineteenth-century conception of hermaphroditism demands that we think of gender and sexuality as overlapping: in the late nineteenth century, as Foucault reminds us, homosexuality was invented as it came to be understood in terms of collective identity rather than singular action, 'a species' as opposed to 'the sodomite'. He writes that 'Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms

Holy Spirit in hermaphroditic terms as masculine in its impregnation of the earth, and feminine in its act of 'brooding' on the world 'Dovelike', as if incubating an egg:

Instruct me, for thou knowst; thou from the first
Wast pregnant, and with mighty wings outspread
Dovelike satst brooding on the vast abyss
And mad'st it pregnant. (l. 19–22)

Maxwell discusses this passage as one in which 'the Spirit combines brooding (a female quality) with insemination (a male quality)', writing that 'if Milton's powers do shade into each other, it is with a predominance of female characterisation [...]. The Spirit then might be more female than androgynous, annexing the capabilities of the male'.³⁸⁴ Maxwell relinquishes the hermaphroditic in favour of the feminine, in support of her reconceptualisation of the Miltonic sublime as feminine. Interestingly, although the association of a bird incubating eggs is primarily with the maternal, doves are a species that *share* incubation duties: the male and female parents take turns 'brooding'. Mourning doves will not approach their nest 'if they see a person anywhere near' and so the switching occurs in secrecy, giving the impression to anyone studying the nest that the pair are a single bird; male and female blend together.³⁸⁵ I suggest that Milton's Holy Spirit (although perhaps unintentionally) is then doubly hermaphroditic and distinctly androgynous.³⁸⁶

The Holy Spirit is not the only hermaphroditic being in *Paradise Lost*. Milton's angels are also sexually indeterminate figures, 'desiring beings' that 'are ideal inhabitants of Milton's self-generating ambisexual cosmos'.³⁸⁷ Though Milton's angels are 'spirits masculine' (x. 890), they have the ability to take on female form, or mixed form,³⁸⁸ 'For spirits when they please | Can either sex assume, or both; so soft | And uncompounded is their essence pure' (l. 423–25). Milton's angels engage with gender fluidly, assuming 'both' sexes, if 'they please'.

of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul' (Foucault, p. 43).

³⁸⁴ Maxwell, *Bearing Blindness*, pp. 19–20.

³⁸⁵ Margaret Morse Nice, 'A Study of the Nesting of Mourning Doves', *The Auk*, 39.4 (1922), 457–74 (p. 465).

³⁸⁶ We might relate this to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's lines 'Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine heart wide, | And fold within the wet wings of thy dove' as an instance of Victorian sexuality bringing together the religious imagery of the Dove, and the eroticism of its 'wet wings'. 'Sonnet from the Portuguese', xxxv, in *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. by Frederic G. Kenyon (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1897), p. 319, ll. 13–14).

³⁸⁷ Karma deGruy, 'Desiring Angels: The Angelic Body in *Paradise Lost*', *Criticism*, 54.1 (2012), 117–49 (p. 129).

³⁸⁸ An interesting feature of the story of the disinterment of Milton's coffin is that its authenticity was brought into question by claims that the corpse was that of a female, and so certainly not Milton (Neve writes a response to this in the postscript to his pamphlet). With regards to the discussion at the heart of this chapter, on the fluidity of gender in Milton's conception of a hierarchy of divine beings, it seems fitting that in the afterlife his bones might 'either Sex assume, or both' (l. 424).

The hermaphrodite, then, is associated in *Paradise Lost* with both the creation of the earthly world and the divine beings that populate Heaven (and Hell). As deGruy comments (although without naming the hermaphroditic), ‘Creation contains the active elements it needs to generate itself; gender and sex are as mutable and circumstantial as the angelic body.’³⁸⁹ The potential androgyny of Adam and Eve before the Fall is another matter to consider. ‘As commentators have observed,’ in Maxwell’s words, ‘the originary hermaphrodite of [Plato’s] *Symposium* is not dissimilar to Adam who contains Eve’.³⁹⁰ Although, as James Grantham Turner has pointed out, Milton departs from an overtly Platonic interpretation of Genesis—in which Adam is hermaphroditic before the separation scene—Adam and Eve’s androgynous unity before the Fall is still a matter of contention.³⁹¹ However, having established the importance of the hermaphroditic in Milton’s divine sphere, Adam and Eve are never far out of sight, as in this ontologically fluid universe the nature of mankind is not easily separated from that of the divine. The prelapsarian plan is that they will ascend to androgyny. This aetiological androgyny is rooted in Plato, certainly, but I suggest that the depth to which it is present in Milton’s writing marks it out as additionally and distinctly Miltonic.

The hermaphrodite is a central figure in Milton’s epic, and is the simplest point at which to begin a comparison with Swinburne’s melting bodies. As Lindsay Smith writes, ‘the hermaphrodite was central to Swinburne’s poetic project’, which forms part of a broader ‘preoccupation with bodily indeterminacy’.³⁹² Swinburne’s poem ‘Hermaphroditus’, ‘one of the early scandals worth candling’ and a clear example of the centrality of the figure in his ‘poetic project’, takes inspiration from a statue—‘the Roman copy of a Greek original’—he had visited in the Louvre in 1863.³⁹³ The figure lies upon a couch, and from one side appears unequivocally female, but from the other is seen to have male genitalia. Swinburne’s ‘Hermaphroditus’ represents this dual incarnation of the sexes through a concern for

³⁸⁹ deGruy, p. 129.

³⁹⁰ Maxwell, *Bearing Blindness*, p. 73. See also, on the ‘wedding of bodies’ and the creation of Eve from Adam in relation to Rossetti’s ‘Nuptial Sleep’, Maxwell’s *Second Sight: The Visionary Imagination in Late Victorian Literature* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 48–49.

³⁹¹ *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1993). See Marilyn R. Farwell, ‘Eve, the Separation Scene, and the Renaissance Idea of Androgyny’, for a discussion of the implications of Adam and Eve’s androgyny. *Milton Studies*, 16, ed. by James D. Simmonds (1982), 3–20.

³⁹² Lindsay Smith, *Pre-Raphaelitism: Poetry and Painting* (Tavistock, UK: Northcote House, 2013), pp. 64, 82.

³⁹³ Jeffrey Herrick, ‘Swim and Burn with Swinburne’, *The Antioch Review*, 67 (2009), 99–107 (p. 104); Smith, p. 86. Maxwell suggests the ‘major influence’ on this poem is Shelley’s ‘On the Medusa’, discussed above in Chapter 1 (*Bearing Blindness*, p. 200).

liminality and pairing of opposed concepts; he writes of ‘some brief space’ that lies ‘between sleep and life’ (l. 15). Smith notes the ‘series of perfect deferred doublings: “love/sleep”; “shadow/light”’ that exist ‘in that barely imaginable space between “eyelids” and “eyes”’.³⁹⁴ Limits and interstices are everywhere in Swinburne.³⁹⁵ Jerome J. McGann points to the ‘boundary situation’ as a ‘peculiarly Swinburnian place’, noting that Swinburne ‘haunt[s] boundary lines’.³⁹⁶ This ‘consciousness of limits’, I suggest, would draw Swinburne to the edges of Miltonic biology.³⁹⁷

The hermaphrodite stands as a basic link connecting the Miltonic and Swinburnian body; beyond this, a more clandestine interest in permeable bodily boundaries builds a conceptual relation between the two poets. ‘Melting’ penetrates right down to the basic biological construction of Milton’s beings. This takes us to the second form of boundary dissolution in *Paradise Lost*: defecation and digestion. Consider the start of Book V:

Now Morn her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam waked, so customed, for his sleep
Was airy light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapors bland, which the only sound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora’s fan,
Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough; so much the more
His wonder was to find unwakened Eve
With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,
As through unquiet rest. (v. 1–11)

Adam awakens after a night of peaceful sleep to find Eve beside him ‘with tresses discomposed’ indicating her ‘unquiet rest’, provoked by Satan whispering to Eve in her sleep, as he attempted to ‘raise | At least distempered, discontented thoughts, | Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires’ (IV. 806–08). Eve’s disturbed sleep is all the more alarming when juxtaposed with Adam’s ‘airy light’ slumber, the lightness of which is attributed to his ‘pure digestion’. Gordon Teskey suggests that these ‘vapors bland’ are:

A discreet answer to the perennial question of Edenic excretion. Adam’s sleep is light because his digestion is so efficient that nothing is left over as waste except mild vapors emitted through the pores, which the goddess of the dawn, Aurora, disperses with her fan.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁴ Smith, p. 88.

³⁹⁵ On Foucault and the ‘interstice’ see n.378 above.

³⁹⁶ *Swinburne: An Experiment in Criticism* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 171.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Gordon Teskey (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), p. 106, n.5.

On Teskey's reading of these lines as describing excretion through the pores, the edges of the prelapsarian human body are permeable, which forms the foundation of an understanding of prelapsarian humanity as sharing in a divine biology that denies division. This human biology fits into the structure of Miltonic monism as it is explained later in Book V, in Raphael's conversation with Adam:³⁹⁹

O Adam, one almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not depraved from good, created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Indued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance. (V. 469–74)

In Milton's aetiology, God creates the universe from himself (*creatio ex deo*) as opposed to from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*).⁴⁰⁰ 'One first matter' proceeds from God and is used in all beings in 'various forms' and with 'various degrees | Of substance', with the aim that they will then 'up to him return'. Before the fall, humanity is full of monistic potential so that 'perfection in Milton's Eden is not a state of being but rather a process of being, a process of growth'.⁴⁰¹ Martin Grossman speaks about the movement of created beings upward in this hierarchy in terms of God's desire for himself in the form of the freely-willing other, connecting Milton's monist system to an 'economy of desire' in the epic:

Yet Adam and Eve, God and creation, matter and form strive to become each other; [...] what God wants is himself: but not his whole self—a which would collapse immediately into unity with its original—but rather, himself, as sufficiently different to be his other (self).⁴⁰²

Milton's vision of prelapsarian biology is then all connected to desire. Matter is formed in a hierarchical system to fulfil a desire for an other who is 'sufficiently different' enough not to 'collapse immediately into unity'. This is a danger to which I will return to below in relation to Swinburne and Sappho.

The key term in Milton's system is 'degrees', which represents angels and humans as part of a monistic hierarchy of substance; angels are made of the same substance as humans, but being superior are significantly lighter. Differences between angelic and human biological

³⁹⁹ On Milton's monism see Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

⁴⁰⁰ 'A position deriving from Greek Platonic theology; this is perhaps the most striking instance of Milton's thought being aligned with that of the Cambridge Platonists' (Campbell and Corns, p. 274).

⁴⁰¹ Kent R. Lehnhof, "'Nor Turnd I Weene": *Paradise Lost* and Pre-Lapsarian Sexuality', *Milton Quarterly*, 34.3 (2000), 67–83 (p. 69).

⁴⁰² 'The Genders of God and the Redemption of the Flesh in *Paradise Lost*', in *Milton and Gender*, ed. by Catherine Gimelli Martin (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 95–114 (pp. 106–07).

matter is not marked out by material but *hierarchical* closeness to God. This monistic notion of *creatio ex deo* theoretically aligns with the form of the hermaphroditic considered above in the impregnation and incubation of the world, where the creating force contains the materials for all of creation. Milton's holy hermaphrodite is not made infertile by the conjoining of two sexes, but instead is given more reproductive power; is made capable of reproducing asexually, and so all of the substance of the world is drawn out from a hermaphroditic beginning.⁴⁰³ I would suggest that Smith's claim that 'the hermaphrodite was central to Swinburne's poetic project' and an instance of his 'preoccupation with bodily indeterminacy' can apply just as readily to Milton's epic: bodily indeterminacy and the hermaphrodite are inextricably linked to the crucial hierarchical structure of his universe.⁴⁰⁴

This hierarchy of density is further explored in acts of eating and digestion in *Paradise Lost*, an epic in which the central action is the eating of an apple, and stories of warring angels are told over the dinner table. Eating is figured by Raphael as an essential component of the spiritual system within which humanity and the angels are related to each other and to God. Lehnhof calls Milton's assertion that angels eat 'brazen'. Where more 'timid theologians skirt the question', 'Milton unequivocally declares that angels eat'.⁴⁰⁵ This declaration of angelic consumption seems even more brazen with the addition of spiritual scatology, as Milton's angels must too excrete any waste matter that cannot be assimilated. Following the suggestion made above that Milton's metaphysics are in part an expression of interest in his own body, it might reasonably be supposed that Milton involves the matter of excretion in his system of permeable boundaries (particularly in *Paradise Lost*) because of his own digestive preoccupation: he is said to have blamed his blindness on a digestive problem (which seems gloomily evocative of Scrooge's pun, 'there's more of gravy than of grave about you!').⁴⁰⁶ In a letter which contains what his recent biographers call 'the fullest description of Milton's blindness', he writes of the two matters side by side: 'It is ten years, I think, more or less,

⁴⁰³ There is a difference in the ways in which hermaphroditic creative power is treated by Milton and his Victorian successors: where for Milton, the hermaphrodite represents a joint reproductive force, the creative product of nineteenth-century hermaphroditism is not biological or metaphysical, but cultural. The nineteenth century hermaphrodite is often a sterile figure, but this sterility can be paradoxically artistically fruitful. As Maxwell notes, 'It is at once a figure of plenitude and loss, being sufficient unto itself, but also solitary, unmated and sterile; [...] it manages to indicate sexual knowledge and experience whilst simultaneously signifying virginity and abstention from physicality' (*Bearing Blindness*, p. 202).

⁴⁰⁴ Smith, pp. 64, 82.

⁴⁰⁵ Lehnhof, 'Nor Turnd', p. 78.

⁴⁰⁶ Charles Dickens, 'A Christmas Carol', *The Christmas Books* (London: White's Books, 2008), p. 14.

since I noticed my sight becoming weak and growing dim, and at the same time my spleen and all my viscera burdened and shaken with flatulence.’⁴⁰⁷

In response to Adam and Eve’s offer of a feast of fruit, Raphael explains that ‘food alike those pure | Intelligential substances require | As doth your rational’ (v. 407–09). So, they sit down to eat:

And to their viands fell, nor seemingly
The angel, nor in mist, the common gloss
Of theologians, but with keen despatch
Of real hunger, and concoctive heat
To transubstantiate; what redounds, transpires
Through spirits with ease. (v. 434–39)

‘Transubstantiate’, along with its Roman Catholic connotations, is defined by Teskey as to ‘turn one substance into another’, though of course, if this action takes place in a truly monistic world, it is better described as the act of converting substance from one form into another.⁴⁰⁸ The *OED* states the use of ‘transpires’ to mean ‘to emit or cause to pass in the state of vapour through the walls or surface of a body’ since at least the sixteenth century, confirming that angelic excretion exists in a form of perspiration. This extension of excretion across the ‘body’ is part of a conception of angelic biology in which the entire physical being fulfils all functions:

For spirits that live throughout
Vital in every part, not as frail man
In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,
Cannot but by annihilating die;
Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
Receive no more than can the fluid air:
All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,
All intellect, all sense, and as they please,
They limb themselves, and color, shape or size
Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare. (vi. 344–53)

The bodies of Milton’s angels are not organic in the way we understand ourselves to be organic—they are ‘not as frail man’, their bodies do not have specialised parts with specialised functions—‘All functions are performable everywhere in them’.⁴⁰⁹ Although Rogers remarks that ‘angels have digestive tracts in Milton’s heaven’, in fact angels *are* digestive tracts in Milton’s heaven.⁴¹⁰ As they are ‘all heart’, ‘all head, all eye’ and ‘all ear’, they

⁴⁰⁷ *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. by Don M. Wolfe, 8 vols (New Haven; London: Yale University Press; Oxford University Press, 1966), IV: 1650–1655, p. 869 (28 September 1654).

⁴⁰⁸ Teskey, p. 118, n.438.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 141, n.344–53.

⁴¹⁰ John Rogers, ‘*Paradise Lost*, Books V–VI’, Open Yale Lecture (29 October 2007). <<http://oyc.yale.edu/english/engl-220/lecture-15>> [accessed 27 September 2013] §14.

are also *all intestine*. Within Milton's monistic substantial hierarchy, this act of eating closes the gap somewhat between angels and prelapsarian humans, as they can share the same earthly fruits and digest matter in a similar way. This is a key example of the way that the vile and the valuable merge in Milton.⁴¹¹

We might turn back to the discussion of Milton's serpentine Satan in the previous chapter, and Clark's suggestion that the snake's body 'is an egalitarian body, a body without established hierarchy among its constituents; a body in which the senses hardly seem to be located or concentrated in specific organs'.⁴¹² This bears an interesting relation to an understanding of the Miltonic angelic body as free from division. Satan, the angelic shapeshifter, assumes the form of a shapeshifting snake, but there is a biological affinity between archangel and limbless reptile even *before* Satan's Fall.

The movement of the snake is unquestionably sexual, but not just in the sense that it is a powerful phallic symbol. Clark identifies symbolism of female sexuality too:

The snake is a phallus that rises up and up, but also twists and circles: it is phallic uprightness and aggression, but also involution, encircling, constant self-touching and change of shape. It is phallus and vagina in one: the organ that strikes, the organ that ingests and envelops. [...] Male and female, outside and inside, presence and absence, life and death – the snake is that sought-after (dreaded) moment in sexuality where all founding distinctions flow into each other.⁴¹³

The snake is not simply a phallic symbol *or* a symbol of female sexuality but a hermaphroditic symbol: 'It is phallus and vagina in one'.⁴¹⁴ Clark's statement here recalls a similar line from Richard Slotkin, who has said of Melville's *Moby Dick* that it is 'at once masculine and feminine, a phallus and an odalisque, enticing and overwhelmingly erotic'.⁴¹⁵ Like Milton's hermaphroditic Holy Spirit, the white whale is 'a creature both exquisite and appalling, in

⁴¹¹ As well as the matter of transpiring excretion revealing the boundaries of the human body to be permeable, Lehnhof picks up on another way in which the human body is blended with its environment. He writes that 'the boundaries between Eve's body and the vegetative realm are blurred' in repeated connections between Eve's body and the flowers of Eden: 'Taking on the role of Eve's children (the fruits of her womb), the plants of the nursery demonstrate the indivisibility between Eve and the garden itself' ('Nor Turnd', p. 70). This vision of the female body merging with the natural world will return in my discussion of Hardy in Chapter 4.

⁴¹² Clark, p. 180.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 224, 227.

⁴¹⁴ Wendy Furman-Adams and Virginia James Tufte argue that in the third and fourth centuries 'the snake lost some of its sexual ambiguity, becoming a predominantly feminine symbol' which comes to represent 'the seduction of the masculine by the feminine—all perfectly exemplified by Eve's seduction of Adam'. "'Pleasing Was His Shape, | And Lovely": The Serpent with Eve and Adam in Art before Milton and in Re-Visions by Three Twentieth-Century Women', *Milton Studies*, 37, ed. by Albert C. Labriola (1999), 89–141 (p. 89).

⁴¹⁵ *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 547.

which the whole originating force of creating seems concentrated'.⁴¹⁶ Harold Beaver speaks similarly of the whale as 'a true amphibium, dual-sexed'.⁴¹⁷ These three forms—the whale, the snake and the hermaphrodite—are connected through their dual nature, the structure of 'founding distinctions flowing into each other'. The labyrinth, similarly, is a structure that is always linked with this kind of flowing duality—'outside and inside, presence and absence, life and death'—and I discussed in Chapter 2 the way in which Milton's language mimics the labyrinth in the presentation of two paths within single words. This then can be seen as a hermaphroditic syntax, a form of dual language I will discuss in more depth below. Foucault writes that this doubling in the architectural and experiential structure of the labyrinth is an externalisation of the Minotaur's 'mixed monstrous nature': half bull, half man.⁴¹⁸

Clark suggests that the intense look in the eyes of the man running away from the snake in Poussin's painting signals more than a simple fear of death, it is, in Clark's words, to do with 'something more disgusting—an inside coming out'.⁴¹⁹ This is manifested in the very shape of the snake, which is an embodied rejection of the division between inside and outside. The snake resembles human intestines living independently outside of the body. These intestines then become *animated*, a separate organism that regularly sheds its skin (skin-shedding in itself is an image that refuses the sanctity of bodily boundaries). Clark comments that the man who gazes back with fear upon the snake, wound around the corpse of another man, is 'like Orpheus looking back at Eurydice'; two figures drawn from a myth that is tangled up with the idea of the threshold, of attempting to cross and re-cross the boundary of death.⁴²⁰ Thus the look and the painting are steeped in concern with the *threshold*, the boundary.

Milton's construction of angelic digestion runs parallel to his explanation of angelic sexuality. This is the third primary form of boundary dissolution, which has the clearest reverberation in Swinburne's poetry. In Book VIII, Adam asks of Raphael 'Love not the heavenly spirits, and how their love | Express they, by looks only, or do they mix | Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?' (VIII. 615–17). Raphael responds:

Whatever pure thou in the body enjoyst
(And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
In eminence, and obstacle find none

⁴¹⁶ Delbanco, p. 139.

⁴¹⁷ Beaver, ed., *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1972), quoted in Hoare, p. 99.

⁴¹⁸ *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, ed. by James Faubion, trans. by Charles Ruas (London; New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 82.

⁴¹⁹ Clark, p. 82.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars:
 Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace,
 Total they mix, union of pure with pure
 Desiring; nor restrained conveyance need
 As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul. (VIII. 622–29)

The sexuality of Milton's angels surpasses a postlapsarian understanding of the sexual act: neither an entirely cognitive encounter nor a physical meeting of sexual substance, angelic sex is an all-encompassing spiritual union.⁴²¹ Material angelic bodies find no 'exclusive bars' or 'obstacle' in expression of love, and a 'spirits embrace' is associated with ease and absolute amalgamation. Mixture is 'easier than air with air', a 'total' 'union of pure with pure'. This last phrase, 'union of pure with pure' highlights again Milton's monism; the *OED* defines 'pure' as 'not mixed with any other substance or material', suggesting that a 'union' of 'pure' substances is in fact an oxymoron, yet in Milton's early universe there is no conceptual conflict between 'mixture' and 'pure' because angels consist of the same single divine substance.

Angelic sex dissolves bodily boundaries; for Milton's angels 'desire is not constrained by body; rather, body is actually shaped by desire'.⁴²² In expressions of love they retain their individual existence but find no 'obstacle' or 'membrane'. As deGruy writes, 'erotic activity is privileged by being granted to angels whose undivided natures allow them an unproblematic satisfaction of embodied appetite'.⁴²³ This image of ideal angelic melting, 'unproblematic satisfaction', contrasts with a sense of a negative 'sticking' that can be found in Milton's prose. In the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton writes that 'where no correspondence is of the minde' in a marriage,

instead of beeing one flesh, they will be rather two carkasses chain'd unnaturally together; or as it may happ'n, a living soule bound to a dead corps [...] it is no blessing but a torment, nay a base and brutish condition.⁴²⁴

⁴²¹ For a recent and thorough discussion of the role of sexual touch in Milton's paradise, see Joe Moshenska, "'Transported Touch': The Sense of Feeling in Milton's Eden", *Journal of English Literary History*, 79.1 (2012), 1–31.

⁴²² deGruy, p. 125.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴²⁴ *Complete Prose*, ed. by Ernest Sirluck (1959), II. 326–27. This discussion of desire and unity is relevant too, to my earlier analysis of Mary Shelley's treatment of the fragmented P. B. Shelley, who writes rather shockingly in the same terms about his marriage to Harriet: 'I felt as if a dead & living body had been linked together in loathsome & horrible communion'. Of his relationship with Mary, however, he writes 'so intimately are our natures now united, that I feel whilst I describe her excellencies as if I were an egotist expatiating upon his own perfections'. *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1964) I, p. 402 (3 October 1814). Here, as in Milton's thinking, there is a distinct difference between a 'torment' and a unity of two like minds.

Edward Le Comte comments on Milton's use of this image that 'it is striking how often he presents the situation of being stuck together, as if he were not only in rebellion against the tie that binds, but also in revulsion against the sticky seminal fluid'.⁴²⁵ What this highlights is that, as always for Milton, liberty is foremost. Where angels are free to mix 'easier than air with air', to be attached to another *without freedom* is not to melt, it is to be stuck, 'no blessing but a torment'.

Milton's erotic union of spirits finds itself distorted in Adam's passionate cry after Eve informs him of her disobedience:

no no, I feel
The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe. (IX. 913–16)

And, later:

So forcible within my heart I feel
The bond of nature draw me to my own,
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
Our state cannot be severed, we are one,
One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself. (IX. 955–59)

Adam's claim that 'from thy state | Mine never shall be parted' follows directly from the 'link of nature' he feels with Eve; that she is (in biblical language) 'bone of my bone' and 'flesh of flesh'. He goes on to speak of their identification and their resistance to separation ('Our state cannot be severed, we are one'). Although there is clearly a difference between Raphael's angelic incorporeal 'union of pure with pure' and Adam's 'One flesh' (an image which lends itself more to the connotations of 'assimilation' than 'union') they both demand a participation in 'oneness'. In Milton's hierarchy, then, those closer to God are more easily conceived as hermaphroditic, but the melting of bodies is present in all stages of creation. The figure of the hermaphrodite becomes part of a monist system in which lower, denser beings yearn to mix with one another: 'One flesh, or at least one rib, becomes two wills which will to join but also to separate'.⁴²⁶ Higher beings are able to mix with one another 'easier than air with air', whilst also representing the *ultimate* state of mixing, the hermaphroditic Holy Spirit, containing two mixed sexes in one form. In the Miltonic system, the 'rigid distinction between male and female' which is widely assumed to be the 'Victorian cultural imperative' is repeatedly disrupted and its opposite—the mutability of the sexual body,

⁴²⁵ *Milton and Sex* (London; Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1978), p. 36.

⁴²⁶ Grossman, pp. 105–06.

pervasive in nineteenth-century medical and cultural discourse—is held to be the biological peak.⁴²⁷

Yisrael Levin has argued that in his later poetry Swinburne ‘establish[es] a new creation myth’ which ‘departs from biblical myth [...] by defining the act of creation as an essentially erotic act’, which involves a return ‘to pre-Christian pagan myths that associate creation with birth’.⁴²⁸ In light of this discussion of the hermaphroditic elements of Milton’s creation, and the various ways in which Milton’s universe can be considered erotically charged, we might here differentiate Swinburne’s departure from Christianity from his engagement with Milton. Where Levin has considered Swinburne’s mythopoeic poems as deviating from Genesis, I suggest that in turning away from the biblical creation myth Swinburne may have found an alternative in Milton. In Levin’s discussion of ‘Off Shore’ (1880), for example, there is a parallel in the way that ‘the sun and the sea are depicted as lovers, whose mutual desire sets the poem in motion’ with Milton’s sexual universe.⁴²⁹ Levin shows that the sun’s light penetrates the sea and her ‘moaning and groaning’ makes clear the ‘explicit eroticism’ of the poem.⁴³⁰ We see the same eroticism when Milton’s ‘mounted sun | Shot down direct his fervid rays to warm | Earths inmost womb’ (v. 300–02).⁴³¹ In *Paradise Lost*, Michael Wilding notes, human sexuality is reflected in the world around it, so that ‘Human sex is like the universe’.⁴³² Milton’s aetiology is imbued with a sexuality akin to that in Swinburne’s myths of creation. Levin proposes that perhaps ‘the earlier, more provocative poems did bear in fact the seed of a uniquely Swinburnian myth of creation’ and I suggest that Miltonic eroticism provides a way of linking sexuality in Swinburne’s early sadomasochistic poetry with his later work.⁴³³

SWINBURNE’S MILTONIC MELTING BODIES

It is to the sadomasochistic poetry that I now turn. Bodily boundaries are permeable in sexual and scatological acts in *Paradise Lost*: how then is this material melting—beyond the

⁴²⁷ Matus, p. 23.

⁴²⁸ ‘Solar Erotica: Swinburne’s Myth of Creation’ in *A.C. Swinburne and the Singing Word: New Perspectives on the Mature Work*, ed. by Yisrael Levin (Farnham, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 55–72 (p. 55).

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁴³¹ Compare again Melville’s Miltonic *Moby-Dick*, in which ‘sky and sea marry in a unity which (as Melville describes it) is a coitus of cosmic sexual principles’ (Slotkin, p. 547).

⁴³² Wilding, *Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1969), p. 84, quoted in Leonard, p. 702.

⁴³³ Levin, p. 63.

hermaphroditic—expressed by Swinburne? In ‘Les Noyades’ he deals explicitly with merging and desire in a way which evokes Milton’s abovementioned ‘carkasses chained unnaturally together’. Swinburne describes a form of execution performed during the Reign of Terror, a ‘marriage’, where men and women were stripped naked, tied to one another, and drowned. Swinburne writes that these victims were ‘Bound and drowned, slaying two by two, | Maidens and young men, naked and wed’ (ll. 11–12). Two figures are to be bound and killed as a pair: ‘One rough with labour and red with fight, | And a lady noble by name and face, | Faultless, a maiden, wonderful, white’ (ll. 14–16). The ‘lady noble’ is distraught but the ‘one rough with labour’ is overjoyed, because he has loved her from afar his ‘whole life long’ (l. 45). He cries in delight: ‘I should have held you, and you held me, | As flesh holds flesh, and the soul the soul’ (ll. 71–72). Swinburne’s doubled pairs of ‘held’, ‘flesh’, and ‘soul’ form a chain ending in the dissolution of dividing boundaries: one repetition lies within the first line and two within the second and there is a quickening of pace as the spaces between the repeated words reduce. The repeated ‘held’ is separated by three words, though ‘you’ stands either side of ‘and’ (which both divides and joins each ‘held’); ‘flesh’ is only kept apart from ‘flesh’ by ‘holds’; finally, there is nothing to separate the ‘the soul’ from ‘the soul’. Where souls are not kept apart, we might expect to find a representation of ideal desire. Instead, it is torture: the lady is horrified and the labourer is deluded. Swinburne makes clear the horror of cleaving together where body and mind are not in accord and there’s no cleaving apart. The labourer’s joy at the prospect of being bound to the noblewoman in death is also expressed in a desire for a specifically material melting—recalling Adam’s fevered cries of ‘Our state cannot be severed’—where Swinburne writes: ‘I shall drown with her, laughing for love; and she | Mix with me, touching me, lips and eyes’ (ll. 55–56).

Swinburne speaks directly of ‘melting’ in ‘Hermaphroditus’, when he writes ‘Thy moist limbs melted’ (l. 53). His preoccupation with melting is clearly engaged with Greek and Sapphic notions of eros. As Anne Carson writes, ‘in Greek the act of love is a mingling [...] and desire melts the limbs’.⁴³⁴ Carson translates the first line of Sappho’s fragment 130 as ‘Eros the melter of limbs (now again) stirs me’, which suggests a disorientation and bodily disruption that aligns with the melting considered above.⁴³⁵ Though this Greek conception of love is undoubtedly a shared source for Milton and Swinburne, support for reading Swinburne’s use of Greek love as additionally and significantly Miltonic can be identified elsewhere, especially in ‘Hermaphroditus’. In this poem, Swinburne figures the

⁴³⁴ *Eros the Bittersweet* (Champaign, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998), p. 7.

⁴³⁵ Sappho, *If not, winter: fragments of Sappho*, trans. by Anne Carson (London: Virago, 2003), p. 265.

hermaphrodite as ‘a pleasure-house’ that ‘Love made himself of flesh’, which Love in fact ‘would not enter in’, because ‘on the one side sat a man like death’ and ‘on the other a woman sat like sin’ (ll. 23–26). Maxwell touches on these lines in her discussion of chiasmus in the poem but omits the Miltonic figures to focus on the chiasmatic structure of the lines: ‘in sonnet 2, lines 11–12, (‘sat . . . man | . . . woman sat’) where a simple visual contrast or antithesis is involved’.⁴³⁶

Of course, Death and Sin are Satan’s offspring in *Paradise Lost*. At Hell’s gates, we are told their genealogy: Sin erupted from a gash in Satan’s head like Athena from Zeus. Satan then impregnated her, and so she gave birth to Death. Death, overcome with lust, raped Sin and made her pregnant with demonic canine creatures (ll. 746–809). Swinburne’s reference to these children of Satan complicates their embodiment of opposing halves of the hermaphrodite so that the implication is that these two ‘halves’ are particularly difficult to categorise and divide. Milton’s Sin is mother, lover, and sibling to Death, and so the complex nature of Hermaphroditus is expressed via Miltonic beings whose relation to one another is equally complicated. Furthermore, Milton’s Sin herself is only half woman: ‘The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair, | But ended foul in many a scaly fold’ (ll. 650–51). Unlike Shakespeare’s Hostess Quickly in *Henry IV*, called an otter by Falstaff as she is ‘neither fish nor flesh; a man knows not where to have her’, Milton’s Sin is both fish *and* flesh.⁴³⁷ Satan demands to know ‘What thing thou art, thus double-formed’ (ll. 741). In answer, Sin replies that it was the birth of Death that deformed and divided her—‘Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew | Transformed’ (ll. 784–85)—so that the act that makes her ‘double formed’ is the very act that assigns her the twofold role of both mother and unwilling lover.

Swinburne’s lines distinctly recall an illustration from an 1818 edition of *Paradise Lost*, engraved by Francis Bartolozzi after Thomas Stothard. The Stothard image, titled ‘Sin and Death’, depicts Milton’s pair seated at either side of the entrance to Hell. Certainly we could read this as a place Love ‘would not enter in’. On one side of the (unusually domestic) entrance, Sin sits surrounded by the serpentine curls of her lower half and two reptilian hounds; opposite sits Death, more solidly human than Milton describes him, but still with a darkness and lack of distinction from the background which maintains some of the obscurity of Milton’s Death.

⁴³⁶ *Bearing Blindness*, p. 205.

⁴³⁷ *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), III. 115.



Figure 14. Francis Bartolozzi after Thomas Stothard, 'Sin and Death' in *Graphic Illustrations of Milton's Paradise Lost* (London: John Hill, 1818).

The various births and sexual acts in the genealogy of Sin and Death tend towards a violent and sudden breaking of boundaries, in contrast to gentle transpiration. Sin 'sprung' from the side of Satan's head 'opening wide', causing him 'sudden miserable pain' (II. 752–58). Likewise, Death's birth is described as particularly painful, as 'breaking violent way' he 'tore through' Sin's 'entrails' (II. 782–83). When Sin next gives birth it is to the canine children of Death, who return to the womb to 'howl and gnaw' her bowels, 'then bursting forth' enact the birth repeatedly (II. 799–800). These expulsions, 'breaking' and 'bursting', all involve an unwanted tearing of flesh. They return reconfigured as the target of desire in Swinburne's 'Anactoria', in which he speaks as Sappho, expressing extreme frustration in her desire to consume or assimilate the object of her love:

O that I
Durst crush thee out of life with love, and die,
Die of thy pain and my delight, and be
Mixed with thy blood and molten into thee! (ll. 129–32)

What Swinburne's Sappho yearns for in 'Anactoria' (to be 'molten into thee') is exactly what Milton's angels enjoy (and what Satan's children cannot enjoy), because they possess 'the potential to utterly dissolve boundaries in a moment of mutual interpenetration'.⁴³⁸ Swinburne's dissolution of boundaries is often figured as an act of eating, of consumption and digestion of the beloved other, as for angels, with their bodies 'all tongue' the act of eating is 'an act of lovemaking'.⁴³⁹ In 'Anactoria' consumption, digestion and eroticism intersect, merging Miltonic and biblical images:

That I could drink thy veins as wine, and eat
Thy breasts like honey! That from face to feet
Thy body were abolished and consumed,
And in my flesh thy very flesh entombed! (ll. 111–14)

Maxwell writes that Sappho's desire to consume and entomb Anactoria here is 'a cannibalistic act of enclosure which also reminds one of a perverse maternity, as if Sappho might give birth to Anactoria'.⁴⁴⁰ This brings us back to the image of Milton's Sin as simultaneously mother, lover and victim of Death. Sections of 'Anactoria' recall Eve's act of eating the forbidden fruit and distorts the passage in which fruit turns to ash in the serpents' mouths (x. 547–72): 'I would earth had thy body as fruit to eat, | And no mouth but some serpent's found thee sweet' (ll. 25–26). Serpents reappear several times in the poem, here linked to the act of eating from a tree: 'Her spring of leaves is barren, and her fruit | Ashes [...] underneath | Serpents have gnawn it through with tortuous teeth' (ll. 237–40). Sappho's frustrated and violent expressions of desire for a sexual act that involves consuming her lover, leading inevitably to her lover's destruction, places her closer to the suffering of Sin, as she is still distanced from (and desirous of) the state described by Adam in his fleshly biblical expressions of love mentioned above—'Our state cannot be severed, we are one, | One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself' (ix. 958–59). Sappho desires to be 'One flesh' with Anactoria, but the bodily boundaries that restrict her mean that this is only possible through a cannibalistic destruction. Again, this contrasts with the ideal 'union of pure with pure' that Milton's angelic beings enjoy.

A difference emerges from this discussion of destruction between Greek and Miltonic erotic melting. This is the point at which we can identify the way in which Milton supplements and surpasses Sapphic desire. Carson writes that: 'In experiencing and articulating the melting threat of eros, the Greek poets are presumably also learning

⁴³⁸ deGruy, p. 130.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ *Bearing Blindness*, p. 39.

something about their own bounded selves through the effort to resist dissolution of those bounds in erotic emotion.⁴⁴¹ This sits in conflict with the Miltonic representation of divine beings as enjoying both individuation and boundary dissolution. As Carson explains it, the threat of eros for the Greeks comes from the notion that boundary dissolution involves destruction of the self, ‘union would be annihilating’.⁴⁴² In Swinburne’s ‘Anactoria’, this destruction of self and other through melting is exactly what Sappho covets. Swinburne’s Sappho does not ‘resist dissolution’: she craves it, like Lucretius’s lovers that ‘hurt the body they love, so close they press | They kiss so fiercely that teeth enter lips’.⁴⁴³ Her ultimate desire is for an *almost*-Miltonic divine—though unachievable—dissolution. It is a desire that ‘exceeds the limits of human possibility’.⁴⁴⁴ However, Sappho’s tangled vision of what it would mean to be ‘molten into thee’ in ‘Anactoria’ is perhaps more akin to Aristophanes’ vision of united halves in Plato’s *Symposium*: she would not refuse the offer of being ‘weld[ed] together, [fused] into a single person, instead of being two separate people’.⁴⁴⁵ Swinburne depicts Sappho’s desire here as a frenzied, overwhelming desire to consume and be consumed. Neither the Greek nor the Miltonic models of melting exactly map onto Swinburne’s presentation of extreme desire, but they are both closely related to it. McGann writes: ‘What [Swinburne] wants for his lovers is death, or entire mutual engulfment.’⁴⁴⁶ In Milton’s universe divine beings need not fear self-destruction in dissolution, as the boundaries they break were made to be broken. They achieve something more than being ‘welded together’: a complete ‘cleaving’ in *both* senses of the word. The ability to separate as well as to be ‘molten into thee’ is significant for Milton; this *antithetical* cleaving is divine sexual freedom. The Miltonic preoccupation with sexual melting is then differentiated from the classical understanding of eros as it *goes beyond it*: it is not a threat, and not permanent. In Swinburne’s embrace of this melting beyond the Sapphic, he disavows any adherence to a Victorian doctrine of fear of mutability.

⁴⁴¹ Carson, *Eros*, p. 40.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁴⁴³ *On the Nature of the Universe*, trans. by Ronald Melville (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), IV. 1079–80. ‘Mouth pressed to watering mouth and lips to lips | Drawing deep breaths as body calls to body. | In vain. For they can rub nothing off from it, | Neither can body be absorbed in body. For that they sometimes seem to want and strive for, | So ardently in Venus’ toils they cling | Their limbs with rapture liquefied and melted’ (IV. 1108–14).

⁴⁴⁴ David A. Cook, ‘The Content and Meaning of Swinburne’s “Anactoria”’, *Victorian Poetry*, 9 (1971), 77–93 (p. 78).

⁴⁴⁵ *Symposium*, trans. by Robin Waterfield (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 29.

⁴⁴⁶ *Swinburne*, p. 213.

The conception of a sexual melting without threat, and without fear of the dissolution of the self, is related to Milton's provision of a system which, again, 'goes beyond' the conflict between the vile and the valuable that Swinburne finds so captivating in Baudelaire: 'here, for once, is sex, beginning with nudity, without guilt'.⁴⁴⁷ Swinburne's relationship to Baudelaire can be useful as a point of comparison: Brennan writes of Swinburne that his 'interest [...] is in the similarity he has to Baudelaire rather than in how he either does or does not surpass him'.⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, my interest here is primarily in the similarities between Swinburne and Milton. Of Baudelaire, Swinburne wrote that 'even of the loathsome bodily putrescence and decay, he can make some noble use; pluck out its meaning and secret, even its beauty, in a certain way, from actual carrion'.⁴⁴⁹ Jonathan Culler suggests that what Baudelaire offers (and what is particularly modern about this offering) is an illumination of 'poetry's ability to bring into verse the banal [or] the disgusting [...] and give it a poetic function'.⁴⁵⁰ Where Baudelaire offers an example of how to find pleasure in 'problems', 'beauty' in 'carrion', or nobility in 'the loathsome bodily putrescence'—in Baudelaire's own words, 'Aux objets répugnants nous trouvons des appas'—Milton offers something aetiological rather than modern: we are confronted with what is 'banal' or 'disgusting' to the modern mind, but in a world without these points of reference.⁴⁵¹ Milton's monistic world involves the scatological and sexual functions of angels, acts which we would consider 'bodily putrescence' in another form. He conceives a state of being for angels and prelapsarian

⁴⁴⁷ Le Comte, p. 88. A return to hair: in Swinburne's elegy to Baudelaire, 'Ave Atque Vale', he speaks of placing his hair on Baudelaire's tomb. Swinburne begins by asking 'Shall I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel, | Brother, on this that was the veil of thee?' and in the eleventh stanza he 'lay, Orestes-like, across the tomb | A curl of sever'd hair'. Thomas J. Brennan writes that 'More than any other gesture in the poem, this tribute has a purely formal and even perfunctory quality to it' ('Creating From Nothing: Swinburne and Baudelaire in "Ave Atque Vale"', *Victorian Poetry*, 44.3 (2006), 251–71 (p. 265)). This open gift of hair is 'purely formal' and as Brennan points out, likely to have resulted from Swinburne's 'needing a word that rhymes with "bear" and "air" at the close of the stanza' (ibid.). Nevertheless, it seems important to note that this offering reverses the transmissions of hair so far discussed, in which hair has been given (or taken) as a gift of inspiration from the dead to the living, from poetic predecessor to successor, from Milton to Keats. Here, Swinburne's gift of a curl of his hair (which has been noted as one of his most memorable features, red and unruly) to Baudelaire perhaps marks his self-recognition as an equal to Baudelaire, a 'Brother'. Brennan comments on this somewhat equalising interest in Baudelaire: 'The older poet inhabits his thought, memory, language, and sense. Instead of representing a future to him, Baudelaire merely impresses on him the continuing flow of images in the present that iterates repetition. Swinburne's accomplishment is to realize that any poet, instead of standing apart from this flow, may be able to refine his perception by becoming one with it' (p. 256).

⁴⁴⁸ Brennan, p. 254.

⁴⁴⁹ 'Charles Baudelaire: *Les Fleurs du Mal*' repr. in *Swinburne as Critic*, ed. by Clyde K. Hyder (London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 30.

⁴⁵⁰ 'Introduction' in *The Flowers of Evil* [*Les Fleurs du Mal*], trans. by James McGowan (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. xxv.

⁴⁵¹ 'In most repugnant objects we find charms', 'To The Reader', ibid., pp. 4–5.

humans in which excretion and sexuality, acts of disorder and boundary dissolution are presented but are not threatening, and not obscene. Miltonic angels and prelapsarian humans partake in both erotic acts and excretion via disruption or dissolution of the boundaries of their bodies and far from 'loathsome' it is delightful.

This difference can be focused in the figure of the flower in Baudelaire and Milton. As Brennan writes of the flower in Swinburne and Baudelaire, 'the flower has a potential for decay; only with that recognition can its life be appreciated'.⁴⁵² The potency of the flower, for Baudelaire, lies in the fact that it holds the possibility of its future death within itself. This can be compared with Raphael's metaphor of the flower in Book V, which he uses to illustrate the very opposite, that created life contains within itself the possibility of progression and the return to God:

O Adam, one almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not depraved from good, created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Indued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
But more refined, more spirituous, and pure,
As nearer to him placed or nearer tending
Each in their several active spheres assigned,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More airy, last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes. (V. 469–82)

In this metaphor, all of God's creation is compared to a plant in which the roots are lowly while the leaves 'more airy' lead up to the 'bright consummate flower', closest to God. Dobranski notes that 'the philosophy [Raphael] attempts to describe collapses the space between vehicle and tenor; if the distinctions between God's creations reside in their forms, so do the distinctions between the parts of God's creations'.⁴⁵³

In the second half of *Paradise Lost*, as the possibility of this material return up the hierarchy of divine substance fades, Milton's bodies begin to be clouded with the disgust that

⁴⁵² Brennan, p. 262. See also Patricia Clements, "'Strange Flowers': Some Notes on the Baudelaire of Swinburne and Pater", *The Modern Language Review*, 76.1 (1981), 20–30

⁴⁵³ Dobranski, p. 343. This, again, reaches back to the matter of hair in Milton, as Dobranski writes that 'applied to Adam and Eve' this 'suggests that their hair may be the most spirituous and pure part of their bodies; in terms of Raphael's plant metaphor, their tresses correspond to 'the bright consummate flower' that 'spirits odorous breathes' (V. 481–82). Milton encourages this alliance by describing the couple's hair as plants: Adam's hyacinthine locks and Eve's vinelike curls' (ibid.). We might think also of Hunt's lines on Milton's hair: 'It is the gentlest, yet the strongest thread | Of our frail plant' (*Poetical Works*, p. 238, ll. 10–11).

comes to be aligned with beauty by Baudelaire. Where deGruy writes that angels enjoy ‘a material existence that is not subject to a hierarchy of bodily configuration’, there is debate as to whether this wholeness of self is also enjoyed by prelapsarian humans.⁴⁵⁴ Kent R. Lehnhof (discussing why Milton does not provide the ‘details’ of prelapsarian sex) goes so far as to suggest that prelapsarian Adam and Eve do not possess genital sexuality—‘are entirely whole, possessing perfect integrity of self’—they share the unfragmented and undivided state of the angels, prior to any experience of organic division.⁴⁵⁵ In Milton’s conception of prelapsarian humanity, as Lehnhof reads it, the relation of human sexual acts to angelic sexual acts is similar to the relation between their digestive acts (a reasonable interpretation, considering the extent to which digestion and sexuality are connected in *Paradise Lost*). We can connect this again to Swinburne, as Margot K. Louis explores the way that his poetry ‘undercut[s] the phallic model [...] substituting for it a model of sex based on the assumption of multitudinous centers of pleasure, in ways that highlight female subjectivity and female desire’—as Milton’s prelapsarian and divine bodies are *all intestine* then, they may also be *all clitoris*.⁴⁵⁶

Regardless of whether or not we accept what Dobranski calls the ‘modest conclusion that prelapsarian intimacy is not merely genital’, we can be sure that for postlapsarian humanity the ‘hierarchy of bodily configuration’ becomes suddenly pronounced.⁴⁵⁷ Excretion and the erotic become a point of shame and are pushed downwards, or hidden. Lehnhof claims that it is ‘only after the Fall when their primary unity is shattered by sin’ that Adam and Eve ‘can engage in an intercourse that is not total but merely sexual’.⁴⁵⁸ Following the Miltonic tradition of aligning sexuality with food, digestion is no longer easy either, as ‘Adam’s postlapsarian sinfulness is obscenely figured in the “unkindly fumes” of gastric distress that disturb him after he eats the forbidden fruit (IX. 1050)’.⁴⁵⁹ These ‘unkindly fumes’ are distinct from the ‘vapours pure’ discussed above. The postlapsarian transformation of the human body is one that moves away from the divine and toward the comprehensively utilitarian. We become less spiritually ‘vital’ and more ‘organic’. The metamorphosis is a retreat from unity, towards an intensification of fleshliness, density, and division. This is

⁴⁵⁴ deGruy, p. 126.

⁴⁵⁵ ‘Nor Turnd’, p. 80.

⁴⁵⁶ ‘Erotic Figuration in Swinburne’s *Tristram of Lyonesse*, Canto 2: The Vanishing Knight and the Drift of Butterflies’, *Victorian Poetry*, 47.4 (2009), 647–59 (p. 647).

⁴⁵⁷ Dobranski, p. 351.

⁴⁵⁸ ‘Nor Turnd’, p. 80.

⁴⁵⁹ Lehnhof, ‘Scatology and the Sacred in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 37.3 (2007), 429–49 (p. 439).

precisely the reversal of God's original plan for humanity, prior to Satan's escape from Hell; for humanity to slowly earn their ascension to heaven and become less dense, light as angels. Instead, after the fall, we have to toil and shit and piss.

Mary Douglas writes that 'dirt is essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder'.⁴⁶⁰ Like evil, then, dirt and the associated shame of excretion arrive alongside knowledge. The postlapsarian body attempts to deal with this corporeal dirt and disorder, 'matter out of place,' by dividing divine matter.⁴⁶¹ Douglas writes that 'ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating [...] have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience'.⁴⁶² What is important here, though, is that Milton also presents us, and Swinburne, with an image of these biological functions *before* shame and knowledge, in his conception of the prelapsarian world in which a lack of disorder or knowledge of disorder rendered 'dirt' nonexistent. Walter Benjamin writes on Baudelaire in direct relation to the Fall and knowledge:

Underlying Baudelaire's writings is the old idea that knowledge is guilt. His soul is that of Adam, to whom Eve (the world) once upon a time offered the apple, from which he ate. Thereupon the spirit expelled him from the garden. Knowledge of the world had not been enough for him; he wanted to know its good and evil sides as well. And the possibility of this question, which he was never able to answer, is something he bought at the price of eternal remorse. His soul has this mythical prehistory, of which he knows, and thanks to which he knows more than others about redemption. He teaches us above all to understand the literal meaning of the word "knowledge" in the story of Eden.⁴⁶³

For Benjamin, Baudelaire is distinctly a poet of the postlapsarian state. Baudelaire's writing and 'soul' is intertwined with the association of 'knowledge' with both 'good and evil'. The possibility of angelic melting finds no place in Baudelaire's world after the Fall.

Richard Sieburth links Douglas's anthropology of dirt with a sense of disorder in Swinburne and Baudelaire. Sieburth points out that 'the critical vocabulary deployed against both Swinburne and Baudelaire seems to make one thing clear: in the eyes of many of their contemporaries, their poetry was simply *dirt*'.⁴⁶⁴ For Sieburth, the filth at the source of criticism of their poetry was a disorder which refused to be bounded, a refusal 'to observe the segregation of high and low, pure and impure, sacred and obscene' which 'culminates in

⁴⁶⁰ *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* [1966] (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 2.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁶³ *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, ed. by Michael W. Jennings, trans. by Howard Eiland, Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingston, and Harry Zohn (Cambridge, MA; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 27–28.

⁴⁶⁴ Sieburth, p. 344.

[a] hermaphroditic epiphany'.⁴⁶⁵ The 'hermaphroditic' for Sieburth, instead of representing (as in Milton) a paradoxical-because-ideal mixture of 'pure' with 'pure', comes of an 'ironic inversion [or perversion] of conventional semantic categories'.⁴⁶⁶ For Sieburth, reading Swinburne in light of Baudelaire, the hermaphrodite is obscene because it is rooted in a refusal of boundaries and order: 'the scandal of their poetry is the scandal of dirt: to be neither here nor there, but always somewhere else, always in between'.⁴⁶⁷ Milton's vision of the hermaphroditic denies this obscenity, because the biological boundaries that are broken in prelapsarian *Paradise Lost* are supposed to be broken.

MILTON'S POETICS OF MELTING

The various instances of the dissolution of bodily boundaries that have been my focus—namely hair, sex, perspiration, defecation—all, in some sense, could come under the banner of 'excretion'. Dobranski writes that 'hair during the early modern period was sometimes called an "excrement"' and turns to the *OED*, which gives generally "'that which grows out or forth" but [...] more specifically "superfluous matter thrown off by the bodily organs; an excreted substance"'.⁴⁶⁸ Lehnhof notes that in Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* 'sex is not sublime but scatological—Milton 'identifies sex with such mundane bodily processes as perspiration and defecation', calling semen 'the quintessence of an excrement'.⁴⁶⁹ What these figures of excrement all have in common is that they involve a form of boundary crossing and of disrupting the edges of the individual.

I now move beyond a concern with Milton's biological boundaries to consider the importance of Milton's poetic language as a vehicle for melting bodies. One purpose underlying this final section is to further reveal the links between Milton's poetic language and his ideas. Boundary dissolution is built into several levels of Milton's poetry, strengthening the sense that 'melting' is a particularly Miltonic effect. It appears in forms ranging from the interaction between single letters and syllables to the structure of the entirety of *Paradise Lost*, which, joined by its sequel *Paradise Regained*, is part of a pairing that

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 345, 348.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 348.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 353.

⁴⁶⁸ Dobranski, p. 344. The first definition that the *OED* provides for 'excrement', however, gives it as 'That which remains after a process of sifting or refining', from the latin *excrementum* meaning 'what is sifted out'. Excretion then, is related to a process of refinement, and to 'that which remains'.

⁴⁶⁹ 'Nor Turnd', p. 75; *Complete Prose*, II. p. 248.

melts. Elbert N. S. Thompson writes that the ‘two stories are woven indissolubly together, and a real artistic unity is made possible’.⁴⁷⁰

Leonard considers the melting nature of Milton’s syllables, responding to Francis Peck’s claim that ‘Milton can glide two vowels together without annihilating either one’.⁴⁷¹ He writes:

This practice, known as synaloepha (the Greek word means “melting together”) should not be confused with elision, where one of the vowels is omitted (literally “crushed out”, Latin *elido*) in pronunciation. [...] Peck does not use the term “synaloepha”, but he does talk of Milton’s “melting of syllables”: “As to his elisions, melting of syllables, & using something like an English dactyl foot: he generally cuts off the letter y in the word many, when the next word begins with a vowel (which yet seems not to be cut off, but rather to remain) whereby he gives a particular softness to the foot, & makes it read like an English dactyl” [...]. Johnson will think statements of this kind an intolerable contradiction. How can syllables “remain” when they have been “cut off”? But Peck is right. “Melting” syllables do “remain”—even when they yield to the decasyllabic norm.⁴⁷²

Leonard is referring here to phrases such as ‘so over many a tract’ (VI. 76–77) in which ‘many a’ becomes ‘man(y)a’. Here the limits of words, as objects, can be compared to the limits of heavenly bodies, since the two can cleave without being annihilated. The boundary itself is ‘cut off’, whilst the words in entirety ‘remain’. To extend this line of inquiry, we might look at language that denies limitation used frequently by Milton and to which Swinburne has been said to be ‘addicted’: the pun.⁴⁷³ McGann notices that Milton and Swinburne share a favourite pun in ‘ruin’, which ‘carries the meaning of “to fall upon” from its Latin roots’.⁴⁷⁴ Carson writes that: ‘Like eros, puns flout the edges of things.’⁴⁷⁵ She suggests that the pun first conveys the possibility of the dissolution of edges and consequently reveals this as a painful *impossibility*, as we are confronted with the troubling reality that ‘words have edges. So do you’.⁴⁷⁶ This highlights an interesting distinction between the written and verbal effects of poetry: Milton’s use of synaloepha, experienced verbally, seems an effective way of ridding words of their edges (which removes Carson’s painful reminder that melting together is not possible for human lovers) and yet the visual experience of the words on the page confirms their presence. For Milton, the blind poet, the verbal experience surely takes precedence.

⁴⁷⁰ *Essays on Milton* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1914), p. 88, quoted in Leonard, p. 293. On the publication history of the two epics united, see Wittreich, ‘Lost Paradise Regained: The Twin Halves of Milton’s Epic Vision’, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 80.3 (2011), 731–55. Wittreich writes ‘twinning’ the epics is a publication trend in ‘the entire nineteenth century’ (p. 733).

⁴⁷¹ *New Memoirs of the Life and Poetical Works of Mr. John Milton* (London: 1740), cited in Leonard, p. 41.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

⁴⁷³ Sieburth, p. 352.

⁴⁷⁴ *Swinburne*, pp. 155–56.

⁴⁷⁵ *Eros*, p. 35.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Carson does later add, however, that ‘a god’s word has no beginning or end. Only a god’s desire can reach without lack’.⁴⁷⁷ Perhaps, then, in a poem depicting a monist universe in which all substance involves God in different degrees, the ‘beginnings’ and ‘ends’ of words are less rigid.

On a larger scale, Milton’s companion poems ‘Il Penseroso’ and ‘L’Allegro’ are two separate but indivisible texts the boundaries of which dissolve, and that are constantly in dialogue with each other. This dialogue is cyclical; each begins with an address to the other. If the introductory lines can be read as a ‘looking-back’ to the partner poem, the pair must be read in a cycle. Yet, because they both begin with this looking-back, neither can claim to be the first of the two. The publication dates of the poems are at best hazy, so that if the poems are twins it is not clear which was born first. This cyclical motion also complicates identification of the start and end of each poem: as the beginning of ‘L’Allegro’ is concerned directly with ‘Il Penseroso’, and vice versa, a clear line cannot be cut between the last lines of the ‘first’ and the title of the ‘second’. These poems cleave antithetically; they demand at once to be considered neither separate nor inseparable.

Eric C. Brown writes that the dissolution of the borders of these two poems in relation to each other is expressed in the use of ‘imagery of limitless horizons, unbounded enclosures, and other sites of liminality’ within the poems.⁴⁷⁸ He points to the recurring image of the window, which ‘both allows for interaction and forms a barrier’.⁴⁷⁹ Here, again, we find the idea of ‘melting’ and boundary dissolution emerging in relation to Milton’s work: ‘the repeated dissolution of these borders creates a sense of instability between the poems’ and this, among other factors, contributes ‘to the constant flux in which one poem melts into the other’.⁴⁸⁰ Brown figures the melting pair in terms of desire, and their melting can be read as sexual: ‘what each companion dreams, what each desires, will always be the other’, and it is ‘this desire for the other that makes it impossible for us ever to read either poem absolutely in isolation or to read them simultaneously’.⁴⁸¹

Brown’s most interesting example of Milton’s use of liminality is his recurring use of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth:

Orpheus and Eurydice signify the poems’ power to draw one to the brink but never conclusively over it; each poem strains, like Orpheus, toward a closure it never quite realizes. The rhetoric of the poems—swaying from harsh dismissals to enchanting

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 76.

⁴⁷⁸ “‘The Melting Voice Through Mazes Running’: The Dissolution of Borders in *L’Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*”, *Milton Studies*, 40 (2001), 1–18 (p. 1).

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 1.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

enticements—thus matches the play of borders *inside* the poems with those *between* the poems.⁴⁸²

Milton's use of mythical figures can be read almost invariably as involving matters of liminality as, of course, Greek mythology deals with interaction between inhabitants of different worlds; the human, the dead, and the divine. Milton writes that Melancholy is 'Of Cerberus and blackest midnight born' in the backward-looking passage beginning 'L'Allegro' (l. 2), and, as Brown comments, one of the central purposes of Cerberus the mythical monstrous canine was 'to ensure the separation of one world from another [...] to prevent one from seeping into the other'.⁴⁸³ Brown shows this 'seepage' to be 'ironically extensive in Milton's poems'.⁴⁸⁴ At the end of 'L'Allegro's' 'looking-back' Melancholy is effectively banished to 'dark Cimmerian desert' (l. 10) to allow the poet to devote what follows to 'L'Allegro'. This desert is located at the edge of the world, 'a featureless terrain that purposefully erases all such borders and distinctions'.⁴⁸⁵

Orpheus and Eurydice also appear in Swinburne's 'Hermaphroditus'. Smith argues that:

The first two lines of Swinburne's poem very interestingly evoke the image of Orpheus and Eurydice, in the gesture of looking back, and one of the enduring attractions in the myth of the tragic lovers resides in representations that present them, as Swinburne does here, as physically bound to one another—androgynous almost.⁴⁸⁶

Smith positions Orpheus 'looking back' in the first lines of the poem, mirroring the position of the looking-back passages of Milton's companion pieces. Whilst it is unsurprising that both poets incorporated Orpheus and Eurydice in works that focus on doubling, their use of the myth does enforce the sense in which both are preoccupied with 'melting', and doubles that are 'physically bound to one another—androgynous almost'.

Discussion of these companion poems draws on Milton's use of dark and light to both separate and connect the pair. Brown speaks of the paradox of difference and darkness that he perceives Milton to be playing with: as darkness falls, objects are not so easily divided from one another. Visually, they merge in the shadows. However, they are then experienced differently 'so that the same locale can seem alternately lovely and horrific'.⁴⁸⁷ Darkness both 'dissolves' and 'imposes' difference.⁴⁸⁸ Brown aligns this paradox with that of good and evil:

⁴⁸² Ibid., pp. 1–2.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁸⁶ Smith, p. 87.

⁴⁸⁷ Brown, 'Melting Voice', p. 2.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

Good and evil share with darkness and light the same paradox of borders, wherein difference is established only to be dissolved, and one knows of good through evil and evil through good until they intermingle almost inseparably.⁴⁸⁹

Dark is only dark with knowledge of light, and evil is only evil with knowledge of good. Indeed, Milton writes in *Areopagitica*: 'It was from out the rinde of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evill as *two twins cleaving together* leapt forth into the World.'⁴⁹⁰ This last phrase of Milton's metaphor might easily be taken for a line from Swinburne.⁴⁹¹ The image of 'two twins cleaving together' recalls that of the men and woman bound and drowned in 'Les Noyades' and directs us back from poetic structure to words themselves, particularly toward Swinburne's uses of the word 'cleave': 'the flesh that cleaves' ('Anactoria', l. 9); 'thy lover that must cleave to thee' ('Laus Veneris', l. 138); 'choose of two loves and cleave unto the best' ('Hermaphroditus', l. 6); 'the flowers cleave apart' ('A Ballad of Death', l. 87); 'let not this woman wail and cleave to me' ('Phaedra', l. 41). This is not to suggest that Swinburne's repeated use of the word is a Miltonic allusion, as 'cleaves' is by no means uncommon (for example, it is used in some translations of Genesis 2:24), but instead that the two are connected by their preoccupation with melting even at a semantic level.

The use of 'cleave' itself may be read as an expression of this preoccupation; as I have suggested several times, it is antithetical. The *OED* defines 'cleave' as first 'to part or divide' and second 'to stick fast or adhere' (indeed, Freud chooses 'cleave' as an example in his essay 'The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words').⁴⁹² Both meanings are used by Swinburne in the quotations above. Milton is 'keenly aware of the fact that English is rich in words that mean the opposite of themselves and he often uses such words in *Paradise Lost*'.⁴⁹³ This adds another dimension to the sense in which Milton's words themselves convey a concern for melting, as it is not just the spaces between words, but meaning within words, that melts. These opposing meanings of 'cleave' are themselves 'as two twins cleaving together'.

We might compare the way that the edges of Milton's poems cleave together with the way Swinburne disrupts the boundary between poetry and its audience. Maxwell writes:

Because of the way Swinburne's verse has particular designs on the sensibility of readers, their bodies and minds, there can arise a sense that they are not quite sure

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ *Complete Prose*, II, p. 514.

⁴⁹¹ The idea of two beings 'cleaving together' also seems particularly attractive to Miltonists as applicable to many aspects of his reception. For example, Leonard writes that 'For Milton in the nineteenth century, praise and blame are two twins cleaving together' (Leonard, p. 81).

⁴⁹² 'The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words' [1910], in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. by Anna Freud, Alix Strachey, and Alan Tyson, trans. by James Strachey, 19 vols (London: Vintage, 2001), XI, p. 159.

⁴⁹³ Leonard, p. 245.

what belongs to the poem and what to themselves, a sense of not being quite sure where their identities and those of the poems begin and end.⁴⁹⁴

Swinburne's verse extends his engagement with the body beyond the boundaries of the text. Readers of Swinburne are never quite sure 'where their identities and those of the poems begin and end', so that one of the ways in which Swinburne is a primary poet of the Victorian body is in the effect of his poetry on the bodies of his audience. These, as Maxwell suggests, become in some way indistinguishable from his texts. In his unfinished novel *Lesbia Brandon*, Swinburne speaks (through the character Lady Warriston) of the direct communication between verse and the nerves, as if commenting on the particularly physical effects of his own poetry:

Things in verse hurt one, don't they? Hit and sting like a cut [...]. You have the nerve of poetry – the soft place it hits on, and stings. [...]. It's odd that words should change so just by being put into rhyme. They get teeth and bite; they take fire and burn. I wonder who first thought of tying words up and twisting them back to make verses, and hurt and delight all the people in the world for ever. [...] It was an odd device: one can't see why this ringing and rhyming of words should make all the difference in them: one can't tell where the pain or the pleasure ends or begins.⁴⁹⁵

Here, again, 'one can't tell' where boundaries lie, and words in verse 'get teeth and bite; they take fire and burn'. Edmund Gosse states that when Swinburne read 'Dolores' to a Pre-Raphaelite audience several 'ladies' were sent 'into an unmistakable state of arousal', and Ruskin said of 'Faustine' that 'it made me all hot'.⁴⁹⁶ The physiological effects of Swinburne's poetry indicate that not only is his importance as a writer of the Victorian sexual body inscribed in his poetry, but also on the very Victorian bodies that experienced it. These effects of Swinburne's poetry can be linked back to Keats's 'Lines on Seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair':

For many years my offerings must be hushed:
When I do speak, I'll think upon this hour,
Because I feel my forehead hot and flushed,
Even at the simplest vassal of thy power —
A lock of thy bright hair.
Sudden it came,
And I was startled, when I caught thy name
Coupled so unaware;
Yet, at the moment, temperate was my blood.
Methought I had beheld it from the Flood.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁴ *Swinburne* (Tavistock, UK: Northcote House, 2006), p. 24.

⁴⁹⁵ *Lesbia Brandon*, ed. by Randolph Hughes (London: Falcon Press, 1952), p. 148.

⁴⁹⁶ Quoted in Sieburth, p. 351.

⁴⁹⁷ *The Complete Poems*, ed. by John Barnard, 3rd edn (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 220, ll. 33–42.

The effect on Keats of the presence of Milton's bodily relic, 'the simplest vassal of thy power', is profoundly physical. This physical transmission of power occurs through marginalia too, as Nelson notes that on seeing Milton's signature in a first edition of *Paradise Lost*, Barrett Browning—whose hair is now entwined with this lock—thought of running her head against a wall.⁴⁹⁸ In the vein of Gray's suggestions regarding hair as a liminal object belonging both to the self and the other, Milton's hair for Keats provides, similarly to Swinburne's verse, 'a sense of not being quite sure where their identities and those of the poems begin and end'.⁴⁹⁹

Critics of Milton and Swinburne might make use of this connection between the physiological breakdown of the boundary of the text, and the various moments of boundary dissolution in the biology of Milton's beings. It is possible to use this textual and biological 'melting' to defend Milton and Swinburne from a historical line of criticism that attributes both poets with a tendency to prioritise 'sound over sense'. Leonard writes:

It is a curious fact that Milton's earliest critics (until about the middle of the nineteenth century) revered him as the pre-eminent English poet of co-operation between sound and sense, while the twentieth-century assault on Milton's reputation was based largely on the belief that he divorces sound from sense. [...] the roots of the change lie in the relatively neglected Milton criticism of the Victorian period.⁵⁰⁰

This turning point which Leonard identifies in the mid-nineteenth century arrives with Matthew Arnold's attribution to Milton of the 'grand style':

Victorian critics, especially those writing after Arnold (1861), saw Milton as the greatest poet of 'the grand style', which was understood as grandiloquent sound acting independently of sense. This view of Milton prepared the way for twentieth-century anti-Miltonists who accused Milton of divorcing sound from sense.⁵⁰¹

Similarly, Herrick describes 'the common rap against Swinburne' as 'that of sound and fury signifying nothing', and Sieburth writes that his poetry 'subverts the hegemony of sense over sound [...] in order to return both poet and reader to a more carnal rapport with language'.⁵⁰²

The critical language surrounding the apparent foregrounding of sound over sense in Milton's writing leads us back to thinking about this 'carnal rapport' and the dissolution of the boundaries of the texts themselves. Leonard writes that 'Numerous critics have commented on the muscular energy of the [opening] lines [of *Paradise Lost*], and the sense they impart of breathless, dizzy anticipation' and quotes C. S. Lewis on the physiological

⁴⁹⁸ Nelson, p. 4.

⁴⁹⁹ Maxwell, *Swinburne*, p. 24.

⁵⁰⁰ Leonard, p. ix.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵⁰² Herrick, p. 100; Sieburth, p. 351.

effects of Milton's poetry: 'our very muscles respond as we read'.⁵⁰³ I have mentioned above several cases of the same bodily reaction to Swinburne: Robin Fox confirms that that 'you don't just hear' Swinburne's most famous lines, 'you feel them physically'.⁵⁰⁴ This may be read as confirmation that these two poets are guilty of both divorcing sound from sense and prioritising sound. It is because the verse of these poets is so strongly *felt* that it has often been thought to be able to offer nothing else, as the physiological effect of the poetry seems to conceal any connection between the words and their meaning. However, I want to suggest that the way in which Milton and Swinburne's use of sound demands a physical response reiterates the various instances of boundary collapse in their work. The physical manifestations of the strength of sound draw the reader across the very edges of the text, and so we come some way towards experiencing melting bodies through poetry.

On a more general level, I have demonstrated how Milton's language—on every level—is deeply connected to his ideas. In turn, this binding of sense and sound is made available to Swinburne as a foundation for his own poetic representations of the breaching of the boundaries of the body. Swinburne links himself to a complex philosophy and his extension of Milton's metaphysics of melting highlights the presence of Milton's ideas beneath his own sounds.

CONCLUSION

Milton and Swinburne both flaunt the edges of poetry. Milton's poems melt into each other, as Swinburne's melt into their audience, and their poetic practices melt into each other. They are connected by their understanding of the body as mutable and permeable, and by the poetic devices and language that they use to conceptually explore this dissolution of bodily boundaries. Melting (merging, assimilation, unification, 'cleaving together') is a concept itself 'woven indissolubly' into Milton's words, structures, theology and metaphysics, and one which is pervasive in the poetry of Swinburne.⁵⁰⁵ Swinburne's expression of his preoccupation with 'melting' is aided by particularly Miltonic images such as the sensual act of eating forbidden fruit, and the complex figures of Death and Sin. DeGruy writes that 'Milton's angelic body offers access to an unsexed, or indifferently sexed, state of being, to a

⁵⁰³ Leonard, p. 40; Lewis, *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 40 quoted in Leonard, p. 40.

⁵⁰⁴ 'Playing by the Rules: Sound and Sense in Swinburne and the Rhyming Poets', *Philosophy and Literature*, 32.2 (2008), 217–40 (p. 228).

⁵⁰⁵ Thompson, p. 88, quoted in Leonard, p. 293.

dizzying array of bodily configurations in which absolutely nothing is forbidden', and this is both the state that Swinburne's Sappho desires, and that his 'Hermaphroditus' embodies.⁵⁰⁶ Milton offers a vision of a potential relation between the 'vile' and the valuable which goes beyond that offered by Baudelaire, and which denies a postlapsarian system of division and rigidity of boundaries that an anthropological understanding of 'dirt' demands. In Milton's universe boundaries are permeable and mutable in a way that would have attracted Swinburne and fed into his poetic representation of the sexual body. Swinburne's sexual bodies—some of the most interesting that Victorian poetry offers—make clear that mutability and instability of boundaries are vital concepts for an understanding of Victorian sexuality. Swinburne's use of a particularly *Miltonic* form of bodily melting demonstrates Milton's previously underestimated importance for Swinburne, and consequently for an understanding of representations of the sexual body in Victorian culture.

⁵⁰⁶ deGruy, p. 128.

4 Milton Regained

Thomas Hardy

spring and autumn here
Danced hand in hand.

(*Paradise Lost*, v. 394–95)

Like the other figures discussed above, Thomas Hardy read widely and deeply. Consequently, the use of allusion was a ‘permanent tool’ for him.⁵⁰⁷ His sources often mirror Melville’s, as he makes much use of the Bible, Shakespeare, Classical texts, and, of course, Milton. Interest in Milton’s influence on British culture in the later nineteenth century has amplified in the last decade, and I propose that Hardy deserves a central place in these enquiries; this chapter explores an extensive engagement with Milton in his fiction. I argue that Hardy’s most striking use of Milton is made clear in moments which reveal his literary idiosyncrasy: the landscape of Wessex; his method of continually shifting perspective; the attention he pays to peripheral phenomena, particularly hands.

In the 150 years since Hardy’s writing career began, only a handful of critics have focused exclusively on the relationship between Milton and Hardy.⁵⁰⁸ Although their names are often found together in anthologies of English poetry, they are not often placed in direct dialogue. Hardy’s relationship with Milton is in part one that would be assumed for any educated Victorian: he notes in the *Life* that his great grandmother was familiar with ‘such standard works as *Paradise Lost*’.⁵⁰⁹ In this sense Milton is a given, and he is certainly always at hand for Hardy, as elsewhere in the *Life* he mentions or quotes variously ‘Il Peneroso’, *Comus*, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, and *Areopagitica*. Dennis Taylor has explored Milton’s influence beyond this standard familiarity, addressing Milton’s more distinctive

⁵⁰⁷ Patricia Ingham, ‘Introduction’, in *Desperate Remedies* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. xii.

⁵⁰⁸ See Allan Brick, ‘Paradise and Consciousness in Hardy’s *Tess*’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 17.2 (1962), 115–34; Joan Grundy, ‘Milton and Hardy’, in *John Milton: Twentieth Century Perspectives*, ed. by J. Martin Evans, 5 vols, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1, 329–40 (first publ. in *Thomas Hardy Annual*, 3 [1985], 3–14); Taylor, ‘Hardy’s Missing Poem’, 50–60; Karley Adney, ‘It’s Not a Matter of Message but of Messenger: Miltonic Principles in Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*’, *The Thomas Hardy Society Journal*, 2.2 (2006), 35–43; Norbert Lennartz, ‘Paradise Lost and Hell Regained: On the Figure of the Intruder in Thomas Hardy’s *Far from the Madding Crowd*’, *Études Anglaises: Revue Du Monde Anglophone*, 61 (2008), 3–18. Other scholars I will discuss in this chapter have written about Hardy’s relationship with Milton secondarily to argument focused on other topics (such as nineteenth-century astronomy, allusion, and hands).

⁵⁰⁹ Thomas Hardy and Florence Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy* (London: Studio Editions Ltd, 1994), p. 8. Previously published as *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840–1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928) and *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892–1928* (London: Macmillan, 1930). Further references to this edition will be given parenthetically in the text and designated *EL* or *LL*.

presence in Hardy's early 'poetic evolution'.⁵¹⁰ Taylor suggests that 'some of the most interesting' moments in Hardy's marginalia are in books Hardy was reading during the 1860s, in his mid-twenties, 'when he was forming his literary style'.⁵¹¹ Of these Taylor identifies a number that prove particularly useful for 'studying Hardy's vocabulary', in which Hardy had 'underlined a multitude of individual words and phrases' as opposed to larger passages. These included Milton's *Poetical Works*, and the first volume of his *Prose Works*.⁵¹² Taylor presents this as evidence that 'Hardy was learning an entire vocabulary by way of Milton's'.⁵¹³

However, Hardy's annotations do not suggest an entirely simple interpretation. He marks Milton in many different ways and demonstrates a varied, repeated reading of the poetry. Taylor notes that Hardy's 1865 edition of Milton 'was read and carefully annotated at least twice, with earlier underlinings erased'.⁵¹⁴ Many of Hardy's marks in both the 1865 edition and the earlier 1864 edition are restricted to horizontal and vertical lines, though occasionally he breaks through his reserve (for instance, he writes 'Horrible!' next to Sin's description of her flight from Death). Some passages are marked which seem to point to an acknowledged shared preoccupation, in particular with ideas of freedom, suffering, and providence. Hardy often marks passages depicting chaos, and seems to admire Milton's descriptions of the visually obscure. Hardy marks vertically Satan's metamorphosis in Book X, making clear an interest in the scene. Other markings support Taylor's reading of the importance of the 'word as word'.⁵¹⁵ For instance, Hardy's underlinings in 'Lycidas' indicate a concern with poetic language, rather than plot. It is important, though, that these marks often follow a conceptual pattern, implying a response to Milton's ideas as well as his words.

⁵¹⁰ Taylor, p. 59.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., p. 50.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Ibid., p. 53.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid. Where I refer to Hardy's annotations in this chapter, I refer to either his marks in Milton's *Poetical Works* (London: Routledge, 1864) signed and dated 1865, or *Milton's Poetical Works* (Halifax: Milner & Sowerby, 1865), signed and dated 1866. Both are housed at the Dorset County Museum, Hardy Collection. Note that the second edition was read in the same year that Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* was published; Hardy 'read him as he came out', though he did not 'know him till many years after the *Poems and Ballads* year' (LL 163). Hardy's library also contains a copy of *Paradise Lost*, facsimile of the 1st edn (London: Elliot Stock, 1877) signed with no date. I include an image of the signed title page of this edition, partly as a demonstration of the affective power of marginalia; the sight of Hardy's name in his own hand so close to Milton's title is galvanizing (see Figure 15).

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., p. 52.

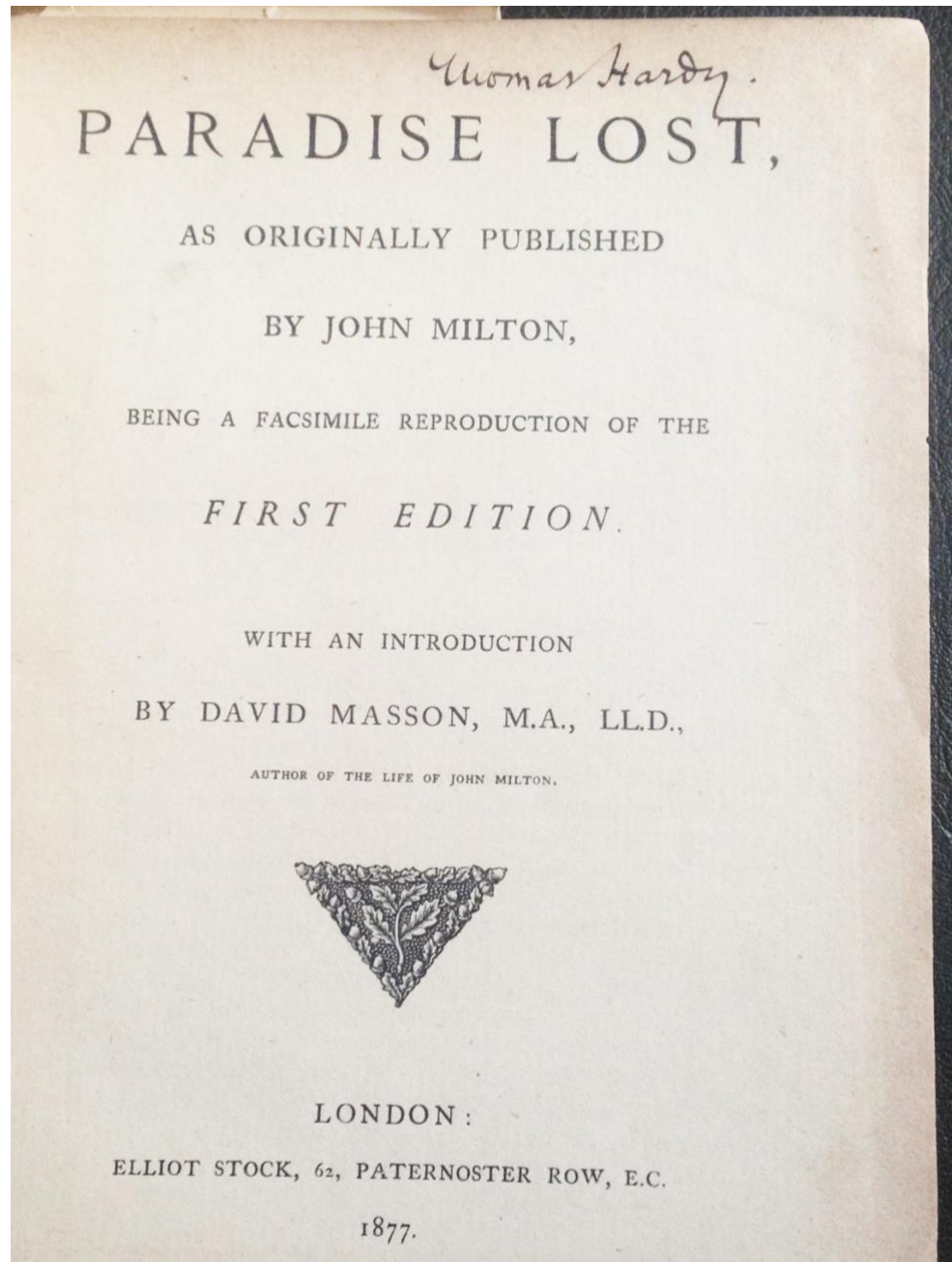


Figure 15. Hardy's signed 1877 edition of *Paradise Lost*.

Where Taylor has paid attention to Hardy's interest in the Miltonic 'word as word', other scholars have focused on shared conceptual concerns or thematic allusion. Joan Grundy identifies an array of allusions suggesting that Hardy both 'came to see himself as challenging the succession from Milton' and 'recognised their kinship'.⁵¹⁶ Karley Adney has expanded upon Grundy's comments on Hardy's use—in *Jude the Obscure*—of Milton's writings on divorce. There are countless other ways to write about Hardy and Milton, including the significance and use of music, architecture, and astronomy (the latter recently explored by

⁵¹⁶ Grundy, pp. 329–30.

Gillian Daw in work on the nineteenth-century astronomical imagination).⁵¹⁷ My approach brings together these methods of reading the Miltonic in Hardy. I suggest that we might think productively about Milton and Hardy by thinking thematically *and* at the level of ‘the word as word’. Hardy’s relationship with Milton is founded on an intense and repeated reading of Milton’s words in the very early years of his literary career (when he still considered himself a youth) and cemented in a long-standing ‘recogni[tion of] their kinship’ in a shared interest in temporal, topographical, and bodily edges.⁵¹⁸

I begin by addressing the Miltonic features of Hardy’s topography in his novel most concerned with environment, *The Return of the Native* (1878). Landscape, for both writers, is connected inherently to the figures that live within it. Consequently, this discussion of Wessex as engaging with the settings of *Paradise Lost* also deals with the relationship between character and landscape. Hardy’s use of spatial and temporal shifts is key for connecting the human to the non-human world, and I argue that this shifting perspective is both a Miltonic visual technique and a way of placing Hardy’s characters in relation to Milton’s. Hardy’s spatial shifts replicate the mutability of size in Milton’s universe (particularly that of his divine beings), and his temporal shifts reveal characters to be repeating a cyclical pattern of human behaviour which connects them to ‘our first parents’.

I consider Hardy’s use of Miltonic characters in the context of the sensation fiction of the 1860s and the Victorian conception of the ‘fallen woman’, in order to specify the particularities of Hardy’s use of Milton. Addressing Hardy’s apprenticeship in sensation fiction in his first published novel, *Desperate Remedies*, allows a division to be made between writing driven by Hardy’s idiosyncratic impulses and the demands made by his editors and the reading public. If we consider Hardy’s shifts in perspective to be key to his idiosyncratic style we can, perhaps paradoxically, see parallels with Milton in that idiosyncrasy.⁵¹⁹ In addressing a broader use of Miltonic characters in Victorian sensation fiction we can also reveal how Hardy both participates in, and makes perverse, a more common way of using Milton’s characters.

⁵¹⁷ “‘Dark with Excessive Light’: Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the Nineteenth-Century Astronomical Imagination”, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 37.2 (2015), 107–26.

⁵¹⁸ Hardy writes: ‘I was a child till I was 16; a youth till I was 25; a young man till I was 40 or 50’ (*LL* 179).

⁵¹⁹ Key readings of Hardy’s shifting perspectives can be found in Carol Reed Andersen, ‘Time, Space, and Perspective in Thomas Hardy’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 9.3 (1954), 192–208; J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970); and Gillian Beer, *Darwin’s Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

These connections are often revealed at liminal moments in Hardy's texts. A link can be seen between Hardy's use of Milton and the attention he pays to peripheral phenomena, particularly an attention to the edges of the body and landscape. His depictions of landscapes dwell on occurrences at the margins—both spatially and temporally—so that the Miltonic in Wessex is often revealed at the horizon, at dawn, or dusk. The second half of this chapter is largely concerned with the bodily edges in the form of the hand. By analysing Hardy's hands, which distinctly recall *Paradise Lost*, I reveal Hardy's engagement with Milton's text both conceptually and at the level of 'word as word'. Hardy perversely duplicates Milton's system of significant touch, and his use of hands proves a *deep* engagement with Milton that is made clear when contrasted with the history of Milton illustration. I consider a broader nineteenth-century concern with hands, in order to identify what is distinctive about Hardy's use of Miltonic hands.

In exploring Hardy's relationship with Milton, I will also tie together the various threads of thinking about Milton's Victorian presence that have emerged in previous chapters. Hardy's lifelong admiration of P. B. Shelley is often extended to his wife. Swinburne and Hardy are very clearly connected by Hardy's friendship with, and admiration of, Swinburne, commemorated in his 1910 elegy, 'A Singer Asleep'. The two 'laughed and condoled with each other on having been the two most abused of living writers', for Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* and Hardy's *Jude* (LL 112).⁵²⁰ Melville and Hardy are connected by the contour of their literary careers—both were made famous by their fiction, and after giving up due to harsh criticism (of Melville's *Pierre*, and Hardy's *Jude*) dedicated their later years to writing poetry.⁵²¹ Hardy is open in his admiration of Turner's late work, '(which I suppose is all wrong in taste)' (EL 117).⁵²² He writes on the watercolours that 'each is a landscape *plus* a man's soul' and the 'much decried, mad, late-Turner rendering [of nature] is now necessary to create my interest' (EL 283, 243). I suggest, however, that it is primarily in their use of the Miltonic that these nineteenth-century painters, poets and novelists can be brought together.

⁵²⁰ Hardy relates an anecdote of Swinburne's recollecting 'a paragraph he had seen in a Scottish paper: "Swinburne planteth, Hardy watereth, and Satan giveth the increase"' (LL 111).

⁵²¹ Delbanco, p. 4. Hardy's fiction can also be linked to the Miltonic vortical and labyrinthine patterns discussed in Chapter 2. Miller suggests in *Hardy* a reading of Hardy's lover as a replacement for the divine passive being at the centre of a whirling vortex, and Margaret Kolb suggests the figure of the labyrinth recurs in the veering footsteps of drunk or tired night-travellers in 'Plot Circles: Hardy's Drunkards and Their Walks', *Victorian Studies*, 56.4 (2014), 595–623.

⁵²² On Hardy and Turner see J. B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) and Ruth Bernard Yeazell, 'The Lighting Design of Hardy's Novels', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 64 (2009), 48–75.

Hardy's place at the end of this thesis is also supported by his particularly liminal position at the threshold of modernity. Much of the presence of the Miltonic in Hardy—as in the work of Shelley, Martin, Melville, Turner, and Swinburne—occurs at thresholds, or at margins. Hardy's writing is continually paying attention to events around edges: people appear as strange forms at the horizon; letters are lost under doormats; crucial meetings occur at dawn, or at dusk. Here I attend to some of these, and show that Milton's pervasive presence is most clear in these liminal moments, at the peripheries. Many of Hardy's female characters oscillate around the threshold between acceptable and unacceptable sexual practice (or their transgression of this boundary is somewhat ambiguous). The protagonist of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1981–2) is fallen, yet still defiantly labelled 'pure' by Hardy. In addition to (and perhaps because of) her identification with the figure of the 'Fallen Woman', Tess is explicitly compared with Eve in the text, and the relation is widely acknowledged by critics. Alan Brick has called *Tess* Hardy's devotion 'to the question of what fallen Adam and Eve may find to live by in Victorian England'.⁵²³ Whilst it is in *Tess* that Hardy makes the most overt connections to Eve, she is present in some form in almost all of his fiction, and many of the claims I make of *Tess* in this chapter are by no means restricted in their application to Hardy's penultimate novel. In *Two on a Tower* (1882) Lady Constantine confirms a broad identification of Eve with Hardy's women, remarking with regards to her pride: 'that which is called the Eve in us will out sometimes'.⁵²⁴ *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), too, is Miltonic, and involves one of Hardy's most conspicuous displays of *Paradise Lost* as one of only eight books that Gabriel Oak owns.⁵²⁵ It is nearly impossible to speak of one of the Wessex novels separately from the others, partly because the novels take place in a unified landscape.

MILTON'S WESSEX

For Hardy as for Milton, environment and subject are inextricably connected, so that the fall is not only mirrored in the landscape but materially alters it. Following the Fall in *Paradise Lost* 'Earth felt the wound' (IX. 782), whilst pathetic fallacy is so pervasive in Hardy's writing that it is a theme rather than technique.⁵²⁶ Though they do not begin as such, Hardy's novels

⁵²³ Brick, p. 116. See also Grundy, p. 300.

⁵²⁴ *Two on a Tower* (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 107.

⁵²⁵ *Far from the Madding Crowd*, ed. by Suzanne B. Falck-Yi (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 72.

⁵²⁶ '[Tess's] figure became an integral part of the scene. At times her whimsical fancy would intensify natural processes around her till they seemed part of her own story. Rather they became a part of it;

largely come to be enclosed in a common landscape, after a process of revision stretching into the twentieth century.⁵²⁷ This adds to the sense of both continuity and repetition; as Miller states, the Wessex novels 'are like variations on the same architectural plan'.⁵²⁸ The landscape within which the Fall is re-enacted is most dominant not in the farmland of *Tess* (traditionally the focus of Miltonists' critique of Hardy), but the heath of *The Return of the Native*. In both novels Wessex provides a backdrop resembling both a profuse Paradise and a Hell teeming with demonic life. Egdon Heath is 'farther from the madding crowd than ever', and surpasses mere setting to become an influential presence in *Return* (EL 162). John Paterson has said that 'its men and women are seldom equal after all to the sublime world they occupy'.⁵²⁹ The significance of the heath for a reading of the Miltonic in Hardy is primarily found in its bringing together Miltonic extremes into a 'transtemporal' landscape.⁵³⁰

Milton and Hardy have a shared concern with the beginnings of the world, which is embedded in this transtemporal topography. One evening around the time of the composition of *Return*, Hardy writes in his journal that 'the west is like some vast foundry where new worlds are being cast' (EL 155). This vision appears in the opening of the novel, which describes the Heath ablaze on November fifth, a landscape at once illuminated by fire and suggesting 'the lightless underworld of the ancients'.⁵³¹ The scene recalls Dante's *Inferno*:

The whole black phenomenon beneath represented Limbo as viewed from the brink by the sublime Florentine in his vision, and the muttered articulations of the wind in the hollows were as complaints and petitions from the 'souls of mighty worth' suspended therein.⁵³²

At this early point in the novel the Heath is aligned with not just Dante's vision of Hell, but specifically Limbo, the place 'inhabited by the otherwise great and good but [...] inevitably unbaptized'.⁵³³ The suffering that occurs in Limbo does not result from transgression, but

for the world is only a psychological phenomenon, and what they seemed they were.' Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (London: Vintage, 2011), p. 101. Further references to this edition will be given parenthetically in the text. On Hardy's use of 'pathetic fallacy' see Maxwell, *Second Sight*, pp. 208–09.

⁵²⁷ See Simon Gatrell, 'Wessex', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Dale Kramer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 19–37.

⁵²⁸ Hardy, p. 207.

⁵²⁹ 'An Attempt at Grand Tragedy' in *Thomas Hardy: The Tragic Novels*, ed. by R. P. Draper, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 109–18 (p. 109).

⁵³⁰ Miller's commentary on the poem 'On High Stoy Hill' applies more broadly to Hardy's oeuvre: 'The landscape seems to be transtemporal. It contains past, present, and future [...]. In this transtemporal region each thing which has happened, is happening, or will happen stands side by side with all the others, each like the others in kind, all in permanently clarified juxtaposition forever' (Hardy, p. 229).

⁵³¹ Paterson, p. 112.

⁵³² Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, ed. by Simon Gatrell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 20. Further references to this edition will be given parenthetically in the text.

⁵³³ Tony Slade, ed., *The Return of the Native*, (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 399.

through the unavoidable sin of circumstantial ignorance. The scene also prompts a connection to Satan looking into Chaos: 'Into this wild abyss the wary fiend | Stood on the brink of hell and looked a while' (ll. 917–18). At various points throughout Hardy's oeuvre Wessex is viewed from the edges in this way; figures stand with a prospect over 'the wild abyss' or the garden of Eden from its walls, in a way that recalls Satan as both voyager and voyeur. Hardy acknowledges the Miltonic nature of this voyeurism, where liminality and vision come together, in the opening chapters of *Far from the Madding Crowd* where Gabriel Oak looks upon Bathsheba through a wall. He gazes upon her through a crack, 'her position being almost beneath his eye, so that he saw her in a bird's eye view, as Milton's Satan first saw Paradise'.⁵³⁴

The blazing beginning of *Return* prepares the stage for the appearance of Eustacia, who is presented variously as a pagan witch, a classical divinity, an Eve-like figure, or Satanic-tragic hero. Eustacia's wild protestation against Heaven recalls the frustration of Milton's Satan atop Mount Niphates, and reveals the Heath to be a place of torment:

O the cruelty of putting me into this imperfect, ill-conceived world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and crushed by things beyond my control! O how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me. (346)

Eustacia's shifting identification—between divinity and devil—is an instance of Hardy's tendency to play with gender roles. As Linda M. Shires writes, 'his texts award and deny power of differing kinds to both sexes unpredictably'.⁵³⁵ This is especially present in *Return*, most clearly in the mumming scene discussed below. The different kinds of power that Eustacia is awarded can be thought about in Miltonic terms, as although she is seldom the submissive Eve, she is often the *ambitious* Eve, and at times the voyeuristic Satan.

Eustacia's oscillating identity as both Satanic anti-hero and Eve-like transgressor is also mirrored in the shifting Miltonic state of the landscape. Victor Hugo wrote that in *Paradise Lost* Milton aimed to create 'a whole world: my own Heaven, my own Hell, my own Earth' and Hardy's landscapes are a combination of all three.⁵³⁶ (Recall the *Observer* review of Martin's Fall of Babylon, which states that it 'embraces all the requisites of its subject, having a beginning, a middle, and an end'.)⁵³⁷ Egdon Heath shifts between Heaven, Hell, and Earth, containing 'a whole world' simultaneously enclosed and infinite in the mystical core of Wessex. Through presenting a mixed landscape with both divine and earthly, pre- and

⁵³⁴ *Far from the Madding Crowd*, p. 19. See also Bullen, p. 71.

⁵³⁵ 'Narrative, Gender, and Power in *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 24.2 (1991), 162–77 (p. 164).

⁵³⁶ Extract from *Cromwell* (1827), trans. by Teskey, in *Paradise Lost*, p. 397.

⁵³⁷ *Observer* (8 Feb 1819), quoted in Myrone and Austen, p. 97.

postlapsarian characteristics, Wessex provides for its inhabitants the knowledge that they exist in an already Fallen world along with the promise of a series of Falls to come.

In prelapsarian *Paradise Lost*, too, the Fall-to-come is present. Evidence of seasonal change disrupting the ‘eternal spring’ of Milton’s paradise surfaces when Raphael speaks to Adam of the annual migration of birds, in a world where birds would have no reason to seek out warmer climes. John Leonard, among others, deems this an unsolvable problem, only comprehensible as a sign that the Fall has either already begun or is unavoidably imminent.⁵³⁸ We might think again of the future fall contained in Milton’s use of the word ‘error’. In Wessex, the intensity of the seasons marks the landscape as a fallen world where severe weather is fatal—seasonal changes only occur in a fallen world, and the intensity of these changes in Wessex marks it out as paradoxically Edenic but not prelapsarian. The seasons in Hardy recall the ‘fierce extremes’ (ll. 599) of Milton’s Hell (a phrase that Hardy marks in the 1865 *Poetical Works*). We might think of *The Woodlanders*, in which Giles Winterborne, despite being ‘winter – borne’, does not survive exposure to the bitter weather.

In summer Wessex is much closer to Hell. In *Return* Mrs Yeobright is exhausted by the heat, walking across the heath where ‘every valley [is] filled with air like that of a kiln’ (266). It is in this unforgiving landscape that she dies from the bite of a snake. The description of the snake is striking:

The live adder regarded the assembled group with a sinister look in its small black eye, and the beautiful brown and jet pattern on its back seemed to intensify with indignation. Mrs. Yeobright saw the creature, and the creature saw her: she quivered throughout, and averted her eyes. (285)

In the snake’s mirrored ‘seeing’ of Mrs Yeobright there is an uncanny, Satanic intelligence, and its ‘beautiful’ markings give the serpent an attraction that seems unfitting with the crime it commits. The rustic Christian Cantle senses a connection to the biblical serpent, and asks ‘how do we know but that something of the old serpent in God’s garden, that gied the apple to the young woman with no clothes, lives on in adders and snakes still?’ (285).⁵³⁹

On this final journey, Mrs Yeobright gazes on the multitudes of minuscule worlds which surround her:

So she went on, the air around her pulsating silently, and oppressing the earth with lassitude. She looked at the sky overhead, and saw that the sappherine hue of the zenith in spring and early summer had completely gone, and was replaced by a

⁵³⁸ Leonard, pp. 543–44, 809.

⁵³⁹ It is worth noting in light of the discussion of the Miltonic maze in Chapter 2 that Mrs Yeobright’s journey fits the scheme of a journey through a labyrinth: she ‘had never before been to her son’s house, and its exact position was unknown to her. She tried one ascending path, and another, and found that they led her astray’ (267).

metallic violet. [...] Occasionally she came to a spot where independent worlds of ephemerals were passing their time in mad carousal, some in the air, some on the hot ground and vegetation, some in the tepid and stringy water of a nearly-dried pool. All the shallower ponds had decreased to a vaporous mud, amid which the maggoty shapes of innumerable obscene creatures could be indistinctly seen, heaving and wallowing with enjoyment. (266–67)⁵⁴⁰

Hardy's description of this scene as Mrs Yeobright views it from above (again, a voyager and voyeur looking over a prospect)—'maggoty shapes', 'obscene creatures', 'heaving' and 'wallowing'—creates a Hell in miniature. These small, alien creatures are only seen 'indistinctly' as mere 'shapes'. We might see here an echo of Milton's celebrated portrait of Death: 'The other shape | If shape it might be called that shape had none | Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb, | Or substance might be called that shadow seemed' (ll. 666–69). (Hardy marks 'if shape it might be called that shape had none' in 1866, again demonstrating a predilection for the Miltonic obscure.) More than this, though, the passage recalls Milton's description of the rebel angels in Hell:

Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring time, when the sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters; [...]
So thick the airy crowd
Swarmed and were straitened; till the signal given,
Behold a wonder! they but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless. (l. 767–80)

The 'hiss' of the wings here looks forward to the scene in which the whole host of Hell is turned into snakes, not seen by Satan at first, but heard. Similarly, Mrs Yeobright's attention to the obscene insect world prefigures her fatal encounter with the snake, which ruptures the division between herself and the natural world she observes.

In the 1864 edition of Milton's *Poetical Works* Hardy marks two passages that depict Milton's rebel angels as insects and giants, shifting in size, swarming and repulsive: 'in bigness to surpass Earth's sons | Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room', as well as the earlier lines 'pitchy cloud of locusts [...] numberless were those bad angels seen' (l. 340–44). We might think, too, of the moment in Book III where, after having heard so much about

⁵⁴⁰ This is a scene mirrored in many of Hardy's novels, beginning with *Desperate Remedies* where Aeneas Manston looks into a rain-water-butt: 'Hundreds of thousands of minute living creatures sported and tumbled in its depth with every contortion that gaiety could suggest; perfectly happy, though consisting only of a head, or a tail, or at most a head and a tail, and all doomed to die within the twenty-four hours' (p. 209).

Satan's great size (his hugeness conveyed through comparison to Leviathan and other great sea serpents) we see him from the viewpoint of God: as a speck 'Coasting the wall of heaven' (III. 71). These shifts in *Paradise Lost* reveal size to be relative, and Hardy's interest in these passages is unsurprising considering his repeated focus on swarming ephemeral multitudes as part of a broader system of radically shifting perspective. This grappling with spatial and temporal scale is one of the primary guiding principles of his work, made clear in the oft-quoted note in Hardy's journal from 1865: 'To insects the twelvemonth has been an epoch, to leaves a life, to tweeting birds a generation, to man a year' (*EL* 72). This statement lies at the centre of a fiction which often moves spatially between the world of insects, leaves, birds and men, and even beyond 'the mysterious outskirts of the solar system'.⁵⁴¹ The importance to Hardy of the relation between man and insect is reiterated in another journal entry: 'I sit under a tree, and feel alone: I think of certain insects around me as magnified by the microscope: creatures like elephants, flying dragons, etc. And I feel I am by no means alone' (*EL* 141). Even in this imagined vision of the insects around him magnified, Hardy is playing with perspective: the minute organisms are envisioned as *large* creatures, 'elephants' and 'dragons'.

Carol Reed Andersen has identified 'the unique quality' of Hardy's novels as the metaphorically rendered theme that 'involves a view of life in which man's emotional reaction to the inevitable frustration of his desires is perceived in a large and shifting perspective of time and space'.⁵⁴² Spatially, this shifting perspective is a movement between the scale of landscape, the scale of species, the scale of the individual human, and the scale of microscopic insect life. Temporally, it is a movement between present and distant past, both geographical and anthropocentric. These are recognizable marks of Hardy's writing throughout his oeuvre. Andersen writes that:

By this means, the characters are not only enlarged to stand for all men's repetitious fates, but they are also personally minimized by their placement in the vast current of time. [...] The plot itself is universalized by the use of metaphors to place it in a context of all the world's time and all the world's space.⁵⁴³

Through this unceasing veering between dimensions, Hardy's protagonists are at once universalised—made to 'stand for all men's repetitious fates'—and made insignificant, placed in perspective against the history of human and nonhuman time. It is in the persistent use of this technique that Hardy's women, primarily Tess, are linked most intensely with Eve, in a

⁵⁴¹ *Two on a Tower*, p. 33.

⁵⁴² Andersen, p. 195.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 208, 196.

ubiquitous way that surpasses overt allusions littered throughout the novels.⁵⁴⁴ It points to the Fall as something that is re-lived in each lifetime, with new Adams, new Eves, and new Satans playing their roles in re-enacting it. This approach to temporality draws on Milton in a way that is comparable to Shelley's approach in *The Last Man*, a novel that, as I have demonstrated, involves an elusive temporality in which the present might be just a repetition of the past.

This shifting perspective is linked to the Miltonic in Hardy, as Miltonists also recognise its centrality to his poetry, and it is often expressed in terms of the 'protocinematic'. Most recently Eric Brown has written on what could be considered either the 'cinematic qualities of Milton's verse, or the Miltonic qualities of the cinema'.⁵⁴⁵ Brown suggests that Milton 'anticipated and cultivated' cinematic technique in combining 'panoramic expansiveness' with 'rapid' movement 'between multiple perspectives'.⁵⁴⁶ Miklós Péti, too, has recently written on Milton's 'rapid oscillation of perspectives' moving between 'the panoramic [and] the closely focused'.⁵⁴⁷ It is not hard to see how this cinematic reading of Milton bears similarities to Hardy's visual techniques, as David Lodge calls Hardy 'remarkably "cinematic" [...] both in the way he describes landscape and in the way he deploys his human figures against it'.⁵⁴⁸ However, Miller has pointed out that Hardy's temporality moves *beyond* the capabilities of cinema as we know it, in a close-reading of a scene from *Far from the Madding Crowd*:

his focusing of the point of view, however, is qualified by language which gives the reader a temporal perspective on the barn which no physical vision, cinema, or stage set could provide. The barn as it presently looks is placed in the context of the mind's knowledge of its four centuries of existence.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁴ Hardy's thinking about deep time, argues Beer, has much to do with Darwin, who, as I discussed in the introduction, drew on Milton in his thinking about profusion and in questions of 'how much could survive, how much could be held in common and in continuity from the past' (Beer, p. 32). Hardy and Darwin are connected by a shared insistence 'on repetition as a basic organisation for all experience within the natural order' (p. 229).

⁵⁴⁵ Eric C. Brown, *Milton on Film* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2015), p. 18.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁴⁷ 'A Heap of Broken Images or, Why Milton Is an Iconoclast?', *Classical Receptions Journal*, 6.2 (2014) 270–93, (pp. 275–76). Péti argues for a cinematic reading of Milton's epic similes, which discusses 'after Eisenstein, Milton's montage technique' (p. 277). See Luisa Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: Turning Readers into Spectators* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) for a consideration of how 'Eisenstein helps us read Milton visually' (p. 4).

⁵⁴⁸ 'Thomas Hardy and Cinematographic Form', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 7 (1974), 246–54 (p. 249). See also Beer, who writes that 'Hardy like Darwin places himself in his texts as observer, traveller, a conditional presence capable of seeing things from multiple distances and diverse perspectives almost in the same moment' (p. 230).

⁵⁴⁹ *Hardy*, p. 60. Acknowledging similar difficulties in Milton, Brown's project also explores the *impossibility* of a cinematic adaptation of *Paradise Lost*.

Still, the ‘protocinematic’ can be useful to us in bringing together commentary on the spatiotemporal shifts of both writers. That this consideration of perspective and scale is particularly Miltonic can be confirmed in the writing of nineteenth-century critics (who are, therefore, writing without the frame of the cinematic). Samuel Taylor Coleridge is concerned with Milton’s temporal scale, writing of *Paradise Lost* that ‘it and it alone really possesses the Beginning, Middle, and End—the totality of a Poem or circle as distinguished from the ab ovo birth, parentage, &c or strait line of History’.⁵⁵⁰ What Hardy likewise presents us with is not ‘the strait line of History’ but the ‘circle’ of human fallibility in its totality, through the simultaneous deterioration of the innocent, falling and fallen so that ‘perspective in Hardy is a peculiar sense of the concurrence of past and present’, where “‘now”, “yesterday,” and “long ago” [are] verging on each other, interpenetrating, and losing their sharp outlines’.⁵⁵¹ We can see a reflection of this in Hugo’s similarly tripartite statement that Milton wrote to create ‘a whole world’ containing Heaven, Hell, and Earth.⁵⁵²

In Hardy’s Wessex, then, the Fall has left its mark on both the landscape and its inhabitants. However, the Fall is also always re-occurring on an individual scale. The combination of Hardy’s presentation of time as cyclical, and his pervasive engagement with Milton’s *Paradise Lost* in constructing landscape and his characters’ conceptions of themselves, produces a vision of the Fall, and particularly *Eve’s* fall, repeated time and again in the lives of her Wessex daughters. As Miller writes, ‘The idea of a present which is a repetition or reincarnation of the past recurs through [*Tess*] like a refrain with many variations’.⁵⁵³ We are made aware of this reincarnation—the repetitious circularity of human experience—most powerfully by Tess herself, who produces the most striking meditations upon her place in a recurring system of suffering.⁵⁵⁴ Most memorable of these temporal ruminations is the passage in which Tess thinks of the unrecognised annual passing of the anniversary of her own death:

She suddenly thought one afternoon, when looking in the glass at her fairness, that there was yet another date, of greater importance to her than those; that of her own death, when all these charms would have disappeared; a day which lay sly and unseen among all the other days of the year, giving no sign or sound when she annually

⁵⁵⁰ ‘Lecture on Milton and the *Paradise Lost*. 4 March, 1819’, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by R. A. Foakes, 16 vols (Princeton, NJ; London: Princeton University Press; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), v. II, 385–91 (p. 389).

⁵⁵¹ Andersen, pp. 202–03.

⁵⁵² Hugo, trans. by Teskey, *Paradise Lost*, p. 397.

⁵⁵³ *Hardy*, p. 102.

⁵⁵⁴ This cyclical existence by no means restricted to *Tess*, and is most overt in *The Well-Beloved* (1897), in which the cycle is represented within three generations of women all named Avice.

passed over it; but not the less surely there. When was it? Why did she not feel the chill of each yearly encounter with such a cold relation? (116–17)

We witness Tess's uncanny preoccupation with her future, almost an awareness of her fictional existence and the fate laid out in the numbered pages ahead of her:

you seem to see numbers of tomorrows just all in line, the first of them the biggest and the clearest, the others getting smaller and smaller as they stand farther away; but they all seem very fierce and cruel and as if they said, "I'm coming! Beware of me! Beware of me!" (146)

As well as looking forward like this, to the day of her own death and the 'fierce and cruel' 'tomorrows just all in a line', Tess comprehends her own experiences as repetitions of the past. Consequently she is averse to learning more about the d'Urberville line, which is 'so unusually old as to have almost gone round the circle and become a new one' (150):

Because what's the use of learning that I am one of a long row only – finding out that there is set down in some old book somebody just like me, and to know that I shall only act her part; making me sad, that's all. The best is not to remember that your nature and your past doings have been just like thousands' and thousands', and that your coming life and doings'll be like thousands' and thousands'. (149)

Though the hypothetical 'old book' Tess refers to is a record of the d'Urberville family, it might just as easily be the Bible or *Paradise Lost*, with Tess ordained to play the part of Eve, who she recognises as 'somebody just like me', acknowledging that she 'shall only act her part'.

Tess also sees in the future the suffering to be visited on an imagined line of descendants, so that the most powerful reason for Tess and Angel to separate is their concern for 'the future of other people than ourselves' (285). She resists the idea of extending the line of tragedy inherited from her ancestors. The scene recalls the darkest of Eve's speeches in *Paradise Lost*, when she suggests to Adam after the Fall that to avoid the suffering of their offspring they should seek out death themselves:

Then both ourselves and seed at once to free
From what we fear for both, let us make short,
Let us seek death, or he not found, supply
With our own hands his office on ourselves. (x. 999–1002)

SENSATION FICTION AND THE MYTH OF THE FALLEN WOMAN

In identifying Tess with Eve, it is useful to ask whether this Miltonic characterisation is applicable not just to Hardy's writing but also to that of his contemporaries, as many of the echoes of Milton within Hardy's novels are related to broader concerns about women's

sexuality and sexual history in late Victorian fiction. Particularly in sensation fiction—and in painting associated with the themes of sensation fiction—the potentially Miltonic roles of the ‘fallen woman’ and ‘the seducer’ are played out.

Hardy’s relationship to sensation fiction is by no means simple. He says of the ‘powerfully, not to say wildly, melodramatic situations’ in his first published novel *Desperate Remedies* that they were ‘concocted in a style which was quite against his natural grain’ (EL 112). A contemporary reviewer suggested this debut was ‘a desperate remedy for an emaciated purse’ (EL 111). Hardy blames the faults of *Desperate Remedies*, at least partially, on the advice given by George Meredith to write a novel ‘with a more complicated plot’, which he understood ‘to mean that he should attempt a popular sensation novel’.⁵⁵⁵ Lawrence O. Jones has identified in the novel dual impulses, arising because of the conditions of its creation: those of Hardy’s artistic inclinations versus those ‘demands of the conventional genre’, its engagements with which have been read as ‘verging on the parodic’.⁵⁵⁶ These generic demands could be listed very roughly as follows: a morally just universe in which goodness is rewarded and sinfulness punished; recurring conventional character ‘types’; mystery and secrets, or ‘withholding information rather than divulging it’; ‘patently outlandish plot devices’ that form, as Hardy writes, ‘an intricate puzzle which nobody should guess till the end’.⁵⁵⁷ After *Desperate Remedies* Hardy pulls away from this plot-driven model of writing and the moral orthodoxy of the sensation novel, though there is much present in this first novel that remains in the later works.⁵⁵⁸ A sense of the demands of the reading public certainly stays with Hardy, haunting his career in fiction-writing, and eventually contributing to its end.

I am suggesting that thinking about Hardy’s relationship with sensation fiction can be useful in turn for understanding his relationship with Milton. Considering Hardy’s early apprenticeship in sensation fiction reveals that the dual impulse that Jones sees in his early fiction still exists in the later works (admittedly in more subtle ways). In the work produced as a result of both of these drives we can see the Miltonic at work, and so can identify Hardy’s interest in Milton as formative in both his artistic idiosyncrasies, and in his development of

⁵⁵⁵ Lawrence O. Jones, ‘*Desperate Remedies* and the Victorian Sensation Novel’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 20 (1965), 35–50 (p. 37).

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.; Walter M. Kendrick, ‘The Sensationalism of Thomas Hardy’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 22 (1980), 484–503 (p. 490).

⁵⁵⁷ Patrick Brantlinger, ‘What Is “Sensational” About the “Sensation Novel”?’’, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 37.1 (1982), 1–28 (p. 2); Kendrick, ‘Sensationalism’, p. 486; 1871 letter quoted in Kendrick, p. 487.

⁵⁵⁸ Moral orthodoxy is not always adhered to in works typifying the genre, but as Brantlinger points out ‘the subversive qualities of novels like *Lady Audley’s Secret* are not overt’ (p. 5).

ways of *appearing* to satisfy the demands of a family-oriented reading public. Above, I have discussed the former in the relation of the Miltonic to Hardy's shifts in spatiotemporal perspective. Below, I will consider Hardy's development of a tendency in sensation fiction to identify characters with Miltonic figures: the sympathetic villain (Satan), the woman who is tempted (prelapsarian Eve), the beloved man of learning (Adam), and the fallen woman (postlapsarian Eve).

Another feature of Hardy's writing that arguably finds basis in sensation fiction is his concern with the grand effects of the trivial. In Ellen Wood's 1861 sensation novel *East Lynne*, she writes:

It is curious, nay, appalling, to trace the thread in a human life; how the most trivial occurrences lead to the great events of existence, bringing forth happiness or misery, weal or woe.⁵⁵⁹

Wood offers a reflection on the way the genre is heavily invested in the grand consequences of small actions and the mapping of connections between each 'trivial occurrence' and its subsequent 'great event'. I will go on to discuss below the ways in which Hardy's writing responds to *Paradise Lost* as an epic built around a mere 'trivial occurrence' with 'grand consequences', bringing forward both 'happiness' and 'woe'. Hardy's use of the trivial and the grand, in contrast, more often brings forth misery: letters go undelivered, accidents set off a chain of events which end tragically. I show that Hardy and Milton have a somewhat paradoxical *shared idiosyncrasy* in a common use of trivial moments of hand-touching and hand-holding. These moments in which the trivial is made important are found throughout Hardy's work, but particularly in *Return* and *Tess*.

Paradise Lost is vital to broader Victorian concerns about temptation and the consequences of seduction, most commonly played out in sensation fiction and popular Victorian painting. Milton's Eve is, in Nina Auerbach's words, the 'literary archetype [for] the Victorian myth of the fallen woman' as it appears in the literature and art of the nineteenth century.⁵⁶⁰ The fallen woman is a woman imagined to have succumbed to seduction, or to have experienced sexuality outside the appropriate confines of marriage. The myth appeals to the original seduction as a warning against temptation. Hardy's use of Miltonic characters can then be seen to engage with broader nineteenth-century narratives of sexuality and morality and it is useful to explore these narratives in order to place Hardy

⁵⁵⁹ *East Lynne*, ed. by Elisabeth Jay (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 116. Further references to this edition will be given parenthetically in the text.

⁵⁶⁰ Nina Auerbach, 'The Rise of the Fallen Woman', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 35.1 (1980), 29–52 (p. 29).

in relation to them. Lynda Nead recently curated an exhibition at London's Foundling Museum, which engaged with the 'myth and reality of the 'fallen woman' in Victorian Britain', in painting and popular culture.⁵⁶¹ This included Richard Redgrave's 1851 oil painting 'The Outcast', which depicts a mother and child being sent out of the family home by a father figure while the rest of the family looks on, distraught (see Figure 16). Another woman pleads, presumably to let the pair stay. The room is painted in warm tones, in sharp contrast with the black night without, and the white snowdrift stealing in at the door. The caption reads 'the fall is literally enacted as the expulsion from the paradise of the family home into the dangers of the outside world', distinctly connecting the plight of the 'fallen woman' and the story of Eve's fall, and making the woman's fall an expulsion from the Eden of Victorian family life. The seducer, we will see, is often created in the image of Milton's Satan, whilst the 'Fallen Woman'—the seduced—is recreated time and time again in the image of Eve.



Figure 16. Richard Redgrave, *The Outcast*, 1851.

⁵⁶¹ 'The Fallen Woman Exhibition', *Foundling Museum*
 <<http://foundlingmuseum.org.uk/events/fallen-woman/>> [accessed 10 May 2017]. The exhibition took place from 25 September 2015 to 3 January 2016.

Milton himself appears at strange moments in Victorian sensation fiction. In Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) he almost literally haunts the text, appearing as the mere possibility of a ghost:

Fleet street was quiet and lonely at this late hour, and Robert Audley being in a ghost-seeing mood would have been scarcely astonished had he seen Johnson's set come roistering westward in the lamplight, or blind John Milton groping his way down the steps before Saint Bride's church.⁵⁶²

Milton's name had been mentioned earlier in the text, in an allusion to Thomas Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' where Sir Michael Audley's mistakes Robert's 'laziness for incapacity':

He forgot the mute inglorious Miltons who die voiceless and inarticulate for want of that dogged perseverance, that blind courage, which the poet must possess before he can find a publisher; [...] Surely it is a mistake to judge of what a man can do by that which he has done.⁵⁶³

Neither of these instances recalls Milton directly; in both he lingers at a remove, he is not-quite-there. Robert does *not* see the ghost of Milton 'groping his way down the steps', but 'would have been scarcely astonished' to have witnessed such a sight. His uncle does not think of Milton, but rather *forgets to think* of Gray's 'mute inglorious Miltons' who might be compared with him if not for their lack of 'blind courage'.

East Lynne reveals a less phantasmal Miltonic presence, as its characters are firmly founded in the central figures of *Paradise Lost*. From the beginning, we are prompted to think of Wood's characters in terms of divinity or prelapsarian being: when Mr Carlyle first views Isabel Vane, he is 'not quite sure whether it was a human being: he almost thought it more like an angel' (11); when Barbara Hare is introduced two chapters later, Carlyle takes her hand and walks with her through her garden to the family home, and she 'felt that she was in Eden' (24). We will see later that Hardy's characters also often share this feeling. Isabel and Barbara both begin as prelapsarian Eves, but Isabel will go on to resemble fallen Eve, suffering for her sins as the flawed heroines of sensation fiction must. In chapters 45 to 47 of *East Lynne*, Wood maps the development of her villain, Captain Levison, onto the blueprint laid by Milton's Satan. These consecutive chapters can be read as a triad of Satanic degeneration, reflecting at once the generic tendency of sensation fiction to imitate Miltonic characterisation, and the perspective of Victorian Milton criticism.

⁵⁶² *Lady Audley's Secret* (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 436.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

Leonard has noted that a significant change in interpretations of Milton's Satan occurs in the Victorian period. In the second half of the nineteenth century, 'for the first time, critics argue for Satan's progressive moral degeneration'.⁵⁶⁴ Leonard summarises this shift in thinking, which is closely linked to Satan's shape-shifting:

Victorian critics distinguish the hero of the early books from the toad and serpent of the later ones. Shelley had noted the general contours of this deterioration, but he had seen God, not Satan, as its author and had admired Satan for resisting the process that God unjustly imposes. In the second half of the nineteenth century, critics come to hold Satan accountable for his degeneration.⁵⁶⁵

Leonard claims that this conversation around Satan's 'degeneration' seems to begin with David Masson, the preeminent Victorian biographer of Milton, who is 'the first critic to use the word 'degenerate' of Satan'.⁵⁶⁶ He also draws attention to the commentary of Edwin Paxton Hood, who locates 'the decisive moment' for readers of *Paradise Lost*—the moment in which we can disavow any 'false sympathies' we may have 'indulged' ourselves—in the sight of Satan 'Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve' (IV. 800):⁵⁶⁷

Surely this redeems us from our fallen homage. This toad, the prince of many throned powers! and all of disguises in this! ... This is a noble stroke for the imagination! It relieves us from those false sympathies in which we had too precipitately indulged.⁵⁶⁸

It is Stopford A. Brooke, however, who could claim to be 'the first critic to develop a coherent case for "the degradation of Satan"' in *Milton* (1879), where 'degradation' is, like 'degeneration', a gradual loss of physical, mental, and moral power: 'Satan's "history", he writes, "is that of a person in process of degrading"'.⁵⁶⁹ The matter of Satan's sequential degeneration in *Paradise Lost*, linked to his amphibious shape-shifting, can then be considered of particular interest to Milton's readers during the second half of the nineteenth century.

In *East Lynne*, we can see how this critical reading of Satan's degeneration is mirrored in popular fiction. When Wood's villain Captain Levison unwisely stands against his rival Carlyle in a local election, Carlyle's response to the challenge is 'to take no more heed of him, than I should of the dirt under my feet' (459). His overbearing elder sister replies: 'Good. You bear on, upon your course; and let him crawl on, upon his. Take no more heed of him

⁵⁶⁴ Leonard, p. 422.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 425.

⁵⁶⁷ Empson's comment on this moment is worth repeating: 'Satan is as beautiful as his creator can make him; you are not to think there is anything low about him even in disguise. Probably he made a very fine toad' (*Versions*, p. 143).

⁵⁶⁸ *John Milton: The Patriot and the Poet* (London: 1852), pp. 173–4, quoted in Leonard, p. 424.

⁵⁶⁹ Leonard, p. 429. Leonard adds that Wordsworth had also noted that Satan 'degrades', but, like Shelley, says that the source of this degradation is God, not Satan.

than if he were a viper'. Carlyle's extreme decency is reiterated time and again in his reluctance to publicly punish Levison. The parallel drawn is between Carlyle and Adam or Christ—and Levison with the biblical Serpent or Milton's serpentine Satan—as this passage clearly recalls the biblical image of the serpent crushed by the heel of man and Christ (Genesis 3:15, Luke 10:19, *PL* XII. 430–35). However, Carlyle's mercy seems to surpass the retribution of Adam/Christ, since instead of crushing the serpent with his heel, Carlyle 'let[s] him crawl on'.

In the following chapter, the link between Levison and Satan's degeneration is drawn even more fully and made more specifically Miltonic. Levison is thrown into a pond by supporters of the opposition and appears as an amphibian, surrounded by other 'adders and toads and frogs':

On, to the brink of the pond: a green, dank, dark, slimy, sour, stinking pond. His coat-tails were gone by this time, and sundry rents and damages appeared in—in another useful garment. One pulled him, another pushed him, a third shook him by the collar, half a dozen buffeted him, and all abused him. [...] A souse, a splash, a wild cry, a gurgle, and Sir Francis Levison was floundering in the water, its green poison, not to mention its adders and toads and frogs, going down his throat by bucketsful. (466)

Levison is thrown in amongst his kind in this scene (by a crowd which goes on to 'dance the demon's dance' around him), which draws on the earlier comparison of Levison with the viper (466). Levison appears more toad than snake, 'floundering' with the clumsy motions of the amphibian rather than the smooth movements of the serpent (recall Milton's Satan who 'leading swiftly rolled | In tangles, and made intricate seem straight, | To mischief swift', IX. 631–33). As if to confirm this Miltonic identification, the description of the pond itself ('green, dank, dark, slimy, sour') mirrors Satan's surroundings, as it follows the monosyllabic rhythm of Milton's description of the regions of Hell as 'Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death' (II. 621).

Levison's Satanic nature is subsequently solidified as we see him not only as despicable, but pathetic. The villains of sensation fiction, much in the vein of Milton's Satan, often evoke a qualified sympathy. Wood writes that on his escape:

The soaked and miserable man increased his speed as much as his cold and trembling legs would allow him; he would have borne on without legs at all, rather than remain under the enemy's gaze. (468)

Levison then has some desire to go on 'without legs at all', to be reduced from man to snake, 'rather than remain under the enemy's gaze', displaying a misdirected pride certainly comparable with that of Milton's Satan. Importantly, in line with Victorian criticism, he is

prompted by his *own* desire rather than as part of God's punishment. Levison seems to enact the moment when Satan's 'arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining | Each other, till supplanted down he fell | A monstrous serpent on his belly prone' (x. 512–14). In the third chapter, he appears to have regained some of his dignity when he is depicted giving a speech to a large crowd:

They stood there one afternoon, the eloquence of Sir Francis in full play (but he was a shocking speaker), and the crowd, laughing, hissing, groaning, and applauding, blocking up the road. Sir Francis could not complain of one thing—that he got no audience. For it was the pleasure of West Lynne extensively to support him in that respect: a few to cheer, a great many to jeer and hiss. (475)

However, his audience here is revealed to be a large hissing mass and their tendency to 'hiss' is enforced by its repetition. The scene recalls the crowd that greets Satan upon his triumphant return to Hell, where, after detailing his victory, he stands:

expecting
Their universal shout and high applause
To fill his ear, when contrary he hears
On all sides, from innumerable tongues
A dismal universal hiss, the sound
Of public scorn. (x. 504–09)

Levison is represented in these three chapters as repeatedly connected to Milton's Satan in both his moral and physical degeneration.

I have demonstrated that Wood's archetypal sensation novel utilises the central figures of *Paradise Lost* in its characterisation. In sensation fiction more broadly, the seducer is Satanic, whilst the seduced appears in the image of Eve. Perhaps, then, awareness of this convention—recognition of the pervasiveness of the figures of *Paradise Lost* in Victorian culture—diminishes the reader's critical impulse to explain the complexities of the presence of Adam, Eve, and Satan in Hardy's fiction. To revivify this impulse, then; how does Hardy's use of Miltonic characters diverge from this generic tradition? He responds at once to the way that texts like *East Lynne* use Miltonic characters, and to the use of the biographical Milton in texts like Eliot's *Middlemarch*.⁵⁷⁰ When we *do* pay attention to the explicit Miltonic allusions in Hardy's *Tess* a pattern emerges: often the moments in which Miltonic figures are mentioned directly in *Tess* are in dialogue or interactions between the characters. In a review of Gray's *Milton and the Victorians*, responding to Gray's reading of the Miltonic in the work of Eliot, Klaus Hofmann suggests that in fact 'there is no relationship between poet and

⁵⁷⁰ See Nardo.

poet, author and author, Milton and Eliot'.⁵⁷¹ Hofmann is not denying the presence of allusion to Milton in Eliot's work, but pointing out that it is not George Eliot but Dorothea Brooke who considers herself in relation to Milton. Though this seems a strange critique of Gray's argument, it is a useful distinction for considering Milton's role in Hardy's fiction, as I want to suggest here that where there is undoubtedly a relationship between 'poet and poet, author and author' in the case of Hardy and Milton, it is also the case that Hardy's characters (mis)understand themselves and each other in terms of *Paradise Lost*. The likeness of Angel, Tess, and Alec to Adam, Eve, or Satan is proclaimed not by the narrator, then, but by Angel, Tess, and Alec themselves. Hardy's characters attempt, and often fail, to understand themselves and their relations to each other in light of *Paradise Lost*, and the tendency of sensation fiction to align seducer with Satan is disturbed in their misreadings.⁵⁷² That these identifications occur against a backdrop that I have shown to be Miltonic prevents the relationship between character and Milton from replacing that between author and Milton. Instead, connections to Milton's poetry can be seen to be occurring on different levels of the text at the same time, at that of the very material of Wessex (along with the ways in which we experience it) as well as that of character interaction and plot-determining action.

This pattern is not restricted to *Tess*; think again of Lady Constantine's claim that 'that which is called the Eve in us will out sometimes'.⁵⁷³ Egdon Heath is described as 'shut in by the stable hills, among which mere walking had the novelty of pageantry, and where any man could imagine himself to be Adam without the least difficulty' (106). This is not a landscape in which man *becomes* Adam, but 'could *imagine himself to be* Adam'. Alec exclaims to Tess after his conversion, 'No amount of contempt that you can pour upon me, Tess, will equal what I have poured upon myself—the old Adam of my former years!' (360). The reader, however, knows that Alec has not played the part of Adam in this story, and Hardy suggests he comes to see it too, when he says to Tess later in the novel, 'A jester might say this is just like Paradise. You are Eve, and I am the old Other One come to tempt you in the disguise of an inferior animal' (407–08). Tess assures him this likeness is his own discovery, as she 'never said you were Satan, or thought it. I don't think of you in that way at all. My thoughts of you are quite cold' (408).

Though the comparison seems more justified to readers than the earlier with Adam, Alec doubles back on himself and claims that he only suggests a likeness to Satan by way of

⁵⁷¹ 'Milton's Hair', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 21.2 (2010), 224–26 (p. 226).

⁵⁷² At least some of the identifications are to *Paradise Lost*—certainly those of Alec and Angel are. Tess may be referring to less literary sources when she speaks about the devil.

⁵⁷³ *Two on a Tower*, p. 107.

imagining how Tess might perceive him. This is entirely in line with his tendency to deem Tess responsible for his actions, and to perceive her as the Eve that tempts: 'I said I would not come near you; and in spite of such temptation as never before fell to mortal man, I'll keep my word' (68); and 'it is better that I should not look too often on you. It might be dangerous' (363); finally, 'why then have you tempted me? I was firm as a man could be till I saw those eyes and that mouth again – surely there never was such a maddening mouth since Eve!' (378).

Angel at first perceives Tess as Eve the ideal, divine, original woman, features Hardy's intellectual characters often seek out in lovers. Yet, in the fourth 'phase' he begins to see the serpent in Tess and she becomes akin to the Eve whose face is mirrored in the snake. He watches as she yawns, and sees 'the red interior of her mouth as if it had been a snake's [...] her eyelids hung heavy over their pupils' (199). On the very next page, Hardy writes that Tess 'regarded [Angel] as Eve at her second waking might have regarded Adam' (200). This disparity is important: Tess looks upon Angel as Adam, and consequently herself as Eve; Angel, perhaps not quite consciously, sees the snake in her. Satanic imagery surrounds Tess again as she begins her confession, just as Angel's vision of her is about to alter: 'A large shadow of her shape rose upon the wall and ceiling. She bent forward, at which each diamond on her neck gave a sinister wink like a toad's' (265). This transformation in Angel's perception of Tess is described as a revelation of her Satanic deception, as he 'looked upon her as a species of imposter' (269).

Tess's identification with Eve then could then be considered part of the fatalistic mechanism which leads to her doubled Fall, first as mother-out-of-Wedlock, and then murderer. Tess is beset from the beginning with a sense of unwarranted guilt about the death of the family horse: 'she regarded herself in the light of a murderess' (36). This is the catalyst for her initial submission to Alec's deceitful arrangements. To be repeatedly told 'You are Eve' then becomes, like 'I am a murderess', a foundation for Tess's misdirected motivation. In the same respect, Alec's identification of himself with Adam perhaps prevents him from understanding his fault in so relentlessly pursuing Tess. Just as convention demands that the identification of a character as a 'Fallen Woman' leads to her death or exile, Tess's recognition of Eve in herself means her fate seems inescapable, and she does 'act her part'. Miller writes that 'so strong is Tess's conviction of the irresistible coercion of history that she does not believe she can avoid repeating the past'.⁵⁷⁴ Perhaps she is right, since even after her own death the cycle continues as her sister, though legally unable to marry him, departs hand-in-

⁵⁷⁴ Hardy, p. 103.

hand with Angel. Whilst we do not know what they are walking towards, the suggestion is that the process of female falling does not conclude with Tess.

In paying attention to moments in which Tess and Angel are clearly envisioned as Adam and Eve, a connection can be made between Hardy's use of Milton and the attention he pays to peripheral phenomena, particularly an attention to the edges of the body and landscape. These overtly Edenic moments are often those in the early hours of the morning, (again, at dawn, a liminal hour) at the dairy. They wake before the others ('possibly not always by chance'):

[They] seemed to themselves the first persons up of all the world. [...] The spectral, half-compounded, aqueous light which pervaded the open mead, impressed them with a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve. At this dim inceptive stage of the day Tess seemed to Clare to exhibit a dignified largeness both of disposition and physique, an almost regnant power, possibly because he knew that at the preternatural time hardly any woman so well endowed in person as she was likely to be walking in the open air within the boundaries of his horizon; very few in all England. [...] She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman – a whole sex condensed into one typical form. (153–54)

Tess's appearance as Eve-like, as a universal or 'visionary essence of woman' is linked to her appearance at 'the preternatural time', at the time between sleep and work. This scene seems to support Brick's interpretation of *Tess* as the story of what happens when Satan seduces Eve before she meets Adam.⁵⁷⁵

So much of *Tess* is set at the margins: so much occurs at the threshold of doors and windows, at the horizon. Hardy shows a persistent awareness and interest in the divisions that keep (or fail to keep) things apart.⁵⁷⁶ Partly this is dictated by the necessary early rising of the poor, as in order to travel by foot or by slow transport across long distances, they must rise 'before dawn—at the marginal minute of the dark when the grove is still mute' (53). Tess is captured at Stonehenge at the time when the 'whole enormous landscape bore that impress of reserve, taciturnity, and hesitation which is usual just before day' (460). Hardy often makes use of strange metaphors when paying attention to it to the horizon as though this space at the edge of the visible landscape is has a particular susceptibility to the transformative power of the subjective gaze. He uses a strangely domestic, homely image as the sun prepares to rise at Tess's capture, where 'the uniform concavity of black cloud was lifting bodily like the lid of a pot, letting in at the earth's edge the coming day' (459). He

⁵⁷⁵ Brick, p. 120.

⁵⁷⁶ Hardy's interest in boundaries is linked to his interest in convergence, which Miller addresses in *Hardy* (see especially pp. 210–11). Moments of intensity between Tess and Angel, at the peak of their desire for each other, are discussed in terms of convergence and relational thresholds.

suggests that Tess is drawn to this liminal time, as ‘she knew how to hit to a hair’s-breadth that moment of evening when the light and darkness are so evenly balanced that the constraint of day and the suspense of night neutralize each other’ (100). This attraction is explained as due to a combination of the ‘mental liberty’ and the feeling of seeming ‘less solitary’ it affords (100). Hardy suggests a freedom that might be aligned with Keats’s negative capability, where the barrier between Tess and the natural world breaks down, in a communion with the woods which liberates a mind normally encumbered by weariness with the world.

One moment of particular interest for a consideration of Tess as Eve is the following:

[Angel] seemed to discern in [Tess] something that was familiar, something which carried him back into a joyous and unforeseeing past, before the necessity of taking thought had made the heavens grey. [...] The circumstance was sufficient to lead him to select Tess in preference to the other pretty milkmaids when he wished to contemplate contiguous womankind. (142)

Tess is linked here to the ineffably familiar ‘unforeseeing past’. She holds a place in history linked to the first woman. ‘Contiguous’ is defined in the *OED* as ‘next to or touching another usually similar thing’; things that ‘touch each other’ or are ‘touching along a boundary’; ‘touching or connected in an unbroken sequence’. Angel’s vision of Tess recalls her own vision of her place in a repetitious history. She appears to Angel as one connecting those that came before with those who will follow. Here, too, Hardy highlights a concern which arises elsewhere in the fiction, a link between womanhood and loss of boundaries. The edges of women merge into fields, into their clothes, and into generations.⁵⁷⁷

These images of day merging into night, of shapes distorted at the horizon, set the scene for one of the few overt Miltonic references in *Return*:

Blackbarrow had again become blended with night when Wildeve ascended the long acclivity at its base. On his reaching the top a shape grew up from the earth immediately behind him. It was that of Eustacia’s emissary. He slapped Wildeve on the shoulder. The feverish young innkeeper and ex-engineer started like Satan at the touch of Ithuriel’s spear. (148)

Hardy marks this passage when annotating Milton in 1866, suggesting that the moments he deems interesting and worthy of annotation in his earlier reading of Milton endure. It recalls, too, Mary Shelley’s use of ‘Ithuriel’s spear’ to denote the virtue of P. B. Shelley; here it is

⁵⁷⁷ There is a suggestion too, in *Tess*, that women possess a relationship with the world uncommon in men: ‘A field-man is a personality afield; a field-woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her own margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it.’ (104) Here Hardy is again drawn to the lines which do or do not divide things, though this gendered divide is strange given the regularity of male characters in Hardy with a deep connection to their natural surroundings (the names of Gabriel Oak and Giles Winterborne make this connection clear).

Diggory Venn who holds the power to provoke honesty, and Wildeve who is aligned with Satan.

In considering Hardy's tendency to pay attention to edges, we might note that in a strange journal entry he connects the effects of material edges to Milton. He compares the 'rustling of silks' made when 'the congregation rises' at a church service to noise made by 'the Devils' wings in *Paradise Lost*; 'Every woman then, even if she had forgotten it before, has a single thought to the folds of her clothes' (EL 276). That Hardy could think of Milton's Hell when searching for an image to describe the rustling of silk dresses at church demonstrates the attention he has paid to the *details* of Milton's text, and reveals the presence of very specific Miltonic imagery at the peripheries in Hardy's writing.

HARDY'S MILTONIC HANDS

In considering the edges and extremities of the body in Hardy, the most revealing and recurring Miltonic image is that of *hands*. Hands touching, holding, and acting are, in *Paradise Lost*, both trivial and critical. Gray briefly touches on the matter of Miltonic hands in Eliot's *Middlemarch*.⁵⁷⁸ His comments are pertinent for thinking about Hardy and Milton:

Hands form as important a motif in *Middlemarch* as they do in *Paradise Lost*, beginning with Eliot's echo of Milton's "hand in hand." The first thing we learn about Dorothea is that "Her hand and wrist were ... finely formed" [...]. The effect of Eliot's intense focus on these hands, especially Dorothea's, is the same as Milton's: the hands are both a sign of agency and just the opposite—an unpredictable intermediary, a hand that knows not what its owner is doing.⁵⁷⁹

Gray's location of Miltonic hands in Eliot is founded partly in an echo in *Middlemarch* of the final lines of *Paradise Lost*—"They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow, | Through Eden took their solitary way" (XII. 648–49)—an ending which also clearly resonates in the last sentence of *Tess*, which I will discuss below. Two points here are useful: the first considering hands as an 'important motif' in *Paradise Lost*; the second, hands as 'both a sign of agency and just the opposite'. In the rest of this chapter I argue that Hardy's fiction uses Miltonic hands as a motif which intentionally recalls *Paradise Lost* in order to recreate an unstable Eden in Wessex. I will comment on hands as 'a sign of agency and just the opposite', concluding that Milton's liberty meets its equal in Hardy's determinism. This second sense

⁵⁷⁸ Though here I have been considering Hardy's use of Miltonic hands, these texts offer themselves up equally to a reading comparing the centrality of hair in Milton and Hardy, appealing to Gray's hairy model of Miltonic influence. Hardy's narrators often spend a disproportionate amount of time dealing with locks.

⁵⁷⁹ Gray, *Milton*, p. 141.

of what a hand is, or what it performs, is particularly present in Hardy's writing: the clearest example is of his strange tale 'The Withered Arm', which I will discuss in addition to *Tess* and *Return*.

The central question I address here is 'how does Hardy use Miltonic hands?', which prompts two secondary but significant queries: what does Hardy gain by using Milton in this way, knowingly or unknowingly, and what do we gain by paying attention to it? Joan Grundy's comments on the effect of Hardy's use of Milton in the last chapters of *Tess* are useful in answering the first. She writes that 'the situation in Hardy gains in power [...] from the shadowing in it of the primal, universal desolation of Milton's poem' and that his use of Milton throughout the novel deepens the sense of compound misery that is familiar to Hardy's readers.⁵⁸⁰ Milton's pattern of handed moments, which both strengthen and complicate each other, provides Hardy with a model for connecting moments of narrative significance and adds weight to those moments. ('Handed' itself was first used to mean 'joined hand in hand' in 1643, by Milton.)⁵⁸¹ As Andersen writes, 'the repeated use of an image forces an accretion of meaning to attach to it at each mentioning. This accumulation of meaning raises the image almost to the level of a symbol'.⁵⁸² The use of hands in Milton has already attached an 'accretion of meaning' to the image, and Hardy's repeated return to this same image—hands holding, hands touching, and hands seeming to act on their own accord—'gains in power' again by virtue of their relation to Milton's hands.

To tackle the second question, Miller has recently addressed the motif of hands in Hardy, recognizing that 'representations of gesture and other references to hands are frequent in Hardy's work', but also admitting that is an unusual way to approach a figure whose writing is so often considered in terms of the visual.⁵⁸³ He writes that

Hardy's work depends so much on seeing that to approach his fiction and his poems by way of their references to that premier organ of touch, the hand, seems perverse.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸⁰ Grundy, p. 331.

⁵⁸¹ Neil Forsyth has pointed out that the *OED* notes 'handed' in this sense as first occurring in Milton, though the entry has since been updated—in the 1989 edition a third meaning of 'handed' was listed as meaning 'joined hand in hand' with a first quotation from the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, (1643) 'If any two be but once handed in the Church'—followed by the line from *Paradise Lost*, 'Into thir inmost bower Handed they went'. Forsyth, 'Hands On', in *A Concise Companion to the Study of Manuscripts, Printed Books, and the Production of Early Modern Texts: A Festschrift for Gordon Campbell*, ed. by Edward Jones (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), pp. 294–321 (p. 313).

⁵⁸² Andersen, p. 199.

⁵⁸³ 'Hands in Hardy', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan (Farnham, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 505–16 (p. 505). In this essay Miller focuses on ghostly hands in the poetry and on 'the failure to touch or to be touched' (p. 516).

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 506.

Perverse, too, in that Hardy states in the *Life* that as a child he disliked being touched and ‘to the end of his life he disliked even the most friendly hand being laid on his arm’ (*EL* 32), instead preferring ‘to be “the man with the watching eye”’ (*LL* 247). Beer points out the discord between this ‘biographical fact’ and the permeation of his texts ‘by experiences of touch, texture and temperature’.⁵⁸⁵ The haptic approach to Hardy, however, seems much less perverse in light of *Milton’s* interest in ‘that premier organ of touch’. Paying attention to Hardy’s interest in hands can be justified by paying attention to his interest in Milton, and vice versa. Hardy’s personal dislike of touch then seems to strengthen the sense in which his handed moments might be considered part of his Miltonic inheritance, rather than rising from personal proclivity.

The idea of connecting hands with perversity is also actively useful in addressing hands in the work of both figures. The hand comes to hold a strange position in this discourse as, of course, Milton did not use his own hand to write *Paradise Lost*, so that the usual implications of the significance of the author’s hand are absent. At the same time, touch consequently comes to somewhat replace vision in Milton’s world of sensation, and as the hand is both more and less important to Milton as a poet, it can be understood as significant in *Paradise Lost* in strange ways. As we will see, the perversity of handed moments is a key feature in Hardy’s texts. It is worth noting, too, the effect of prudish editors on Hardy’s use of touch: they detected a dangerous perversity in the scene in *Tess* where Angel carries the three dairymaids across a puddle and made Hardy send them over in a wheelbarrow for the serial edition published in the *Graphic*.

This turn toward the tactile reflects a recent critical shift in which literary scholars have been drawn to the significance of handed touch in Victorian culture. Both Peter J. Capuano’s *Changing Hands: Industry, Evolution, and the Reconfiguration of the Victorian Body* (2015) and Aviva Briefel’s *The Racial Hand in the Victorian Imagination* (2015) atypically foreground the hand in a period in which the visual has traditionally been the primary critical focus.⁵⁸⁶ The hand is read by these scholars as a particularly Victorian concern—Kathryn E. McEwen states that ‘the hand appears something of a nineteenth century craze—an attempt to define the human against the tide of industrialization and mechanization, which was rapidly redefining manual

⁵⁸⁵ Beer, p. 236.

⁵⁸⁶ The dichotomy established here between vision and touch is questionable when thinking about Hardy, who often notes their interaction, as when Tess’s ‘great eyes had opened’ in response to her ‘mother’s hand’ touching the door of her bedroom (30). There are, however, moments in Hardy’s work when touch and vision are spoken about as though they are in competition with each other, as when Tess leaves Alec for home: ‘It was still early, and though the sun’s lower limb was just free of the hill, his rays, ungenial and peering, addressed the eye rather than the touch as yet’ (93).

production', but also, as Capuano points out, in relation to 'drastically altered evolutionary paradigms'.⁵⁸⁷ For Hardy, certainly, the hand represents a conscious human relationship with the world, as he writes in his journal that 'clouds, mists, and mountains are unimportant beside the wear on a threshold, or the print of a hand' (*EL* 153). In thinking about the hand in Victorian literature these critics generally look back and consider the wealth of metaphor associated with 'that premier organ of touch', as it is the primary position of 'hands' in conceptions of human identity that make their displacement in the nineteenth century important. The hand forms a central concern for many strands of thinking in the Western philosophical tradition. Aristotle considered the hand proof of man's spiritual and intellectual superiority, writing that 'it is not because they have hands that human beings are most intelligent, but because they are the most intelligent of animals that they have hands'.⁵⁸⁸ This reasoning persists in the nineteenth century, as Charles Bell writes in his popular treatise on the hand: 'We ought to define the hand as belonging exclusively to man—corresponding in sensibility and motion with that ingenuity which converts the being who is the weakest in natural defence, to the ruler over animate and inanimate nature.'⁵⁸⁹ Bell views the hand as 'the last proof in the order of creation, of that principle of adaptation which evinces design'.⁵⁹⁰ Yet, it is reclaimed later in the century as an important marker of human evolution, as the development of the opposable thumb is what sets us apart from the non-human.

The hand is, in this line of thinking, the humanizing factor which differentiates man from animal and machine. Hardy often highlights the importance of hands in manual labour as opposed to machine-led industry, as when he writes that the cows of Talbothay's dairy are particularly sensitive to hands. They 'show a fondness for a particular pair' and kick over buckets if they are not addressed with the preferred 'style of manipulation' (142). Hand-labour is often contrasted with the almost demonic work of machines, as in *Tess* where as 'the inexorable wheels' of a thresher spin as 'old men in the rising straw-rick talked of the past days when they had been accustomed to thresh with flails on the oaken barn-floor, when everything, even to winnowing, was effected by hand-labour' (382). Of course, 'hand' is also

⁵⁸⁷ Kathryn E. McEwen, 'Hand/Arbeit/Buch/Schrift: Approaching the Female Hand' (unpublished PhD, Vanderbilt University, 2013) <<http://etd.library.vanderbilt.edu/available/etd-03222013-034444/>> [accessed 26 January 2016], p. 11; Peter J. Capuano, *Changing Hands: Industry, Evolution, and the Reconfiguration of the Victorian Body* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2015), p. 1.

⁵⁸⁸ Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*, trans. by James G. Lennox (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 99.

⁵⁸⁹ *The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments, as Evincing Design* (London: William Pickering, 1834), p. 18 <<http://archive.org/details/handmechanismvit00belliala>> [accessed 19 May 2017].

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

used as synecdoche for labourers themselves, as well as for slaves, so that the language of hands has also had a *dehumanizing* discriminatory force.

Capuano points to a ‘sustained spike in representations of hands in British fiction and in English culture more generally’ which is revealed in digital analysis of databases containing thousands of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts.⁵⁹¹ The analysis ‘suggests that hands appear in nineteenth-century novels around eight times more frequently than in all genres of eighteenth-century texts’, and ‘more often than any other body part including faces, heads, and eyes’.⁵⁹² If we return to the feature of Milton criticism discussed in Chapter 3—use of Milton’s own writing as a model for his influence—then Capuano’s comments regarding the critical treatment of hands in Victorian literature reveals that hands are another appropriate model (as well as also conveying a similar liminality and duality to hair). Capuano writes that ‘the hand wields a figurative influence so pervasive that it is actually hard to recognize’.⁵⁹³ Capuano’s claim that hands ‘lie hidden in plain sight’, is mirrored in Gray’s that ‘for the Victorians [Milton] is a purloined letter—something so patent as to go unnoticed, hidden in plain sight’.⁵⁹⁴

If hands are of general interest to Victorian writers, then, how can we distinguish Miltonic hands as especially important in Hardy’s work? Milton’s interest in hands is manifested in their appearance at moments that are quietly significant. Milton brings our attention to the minute movements of hands at moments of crisis in *Paradise Lost*, and the recurrence of the motif ties these crises together. Helen Gardner, writing on the dramatic elements of *Paradise Lost*, states that the entire drama of the poem pivots on a few small actions in Book IX: ‘a hand reaching out and plucking, a hand taking from another hand, a hand lifting fruit to the mouth, a second hand lifting fruit to the mouth’.⁵⁹⁵ These small motions constitute ‘the climax of the whole action’.⁵⁹⁶ Significantly, as Gardner points out, they are presented as unadorned and are especially striking for being left so bare: ‘So saying, her rash hand in evil hour | Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate’ (IX. 780–81).⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹¹ Capuano, p. 1.

⁵⁹² Ibid., p. 12.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 11; Gray, *Milton*, p. 22.

⁵⁹⁵ *A Reading of Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 34.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Gardner reads this moment as cinematic, drawing us back to consider a similarity in Milton and Hardy’s visual techniques: ‘Long before the cinema was invented Milton anticipated one of its most thrilling methods: the panorama, an aerial view of a country or city, the settling on a village or a street, then on a house, then on a room in the house, and finally the focusing on some tiny significant act, the tearing of a letter, the lifting of a glass. Dramatic intensity can take two forms, a heightening of actions and of speech so that the imagination is taken by storm, or, if we have been sufficiently

All of earth is wounded as a result of these four sharp simple words, 'she plucked, she ate', and cannot suffer silently, 'Sighing through all her works' (IX. 783).

There are at least three other key moments focused on the hand in *Paradise Lost* which hold particular significance for the developing complexity of Adam and Eve's relationship. The first occurs at the beginning of Book V, when Adam wakes Eve from a sleep disturbed by Satanic dreams, and 'Her hand soft touching, whispered thus. Awake | My fairest, my espoused, my latest found' (v. 17–18). This is the first of a pair of passages in *Paradise Lost* which represent Adam and Eve's hands as simultaneously soft-to-the-touch and touching-softly: two soft hands softly touch. Neil Forsyth has pointed out that whilst Adam's speech in the section directly following Eve's dream mirrors a section of the Song of Songs, the addition of the hands and their 'soft touching' is distinctively Milton's.⁵⁹⁸ The second of the pair occurs at the separation, when Adam and Eve go to work apart in the garden. Eve has convinced Adam to let her toil alone after assuring him, with no shortage of dramatic irony, that Satan would be too proud to seek her before her companion:

With thy permission then, and thus forewarned
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touched only, that our trial, when least sought,
May find us both perhaps far less prepared,
The willinger I go, nor much expect
A foe so proud will first the weaker seek;
So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse.
Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew. (IX. 378–86)

Christopher Ricks considers whether we should consider the word 'soft' in this last line as an adjective or an adverb, or both:

If we had to paraphrase the lines, we would say that 'soft' was an adverb, not an adjective: she softly withdrew her hand. [...] But Milton didn't exactly say that; and since 'soft' is the adjectival form as well, and since Milton so often puts his adjectives after his nouns, the word 'soft' gets attracted into Eve's hand, delicately and as it were by reflection. So that the total effect is 'her soft hand softly she withdrew', with *soft* sounded much more quietly than *softly*. And with a delicate fusion of two points of view, since the adverb has the neutrality of an onlooker, while the adjective puts us in the place of Adam as he feels Eve's hand.⁵⁹⁹

Ricks's reading reveals the syntactical expansiveness of Milton's language while also demonstrating the rewards to be reaped from paying close attention to the 'handed' moments

prepared, the naked presentation of a slight but significant act. When at last we come to it, with the weight of the poem behind it, the undramatic presentation of this simple act of disobedience is profoundly dramatic' (pp. 34–35).

⁵⁹⁸ Forsyth, p. 314.

⁵⁹⁹ Ricks, p. 90.

of the text.⁶⁰⁰ The ambiguous grammar here makes Adam's hand, Eve's hand, and the action of touching *all* 'soft'. Softness is something that disrupts the boundaries of bodies and language in Milton, bridging the gaps between hands and words and taking us back to the melting bodies of Swinburne. We can see this in the line 'Veers oft, as oft' (IX. 515) which Royle reads alternatively as 'veers soft, as soft' in work dealing with 'the veering strangeness of Milton's verse'.⁶⁰¹

These moments of touching occur at points significant in their relation to the chain of temptations which lead to the Fall: Adam's soft hand softly wakes soft Eve from temptation in a dream; Eve's soft hand softly leaves Adam's as she goes off into the garden unprotected; Eve's 'rash hand' plucks the fruit, passes the fruit, and both hands bring the fruit to a pair of lips. In the last lines of *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve find solace in each other's hands:

Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and providence their guide:
They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way. (XII. 645–49)

They leave the poem as they enter it (they are first seen in Book IV, hand in hand). Miller comments that Milton here depicts 'hand touching hand in a way that is almost a self-touching', meaning the peculiar action of touching your hand with your other hand so that it is felt both actively and passively, 'with a delicate fusion of two points of view'.⁶⁰² (This is the kind of touching which comes to be so important in twentieth-century phenomenology, for Husserl and Heidegger, and Derrida after them.) I would suggest that the reason we can read this final 'hand in hand' as 'almost-self touching' is that it is connected to all the previous moments of hand-touching in *Paradise Lost*. By the end of the epic, the touch of a hand is so laden with associations and connections to other moments of expansive touch that this single instance of hand-holding contains within it a vast multitude of feeling: it is emotionally and sensually expansive. The moments of touch that are unadorned and almost trivial individually become weighted through connection. We will find this is the case in Hardy, too.

⁶⁰⁰ Swinburne also uses 'syntactical ambiguity' which 'works towards inclusiveness', as Robert A. Greenberg notes in "'Erotion,'" "Anactoria," and the Sapphic Passion', *Victorian Poetry*, 29 (1991), 79–87 (p. 84).

⁶⁰¹ *Veering*, p. 41.

⁶⁰² 'Hands', p. 508.



Figure 17. N. Schiavonetti after Henry Tresham, Illustration to *Paradise Lost* v. 9–13, detail.



Figure 18. John Martin, 'The Expulsion', from Martin's *Illustrations of the Bible* (1831–35).

Miller writes of ‘touching myself touching you’, that it ‘is what Milton’s Adam and Eve do’.⁶⁰³ It is, again, distinctively *Milton’s* Adam and Eve that do this. Critical work on Milton’s expulsion has drawn on representations of the scene in illustration, and the ways in which Milton, in giving Adam and Eve more complex emotions than simple suffering, worked ‘in direct opposition to the predominant iconographic trend of his time’.⁶⁰⁴ The extra-illustrated Kitto Bible, held at the Huntington Library, San Marino, provides an ideal sample of this iconographic trend. A collection of text and image composed by James Gibbs in the mid-nineteenth century, the Kitto Bible was first published in three volumes and now stands at an astounding sixty, the first few of which contain illustrations of Genesis 1–3.⁶⁰⁵ The Bible additionally holds a substantial number of illustrations of *Paradise Lost*, mixed in with the biblical illustrations. One image included is a large colourful print after Henry Tresham’s illustration of the beginning of Book V (see Figure 17). It clearly illustrates the Adam and Eve of Milton as opposed to Genesis as it is distinctly sexual, and Eve’s ‘tresses discomposed’ point to the recent presence of Satan-as-toad whispering in her ear. Our eyes are drawn to Adam and Eve’s hands, and the way Adam’s hand in particular is held in a position which anticipates touch, with the expectation of softness as both adjective and adverb.

Milton’s handed focus is revealed to be innovation by these illustrations, as depictions of Adam and Eve holding hands in images produced before *Paradise Lost* are found to be, in Roland Mushat Frye’s words, ‘extraordinarily rare’.⁶⁰⁶ Further, Milton complicates his idiosyncratic focus on the first parents’ hands by making the primary moments of hand-holding not just those of paradisaic bliss, but those of crisis or change, such as the expulsion. In biblical illustrations of this scene, many of which derive from Masaccio’s fifteenth-century fresco, via Raphael, the illustrative focus is often on Adam and Eve’s distress: they may hold their heads in their hands, turn away from each other, or appear to be being violently expelled. The power of Milton’s expulsion, in contrast, is bound up in the ambivalence expressed in the held hands: a sadness mitigated by hope. As Jessica Prinz Pecorino writes,

At the conclusion of *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve neither exult in happiness, nor are they overwhelmed by tragedy. The promise of future redemption is qualified by their present loss, even as their loss is tempered by new knowledge and renewed faith.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰³ Ibid. This is a phrase from Jean-Luc Nancy via Derrida.

⁶⁰⁴ Jessica Prinz Pecorino, ‘Eve Unparadised: Milton’s Expulsion and Iconographic Tradition’, *Milton Quarterly*, 15 (1981), 1–10 (p. 1). See also Merritt Y. Hughes, ‘Some Illustrators of Milton: The Expulsion from Paradise’, *The Journal of English and German Philology*, 60.4 (1961), 670–79.

⁶⁰⁵ Extra-illustration is the process of taking a book apart and putting it back together with collections of images added—a popular hobby for collectors in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

⁶⁰⁶ *Milton’s Imagery and the Visual Arts: Iconographic Tradition in the Epic Poems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 281–85.

⁶⁰⁷ Pecorino, p. 1.



Figure 19. William Blake, *The Expulsion* (Illustration 12 to Milton's *"Paradise Lost"*), 1807 (Thomas set).

Early illustrators of Milton did not immediately break away from this biblical convention, so strong was the image of Adam and Eve expelled in shame and suffering. In the first illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost*, from 1688, John Baptist Medina depicts a scene clearly derived from the tradition of Masaccio and Raphael, where hands are used entirely to cover up Adam and Eve's embodied shame: Adam hides his face, Eve her breasts and pudenda. Eve's face is notably made 'stupid' and she seems to feel no regret. The iconographic break is made most forcefully at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in illustrations by William Blake and John Martin. Blake's interpretation has been praised by

Milton scholars for its success in conveying the mixed mood of Milton's expulsion—Pointon writes that the 'ambivalence of Milton's expulsion scene is here ideally expressed'—though even in Blake's expulsion we can see that the pair do not hold each others hands, instead each led by Michael out of Eden (see Figure 19).⁶⁰⁸ Martin comes close to Milton's vision in both his illustration for *Paradise Lost* and that for Genesis, though the pair still turn away from each other and seem neither 'wandering' nor 'slow' (see Figure 18). The strength of Adam's frontward leg in the latter suggests a more purposeful stride, or violent stumble, into the new world.

At the end of the nineteenth century Milton's expulsion scene reappears in the last lines of *Tess*. In the final chapter, Angel and 'Liza-Lu exit the city by its western gate:

Though they were young, they walked with bowed heads, which gait of grief the sun's rays smiled on pitilessly. [...] One of the pair was Angel Clare, the other a tall budding creature—half girl, half woman—a spiritualized image of Tess, slighter than she, but with the same beautiful eyes—Clare's sister-in-law, 'Liza-Lu. Their pale faces seemed to have shrunk to half their natural size. They moved on hand in hand, and never spoke a word. (462)

Not only are the pair 'hand in hand', but importantly Hardy retains the tone of Milton's expulsion: his 'gait of grief' replicates the reluctant pace of Milton's 'wandering steps'. The passage recalls the calm, sad illustrations of Milton's expulsion, rather than those violent images of the pair being chased out of paradise with a flaming sword. Angel Clare and 'Liza-Lu pause near the top of the hill, unwillingly frozen, and watch the raising of the black flag which indicates Tess's execution:

The two speechless gazers bent themselves down to the earth, as if in prayer, and remained thus a long time, absolutely motionless: the flag continued to wave silently. As soon as they had strength, they arose, joined hands again, and went on. (464)⁶⁰⁹

The parallels with *Paradise Lost* are clear, and the holding of hands is the central image tying the two works together. In the fresh sorrow of Tess's death, Hardy's mourning pair perseveres.

Penny Boumelha has commented on this passage:

⁶⁰⁸ Pointon, p. 159.

⁶⁰⁹ The moment sadly recalls a scene after Tess and Angel were married, and washed their hands together in a basin. Angel asks Tess 'which are my fingers and which are yours?' This moment stands in for the consummation of their marriage, representing their spiritual union in marriage in a rare moment of joy for *Tess*. As Tess confesses her history, over the break of a 'phase', the hands become unhandled out of sight so that whilst we leave the pair hand in hand we find them again separate, Angel turned away from Tess at the fireside. The moment, in turn, repeats one in *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), where Fancy washes her hands with Dick and 'hardly know[s] which are my own hands and which are yours—they have all got so mixed up together'. *Under the Greenwood Tree*, ed. by Simon Gatrell (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 104.

It is notable that [*Tess*] offers a curiously inverted image of Milton's fallen world. The post-lapsarian world of Tess is attenuated ('Liza-Lu is only 'half girl, half woman', and both she and Clare seem to have 'shrunk' facially [...]) by expulsion from sexuality, and not by the loss of a pre-sexual innocence. In *Tess* are imagined a Paradise of sexuality (abundant, fecund, succulent) and the guilt of knowledge that inheres within it.⁶¹⁰

It is one of the distinctions of *Paradise Lost*, however, that Milton's Adam and Eve are never 'pre-sexual'. Their sexual relationship changes, of course, but Milton is unusual in granting Adam and Eve full sexuality before the Fall. Indeed, at the most sexually charged moments in the poem attention is often directed at hands, and Milton's focus on hands at these moments reveals them to be an erotic centre of the poem. Some critics have considered this prudish. John Carey complains: 'Adam and Eve, though their nakedness is advertised and preached over, are never looked at steadily. The recurrent references to their hands seem intent on averting our eyes from other areas.'⁶¹¹ For Carey, hands in Eden are a poor substitute for more titillating body parts. Whether it is deemed a flaw or an innovation, in *Paradise Lost*, hands come to replace eyes as the primary erotic organ (this is perhaps not surprising in a poem written by a blind man). In Milton's Eden hand-holding is a sexual act.

So, it is not that Hardy inverts a Miltonic expulsion in which Adam and Eve are driven out of a world of sexual innocence into sexual experience. Instead, Hardy acknowledges and plays upon the sexuality present before *and* after the fall in *Paradise Lost*. Hardy recognises the complexity involved in Miltonic touching—the sexual element in Miltonic hands-in-hands—and uses it to deepen the ambivalence of his own ending and grant it a sadness that amplifies the grief of Tess's execution. Hardy's use of hands is neither simply duplication nor an inversion of Milton but a (perhaps perverse) revivification. At the time of publication, law prohibited the marriage of widower and widow's sister, so the protection requested by Tess for her sister cannot take the form of legal marriage to Angel, and 'Liza-Lu is assumed to take up the role Tess has just discarded; that of, in the eyes of the law, a Fallen Woman. Hardy then brings back Milton's ending without ambivalence and hope, which is perhaps not surprising in a world without God. Hardy complicates Milton as Milton complicates the expulsion.

The same handed pattern can be discerned in *Return*, in which Hardy again uses Miltonic hand-holding to underpin moments of narrative significance and ambivalent eroticism.

⁶¹⁰ *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form* (Sussex; Totowa, NJ: The Harvester Press; Barnes & Noble, 1982), p. 126.

⁶¹¹ Carey, *Milton* (London: Evans, 1969; repr. New York: Arco, 1970), p. 107, quoted in Leonard, p. 594.

Simon Gatrell writes that it is a novel of ‘emotional economy’, in which relationships are ‘formulated through a financial rhetoric’.⁶¹² The systems of desire in the novel are affected by the movement of money, and affection is often treated as currency. The strangest moment of ‘emotional economy’ in the novel, and one of the most striking, occurs when Eustacia—in order to spy on Clym Yeobright—pays Charley to take his (male) role as the Turkish Knight in the mumming. The discussion and payment is conducted in a business-like manner, and neither seems to directly acknowledge the eccentricity of the exchange, though Charley does seem shy, ‘murmuring’ his request and avoiding Eustacia’s gaze:

The youth shook his head.
 “Five shillings?”
 He shook his head again. “Money won’t do it,” he said, brushing the iron head of the fire-dog with the hollow of his hand.
 “What will then Charley?” said Eustacia in a disappointed tone.
 “You know what you forbad me at the maypoling, miss,” murmured the lad without looking at her, and still stroking the fire-dog’s head.
 “Yes,” said Eustacia with a little more hauteur. “You wanted to join hands with me in the ring, if I recollect?”
 “Half an hour of that, and I’ll agree, miss.”
 Eustacia regarded the youth steadfastly. He was three years younger than herself, but apparently not backward for his age. “Half an hour of what?” she said, though she guessed what.
 “Holding your hand in mine.”
 She was silent. “Make it a quarter-hour,” she said. (123)

Charley, ‘brushing the iron head of the fire-dog with the hollow of his hand’, is already nervously focussed on the proposed instrument of exchange. Eustacia’s response is to barter with him. With the hand-holding made a more precious commodity, Charley is not willing to use his entire supply at once, and asks to save a few minutes for another occasion. It is, however, beyond him to resist having just a *little* more of what he is ‘owed’, and he goes on to ask for ‘one more minute’, which Eustacia obliges him:

Eustacia gave him her hand as before.
 “One minute,” she said, and at about the proper interval counted on till she reached seven or eight. Hand and person she then withdrew to a distance of several feet, and recovered some of her old dignity. The contract completed she raised between them a barrier impenetrable as a wall. (126)

Charley and Eustacia leave this scene affected in drastically different ways. Eustacia, ‘the contract completed [...] raised between them a barrier impenetrable as a wall’, whereas Charley’s subsequent commentary on her performance as the Turkish Knight is tempered by ‘the touch of Eustacia’s hand’, which ‘yet remained with him’ (125). For Eustacia, it is

⁶¹² ‘Introduction’ in *Return*, p. xviii.

distinctly her hand, rather than her self, which he has touched: when she withdraws to 'recover [...] her old dignity' she does so as 'Hand and person', as though she deems them separate. Charley, however, considers the hand to convey some fundamental essence of Eustacia, as the touch of it 'remain[s] with him', preserving their connection even beyond her erection of the 'impenetrable barrier'.

Later, Eustacia presents a more willing hand to Clym. At the point where their romance is at its peak, they are pictured hand-in-hand in the bliss of Egdon-as-Eden:

Clym took the hand which was already bared for him—it was a favourite way with them to walk bare hand in bare hand—and led her through the ferns. They formed a very comely picture of love at full flush as they walked along the valley that late afternoon, the sun sloping down on their right and throwing their thin spectral shadows, tall as poplar trees, far out across the furze and fern. (202)

The uncovered state of Clym and Eustacia's hands is central to the 'comely picture', as in their 'bare' state is noted thrice. As in Milton, this passage is connected to the other handed moments in and beyond the text which complicate and cast a 'spectral shadow' over the scene. Eustacia's strange history of touch is connected through these moments of hand-holding so that handed touch has the same effect here as in *Paradise Lost*. We foresee their fall in their hand-holding. The action draws us back to the earlier scene with Charley, reminding us of the economic concerns that underpin all of the dysfunctional relationships in the novel, and will eventually contribute to their collapse. It also looks forward to the end of the novel, where Eustacia's lover, Wildeve, is dragged dead out of the weir. The near-omniscient Venn observes that 'The only sign upon him of his recent struggle for life was in his fingertips, which were worn and scarified in his dying endeavours to obtain a hold on the face of the weir wall' (361). With no hand to grasp on to, Wildeve is dragged to his death.

This scene in *Return* is echoed in *Tess*, where Angel and Tess 'roved along the meads by creeping paths which followed the brinks of trickling tributary brooks' (228). Tess 'put her hand in his, and thus they went on' (229):

The beams of the sun, almost as horizontal as the mead itself, formed a pollen of radiance over the landscape. [...] The sun was so near the ground, and the sward so flat, that the shadows of Clare and Tess would stretch a quarter of a mile ahead of them, like two long fingers pointing afar to where the green alluvial reaches abutted against the sloping sides of the vale. (228)

Again, the pointing fingers made of the shadows of the pair don't just point to the 'sloping sides of the vale', but to the disaster that awaits them. Tess seems to know this, and connects her damning history to the shadows ahead of her: 'She walked in brightness, but she knew that in the background those shapes of darkness were always spread' (230). The same pattern

revealed in *Return* can then be seen at work in *Tess*: scenes of handed relations are connected to each other in a way that both proleptically and retrospectively embeds sadness into moments otherwise Edenic.

THE HAND AND THE WILL

I turn back now to Gray's sense that hands are, in Milton, Eliot—and, I suggest, Hardy—'both a sign of agency and just the opposite'.⁶¹³ The ambivalent relationship between the hand and the will is perhaps most clear in Hardy's story 'The Withered Arm'. From the beginning hands form a focus of the strange tale, in which a woman named Rhoda Brook develops a jealous interest in Gertrude, the young bride of the unacknowledged father of Rhoda's son. In the first chapter, Rhoda asks her son to seek out the bride and groom and see 'what she's like'.⁶¹⁴ Rhoda offers a list of features to take note of ('if she's dark or fair, and if she's tall – as tall as I') and adds a final request for the boy to 'notice if her hands be white; if not, see if they look as though she had ever done housework, or are milker's hands like mine'.⁶¹⁵ This question, separated from the rest, and uttered by Rhoda in the transformative glow of the fire, holds a significance which is partly proleptic: Rhoda's utterance reaches forward to the supernatural 'handed' events that are to follow, as she thinks of Gertrude's hands in comparison to her own; asking if they are 'hands like mine'.

A few weeks later, Rhoda experiences a troubling vision in which Gertrude appears as an incubus, sitting on top of her and 'thrust[ing] forward its left hand mockingly, so as to make the wedding-ring it wore glitter in Rhoda's eyes'.⁶¹⁶ Rhoda, choked by the weight of the demon on her chest, grabs the spectre by its arm with her right hand and throws it to the ground, where it disappears. Yet the 'feel of the arm' remains; Rhoda could feel 'her antagonist's arm within her grasp' for another day.⁶¹⁷ Gertrude later pays Rhoda a visit and reveals a mysterious hand-shaped bruise on her arm. Rhoda recognises 'the shape of her own four fingers'.⁶¹⁸ This leads to a chain of various other disturbing events, but what is particularly troubling to Rhoda is the disconnection between the mark caused by her own hand and her conscious will. Her hand seems to have acted in a way that is simultaneously independent from her, and yet expresses her undisclosed jealousy. She asks herself after

⁶¹³ *Milton*, p. 141.

⁶¹⁴ *Wessex Tales*, ed. by Kathryn R. King (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 58.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 65–66.

Gertrude's revelation: 'can it be [...] that I exercise a malignant power over people against my own will?'⁶¹⁹

With agency in mind, we might return to *Tess* and another important moment centred on the action of a hand, when Alec seductively feeds Tess a strawberry:

"No-no!" she said quickly, putting her fingers between his hand and her lips. "I would rather take it in my own hand."

"Nonsense!" he insisted; and in a slight distress she parted her lips and took it in. [...] She obeyed like one in a dream. (44)

Brick has pointed out a similarity with Eve's dream in Book V (the dream from which Adam awakes soft Eve with his soft touch):⁶²⁰

So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,
Even to my mouth of that same fruit held part
Which he had plucked; the pleasant savoury smell
So quickened appetite, that I, methought,
Could not but taste. (v. 82–86)

If Eve is disturbed by this dream, she is not disturbed in the same way when she later comes to eat the forbidden fruit when awake. This is surely because in the latter scene she brings it to her own mouth, with her own hand. For both Eve and Tess the issue is not with the eating of the fruit, but with the hand that delivers it to the mouth.

Tess refuses Alec's hands repeatedly in the last parts of the novel. He offers her his hand to help her over a lump in the field, which she ignores, and soon after he 'turned suddenly to take her hand; the buff-glove was on it, and he seized only the rough leather fingers which did not express the life or shape of those within' as Tess has 'slipp[ed] her hand from the glove as from a pocket' (372). Where Tess's moments of intimacy with Angel always involved her hands willingly intermingling with his, all Alec can get from her is the shell of her hand, prefiguring his having only her body 'like a corpse upon the current, dissociated from its living will' when she gives in to his advances and lives with him at Sandborne (436). Tess later uses her glove as a weapon against Alec:

without the slightest warning she passionately swung the glove by the gauntlet directly in his face. It was heavy and thick as a warrior's, and it struck him flat on the mouth. [...] A scarlet oozing appeared where her blow had alighted, and in a moment the blood began dropping from his mouth upon the straw. (387–88)⁶²¹

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 66.

⁶²⁰ Brick, p. 119.

⁶²¹ The scenes in which Tess attempts to avoid Alec's advances contain a wealth of Miltonic images and recall Miltonic landscapes. The engine-man standing beside his machine has, due to 'the isolation of his manner and colour', 'the appearance of a creature from Tophet' (380–81); the connection between engineering and Hell is particularly Miltonic. As the rats run around and are dislodged from

This scene is one of many in which Tess makes clear her desire to maintain control over her situation through her hands: she desires to feed herself, to offer her hands to Angel, to refuse the advances of Alec, and finally to kill him. All these moments recall each other; the blood that drops upon the straw foreshadows the murder at the end of the novel.

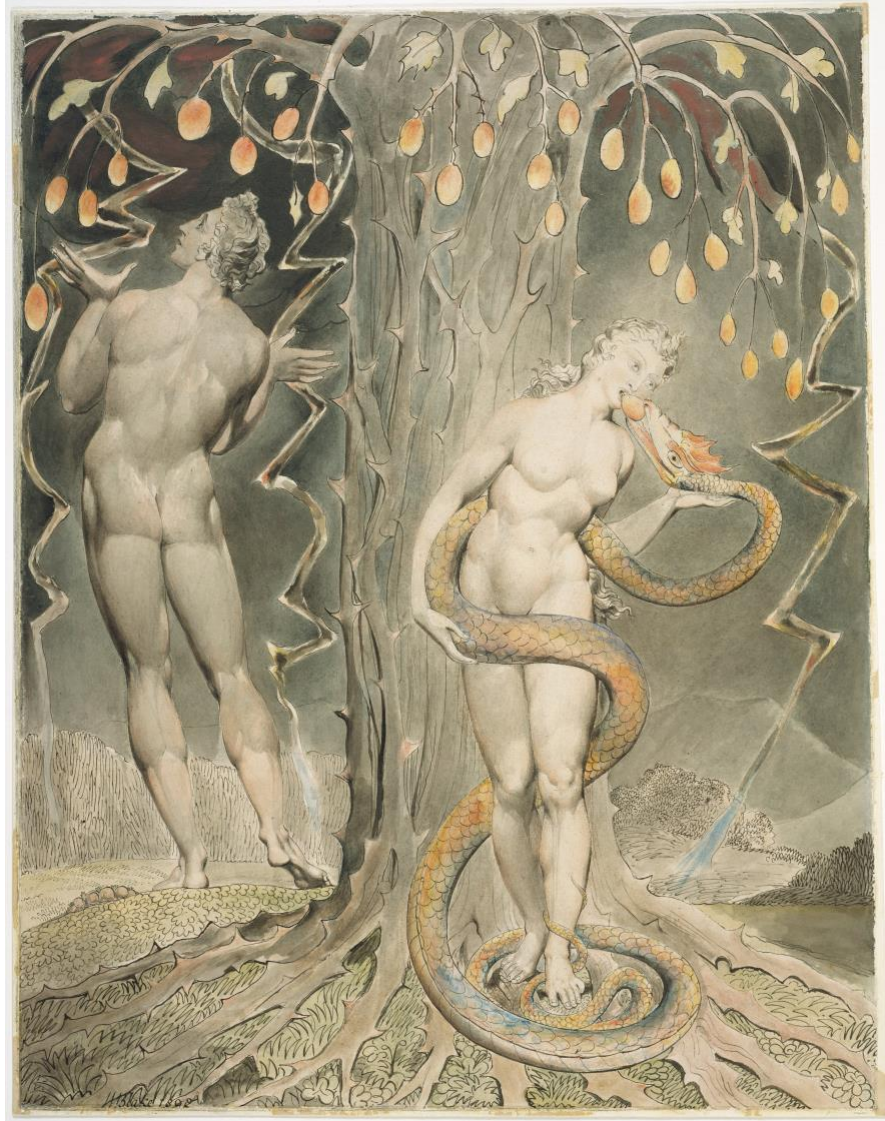


Figure 20. William Blake, *The Temptation and Fall of Eve* (Illustration to Milton's "*Paradise Lost*"), 1808 (Butts set).

These matters of handedness and agency are made more perverse in Blake's illustration of the Fall, which combines the temptation scene with Eve's earlier dream (see Figure 20). In Blake's image Eve stands in the centre of the serpent's convolutions, supporting its coils while it passes the fruit into her mouth from its own so that there are no hands touching the

under women's skirts, there are 'masculine shouts, feminine screams, oaths, stampings, and confusion as of Pandemonium' (391).

fruit. The sexual tone set by the touching and feeding is heightened as Eve's gaze directly meets that of the serpent, mimicking that of Adam and Eve in Blake's illustration of the bower, in which their faces and gazes are intensely parallel and above Satan's eyes—full of sad envy—meet those of the serpent (see Figure 21). In Blake's temptation Eve is given some agency: she seems almost to be guiding the serpent's mouth to her own, and shows no signs of resistance; his coils are not so tightly wound around her as to seem threatening or restrictive. However, Eve's agency is disrupted by the serpent's intermediary position and the removal of her own hands from the action of eating. It is Satan's action which is foregrounded and consequently Eve is painted as an accepting accomplice rather than the maker of her own destruction.



Figure 21. William Blake, *Satan Watching the Endearments of Adam and Eve* (Illustration 5 to Milton's *"Paradise Lost"*), 1807 (Thomas set).

CONCLUSION

We might return to the question of what we gain by paying attention to the Miltonic in Hardy, by attending to the handed moments in Hardy's fiction. Hardy's use of hands involves an emotional complexity that not only reveals his response to Milton, but draws us in turn to pay attention to the (paradoxically Miltonic) idiosyncrasies that are so rewarding in Hardy's writing, and act as a reminder of the—sometimes perverse—interest to be found in his fiction. These instances of the Miltonic in *Tess*, *Return*, and elsewhere all recall and remake Milton in order to make clear a *lack* in postlapsarian Wessex. Hardy replicates the significance of handed moments in *Paradise Lost*, but in these reformulated scenes he removes their redemptive elements, both fallen and unfallen. Because Hardy's world is a world without God, reference to Milton's world of human pain mediated by divine sacrifice is reduced simply to a world of human pain. Hands held at the expulsion do not convey mediated hope, and hands held in a seemingly Edenic setting are commodified and emptied of the Miltonic prelapsarian touch which impossibly combines innocence and eroticism. As Joan Grundy writes, 'Milton's argument asserts the external Providence which Hardy's novel explicitly denies. For Hardy's characters God is not in his Heaven, and all is wrong with the world'.⁶²² I have also shown that Hardy's vision of the world is one in which 'Heaven' and 'the world' are inseparable, so that Wessex contains not one but *all* of Milton's divine worlds.

What does it mean, then, to find these Miltonic parallels in Hardy, among all the other Miltonic features present in his work (his engagement with astronomy, music, architecture, divorce)? Paying attention to temporality, landscape, the body and its edges—all essential to Hardy's work—is given increased significance and interest when viewed alongside Milton's interest in the same matters. What has been treated by critics as an idiosyncrasy is revealed as unity between two writers with simultaneously conflicting and complementary visions of the world. Considering Milton and Hardy in dialogue draws us to refocus our attention onto peripheral and perverse moments in the texts, which can be understood to be central to the emotional power of their work, in turn making clear the substance of their connection.

⁶²² Grundy, p. 334.

Conclusion

Graves, Words, Images, Margins

Throughout this thesis the materiality of the image, the text, and the body have been intertwined. The connections I have made here between progeny and literary and artistic production are not unusual. After all, one of Milton's better-known lines of prose declares:

Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as in a viol the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them.⁶²³

As Hamilton has noted, Turner found 'the fingernails and fingertips were as capable of creating expression in paint as any brushes'.⁶²⁴ In Chapter 3 I explored the ways in which the edges of words and texts behave like the edges of bodies in Milton and Swinburne. Yopie Prins has recently read Swinburne's metre as interwoven with his fascination with flagellation, aligning marks on the page with lashes on the body.⁶²⁵ This thesis has been haunted by bodies both dead and alive. Though Shelley is the writer here who most overtly resurrects the dead, Miller writes of Hardy that the 'theme of the revivification of the past runs all through his poems': 'Hardy is the man who sees ghosts'.⁶²⁶ As Arsić writes of 'Bartleby's passive body', it 'is like a corpse in a grave'.⁶²⁷ I have considered the anecdote as, in Gallagher and Greenblatt's words, an attempt 'to revivify, to bring something back to life', part of an understanding of literary history that suggests 'when they are narrated and troped, dead bodies and their parts can circulate like stories being passed down'.⁶²⁸

In examining lines of influence it is inevitable that we arrive back at the grave, which in Samantha Matthews's words, 'raises fundamental questions about artistic control, relations between private and public existence, and the potential of a life's work to transcend the individual's death'.⁶²⁹ If we return to the beginning of the thesis and Macaulay's 1825 essay on Milton, we find a reflection on the evocative and indirect effects of Milton's poetry which brings together several threads of this thinking:

⁶²³ 'Areopagitica', *Complete Prose*, II, p. 492.

⁶²⁴ Hamilton, p. 56.

⁶²⁵ 'Metrical Discipline: Algernon Swinburne on "The Flogging-Block"', in *Algernon Charles Swinburne: Unofficial Laureate*, ed. by Catherine Maxwell and Stefano Evangelista (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 95–124.

⁶²⁶ *Hardy*, pp. 242–43.

⁶²⁷ Gallagher and Greenblatt, pp. 70–71; Arsić, p. 55.

⁶²⁸ Lorna Clymer, 'Cromwell's Head and Milton's Hair: Corpse Theory in Spectacular Bodies of the Interregnum', *The Eighteenth Century*, 40.2 (1999), 91–112 (p. 93).

⁶²⁹ *Poetical Remains*, p. 30.

No sooner are his words pronounced, than the past is present and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the burial-places of the memory give up their dead.⁶³⁰

This expression of the effects of Milton's words on the reader's imagination suggests at once a relation to the shifting perspectives of Hardy as well as the fragmented and multiplied temporalities of Shelley's *The Last Man*, where 'past is present and the distant near', and 'burial-places [...] give up their dead'. Reading, writing, and painting—with literary history in mind—becomes an act of resurrection. We might think back to the passage marked by Melville's widow in Disraeli's *The Literary Character*, that a husband's '*marks and notes*, will still give him a *sort of existence* with me'.⁶³¹ Similarly, after Percy Bysshe's death, Mary Shelley 'began rereading Homer as a means of continuing her connection to him through one of his favourite authors'.⁶³²

This thesis has dwelled on images and texts as alternatives to 'burial-places' and suggested that these nineteenth-century figures hold a conductive relationship with Milton who is kept 'present' and 'distant' at once. This combines ideas expressed by Gray and Nardo in their examinations of the Victorian Milton. Gray's identification of *duality* as primary encompasses Milton's presence/distance, and Nardo's reading of Eliot fits the schema: 'she subtly, but persistently, evokes Miltonic patterns in situations that expose their absence, leaving not the denial of these patterns, but their echo'.⁶³³ In collecting these sometimes seemingly disparate figures and looking at their use of the Miltonic in the same way—with peripheral vision—I have shown that this is not a singular response to Milton in the Victorian period, but rather a pervasive pattern in nineteenth-century cultural engagement with the Miltonic.

One of the ways in which Milton is kept present and distant in these texts is through their consistent acknowledgement of the inescapably postlapsarian state of human existence. The texts I have discussed in this thesis all recreate the events of Milton's aetiological epic in a world that is Fallen, marked distinctly by the grief of history. The Victorians are particularly aware of their Fallen nature. Shelley mourns and resurrects P. B. Shelley in the language of *Paradise Lost*. I have argued that this is partly because her desire is for a Miltonic prelapsarian world in which woman and angel can converse, and her reality is a Miltonic postlapsarian world in which she must confront—like fallen Adam and Eve—'mortal reproductive time,

⁶³⁰ Macaulay, p. 6.

⁶³¹ Sealts, quoted in Delbanco, p. 321.

⁶³² Kilgour, p. 581.

⁶³³ Nardo, p. 25.

marked by the proliferation of bodies that die'.⁶³⁴ Hardy's Wessex is an already-fallen world in which Eve continues to fall repeatedly; his transtemporal topography gestures to a prelapsarian Eden but is finally, manifestly, postlapsarian. Fiene's identification of Melville's *Bartleby* with Christ considers its similarities with its biblical model, suggesting that 'Bartleby' 'teaches us one thing especially clearly: that when Christ returns as the Messiah we shall deny him and betray him and crucify him again'.⁶³⁵ Further, Urbanczyk writes that the crucial difference between Milton's Satan and Melville's 'Confidence Man' is that 'Melville situates his villainous hero in an already fallen world that departs radically from the joyful hope promised at the end of *Paradise Lost*'.⁶³⁶ The intense sexual desire that Swinburne's poetry expresses is situated in contrast to the possibility of complete cleaving and melting offered in Milton's vision of divine and prelapsarian sexuality. Milton's postlapsarian landscape is consistently *hopeful* in a way that the fictional worlds of his Victorian successors are not. Milton's ambivalent ending is recast in both *The Last Man* and *Tess*, and in both texts, it is reconfigured as unhopeful.

So, the Victorian acknowledgement of Milton's duality appears most regularly in this pattern of recollection and departure. To follow the example set by earlier scholars of Miltonic influence, the best way to illustrate the dynamics of this expression of his nineteenth-century legacy could be drawn from Milton's poetry itself. I discussed in Chapter 1, in relation to John Martin's reputation, the complex meaning suggested by the word 'error' in *Paradise Lost*. Milton's 'error' recalls postlapsarian sin in order to gesture to its absence whilst acknowledging its approach, in turn suggesting that the language in which this is articulated is itself fallen. Ricks conveys the various meanings contained within the word with parentheses: 'wandering (not error)'.⁶³⁷ This inclusion of the unimaginable or invisible—'wandering (not ...)'—as a peripheral attachment to the visible—'error'—reflects the way that Milton himself is recalled to be used as a point of contrast. We could reformulate each of the examples listed above in this way, for instance: Wessex (not Eden).

What makes 'error' important in *Paradise Lost* is what it suggests parenthetically and peripherally. Gray's thinking about Milton and influence is often spatial in this way; he writes about Milton's presence in terms of 'background/foreground', 'centre/threshold': Milton 'exerts his sway' on Arnold 'from the margins or the background'.⁶³⁸ I explicitly use this

⁶³⁴ Murphy.

⁶³⁵ Fiene, p. 22.

⁶³⁶ Urbanczyk, p. 301.

⁶³⁷ Ricks, p. 110.

⁶³⁸ *Milton*, p. 64.

second spatialisation because conceptualising Milton as marginal draws us to pay attention to the marginal moments in texts and images, which as I have demonstrated, are often the moments in which Milton's Victorian influence becomes most visible. This can be considered a version of what Gray reaps from a study of Arnold's Miltonic weakness:

Allusions to Milton in Arnold's prose and poetry are often glancing and fugitive, but they come out most strongly when Arnold is himself propounding the very Miltonic ideal of tactical retreat.⁶³⁹

I argue that the Miltonic in Victorian culture is peripheral, and 'come[s] out most strongly' when writers and painters are writing, in turn, about margins. I extend Gray's comments on Milton's marginality in asserting that it is in the moments of Victorian culture that explicitly address margins or inherently *are* margins—in supplements, anecdotal appendices, and marginalia—that Milton's marginal presence is made clear. This thesis then proposes an understanding of the Victorian Milton as more powerfully peripheral, which in turn encompasses the relationship Gray identifies between Arnold and Milton, as well as the relationship Nardo identifies between Eliot and Milton.

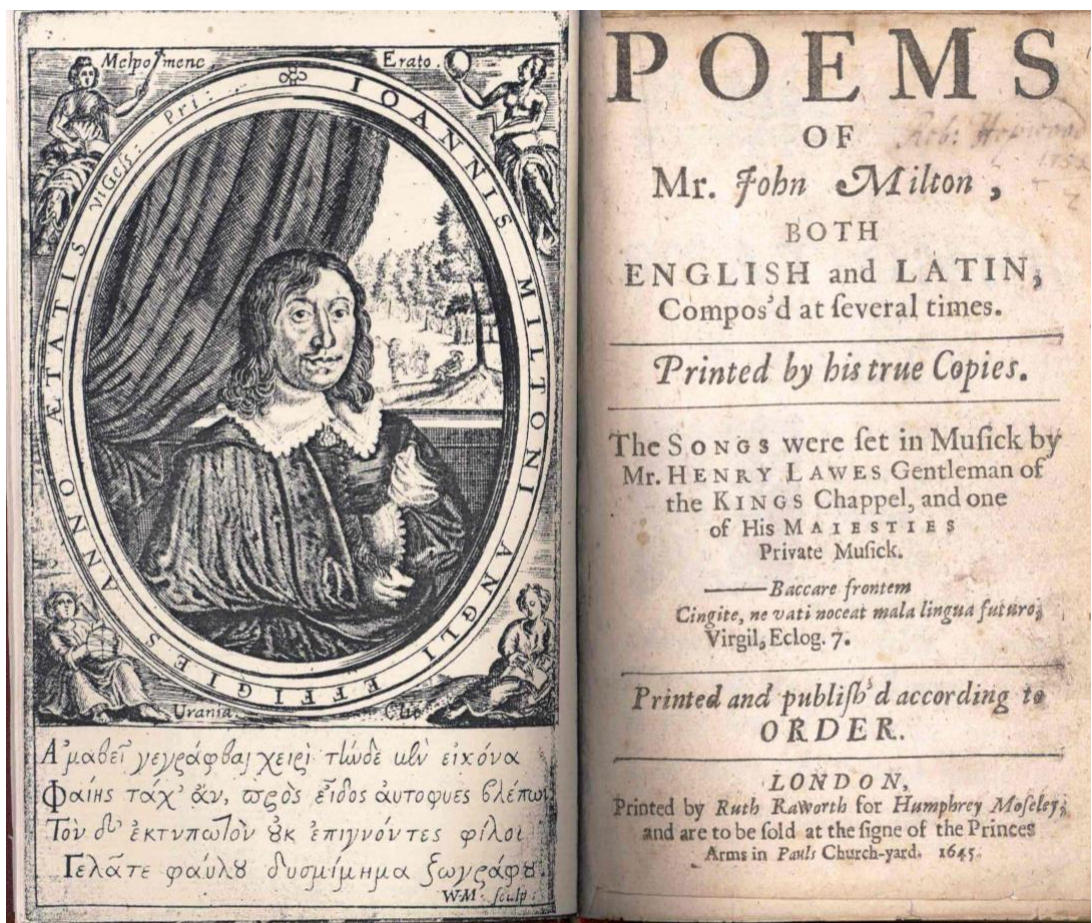


Figure 22. Frontispiece and title page of John Milton, *Poems of Mr. John Milton* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1645).

⁶³⁹ *Milton*, p. 10.

To illustrate this relationship between the visible and obscured we might then turn, finally, to the frontispiece to Milton's 1645 *Poems*, engraved by William Marshall (see Figure 22). In the engraving, Milton is depicted partially obscuring a bright pastoral scene, surrounded by fabric so that he seems to be seated in a dark room. In turn this oval portrait is surrounded by four muses—Urania, Melpomene, Erato, and Clio—one at each corner. The most interesting part of the image, however, is the text in Greek beneath, provided by Milton after he had seen his likeness, and dutifully engraved by Marshall (who, it is assumed, could not read Greek). It translates as follows:

You might readily say that this picture was drawn with an ignorant hand if you saw the real image; if you don't recognize the man being pictured, friends, laugh at this bad imitation of a worthless artist.⁶⁴⁰

The image then presents a secret message (concealed from those of us who, like Marshall, cannot read Greek), which is not contained within the image itself but is attached to it in such a way as to transform the image from simply a 'bad imitation' into a document of Milton's playfulness. There is a concealed division here between the image and the text that accompanies it, where the latter is a concealed critique of the former, made by the same hand but not conceived by the same mind. The story demonstrates the importance of analysing and understanding the appendages of images and texts, as paying attention to their peripheral features is essential for accessing revelatory buried matter, or for making 'darkness visible' (l. 63).

⁶⁴⁰ Trans. by Kerrigan, Rumrich, and Fallon, *Complete Poetry*, pp. 242–43.

Bibliography

- Ackroyd, Peter, *Milton in America* (London: Vintage, 1997)
- Adney, Karley, 'It's Not a Matter of Message but of Messenger: Miltonic Principles in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', *The Thomas Hardy Society Journal*, 2.2 (2006), 35–43
- Alexander, Christine, "'The Burning Clime': Charlotte Brontë and John Martin", *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 50.3 (1995), 285–321
- An, Young-Ok, "'Read Your Fall": The Signs of Plague in *The Last Man*', *Studies in Romanticism*, 44.4 (2005), 581–604
- Andersen, Carol Reed, 'Time, Space, and Perspective in Thomas Hardy', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 9.3 (1954), 192–208
- Arendt, Hannah, *On Revolution* [1963] (London: Penguin, 1990)
- Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals*, trans. by James G. Lennox (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 2001)
- Arsić, Branka, *Passive Constitutions or 7 ½ Times Bartleby* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007)
- Auerbach, Nina, 'The Rise of the Fallen Woman', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 35.1 (1980), 29–52
- B. B., 'Minor Notes: Milton's Rib-Bone', *Notes and Queries: A Medium of Inter-Communication for Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, Etc.*, ed. by George Bell, 5 (1852), 368
- Bailes, Melissa, 'The Psychologization of Geological Catastrophe in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *ELH*, 82.2 (2015), 671–99
- Baudelaire, Charles, *The Flowers of Evil* [*Les Fleurs du Mal*], trans. by James McGowan (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Beer, Gillian, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Bell, Charles, *The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments, as Evincing Design* (London: William Pickering, 1834) <<http://archive.org/details/handmechanismvit00belliala>> [accessed 19 May 2017]
- Belsey, Catherine, *John Milton: Language, Gender, Power* (Oxford; New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988)
- Benjamin, Walter, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, ed. by Michael W. Jennings, trans. by Howard Eiland, Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingston, and Harry Zohn (Cambridge, MA; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006)
- Bennett, Andrew, and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 5th edn (London; New York: Routledge, 2016)
- Bennett, Betty T., 'Radical Imaginings: Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 26.3 (1995), 147–52
- Bindman, David, 'Deep Time, Dragons and Dinosaurs', in *John Martin: Apocalypse*, ed. by Martin Myrone (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), pp. 43–51

- Bloom, Harold, *The Ringers in the Tower: Studies in Romantic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971)
- , *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* [1973], 2nd edn (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Boumelha, Penny, *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form* (Sussex; Totowa, NJ: The Harvester Press; Barnes & Noble, 1982)
- Braddon, Mary Elizabeth, *Lady Audley's Secret* [1862] (London: Penguin, 2012)
- Brantlinger, Patrick, 'What Is "Sensational" About the "Sensation Novel"?', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 37.1 (1982), 1–28
- Brennan, Thomas J., 'Creating from Nothing: Swinburne and Baudelaire in "Ave Atque Vale"', *Victorian Poetry*, 44.3 (2006), 251–71
- Brick, Allan, 'Paradise and Consciousness in Hardy's *Tess*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 17.2 (1962), 115–34
- Briefel, Aviva, *The Racial Hand in the Victorian Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)
- Brontë, Charlotte, *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë: With a Selection of Letters by Family and Friends*, ed. by Margaret Smith, 3 vols (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Brown, Eric C., "'The Melting Voice Through Mazes Running': The Dissolution of Borders in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*", *Milton Studies*, 40 (2001) 1–18
- , *Milton on Film* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2015)
- Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed. by Frederic G. Kenyon (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1897)
- Bullen, J. B., *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986)
- Bulwer-Lytton, Edward, *England and the English* (Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1833)
- Calè, Luisa, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: 'Turning Readers into Spectators'* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Cameron, Lauren, 'Mary Shelley's Malthusian Objections in *The Last Man*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 67.2 (2012), 177–203
- Campbell, Gordon, and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Campbell, Michael J., 'John Martin as a Commercial Printmaker', in *John Martin: Apocalypse*, ed. by Martin Myrone (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), pp. 22–33
- Cantor, Paul A., 'The Apocalypse of Empire: Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', in *Iconoclastic Departures: Mary Shelley after Frankenstein*, ed. by Syndy M. Conger, Frederick S. Frank, and Gregory O'Dea (Madison, NJ; London; Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; Associated University Presses, 1997), pp. 193–211
- Capuano, Peter J., *Changing Hands: Industry, Evolution, and the Reconfiguration of the Victorian Body* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2015)
- Carlyle, Thomas, and Jane Welsh Carlyle, *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. by Clyde de L. Ryals and Kenneth J. Fielding, 25 vols (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1990), xvii

- Carson, Anne, *Eros the Bittersweet* (Champaign: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998)
- Chandler, Marilyn R., 'The Space Makers: Passive Power in Faulkner's Novels', *College Literature*, 14.2 (1987), 120–27
- Clark, T. J., *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)
- Clements, Patricia, "'Strange Flowers': Some Notes on the Baudelaire of Swinburne and Pater", *The Modern Language Review*, 76.1 (1981), 20–30
- Clymer, Lorna, 'Cromwell's Head and Milton's Hair: Corpse Theory in Spectacular Bodies of the Interregnum', *The Eighteenth Century*, 40.2 (1999), 91–112
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by R. A. Foakes, 16 vols (Princeton, NJ; London: Princeton University Press; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987)
- Cook, David A., 'The Content and Meaning of Swinburne's "Anactoria"', *Victorian Poetry*, 9 (1971), 77–93
- Corns, Thomas N., ed., *The Milton Encyclopedia* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2012)
- Davies, Jeremy, 'The Shelleys and the Art of Suffering', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34.2 (2011), 267–80
- Daw, Gillian, "'Dark with Excessive Light': Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the Nineteenth-Century Astronomical Imagination", *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 37.2 (2015), 107–26
- deGruy, Karma, 'Desiring Angels: The Angelic Body in *Paradise Lost*', *Criticism*, 54.1 (2012), 117–49
- Delbanco, Andrew, *Melville: His World and Work* (London: Picador, 2005)
- Deleuze, Gilles, 'Bartleby; Or, The Formula', in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 68–90
- Dickens, Charles, *The Christmas Books* (London: White's Books, 2008)
- Dobranski, Stephen B., 'Clustering and Curling Locks: The Matter of Hair in *Paradise Lost*', *PMLA*, 125.2 (2010), 337–53
- Douglas, Mary, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* [1966] (London: Routledge, 1991)
- 'Editor's Easy Chair', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 14 (January 1857) pp. 270–280
- Effinger, Elizabeth, 'A Clandestine Catastrophe: Disciplinary Dissolution in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *European Romantic Review*, 25 (2014), 19–34
- Eliot, George, *Middlemarch* [1871–72], ed. by Rosemary Ashton (London: Penguin, 1994)
- Empson, William, 'Milton and Bentley', in *Some Versions of Pastoral* [1935] (London; New York: Penguin, 1995), pp. 121–55
- , *Milton's God* [1961], 2nd edn (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981)
- 'The Fallen Woman Exhibition', *Foundling Museum*
 <<http://foundlingmuseum.org.uk/events/fallen-woman/>> [accessed 10 May 2017]

- Fallon, Stephen M., *Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991)
- Farwell, Marilyn R., 'Eve, the Separation Scene, and the Renaissance Idea of Androgyny', *Milton Studies*, 16, ed. by James D. Simmonds (1982), 3–20
- Favret, Mary, 'Mary Shelley's Sympathy and Irony: The Editor and Her Corpus', in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, ed. by Audrey A. Fisch, Anne K. Mellor, and Esther H. Schor (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 17–38
- Feaver, William, *The Art of John Martin* (Oxford; London: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1975)
- , *John Martin, 1789–1854: Loan Exhibition, Oil Paintings, Watercolours, Prints, 30th October–21st November, 1975* (London: Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, 1975)
- Fiene, Donald M., 'Bartleby the Christ', *American Transcendental Quarterly: A Journal of New England Writers*, 7 (1970), 18–23
- Fisch, Audrey A., 'Plaguing Politics: AIDS, Deconstruction, and *The Last Man*', in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, by Esther H. Schor, Anne Kostelanetz Mellor, and Audrey A. Fisch (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 267–86
- Fish, Stanley Eugene, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1967)
- , *How Milton Works* (Cambridge, MA; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001)
- Fogle, Richard Harter, 'Billy Budd: The Order of the Fall', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 15.3 (1960), 189–205
- Ford, Mark, *Thomas Hardy: Half a Londoner* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016)
- Forsyth, Neil, 'Hands On', in *A Concise Companion to the Study of Manuscripts, Printed Books, and the Production of Early Modern Texts: A Festschrift for Gordon Campbell*, ed. by Edward Jones (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), pp. 294–321
- Foucault, Michel, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality Volume 1* [1976], trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1998)
- , *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, ed. by James Faubion, trans. by Charles Ruas (London; New York: Continuum, 2004)
- Fox, Robin, 'Playing by the Rules: Sound and Sense in Swinburne and the Rhyming Poets', *Philosophy and Literature*, 32.2 (2008), 217–40
- Franklin, H. Bruce, *The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963)
- Freeman, John, *Herman Melville* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1926)
- Freud, Sigmund, 'The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words [1910]', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. by Anna Freud, Alix Strachey, and Alan Tyson, trans. by James Strachey, 19 vols (London: Vintage, 2001), XI
- Frye, Roland Mushat, *Milton's Imagery and the Visual Arts: Iconographic Tradition in the Epic Poems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978)
- Furman-Adams, Wendy, and Virginia James Tufte, "'Pleasing Was His Shape, / And Lovely": The Serpent with Eve and Adam in Art before Milton and in Re-Visions by

- Three Twentieth-Century Women', *Milton Studies*, 37, ed. by Albert C. Labriola (1999), 89–141
- Gallagher, Catherine, and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2000)
- Gardner, Helen, *A Reading of Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965)
- Garland, Tony W., 'Brothers in Paradox: Swinburne, Baudelaire, and the Paradox of Sin', *Victorian Poetry*, 47.4 (2009), 633–45
- Gatrell, Simon, 'Wessex', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Dale Kramer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 19–37
- Genette, Gérard, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edn (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1979)
- Giraldi, William, 'The Writer as Reader: Melville and His Marginalia', *LA Review of Books*, 18 August 2013 <<http://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/the-writer-as-reader-melville-and-his-marginalia/>> [accessed 28 January 2014]
- Glen, Heather, *Charlotte Brontë: The Imagination in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Goldberg, Shari, 'Benito Cereno's Mute Testimony: On the Politics of Reading Melville's Silences', *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture and Theory*, 65.2 (2009), 1–26
- Gossman, Ann, 'The Ring Pattern: Image, Structure, and Theme in *Paradise Lost*', *Studies in Philology*, 68.3 (1971), 326–39
- Gray, Erik, 'Faithful Likenesses: Lists of Similes in Milton, Shelley, and Rossetti', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 48.4 (2006), 291–311
- , *Milton and the Victorians* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 2009)
- , 'The Hair of Milton: Historicism and Literary History', in *Romanticism, History, Historicism: Essays on an Orthodoxy*, ed. by Damian Walford Davies (New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 2009)
- Greenberg, Robert A., "'Erotion," "Anactoria," and the Sapphic Passion', *Victorian Poetry*, 29 (1991), 79–87
- Greene, Thomas M., 'Labyrinth Dances in the French and English Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54.4 (2001), 1403–66
- Grey, Robin, 'Melville's Quarrel with Milton: An Introduction', *Leviathan*, 4 (2002), 4–6
- , ed., *Melville and Milton: An Edition and Analysis of Melville's Annotations on Milton* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2004)
- Grey, Robin, and Douglas Robillard, 'Melville's Milton: A Transcription of Melville's Marginalia in His Copy of *The Poetical Works of John Milton*', *Leviathan*, 4 (2002), 117–204
- Grossman, Martin, 'The Genders of God and the Redemption of the Flesh in *Paradise Lost*', in *Milton and Gender*, ed. by Catherine Gimelli Martin (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 95–114

- Grundy, Joan, 'Milton and Hardy', in *John Milton: Twentieth Century Perspectives*, ed. by J. Martin Evans, 5 vols (New York: Routledge, 2003), I, 329–40
- Grylls, Rosalie Glynn, *Mary Shelley: A Biography* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1938)
- Hamilton, James, *Turner: A Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997)
- Hardy, Thomas, *Desperate Remedies* [1871], ed. by Patricia Ingham (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)
- , *Under the Greenwood Tree* [1872], ed. by Simon Gatrell (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985)
- , *Far from the Madding Crowd* [1874], ed. by Suzanne B. Falck-Yi (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)
- , *The Return of the Native* [1878], ed. by Simon Gatrell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- , *The Return of the Native* [1878], ed. by Tony Slade (London: Penguin, 2012)
- , *Two on a Tower* [1882] (London: Penguin, 2012)
- , *The Woodlanders* [1887], ed. by Dale Kramer (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- , *Wessex Tales* [1888; 1912], ed. by Kathryn R. King (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991)
- , *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* [1891] (London: Vintage, 2011)
- , *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved and The Well-Beloved* [1892; 1897], ed. by Patricia Ingham (London: Penguin, 1997)
- Hardy, Thomas, and Florence Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy* (London: Studio Editions Ltd, 1994) first publ. in 2 vols: *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840–1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928) and *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892–1928* (London: Macmillan, 1930)
- Hazlitt, William, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. by P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London; Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1930)
- Herrick, Jeffrey, 'Swim and Burn with Swinburne', *The Antioch Review*, 67 (2009), 99–107
- Hoare, Philip, *Leviathan, Or, The Whale* (London: Fourth Estate, 2009)
- Hofmann, Klaus, 'Milton's Hair', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 21.2 (2010), 224–26
- Hogg, Thomas Jefferson, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1906)
- 'Hood's Whims and Oddities', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 21 (1827), 45–60
- Howell, A. C., 'Milton's Mortal Remains and Their Literary Echoes', *Forum*, 4.2 (1963), 17–30
- Hughes, Merritt Y., 'Some Illustrators of Milton: The Expulsion from Paradise', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 60.4 (1961), 670–79
- Hunt, Leigh, 'The Wishing-Cap, No. 1', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, o.s., 2 (1833), 435–52
- , *The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt*, ed. by Thornton Hunt (London; New York: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1860)

- Jacobs, Carol, 'On Looking at Shelley's Medusa', *Yale French Studies*, 69, The Lesson of Paul de Man (1985), 163–79
- Johnson, Barbara, 'The Last Man', in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, ed. by Audrey A. Fisch, Anne Kostelanetz Mellor, and Esther H. Schor (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 258–66
- Jones, Lawrence O., 'Desperate Remedies and the Victorian Sensation Novel', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 20 (1965), 35–50
- Jonik, Michael, 'Murmurs, Stutters, Foreign Intonations: Melville's Unreadables', *The Oxford Literary Review*, 33 (2011), 21–44
- Kamuf, Peggy, "'Bartleby", or Decision: A Note on Allegory', in *To Follow: The Wake of Jacques Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 34–42
- Kant, Immanuel, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, ed. by John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley, CA; London: University of California Press, 1960)
- Keats, John, *The Complete Poems*, ed. by John Barnard, 3rd edn (London: Penguin, 2006)
- Kendrick, Christopher, 'Un-American Milton: Milton's Reputation and Reception in the Early United States', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 77.3 (2008), 903–22
- Kendrick, Walter M., 'The Sensationalism of Thomas Hardy', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 22.4 (1980), 484–503
- Key, Andrew, 'Infinite Restlessness: Beckett, Bad Infinity and the Dialectic' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Sussex, 2013)
- Kilgour, Maggie, "'One Immortality": The Shaping of The Shelleys in *The Last Man*', *European Romantic Review*, 16.5 (2005), 563–88
- Kitto, John, and J. Gibbs, eds., *The Holy Bible* (The Extra-Illustrated 'Kitto Bible'), 60 vols (London: 1836), RB 49000 The Huntington Library, San Marino, California
- Knighton, Andrew, 'The Bartleby Industry and Bartleby's Idleness', *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, 53.2 (2007), 184–215
- Kolb, Margaret, 'Plot Circles: Hardy's Drunkards and Their Walks', *Victorian Studies*, 56.4 (2014), 595–623
- Lamb, John B., 'Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Milton's Monstrous Myth', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47.3 (1992), 303–19
- Landor, Walter Savage, *Imaginary Conversations*, ed. by Charles G. Crump, 6 vols (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1891)
- Le Comte, Edward, *Milton and Sex* (London; Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 1978)
- Leader, Eldon, 'Moby-Book, or The Dinosaur', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 17 (1993), 65–70
- Lehnhof, Kent R., "'Nor Turnd I Weene": *Paradise Lost* and Pre-Lapsarian Sexuality', *Milton Quarterly*, 34.3 (2000), 67–83
- , 'Scatology and the Sacred in Milton's *Paradise Lost*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 37.3 (2007), 429–49
- Lennartz, Norbert, 'Paradise Lost and Hell Regained: On the Figure of the Intruder in Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *Études Anglaises: Revue Du Monde Anglophone*, 61 (2008), 3–18

- Leonard, David Charles, 'The Cartesian Vortex in Moby-Dick', *American Literature*, 51 (1979), 105–9
- , 'Descartes, Melville, and the Mardian Vortex', *South Atlantic Bulletin*, 45.2 (1980), 13–25
- Leonard, John, *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost, 1667–1970*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Levin, Yisrael, 'Solar Erotica: Swinburne's Myth of Creation' in *A.C. Swinburne and the Singing Word: New Perspectives on the Mature Work*, ed. by Yisrael Levin (Farnham, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 55–72
- Lodge, David, 'Thomas Hardy and Cinematographic Form', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 7.3 (1974), 246–54
- Lokke, Kari E., 'The Last Man', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley*, ed. by Esther Schor (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 116–34
- London, Bette, 'Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, and the Spectacle of Masculinity', *PMLA*, 108.2 (1993), 253–67
- Louis, Margot K., 'Erotic Figuration in Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse*, Canto 2: The Vanishing Knight and the Drift of Butterflies', *Victorian Poetry*, 47.4 (2009), 647–59
- Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, trans. by Ronald Melville (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Luke, Jr, Hugh J., 'The Last Man: Mary Shelley's Myth of the Solitary', *Prairie Schooner*, 39.4 (1965), 316–27
- Macaulay, Thomas Babington, 'Milton' [August, 1825], in *Critical and Historical Essays: Contributed to 'The Edinburgh Review'* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1877), pp. 1–28
- MacCaffrey, Isabel Gamble, *Paradise Lost as 'Myth'* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959)
- Manning, Anne, *The Maiden & Married Life of Mary Powell, Afterwards Mistress Milton*, 3rd edn (London: Hall, Virtue, & Co., 1850)
- Matthews, Samantha, *Poetical Remains: Poets' Graves, Bodies, and Books in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Matus, Jill L., *Unstable Bodies: Victorian Representations of Sexuality and Maternity* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1995)
- Maxwell, Catherine, *The Female Sublime from Milton to Swinburne: Bearing Blindness* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2001)
- , *Swinburne* (Tavistock, UK: Northcote House, 2006)
- , *Second Sight: The Visionary Imagination in Late Victorian Literature* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2009)
- McCall, Dan, *The Silence of Bartleby* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1989)
- McCullers, Carson, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* [1940], ed. by Kasia Boddy (London: Penguin, 2008)
- , *The Mortgaged Heart* (London: Penguin, 1975)

- McEwen, Kathryn E., 'Hand/Arbeit/Buch/Schrift: Approaching the Female Hand' (unpublished PhD, Vanderbilt University, 2013)
<<http://etd.library.vanderbilt.edu/available/etd-03222013-034444/>> [accessed 26 January 2016]
- McGann, Jerome, *Swinburne: An Experiment in Criticism* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1972)
- Mellor, Anne K., *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (New York; London: Routledge, 1988)
- Melville, Herman, *Omoo: A Narrative of Adventures in the South Seas* [1847], ed. by Mary K. Bercaw Edwards (New York: Penguin, 2007)
- , *Moby-Dick, Or, The Whale* [1851], ed. by Viola Meynell (London: Oxford University Press, 1920)
- , *Moby-Dick* [1851] (London: Penguin, 2013)
- , *Redburn; White-Jacket; Moby-Dick*, ed. by G. Thomas Tanselle (New York: Library of America, 1983)
- , *Pierre; Israel Potter; The Piazza Tales; The Confidence-Man; Uncollected Prose; Billy Budd, Sailor*, ed. by Harrison Hayford (New York: Library of America, 1984)
- , *Billy Budd, Sailor and Selected Tales*, ed. by Robert Milder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Miller, J. Hillis, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970)
- , 'Who Is He? Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener"', in *Versions of Pygmalion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 141–78
- , 'Hands in Hardy', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan (Farnham, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 505–16
- Milton, John, *Paradise Lost. A Poem in Twelve Books* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1688), RB 138962, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California
- , *The Paradise Lost of Milton with Illustrations by John Martin*, 2 vols (London: Septimus Prowett, 1826), RB 110034, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California
- , *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. by Don M. Wolfe, 8 vols (New Haven; London: Yale University Press; Oxford University Press, 1953–1982)
- , *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Alastair Fowler, 2nd edn (London; New York: Longman, 1998)
- , *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Gordon Teskey (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005)
- , *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed. by William Kerrigan, John Peter Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon (New York: Modern Library, 2007)
- Milton, John, Francis Bartolozzi and Thomas Stothard, *Graphic Illustrations of Milton's Paradise Lost* (London: John Hill, 1818) RB 621779, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California
- Mohanty, Christine, 'Death by Water in Milton', *Milton Quarterly*, 14.4 (1980), 122–26
- Moore, Alan, and Stephen O'Malley, 'Simultaneous Conjugation of Four Spirits in a Room, 2010' (Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, 2010) <<https://vimeo.com/11849343>> [accessed 15 May 2017]

- Moshenska, Joe, “‘Transported Touch’: The Sense of Feeling in Milton’s Eden”, *Journal of English Literary History*, 79.1 (2012), 1–31
- Mr. Turner*, dir. by Mike Leigh (Entertainment One, 2014)
- Murphy, Erin, ‘Milton’s “Birth Abortive”: Remaking Family at the End of *Paradise Lost*’, *Milton Studies*, 43, ed. by Albert C. Labriola (2004)
- Myrone, Martin, ed., *John Martin: Apocalypse* (London: Tate Publishing, 2011)
- Myrone, Martin, and Anna Austen, ‘Catalogue’ in *John Martin: Apocalypse*, ed. by Martin Myrone (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), pp. 61–212
- Nardo, Anna K., *George Eliot’s Dialogue with John Milton* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003)
- Nelson, James G., *The Sublime Puritan: Milton and the Victorians* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963)
- Neve, Philip, *A Narrative of the Disinterment of Milton’s Coffin, in the Parish-Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, On Wednesday, 4th of August, 1790*, 2nd edn (London: n.p., 1790)
- Newlyn, Lucy, *Paradise Lost and the Romantic Reader* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1993)
- Nice, Margaret Morse, ‘A Study of the Nesting of Mourning Doves’, *The Auk*, 39.4 (1922), 457–74
- North, Julian, ‘Shelley Revitalized: Biography and the Reanimated Body’, *European Romantic Review*, 21.6 (2010), 751–70
- Nuttall, A. D., *Openings: Narrative Beginnings from the Epic to the Novel* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1992)
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by John Dryden and Samuel Garth
 <<http://classics.mit.edu/Ovid/metam.1.first.html>> [accessed 24 May 2017]
- Paley, Morton D., ‘Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man*: Apocalypse Without Millennium’, in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, ed. by Audrey A. Fisch, Anne K. Mellor, and Esther H. Schor (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 107–2
- Paterson, John, ‘An Attempt at Grand Tragedy’, in *Thomas Hardy: The Tragic Novels*, ed. by R. P. Draper, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan Press, 1975), pp. 109–18
- Pecorino, Jessica Prinz, ‘Eve Unparadised: Milton’s Expulsion and Iconographic Tradition’, *Milton Quarterly*, 15 (1981), 1–10
- Péti, Miklós, ‘A Heap of Broken Images Or, Why Milton Is an Iconoclast?’, *Classical Receptions Journal*, 6.2 (2014), 270–93
- Plato, *Symposium*, trans. by Robin Waterfield (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Poe, Edgar Allan, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (New York; London: Melville House Publishing, 1838)
- Pointon, Marcia R., *Milton & English Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970)
- Pommer, Henry Francis, *Milton and Melville* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1950)
- Prettejohn, Elizabeth, ‘Solomon, Swinburne, Sappho’, *Victorian Review*, 34.2 (2008), 103–28
- Prins, Yopie, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999)

- , 'Metrical Discipline: Algernon Swinburne on "The Flogging-Block"', in *Algernon Charles Swinburne: Unofficial Laureate*, ed. by Catherine Maxwell and Stefano Evangelista (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 95–124
- Read, Allen Walker, 'The Disinterment of Milton's Remains', *PMLA*, 45.4 (1930), 1050–68
- Redding, Cyrus, 'The Late Joseph Mallord William Turner', *Fraser's Magazine*, 45 (1852), 150–56
- Reed Doob, Penelope, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990)
- 'Review of *The Last Man*', *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c.*, 473 (1826), 102–3
- 'Review of *The Last Man*', *The Monthly Review, Or Literary Journal*, n. s. 1 (1826), 333–35
- 'Review of *The Last Man*', *The Panoramic Miscellany, or Monthly Magazine and Review of Literature, Sciences, Arts, Inventions, and Occurrences*, 1 (1826), 380–86
- Ricks, Christopher, *Milton's Grand Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963)
- Riding, Christine, 'Making Waves', in *Turner & The Sea*, ed. by Christine Riding and Richard Johns (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013), pp. 240–72
- Robillard, Douglas, *Melville and the Visual Arts: Ionian Form, Venetian Tint* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997)
- Rogers, John, 'Paradise Lost, Books V–VI', Open Yale Lecture (29 October 2007) <<http://oyc.yale.edu/english/engl-220/lecture-15>> [accessed 27 September 2013]
- Rooksby, Rikky, *A. C. Swinburne: A Poet's Life* (Aldershot, UK; Brookfield, VT: Scolar Press; Ashgate Publishing Company, 1997)
- Rowe, Katherine, *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999)
- Royle, Nicholas, *Veering: A Theory of Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011)
- Ruppert, Timothy, 'Time and the Sibyl in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *Studies in the Novel*, 41.2 (2009), 141–56
- Ruskin, John, *Modern Painters*, 3rd edn, 6 vols (London: George Allen, 1900), 1
- Said, Edward W., *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, 2nd edn (London: Granta, 1997)
- Sappho, *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho*, trans. by Anne Carson (London: Virago, 2003)
- Sealts, Jr., Merton M., *Melville's Reading* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988)
- Seidman, Steven, 'The Power of Desire and the Danger of Pleasure: Victorian Sexuality Reconsidered', *Journal of Social History*, 24 (1990), 47–67
- Shakespeare, William, *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008)
- Shawcross, John T., "'Too Intellectual a Poet Ever to Be Popular': Herman Melville and the Miltonic Dimension of *Clarel*", *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies*, 4 (2002), 71–90
- Sheldon, Leslie Elmer, 'The Illimitable Ocean: Herman Melville's Artistic Response to *Paradise Lost* in *Moby-Dick*, *Typee* and *Billy Budd*' (unpublished PhD, University of Toronto, 1980)

- , 'Messianic Power and Satanic Decay: Milton in *Moby-Dick*', *Leviathan*, 4 (2002), 29–50 (p. 36).
- Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, ed. by Betty T. Bennett, 3 vols (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980)
- , *The Journals of Mary Shelley 1814–1844*, ed. by Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987)
- , *The Last Man*, ed. by Morton D. Paley (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994)
- , *Frankenstein; Or, The Modern Prometheus*, ed. by Maurice Hindle (New York: Penguin, 2003)
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, *Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (London: John and Henry L. Hunt, 1824)
- , *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson (London; New York; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1952)
- , *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1964)
- Shires, Linda M., 'Narrative, Gender, and Power in *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 24.2 (1991), 162–77
- Sieburth, Richard, 'Poetry and Obscenity: Baudelaire and Swinburne', *Comparative Literature*, 36.4 (1984), 343–53
- Simpson, Philippa, 'Turner on Show', in *Turner & The Sea*, ed. by Christine Riding and Richard Johns (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013), pp. 163–200
- Slotkin, Richard, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973)
- Smiles, Sam, 'Atlantic Crossings', in *Turner & The Sea*, ed. by Christine Riding and Richard Johns (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013), pp. 270–72
- Smith, Lindsay, *Pre-Raphaelitism: Poetry and Painting* (Tavistock, UK: Northcote House, 2013)
- Snyder, Robert Lance, 'Apocalypse and Indeterminacy in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *Studies in Romanticism*, 17 (1978), 435–52
- Stafford, Fiona J., *The Last of The Race: The Growth of a Myth from Milton to Darwin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1994)
- Stein, Arnold, *Answerable Style: Essays on 'Paradise Lost'* (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 1967)
- Sterrenburg, Lee, 'The Last Man: Anatomy of Failed Revolutions', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 33.3 (1978), 324–47
- Stevens, Paul, 'Milton's Nationalism and the Rights of Memory', in *Imagining Death in Spenser and Milton*, ed. by Elizabeth Jane Bellamy, Patrick Cheney, and Michael Schoenfeldt (Basingstoke, UK; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 171–84
- Svendsen, Kester, 'John Martin and the Expulsion Scene of *Paradise Lost*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 1 (1961), 63–73
- Swaim, Kathleen M., 'The Art of the Maze in Book IX of *Paradise Lost*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 12 (1972), 129–40

- Swinburne, Algernon Charles, *The Poems of Algernon Charles Swinburne*, 6 vols (London: Chatto & Windus, 1905)
- , *Lesbia Brandon*, ed. by Randolph Hughes (London: Falcon Press, 1952)
- , *Swinburne as Critic*, ed. by Clyde K. Hyder (London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972)
- , *Algernon Charles Swinburne: Major Poems and Selected Prose*, ed. by Jerome McGann and Charles L. Sligh (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2004)
- Taylor, Dennis, 'Hardy's Missing Poem and His Copy of Milton', *The Thomas Hardy Journal*, 1 (1990) 50–60
- Taylor, Dennis, and Dayton Haskin, 'Hardy's Milton Once More', *The Thomas Hardy Journal*, 3 (1990), 71–72
- Thomas, Sophie, *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Spectacle* (New York; London: Routledge, 2008)
- Todd, Ruthven, *Tracks in the Snow: Studies in English Science and Art* (London: The Grey Walls Press, 1946)
- Tomalin, Claire, *Thomas Hardy: The Time-Torn Man* (London: Viking, 2006)
- Turner, James Grantham, *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1993)
- Urbanczyk, Aaron, 'Melville's Debt to Milton: Inverted Satanic Morphology and Rhetoric in *The Confidence-Man*', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 39.3 (2003), 281–306
- Wallace, Robert K., *Melville and Turner: Spheres of Love and Fear* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992)
- , 'Melville's Prints: The E. Barton Chapin, Jr., Family Collection', *Leviathan*, 2 (2000), 5–65
- Wang, Fuson, 'We Must Live Elsewhere: The Social Construction of Natural Immunity in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *European Romantic Review*, 22.2 (2011), 235–55
- Webb, Samantha, 'Reading the End of the World: *The Last Man*, History, and the Agency of Romantic Authorship', in *Mary Shelley in Her Times*, ed. by Betty T Bennett and Stuart Curran (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 119–33
- Wheatley, Kim, '"Attracted by the Body": Accounts of Shelley's Cremation', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 49 (2000), 162–82
- Wilson, William, 'Algernon Agonistes: "Thalassius", Visionary Strength, and Swinburne's Critique of Arnold's "Sweetness and Light"', *Victorian Poetry*, 19.4 (1981), 381–95
- Wilton, Andrew, *Turner and The Sublime* (London: British Museum Publications, 1980)
- Wittreich, Joseph Anthony, ed., *The Romantics on Milton: Formal Essays and Critical Asides* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970)
- , '"A Poet Amongst Poets": Milton and the Tradition of Prophecy' in *Milton and the Line of Vision*, ed. by Joseph Anthony Wittreich (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), pp. 97–142
- , 'Lost Paradise Regained: The Twin Halves of Milton's Epic Vision', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 80.3 (2011), 731–55

- Wolfson, Susan J., 'Editorial Privilege: Mary Shelley and Percy Shelley's Audiences', in *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*, ed. by Audrey A. Fisch, Anne K. Mellor, and Esther H. Schor (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 39–72
- Wood, Ellen (Mrs Henry), *East Lynne* [1860–61], ed. by Elisabeth Jay (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Yeats, W. B., 'Prometheus Unbound', in *Essays and Introductions* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1961), pp. 419–25
- Yeazell, Ruth Bernard, 'The Lighting Design of Hardy's Novels', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 64 (2009), 48–75
- Zlogar, Richard J., 'Body Politics in "Bartleby": Leprosy, Healing, and Christ-Ness in Melville's "Story of Wall-Street"', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 53 (1999), 505–29