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“AND PALATE CALL JUDICIOUS”: *PARADISE LOST* AND THE QUESTION OF TASTE

BY ERIC B. SONG

According to the third chapter of Genesis, when Eve “saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit thereof, and did eat” (Gen. 3:6).¹ The biblical account lists three related but discrete motivations for Eve’s transgression: the apparent wholesomeness of the fruit as food, the visual attractiveness of the tree, and the allure of transgressive knowledge. In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton demands from his readers a subtler consideration of the interplay between perception, pleasure, and knowledge. At the initial moment of the Fall, Milton describes how

Eve
Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else
Regarded, such delight till then, as seemed,
In fruit she never tasted, whether true
Or fancied so, through expectation high
Of knowledge, nor was godhead from her thought.
Greedily she engorged without restraint,
And knew not eating death.²

Although these lines conclude with the emphatic lesson that Eve “knew not eating death,” they also complicate any straightforward understanding of her error. Eve’s experience of the fruit overwhelms her regard for anything else; her attention becomes solipsistic, directed not necessarily on the fruit but rather on her own delight. The source of this delight remains uncertain. The phrase “whether true or fancied so” invites the reader to wonder whether the fruit is genuinely, intrinsically delicious or whether expectations of godlike knowledge make the fruit seem delicious in Eve’s wayward experience.

What might it mean to decide that Eve is wrong to taste the fruit as delicious, or that she tastes the fruit as being more delicious than it really is? Such questions may seem trivial given all that is at stake in the mythic narrative. Yet *Paradise Lost* announces a concern for the taste of the fruit in its opening lines:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe[.]

(*PL*, 1.1–3)

This opening signals the centrality of disobedience against God, but it also emphasizes the physical vessel and the sensuous experience of the Fall. The taste of the fruit is, of course, inaccessible for Milton and for his readers—not only because Adam and Eve were the only two people supposedly to taste of it, but also because language cannot transmit bodily experiences directly. Partly because this question of taste remains unanswerable, it helps to advance Milton's poetic investigation of truth and experience. Central Miltonic concerns converge upon the taste of the forbidden fruit: the way rational choice is expressed in or distorted by a sensuous world, and what we should do when our curiosity encounters the limits of knowledge.

This essay begins by advancing two linked arguments concerning the taste of the fruit in *Paradise Lost*—or, more accurately, concerning the disparity between the real taste of the fruit and what the fruit tasted like (to Eve and then to Adam). First, I argue that the nature of Milton's theodicy explains why the poem piques the reader's curiosity about the fruit but then thwarts any decisive judgment concerning its true taste. Milton writes of a world in which a single deity has created human bodies and all the objects they encounter; a verdict concerning proper versus errant pleasure should be available. Yet taste registers a possibility that generates unease across Milton's writings: God himself may take sensory pleasure in sacrifice, culminating in the death of his Son. When it comes to the origins of transgressive human delight, I argue, Milton avoids imagining God's absolute judgment in order to shield the reader from the unhappy possibility of a sensuous or voracious deity. The taste of the fruit remains open to human speculation as part of God's redemptive plan—or, at least, to render this redemptive plan more palatable.

Yet the lesson of *Paradise Lost* concerning taste does not reduce to *de gustibus non est disputandum*, the maxim that teaches that there is no useful debate when it comes to the vagaries of taste. Intersubjective communication and judgment must remain viable despite a kernel of indecipherability. The question of taste, I go on to argue, makes particularly evident how a gendered hierarchy is called upon to make judgment possible in the absence of certainty. Before the Fall, the episode of Raphael's visit and repast reveals Eve's conflicted position

as an object of delight and as a thoughtful subject who must evaluate others' tastes. The hierarchy of reason over sensuousness is gendered in a way that enjoins Adam to maintain husbandly superiority over his wife. Yet the resistance of taste to certainty helps to expose the gendering of this hierarchy as a tenuous fiction. After the Fall, Adam draws attention away from the fact that he has also eaten of the fruit by putting himself in the role of evaluating Eve's taste. This posture of judgment, however, is a ruse or screen that allows Adam to uphold male superiority while also expressing newly lustful desires for his wife. Insofar as the ending of *Paradise Lost* is redemptive, it must restore the conditions of communication from this kind of corrupt judgment. Yet the poem ends not by overcoming a gendered hierarchy but rather by holding out a rarified version of it as the way to foster mutual understanding between two different subjects.

My reading of *Paradise Lost* takes part in recent scholarly conversations about the histories of food, taste, and eating, and about the early modern sensorium more generally.³ Like much of this scholarship, my essay attends to bodily phenomena both as historically specific and as a meaningful link between past and present experiences. The final section of this essay looks forward to suggest that Milton's idiosyncratic but influential religious vision offers a divided lesson for modern thought, especially for the philosophical transition from taste to aesthetics. This lesson may not register within Edmund Burke's theistic empiricism—which grounds the possibility of universal standards of taste on a single Creator—but it speaks to the problems that beset the Kantian project of rational universalism. On the one hand, by leaving questions of taste open-ended for theological reasons, Milton's poetry anticipates the transition from a model of taste rooted in the Creator to a mode of aesthetic judgment rooted in the subject. On the other hand, *Paradise Lost* transmits to future thinking a myth of gender difference as a way to establish intersubjective knowledge over and above subjective caprice. Questions of good taste, of good knowledge, and of the common good continue to be linked together; *Paradise Lost* can help us account for the ways we have imagined the problem of taste as it relates to rational evaluation and shared judgment.

In the description of Eve eating the forbidden fruit, Milton's narrative intrusion—"such delight till then, *as seemed*, / In fruit she never tasted"—gestures toward a logic of vitiated taste (emphasis added).

Perhaps only a corrupted palate would take delight in something God has prohibited. Yet a verdict concerning the basis of delight proves to be more difficult than a verdict concerning choice. Whatever Eve believes or has been led to believe, she is making the wrong decision by disobeying God. It remains less clear what it would mean for Eve's taste to be vitiated at the exact moment of the Fall, if not moments before it. Such questions threaten to become unhelpfully scholastic: how quickly can a demon dance on the tip of a taste bud? Yet Milton underscores the interpretive difficulty involved. When the narrator adds, "whether true / Or fancied so," it is slightly ambiguous whether he is talking about true versus fancied delight (as the sense suggests) or true versus fancied fruit (as proximity suggests). The faint suggestion that we are again comparing this fruit with Hesperian fables reminds us that we will never know what it is really like to taste of this fruit. According to the more overt meaning, unfallen Eve has already fantasized about eating fruit more delicious than the acceptable varieties in Eden.

Eve has done so in an earlier dream implanted (or inspired) by Satan. In sleep, Eve had discovered that her appetite for the forbidden fruit could overwhelm rational choice: "I, methought, / Could not but taste" (*PL*, 5.85–86). Eve's narration only implies that she ate the fruit through a negative construction qualified with a "methought." Such uncertainty befits the fantastical and subjective nature of a dream; neither we nor Adam have any direct access to Eve's dream content. In Adam's subsequent evaluation, the errant work of the "lesser faculties that serve / Reason as chief" should not cause Eve too much concern as long as she exercises her rational choice in her waking life (*PL*, 5.101–2). When Eve falls in reality, however, she not only becomes culpable of volitional wrongdoing but also experiences an intermingling of the various senses that beleaguers reason.

Eve does deliberate before eating the fruit, but the poetic narration in book 9 prefaces this deliberation with an account of the fruit's synesthetic allure. As the serpent's speech continues to ring in Eve's ears, the noontime hour wakes in her

An eager appetite, raised by the smell
 So savory of that fruit, which with desire,
 Inclined now grown to touch or taste,
 Solicited her longing eye; yet first
 Pausing a while, thus to herself she mused.

(*PL*, 9.740–44)

Here, too, Eve's motivations prove more fluid than the third chapter of Genesis suggests. Milton appeals to but challenges the hierarchy of the senses—a familiar hierarchy that persists from antiquity to contemporary thought. Whereas vision and hearing “appear comparatively detached from experiences that are phenomenally subjective,” as Carolyn Korsmeyer puts it, taste “requires perhaps the most intimate congress with the object of perception.”⁴ In Milton's account, the lower senses of smell and taste introduce impulses that imperil Eve's judgment. Eve's choice does remain free insofar as these lower senses filter first through the higher ones and then through reason. Only after being swayed through the sound of deceptive words and then through a desirous eye will Eve succumb to the temptation to see as the gods do. Yet rational deliberation is described as a pause within a chain of sensuous experiences; the phrase “yet first” conveys the impression that Eve's reasoning is a mere delay within the process that the lower senses have initiated.

The relationship between Eve's dream and the waking Fall carries theodical implications. The reader is confronted with another case in which the Fall seems, ominously, to have occurred before the fact. In the conceptual space between an involuntary Fall (“Could not but taste”) and an unencumbered rational choice arises the difficult question of “true / Or fancied” delight. If Milton's God is emphatic about the impropriety of human actions, he offers no transcendent verdict concerning Eve's delight in the taste of the forbidden fruit. The mysterious source of her pleasure adds a specific dimension to the existing problem of divine foreknowledge. Knowing that God designed an interdicted fruit to taste a certain way would raise more questions about his foreknowledge. It might seem curiously futile for God to make a fruit delicious only to ban the eating of it; it might seem downright perverse for God to make it delicious because he knows ahead of time that it will be eaten against his command.

Paradise Lost deflects questions about the divinely ordained taste of the forbidden fruit: after the Fall, the devils are transformed into serpents condemned to eat “delusive” fruit that looks appealing but turns into ashes once in their mouths (*PL*, 10.563). In this latter case, God has deliberately designed a fruit so that it will deceive his enemies as a form of just retribution. Eve's earlier taste of the forbidden fruit, however, blurs the lines between legitimate and corrupt experience in a way that this later parody cannot fully settle. At the crux between innocent and fallen human experience, the taste of the fruit cannot simply be allegorized as the deceptive delightfulness of moral

corruption. The account of delusive fruit in book 10 does confirm that the Creator is fully capable of eliminating or manipulating the gap between perception and reality. Eve's experience, by contrast, leaves us in the realm of imperfect judgment and communication—the realm that the poetic narrator occupies.

The complexity of Eve's delight contrasts with Adam's subsequent act of forbidden eating. Nature itself responds with trembling and weeping "at completing of the mortal sin" (*PL*, 9.1003), yet the description of Adam's experience is peculiarly flat: "while Adam took no thought, / Eating his fill" (*PL*, 9.1004–5). Kristen Poole has offered a way to understand this contrast between Eve greedily engorging and Adam merely eating his fill. Poole argues that *Paradise Lost* bears the imprints of Origen's early claim that humanity fell partly due to spiritual satiety. Just as an excess of food causes a surfeit, a soul's satiety in divine presence triggers a turning away from God. Origen's teaching had, in the fourth century, been rebutted by Gregory of Nyssa, who argues for the difference between physical satiety and a soul's bottomless capacity for God. In Poole's reading, *Paradise Lost* offers "an abrasion of theological positions"—between "the idealism of Gregory of Nyssa's position (the soul grows continuously and perpetually . . .) and the experiential realism of Origen's position (human beings . . . can become overwhelmed with zealous excess)."⁵ In Milton's retelling of the Fall and its causes, the avoidance of excess proves to be a strenuous task or even a paradoxical endeavor. Theological applications of satiety cast God as the highest object of human consumption, with inferior objects of physical consumption proving less or more acceptable. Eve's delight in the fruit is clearly excessive and stimulates a satiety—not a fullness of God himself, as in Origen's understanding, but rather of a chimerical godlike knowledge—that leads to fallenness. As Poole observes, Adam experiences a dangerous "overjoy" not over the taste of the fruit but rather over Eve; Adam's challenge is to find an acceptable balance of desire and restraint when it comes to his feelings about his wife.⁶

My own focus is less on excess and more on the pleasure that motivates consumption while thwarting restraint. Pleasure situates the Creator and humans in a more complex pattern of mutual activity than does a metaphor of consuming deity. The original temptation is not to consume too much of God, but rather to attempt to be like God through the act of eating. *Paradise Lost* celebrates forms of sensuousness, ranging from the lyrical to the olfactory to the erotic, as part of Edenic life. Innocent pleasure is a gift of the Creator to his creatures; insofar as humans are made in God's likeness, such delight

is an experience that God has designed and comprehends. Yet when it comes to the taste of the forbidden fruit, Milton's theodicy functions more coherently in the absence of divine judgment. Taste poses a challenge to Milton's theodicy not only because it underscores questions about divine foreknowledge, but also because it points to questions about God's own enjoyment.

If satiety, as Poole suggests, is a key term in understanding the implications of human appetite, the related notion of satisfaction reveals how pleasure can pose a soteriological problem.⁷ In book 3 of *Paradise Lost*, God foresees the Fall and its implications. All of humanity will die unless "Some other able, and as willing, pay / The rigid satisfaction, death for death" (*PL*, 3.211–12). Recent scholarship on Milton's soteriology has raised questions about his views of and attitudes toward substitutionary sacrifice.⁸ Yet these particular lines, as C. A. Patrides argued in an earlier influential essay, clearly do articulate a widespread Protestant view of atonement in which Christ's death serves as a necessary sacrifice.⁹ Milton's God invokes satisfaction in its abstract, legal, and impersonal sense; death is required not to satisfy God, per se, but rather to achieve an adequate expiation. Yet satisfying the demands of pleasure has been a motivating principle for God as Creator. Earlier in the same heavenly colloquy, God describes why he has given humans free choice. God first describes an epistemological imperative: without freedom, obedient creatures could offer no "proof" of their sincerity (*PL*, 3.103). A few lines later, however, God mentions the "pleasure" he derives from obedience (*PL*, 3.107). Such pleasure is not explicitly sensuous, yet it does suggest that God's delight motivates his creative acts; by this principle, we may be sensuous but freely rational beings only so that we can be suitable objects of God's enjoyment. Yet Milton works to contain such a possibility, using an abstract and depersonalized language of satisfaction to disavow the possibility of a God indecorously pleased by sacrifice.

In the earlier poem "Upon the Circumcision," Milton had worked to strip away the appetitive dimensions of satisfaction in matters of atonement. The younger Milton describes "that great covenant which we still transgress / Entirely satisfied."¹⁰ Here, too, Jesus is described as dying not to satisfy God but rather to achieve a legal satisfaction. "Upon the Circumcision" and *Paradise Lost* both bear witness to the fact that, as William Kerrigan has put it, "Milton could never write with customary strength about the Sacrifice because he felt its intolerable illogic more profoundly than a Crashaw."¹¹ The contrast that Kerrigan proposes, between Milton and his contemporary Richard Crashaw,

allows us to discern how Milton assiduously avoids a view of atonement in which Christ dies to satisfy God's appetite. In "Our Lord in his Circumcision to his Father," Crashaw ventriloquizes the infant Jesus:

To thee these first fruits of my growing death
(For what else is my life?) lo I bequeath.
Tast this, and as thou lik'st this lesser flood
Expect a Sea, my heart shall make it good.¹²

Crashaw describes the infant Jesus in the midst of his circumcision whetting his Father's appetite for blood. This macabre scenario makes sense within the context of Crashaw's poetry, in which the transmission of bodily fluids is a devotional act. For Milton, by contrast, a God who relishes blood would prove repugnant. Such a God would resemble some of the rival deities that Milton decries as demonic. Moloch appears in *Paradise Lost* as a wicked god who demands child sacrifice; in Milton's imagination more broadly, Saturn looms as a deity who devours his own offspring.¹³

Although Milton avoids describing atonement as the satisfaction of God's appetite, *Paradise Lost* follows scriptural precedent in describing God's olfactory delight.¹⁴ Genesis 8 tells us that "the LORD smelled a sweet savour" after Noah offers sacrifices (Gen. 8:21). Revelation provides a typological account of such pleasing aroma: "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (Rev 8:4). In the account of Eve's enticement, as we have seen, Milton describes how the lower senses of smell and taste work together. Yet the basic differences between taste and smell prove significant: the latter can be a much more passive act, as one can smell something without intending to do so. The scriptures suggest that God exercises more agency over his nostrils than do humans: "I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours," God declares in Leviticus to describe the consequences of disobedience (Lev. 26:31). Yet such descriptions also emphasize the agency of God's people to offer something pleasing. A God who receives pleasing aromas may be meaningfully different from a God who wants to devour.

On the morning of the Fall in *Paradise Lost*, nature and humans participate in a cycle of olfactory pleasure between Creator and creation. When the "humid flowers" of Eden

breathed
Their morning incense, when all things that breathe,

From the earth's great altar send up silent praise
To the creator, and his nostrils fill
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair
And joined their vocal worship to the choir.

(*PL*, 9.193–97)

Milton weaves between aural and olfactory senses in order to embed a startling suggestion. “Grateful smell” logically indicates the odor of gratitude expressed by creation, but it also serves as the only possible account of the delight that God takes in this aroma. Without such a suggestion, the reader is left with the merely factual declaration that the smell “his nostrils fill.” The idea of God being grateful to his creatures veers toward blasphemy and must register only faintly. Yet the relatively passive nature of olfaction allows for affective congress between a grateful creation and a God who receives its thanks with pleasure.

In a fallen world, however, sacrifice will be necessary to please God. Enabled by grace, Adam and Eve offer prayers that, once they reach Heaven, are “clad / With incense” (*PL*, 11.17–18). Assuming the role of intercessor, the Son describes these penitent prayers as “Fruits of more pleasing savour” than the literal fruit of Eden (*PL*, 11.26). This promotion of metaphorical over literal objects of delectation serves to limit God’s active pleasure in sacrifice. Afterwards, in Adam’s lesson about the fallen world, Abel is described as offering animal sacrifices that are by “propitious fire from heaven / Consumed with nimble glance, and grateful steam” (*PL*, 11.441–42). Milton invites the notion that Abel’s sacrifices are eaten by heaven but then corrects it, partly by transposing the biblical image of consuming fire onto the fourth chapter of Genesis, which provides no such imagery. The consumption that Milton describes is incendiary and appeals to the eye (“nimble glance”) rather than to the mouth. Milton then uses the word “grateful” again to suggest that sensory pleasure accommodates a shared experience between Creator and creation. The relative passivity of grateful olfaction allows Milton to describe divine appeasement without reinforcing the image of God as a devourer. Yet the way Milton weaves between these two senses—and the general fact that taste and smell are intimately connected—reveals how the possibility of an appetitive deity still lingers in the poem’s theological imagination.

Biblical and poetic accounts of divine pleasure raise questions about anthropomorphism. It remains fully possible that such language merely attempts to describe an otherwise incomprehensible God. As Lana Cable reminds us, a younger Milton had dared, in a polemical

context, to be far more emphatic about divine taste. In *Of Reformation*, Milton reimagines the biblical image of Christ spitting out lukewarm believers to describe how episcopacy produces devotion that “gives a vomit to God himself.”¹⁵ For Cable, this quotation serves as an example of how what “Milton *really means*” cannot be reduced to the meaning behind a bodily metaphor.¹⁶ Precisely through an indecorous description of God, Milton the iconoclast can shock “the idolatrous decorum of the lukewarm bishops.”¹⁷ As a polemicist, Milton widens the disparity between an anthropomorphic description of God and the higher reality of divinity in order to attack those who ostensibly engender debased devotion. Yet in Milton’s poetry, the possibility of divine pleasure may prove more challenging than divine disgust. The lingering idea of God’s gustatory satisfaction reveals one aspect of the predicament that Victoria Silver locates in Milton’s poetry. Silver argues that Milton’s writings consistently underscore the ineluctable disparity between “the divine nature (deity per se) and the divine image (deity as it accommodates itself toward us),” following Protestant elaborations of the *deus absconditus*, the hidden and inscrutable deity.¹⁸ For Martin Luther and John Calvin, the appeal to an inaccessible deity thwarts the demands of rational theodicy and guards the mysteries involved in atonement. My own argument does not concern the general unknowability of Milton’s God but rather how a particular aspect of his unknowability translates into the indecipherability of human taste—at the very moment when eating promises a godlike form of knowledge. In *Paradise Lost*, the question of taste must not be pushed too far, for it ultimately reveals the disturbing possibility that the unknowability of God is merely a screen for the even unhappier possibility that we find God distasteful.

If Eve’s delight in the fruit remains subjective in a way that resists unequivocal judgment, *Paradise Lost* still describes how free experiences can be organized and evaluated hierarchically. When the angel Raphael visits Eden, he partakes of an earthly meal and talks extensively about eating; angelic taste would seem to offer a useful middle ground between divine truth and human perception. Yet the episode of Raphael’s visitation underscores how the gendered hierarchy of Edenic life makes conflicting claims upon Eve: she is called to be an object of male delight but also a subject who must consider the perceptions, thoughts, and tastes of others. As Raphael encounters

Eve for the first time, the narrator emphasizes the latter's innocent beauty and nakedness. Eve is

herself more lovely fair
Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess feigned
Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove[.]

(*PL*, 5.380–82)

Milton subsequently reminds us that Eve is the object of sinless admiration; unlike the “sons of God” (*PL*, 5.447) who marry women out of desire in the sixth chapter of Genesis, Raphael feels a “Love unlibidinous” toward Eve (*PL*, 5.449). Yet by the end of this extended episode, the delight that Eve sparks becomes a source of concern or even contention. For Adam, Eve represents not only visual beauty but a synesthetic source of pleasure (“transported I behold, / Transported touch”) who is, at the same time, a rational subject (*PL*, 8.529–30). When Adam confesses that he has difficulty maintaining his husbandly superiority before Eve, Raphael admonishes him not to be unduly swayed by sexual congress. Raphael reinforces the alignment of masculinity with reality and reason and of femininity with superficiality and corporeality. Yet Adam insists that Raphael has misunderstood and that the source of Eve's seeming superiority is not merely erotic but rather derives from “all her words and actions” (*PL*, 8.602).

The way Eve motivates either innocent or potentially subversive delight thus frames the entirety of Raphael's visitation. The angel's participation in a noontime meal reveals more specifically how the question of taste becomes intertwined with problems of desire, physicality, and beleaguered male ascendancy. When Raphael addresses Eve for the first time, he hails her as “mother of mankind” (*PL*, 5.388). The angel predicts that the world will grow

more numerous with [her] sons
Than with these various fruits the trees of God
Have heaped this table.

(*PL*, 5.389–91)

This jarring simile likens future humans to edible crops. It is possible that the threat of a voracious deity registers faintly; Raphael does not specify for whom these fruit-like humans will be heaped up.¹⁹ Within the immediate context, Raphael's simile more clearly suggests that the matter of eating coincides with sex and reproduction to define Eve's conflicting status as a vehicle of reproduction but also as a privileged subject. Eve should look forward to becoming the mother of

mankind—and, after the Fall, of the seed who will crush the serpent's head—but only by accepting her secondary status as Adam's likeness and helper. Raphael's simile likens maternal Eve to a fertile tree while denying the fact that she plays an active, human role rather than a passive and arboreal one in "heap[ing]" the table before them.

By the time Raphael hails Eve, she has already been tasked with preparing a meal for the "heavenly stranger" (*PL*, 5.316). Eve deploys "hospitable thoughts intent / What choice to choose for delicacy best" (*PL*, 5.332–33). The phrase "choice to choose" registers the difficulty of knowing how to please an angelic palate; Eve's decisions seem to have taken a second-order, reflexive turn whereby she reconsiders the kinds of choices she makes. Laura Lunger Knoppers observes that Milton channels his political thinking into his description of Eve's culinary endeavors. Because her labor demands thoughtful attention, it "cultivates the civic virtues of temperance, reason, and choice."²⁰ My narrower focus underscores the practical challenge that Eve faces in attempting to satisfy another's sensibilities. In retrospect, a painful set of ironies converge on Eve's task. Before Eve's gustatory delight occasions the Fall (and heightens our own curiosity about her sensory experiences), she is called upon to imagine the tastes of others. The literal fruits of her work are compared to the fruits of her eventual childbearing; after the Fall, motherhood will be the way that Eve can restore her rightful place in redemptive history while remaining subjected to Adam. Eve, in other words, is called upon to work within and around the unknowability of others' tastes, but she must continue to remain, at least in part, the object rather than subject of this mystery. When Eve goes on to experience a transgressive delight in the forbidden fruit, she becomes the object of our collective scrutiny in a way that Adam does not when he falls.

Adam, by contrast, plays the discursive role of host during Raphael's visit. In this capacity, Adam is keenly curious to know whether earthly food will taste good to the angelic visitor. Adam describes how "our nourisher" (*PL*, 5.398) provides an earthly bounty "for food and for delight" (*PL*, 5.400) but then frets that the angel will experience it as "unsavoury food" (*PL*, 5.401). Although the ensuing colloquy gives the strong impression that Raphael enjoyed his meal, some ambiguity persists. The angel speculates that God has provided "new delights" that can compare with heaven's, but he says this before tasting earthly food (*PL*, 5.431). After eating, Raphael speaks extensively about the nutritional value (physical and spiritual) of Edenic food; he says nothing about its taste or relative deliciousness. As Amy L. Tigner suggests,

Raphael may very well let his politeness slip when he praises his more heavenly customary fare, “Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of heaven” (*PL*, 5.635).²¹ Our inability to be absolutely certain that Raphael has enjoyed his earthly meal may seem like a trivial matter. Yet the slight doubt accommodated by the narrative plays into the overarching questions of taste as it relates to judgment and rational choice.

The indecipherability of taste opens onto the broader discrepancies between Raphael’s advice and the complexities of human experience. As we have seen at the outset of this essay, the third chapter of Genesis lists three ways that the Tree of Knowledge enticed Eve: by offering good food, by pleasing her eye, and by promising godlike understanding. Raphael’s angelic perspective works to distinguish the registers of nutritious goodness, visual appeal, and knowledge. Eve is introduced as the primary object of visual allure in this episode; wholesomeness and knowledge converge upon food. In Raphael’s extended description of a monistic universe, eating becomes a pathway to spiritual ascent: “All things proceed and up to [God] return” in a chain of consumption and digestive sublimation (*PL*, 5.470).²² Yet gustatory pleasure remains partly estranged from this pattern of nourishment. Although Raphael’s cosmology is expressed in terms that appeal to the senses (“last the bright consummate flower / Spirits odorous breathes” [*PL*, 5.481–82]), the angel emphasizes “nourishment” (*PL*, 5.483) and “corporal nutriments” while making no explicit mention of delightful taste (*PL*, 5.496). Raphael concludes his lesson about eating with an admonition to both Adam and Eve:

Meanwhile enjoy
Your fill what happiness this happy state
Can comprehend, incapable of more.

(*PL*, 5.503–5)

The language of filling and comprehending does suggest a prelapsarian union of eating, growth, and knowledge; this union contributes to the happiness of Edenic life. Yet Raphael’s warning about proper limits sharply qualifies his injunction to enjoy. Far from offering a celebration of pleasure and benefit harmonized together through acts of eating, Raphael’s lesson suggests the difficulty of maintaining a proper balance between them.

Raphael is not prudish about his own pleasures. His colloquy with Adam ends with a memorable description of angelic sex. Yet this conclusion underscores the differences between angelic and human experience. Raphael’s lessons about male superiority prove inadequate

to prevent Adam from joining his wife in sin. (As the argument to book 5—added by Milton for the 1668 printing of the poem—teaches, Raphael's lessons are not meant to succeed but rather "to render man inexcusable".²³) Raphael's lessons offer even less assistance to Eve as she goes on to confront a gustatory temptation—an interplay of sensory and cognitive experiences that the angel's extended remarks about eating cannot fully anticipate. Looking back from Eve's experience of the forbidden fruit, it is particularly meaningful that Adam and Raphael's colloquy raise the stakes of eating to cosmological levels at the expense of practical knowledge. In book 5, Eve alone is tasked with acting on her limited speculations of the tastes of an alien visitor. Milton goes out of his way to describe Eve correcting Adam's inaccurate assumptions about how food is prepared in Eden (see *PL*, 5.313–26). Raphael is, if anything, less aware of Eve's culinary labors. The angel's efforts to establish provisional boundaries between wholesomeness and delight jars with human experience, especially human experience at the threshold of innocence and fallenness. Raphael's admonitions to limit pleasure—erotic pleasure and conjugal love in Adam's case, the conjoined delights of eating and gaining knowledge in Eve's—cannot contain human sensuousness and its effects on reason and knowledge.

When unfallen Adam is confronted by fallen Eve in book 9, the problem of his husbandly superiority and desire for his wife converges upon the question of taste. Adam has no firm basis on which to judge whether the fruit is genuinely delicious. After joining Eve in sin, Adam explicitly broaches this topic:

Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,
And elegant, of sapience no small part,
Since to each meaning savour we apply,
And palate call judicious[.]

(*PL*, 9.1017–20)

This judgment amounts to a travesty, one that the serpent has insinuated into Eve's mind and now Adam's. The forbidden fruit has not conferred godlike vision; although Adam may now know good versus evil, he looks at Eve through "lascivious eyes" (*PL*, 9.1014). Yet it is still revealing what Adam, in his delusion, thinks his new godlike perspective offers, what he claims to experience through his altered vision. Adam's new epistemological position turns him into something like a critic of his wife's more directly physical sensibilities. Adam immediately goes on to confess his own experience of delight: "Much pleasure have we lost, while we abstained / From this delightful fruit"

(*PL*, 9.1022–23). Yet Adam's sensuous pleasure contains a degree of cognitive evaluation; the use of the first-person plural heightens the sense that he has joined his wife in transgressive pleasure partly to confirm her experience.

The emphasis on taste enacts a twist on the misogynistic teaching concerning male versus female knowledge in the first epistle to Timothy: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2:14). Milton does adhere to Pauline (or pseudo-Pauline) teaching by having Adam choose to join Eve despite being fully aware of the consequences. Eve, by contrast, had been deceived by the serpent. Yet as we have seen, it remains unclear whether Eve's palate had been deluded along with her knowledge. Subsequently, even though we know Adam falls undeceived, we remain unsure of the status of his taste—whether he has shared Eve's delight in the taste of the forbidden fruit, or whether he affirms her taste insincerely to flatter her for his ulterior motives. If Adam were to have remained obedient to God, he should have let Eve's taste remain indecipherable. In this sense, the reader's lack of direct access to the taste of the fruit can be partially redeemed as wholesome; Adam's example teaches us not to inquire too far about abstruse matters. Yet as fallen readers, we occupy the corruptible version of uncertainty. We are, in fact, products of Adam's choice to join Eve and to replicate her act of tasting. After the Fall, the gendered division that has already manifested itself around food reemerges as a sharper split between sensuous experience and judgment. This splitting is part of the legacy of the Fall that Milton challenges his readers to negotiate. On the one hand, Milton works to undercut the position of male superiority that Adam expresses as critical detachment. Adam's posture covers over a sense of inadequacy that existed even before the Fall, and his judgment now amounts to sexually motivated flattery. On the other hand, we as readers have no access to any superior grounds for judgment. The question of taste reminds us that the desire to unite the accuracy of knowledge and the delight of the senses has been of a piece with the forbidden act: acquiring moral knowledge through eating. After the Fall, attempts to evaluate sensual experience may be deluded and crassly motivated. Milton's God intends to save humanity from such a predicament, and yet by virtue of his redemptive plans, he remains silent about the judiciousness of Eve's taste.

In *Paradise Lost*, I have argued, taste shuttles Eve from innocence to fallenness while eluding absolute judgment. The partial indecipherability of taste takes part in the broader unruliness of human experience, which a gendered hierarchy is called upon but fails to manage. In this closing section, I suggest that Milton's divided lessons can speak meaningfully to subsequent developments in thinking about taste. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Burke repeatedly conscripts Milton's poetry for the project of grounding universal standards of taste in the existence of a single Creator. Burke certainly does not heed the way *Paradise Lost* remains silent about God's judgment when it comes to the most decisive act of eating. Yet in retrospect, I argue, we can discern Milton's challenge to this kind of theistic empiricism. I then describe Milton's more roundabout relevance for the Kantian shift away from taste and toward aesthetics.²⁴ Milton articulates a particular version of a religious worldview that continues to influence how we conceive the difficulties involved in the Enlightenment project of universality—even when belief in a Creator has become far less important in securing universal standards for judgment. I have no desire to argue that Milton prophetically forecasts the impossibility of an Enlightenment project. Rather, Milton's poetry illustrates how gender difference has become embedded within cultural myth as a troubled way of imagining the problems that exist at the juncture of capricious individual experience and collective judgment.

As Denise Gigante observes, we can locate Milton at a moment when taste had not yet given way to aesthetics via British sentimentalism. That is, the broad use of the term taste still conflated the act of tasting food with other modes of judgment that would later come to be labeled aesthetic. Burke plays an early role in this intellectual transition; Immanuel Kant would come to play a much more decisive one. As Kant asks, "How might it have happened that the modern languages particularly have chosen to name the aesthetic faculty of judgement with an expression (*gustus, sapor*) which merely refers to a certain sense-organ (the inside of the mouth), and that the discrimination as well as the choice of palatable things is determined by it?"²⁵ Burke had conceded in his "Introduction on Taste" that "[t]he term Taste, like all other figurative terms, is not extremely accurate."²⁶ Yet he continues to use the term confidently, appealing to "the consent of all men in the metaphors which are taken from the sense of Taste" (*PE*, 14). Later, in a section on taste and smell, Burke argues for the

propriety of applying gustatory taste to other sensations: "This general agreement of the senses is yet more evident on minutely considering those of taste and smell. We metaphorically apply the idea of sweetness to sights, and sounds" (*PE*, 100). Burke appeals to the traditional hierarchy of the senses only to uphold an analogy between the lower and the higher.

Throughout the *Enquiry*, Burke relies on Milton's poetry to furnish examples of the beautiful and the sublime. "We do not any where meet a more sublime description than this justly celebrated one of Milton," Burke observes before quoting lines from *Paradise Lost* (*PE*, 57). Later, Milton is referred to simply as "[o]ur great poet" (*PE*, 65). Burke's affinity for Milton's theological and rationally strenuous poetry proves unsurprising. Although Burke does not explicitly say as much, Milton's writings may serve not just as a source of examples but also as a precedent for a rational inquiry converging with praise of God. Burke imagines empiricist inquiry as functioning as something akin to devotional art: "If a discourse on the use of the parts of the body may be considered as an hymn to the Creator; the use of the passions, which are the organs of the mind, cannot be barren of praise to him" (*PE*, 44).

Milton's poetry is also associated, although not strictly linked, with the application of the term taste to describe the whole range of sensory experiences and the cognitive evaluation of them. In the section immediately preceding the remarks on taste and smell, Burke describes music in a way that affirms the basic likeness of the different sensory experiences labeled as tastes. He suggests that "sweet or beautiful" are virtually synonymous ways to describe music and declares that "beautiful sounds agree with our descriptions of beauty in other senses" (*PE*, 99). Burke cites lines from Milton's *L'Allegro* as his primary evidence, proclaiming that "no man had a finer ear" than Milton, none "with a happier manner of expressing the affections of one sense by metaphors taken from another" (*PE*, 99). The end of *L'Allegro* describes the ecstasy produced by the "linked sweetness" of musical sounds. It is likely a mere coincidence that Burke quotes Milton's happy man welcoming "soft *Lydian airs*" as a defense "*against eating cares*" (*PE*, 99, italics in original). Burke relies on Milton's description of sweet music and does not register any possibility of a clash between different senses. Yet even as a coincidence—or as an overlooked complication—this discordance is suggestive: even though music might be likened to sweetness, the higher artistic appeal to the ear is nonetheless set against a baser, metaphorical form of devouring.

Throughout the entire *Enquiry*, Burke ignores the Miltonic rationale for avoiding God's judgment concerning taste. In this particular section, Burke relies selectively on one of Milton's earlier poems rather than attending to the complex interaction among the senses in *Paradise Lost*. As we have seen, Milton's rewriting of the Genesis myth describes the lower and higher senses as working together or at cross-purposes, engendering experiences that range from wholesome delight to the onset of corruption.

In *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant praises Burke as "the foremost author" on the physiological bases of beauty and sublimity; Burke furnishes "psychological observations" that "are exceedingly fine and provide rich material for the favorite investigations of empirical psychology."²⁷ Yet Kant's *First Introduction* to *The Critique* reveals such praise to be backhanded: empirical psychology has merely gathered "material for future empirical rules that are to be connected systematically" but "without trying to grasp these rules" (C, 427). Kant's aesthetic philosophy seeks to be far more systematic than Burke had been in applying the term "taste" broadly. Taste does remain for Kant a partly suitable synecdoche for a faculty that is "not one of the understanding or reason": "For even if someone lists all the ingredients of a dish, pointing out that I have always found each of them agreeable . . . I shall be deaf to all these reasons: I shall try the dish with *my* tongue and palate" (C, 148). The interplay between subjective experience and general validity should allow judgment to accommodate individual freedom. Taste remains a useful test case insofar as it underscores the necessity of freedom: "Taste lays claim merely to autonomy," Kant declares, "but to make other people's judgments the basis determining one's own would be heteronomy" (C, 146). Yet mere autonomy is not Kant's objective. Kant seeks to model a genuine coupling of individual experience with the *sensus communis*, which would require one "(1) to think for oneself; (2) to think from the standpoint of everyone else; and (3) to think always consistently" (C, 160). Only then might one reach an enlightened viewpoint. Even if the recalcitrance of taste has value as an index of freedom, taste must nonetheless be transcended—or, at least, sidestepped—in the movement toward higher modes of judgment. Unlike Burke, Kant abandons the synecdoche of taste as a term for sensory experiences in general; Kant's third *Critique* shows little sustained attention to gustatory rather than aesthetic experience.

In attempting to balance individual autonomy with shared judgment, Kant aims to restore human dignity. Kant locates the principles of aesthetic experience not in the Creator but rather in the subject—one

who can arrive at a sense of mastery over a seemingly infinite world.²⁸ We would be merely superstitious were we to submit to God out of “a feeling of our utter impotence”; we should seek instead “quiet contemplation” of the relationship between humanity and the creator (C, 122). For a thinker like Milton, the indecipherability of human taste raises questions about the relationship between God and humanity: humans must negotiate the vagaries of taste in order to deflect an impossible decision between a disturbingly sensuous Creator and an unknowable one. For Kant, the question of freedom versus judgment shifts further toward the way human subjects might interact with one another and reach genuinely intersubjective agreement. The most important implications of this project lie not in its devotional implications but rather in its political applications concerning how to evaluate human actions and choices.

Kant was unable to articulate a comprehensive political philosophy in his later life, but Hannah Arendt has offered her own reconstruction. Arendt's elaboration allows us to discern how the question of taste persists not merely as a way to describe stubborn individual autonomy but rather as a challenge to suture individual freedom with external judgment in a tenable political mode. Arendt cites Kant's views on the French Revolution to locate in his thinking “the clash between the principle according to which you should act and the principle according to which you judge.”²⁹ Kant paradoxically voices his appreciation for the Revolution and his disapprobation of the actual actors undertaking it. He does so by upholding a split between political actors and outside observers: the full meaning of history comes into view only for the latter, whereas the actors should not have undertaken revolutionary action within their limited viewpoint. Arendt finds in aesthetic judgment the crucial possibility of mediating between this troubling division. In her reading, the grounds of Kant's political philosophy lie in his third *Critique*. Arendt notes that the “most surprising aspect” of judgment is that it should originally “be based on the sense of taste”—a lower sense that gives rise to private experiences.³⁰ In moving from taste to aesthetics, Kant describes the necessity both of the imagination—whereby objects that are remote nonetheless come into view—and the *sensus communis* of collective judgments. These operations, which bring together experience and judgment at a remove, hold for Arendt political value, for they allow “actor and spectator [to] become united; the maxim of the actor and the maxim, the ‘standard,’ according to which the spectator judges the spectacle of world, become one.”³¹ If, in other words, a form of

experience originally grounded in individual, embodied caprice can genuinely become the basis of judgment, then we can secure the grounds of a collective politics of evaluating proper action.

Precisely as a theistic view of universal taste becomes superseded by an aesthetic philosophy, Milton's warnings against seeking a transcendent verdict concerning taste continue to speak proleptically. *Paradise Lost* describes how the split between individual, sensuous taste and a higher form of judgment can be sutured, but in such a way that preserves a gendered hierarchy rather than wholly overcoming it. When Milton's Adam declares Eve to be exact of taste, he models *avant la lettre* a parodic version of Kantian judgment. The declaration, "Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste," appeals metaphorically to the higher sense of sight to cast Adam as an overseer or evaluator of his wife; this rhetoric tends to downplay the conspicuous fact that Adam, too, has tasted of the fruit. This shift from taste to judgment betrays impure motives—Adam's desire for Eve and his desire to maintain mastery over Eve despite his own sinful corporeality.

At the end of the epic, Milton describes how Adam and Eve (and the degrees of sensuousness and judgment that they represent) do become unified. Eve remains the object of open-ended interpretation, but it is no longer her taste that is at issue. In her final speech, Eve declares that God has communicated the message of future salvation in a dream whose contents remain unexpressed. It is unclear if Eve is right to ascribe her dream to divine inspiration, as the angel Michael explains that he himself has calmed Eve with "gentle dreams" (*PL*, 12.595). In this case, however, the impossibility of judging Eve's experience is redemptive. The dream emboldens her to submit to her husband but only in a way that maintains some degree of independence. The dream has confirmed her own decisive role in redemptive history: "By me the promised seed shall all restore," Eve declares (*PL*, 12.623). As a result, this dream serves as a corrective to the satanic dream that raised the possibility of separating from Adam and eating the fruit. Adam and Eve exit the poem in a state of oneness and unanimity that is at the same time intersubjective, requiring the forms of productive conversation that Milton describes as the true meaning of marriage.

This conclusion sutures female sensuousness and male judgment in a rarefied hierarchy. Adam and Eve's relationship proves an inadequate model of intersubjectivity—if not for Kant, then certainly for us now. Yet *Paradise Lost* thereby suggests a way to describe the difficulty that Kant and modernity in general confront in establishing a tenable universality. Kant strives to correct against biases so that exercising

judgment may not amount to assuming a false superiority. Gender continues, however, to serve as a privileged metaphor for identifying the vexed relationship between the sensuous and the rational. Contrasting Kant not with Burke but with Ralph Waldo Emerson, Stanley Cavell has described a “masculine/feminine contest over the nature of knowing”: Kant’s insistence on active cognition may be metaphorically masculine, as opposed to Emerson’s acceptance of sensuous reception and intuitions.³² Cavell observes that this dynamic—which is essential for and yet “difficult to develop usefully” within his own reading of William Shakespeare—manifests itself in the pervasive biblical sense of the term “knowing.”³³ Milton’s religious poetry reveals (more clearly than do Shakespeare’s plays) the channels through which traditional or mythic hierarchies persist even when their ideological foundations seem to have eroded.

Milton’s poetry is just one of the many conduits through which the Judeo-Christian ur-myth of gender relations has been transmitted into modern thinking. Yet *Paradise Lost* is of particular (if not unique) relevance to the relationship between the capriciousness of mere taste and rational, consensus-building judgment. Milton’s account of the Fall, as I have argued, prompts sustained and open-ended questioning about sensory pleasures in relation to rational choice. In the partial absence of a transcendent verdict, the poem gives voice to the need for a gendered hierarchy of judgment while also exposing that hierarchy as a tenuous enabling fiction. *Paradise Lost* is thus particularly helpful in locating the religious and cultural histories behind the ambivalent relationship between gender difference and Enlightenment values. This ambivalence has become a very familiar one. Introducing a volume of essays on Kant and feminist thought, Robin May Schott describes the divided views of Kant “as having contributed significantly to theories of autonomy, subjectivity, and rationality in ways that can further feminist projects” or as “a preeminent exponent of patriarchal views” who inscribes “gender hierarchies . . . in the very structure of his theories of morality and aesthetic judgment.”³⁴ Gayatri Spivak has expanded the feminist critique of Enlightenment values by aligning it with a critique of other hierarchies of judgment—namely, racial and colonialist hierarchies. Yet Spivak openly describes her critique of Kant as a “mistaken” reading, placing the term in scare quotation marks to suggest that her project is not just oppositional but somewhat ironic.³⁵ Through the mode of critique (or even of “sabotage,” as she puts it), Spivak tests the enduring value of a universalizing vision without simply abandoning it.³⁶

To what extent should we uphold or jettison an Enlightenment project of universal values? How does gender remain—in itself as well as in dynamic relation to other forms of difference—the site of troubling hierarchies of judgment? How might we balance freedom of taste and general consensus? These all remain sweeping and important questions. By returning to the question of taste in *Paradise Lost*, this essay has sought to uncover one particular strand of the genealogy of our views concerning taste in relation to truth and judgment. By attending not only to the philosophical but also to the literary and religious underpinnings of the way we think about taste, we can account for our seemingly inexhaustible conversations about what really tastes good and what tastes really good. As our shared gustatory curiosity continues to prove insatiable and becomes ever more expansive, we must examine how the desire for good taste has become and remains intertwined—for better and for worse—with our search for the common good.

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NOTES

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¹ All biblical quotations are taken from the 1611 Authorized Version.

² John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler (Harlow: Longman, 2006), book 1, lines 1–2. Hereafter abbreviated *PL* and cited parenthetically by book and line numbers.

³ For a discussion of what, exactly, the forbidden fruit may have been in Milton's imagination and in early modern thinking about Eden more generally, see Robert Appelbaum, *Aguecheek's Beef, Belch's Hiccup, and Other Gastronomic Interjections: Literature, Culture, and Food Among the Early Moderns* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), 192–200. On the significance of Eve's culinary labors in *Paradise Lost*, see Amy L. Tigner, "Eating with Eve," *Milton Quarterly* 44 (2010): 239–53; and Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Politicizing Domesticity from Henrietta Maria to Milton's Eve* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011), 140–64. Bruce R. Smith's work has been influential in sparking attention to the senses in early modern English culture; see "Premodern Sexualities," *PMLA* 115 (2000): 318–29; *The Key of Green: Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2009); and *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). See also Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); and Holly Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2011).

⁴ Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press), 3.

⁵ Kristen Poole, "With Such Joy Surcharg'd: The Predicament of Satiety in Patristic Theology and *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Quarterly* 49 (2015): 16.

⁶ Poole, 13.

⁷ As Poole notes, the Latin *satias* can mean “‘sufficiency’ and ‘satisfied desire’ as well as ‘overabundance, satiety’” (5).

⁸ For arguments aligning Milton’s views with Arianism or with related non-sacrificial theologies of salvation, see John P. Rumrich, “Milton’s Arianism: Why It Matters,” in *Milton and Heresy*, ed. Stephen B. Dobranski and Rumrich (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 75–92; Regina M. Schwartz, *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism: When God Left the World* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2008), 59–83; and John Rogers, “Milton and the Heretical Priesthood of Christ,” in *Heresy, Literature, and Politics in Early Modern English Culture*, ed. David Loewenstein and John Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006), 203–20. For a defense of Milton’s orthodoxy, see Russell M. Hillier, *Milton’s Messiah: The Son of God in the Works of John Milton* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011).

⁹ See C. A. Patrides, “Milton and the Protestant Theory of the Atonement,” *PMLA* 74 (1959): 7–13.

¹⁰ Milton, *Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (Harlow: Longman, 1997), 173. For a discussion of the soteriological implications of this poem, see Rogers, “Milton’s Circumcision,” in *Milton and the Grounds of Contention*, ed. Mark R. Kelley and others (Pittsburgh: Duquesne Univ. Press, 2003), 188–213.

¹¹ William Kerrigan, *The Sacred Complex: On the Psychogenesis of Paradise Lost* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983), 102.

¹² Richard Crashaw, *The Poems, English, Latin, and Greek of Richard Crashaw*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 98.

¹³ For the connection between Moloch and Saturn in Milton’s imagination, see David Quint, *Inside Paradise Lost: Reading the Designs of Milton’s Epic* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014), 19–22.

¹⁴ On the role of olfaction in *Paradise Lost*, see Lauren Shohet, “The Fragrance of the Fall,” in *Milton, Materialism, and Embodiment: One First Matter All*, ed. Kevin J. Donovan and Thomas Festa (Pittsburgh: Duquesne Univ. Press, 2017), 19–36. Although this essay appeared in print after I composed my own, my thoughts about the relationship between smell and taste have been informed by Shohet’s reading, which I encountered in earlier forms.

¹⁵ Milton, *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vol., ed. Don M. Wolfe (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1953), 1:537.

¹⁶ Lana Cable, *Carnal Rhetoric: Milton’s Iconoclasm and the Poetics of Desire* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1995), 9.

¹⁷ Cable, 73.

¹⁸ Victoria Silver, *Imperfect Sense: The Predicament of Milton’s Irony* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), 109.

¹⁹ Milton’s allegory of a voracious Death is a likely candidate even in this prelapsarian context. Yet Raphael’s hailing of Eve anticipates the repeated affirmations of Eve’s motherhood in the final books of *Paradise Lost*. As these affirmations look ahead to Marian motherhood, Raphael also echoes Gabriel’s address to Mary in the annunciation scene in the gospels. Because Eve’s motherhood has such soteriological implications, her future progeny might be likened not only to fruit for personified Death to consume but also (albeit more obliquely) to sacrificial offerings.

²⁰ Knoppers, 151.

²¹ See Tigner, 246.

²² Raphael’s speech has been the object of much scholarly analysis. For some important discussions, see Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and*

Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), 102–7; Rogers, *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1996), 110–22; Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2005), 27–38; and Schwartz, 60–64.

²³ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 281.

²⁴ For an extended argument that Immanuel Kant's account of sublimity (especially as it relates to artistic influence) was shaped by Milton's poetry, see Sanford Budick, *Kant and Milton* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010). Milton's depiction of gender difference is integral to this story of influence. Budick relies heavily on Kant's imprecise paraphrase of lines from book 8 of *Paradise Lost*: "Female light mixes with male light, to unknown ends" (19). Yet Budick's claim for influence has been met with considerable skepticism. Gordon Teskey asserts that it is neither "true or even plausible" that "Kant knew Milton's poetry well" ("Review of Sanford Budick, *Kant and Milton*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46.2 [2013]: 315). Daniel Shore stresses that Kant and Milton merely shared general Christian knowledge (see "Milton and Kant?", *Milton Quarterly* 48 [2014]: 26–38).

²⁵ Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Victor Lyle Dowdwell (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1978), 144; quoted in Gigante, 13.

²⁶ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. Paul Guyer (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2015), 14. Hereafter abbreviated *PE* and cited parenthetically by page number.

²⁷ Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 138–39. Hereafter abbreviated *C* and cited parenthetically by page number.

²⁸ On the Christian bases of Kant's thought, see John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 17–44.

²⁹ Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), 48.

³⁰ Arendt, 64.

³¹ Arendt, 75.

³² Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), 9.

³³ Cavell, 9–10.

³⁴ Robin May Schott, "Introduction," in *Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant*, ed. Schott (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1997), 1.

³⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1999), 9.

³⁶ Spivak, 9.