# LORD OF THE LIVING SOULS:

# DOMINION AND THE SPIRITUAL LIVES OF ANIMALS IN MILTON'S *PARADISE LOST*.

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# ABSTRACT

Russow, Kurt William; MA; Department of English; College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; North Dakota State University; May 2010. Lord of the Living Souls: Dominion and the Spiritual Lives of Animals in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Major Professor: Dr. R.S. Krishnan.

This paper examines Milton's views of the spiritual status of animals as presented in *Paradise Lost*. It discusses how Milton enters into discussion with the discourses of theology, philosophy, and both antique and modern science to construct his own nuanced view on the dominion humankind was theologically mandated to have over animals. Milton promotes a complex animal ethic based simultaneously on both hierarchy and kinship. Ultimately this ethic is used not only to celebrate animals, but also to celebrate a stewardship-oriented notion of a divinely ordained hierarchy.

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# INTRODUCTION

Milton writes in the beginning of *Paradise Lost* that the aim of his epic is to "justify the wayes of God to men" (l. 26). Yet he could not have chosen a more complicated and expansive biblical story for his theodicy. Milton's epic embellishment of the *Genesis* account of the creation and fall entails an expansion on one of the most foundational and contentious myths in Western culture. The creation myth of *Genesis* does a great deal more than just outline the relationship between God and man; it also institutes power relationships, such as the patriarchal power of man over woman and the power of mankind over nature. Thus Milton's *Paradise Lost* involves not only a justification of "the wayes of God to men," but also a justification of the ways of man to the rest of creation. This study is particularly concerned with Milton's justification of the ways of man to animals, which would deal with his interpretation of the power relationship between human and non-human animals mentioned in *Genesis*.

It is written in *Genesis* that "God blessed them [Adam and Eve], and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue* it: and have *dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth'" (1:28). However, the language of this decree is quite vague and somewhat contradictory in its implications. "Dominion" is not entirely defined, and "subdue" gives "dominion" an almost despotic association. Yet would despotism be an appropriate way of managing God's creation? And should not "dominion" in a godly sense be beneficent? It would seem that the language of *Genesis* allows for both despotic and stewardship-oriented views of "dominion." The linguistic instability of the dominion decree of *Genesis* has generated a multitude of interpretations. Rod Preece asserts that

*Genesis* has always resulted in a rigorous debate on the spiritual responsibility one is to have to the animal creation:

> Biblical and Christian thought have given rise to a more complex ethic of animal use informed by its pastoralist origins, Biblical pronouncements that permit different interpretations, and competing ideas and doctrines that arose during its development, and influenced by the rich and often contradictory features of ancient Hebrew and Greco-Roman traditions. The result is not a uniform ethic but a tradition of unresolved debate. (245)

Given that both despotic and stewardship ethics are possible to construe through the language of *Genesis*, it would seem that one's interpretation of the "dominion" in *Genesis* is not only contingent on how one reads the Bible, but also on the affinity that one feels towards other animals. The concept of affinity with animals certainly has the power to complicate static notions that seek to define the barrier between human and non-human animals.

The discourse of Anthrozoology is dedicated to studying cultural attempts to define the power and affinity relationships between human and non-human animals. When anthrozoologists study this issue, they often cite Claude Levi-Strauss, who once stated that "animals are good to think" (89). Levi-Strauss explains this statement in *Totemism*:

> The affinity between man and animal is easily verifiable. Like man, the animal moves, emits sounds, expresses its emotions, has a body and a face. What is more, its powers seem superior to those of man: the bird flies, the fish swims, reptiles shed their skin. The animal occupies an intermediary position between man and nature, and inspires in the former a mixture of

> feelings: admiration or fear, and lust for food, which are the ingredients of totemism. (57)

What makes animals "good to think," in Levi-Strauss' sense, is how they cause humans to define their roles within the larger natural picture. Because we humans often see a natural affinity with our fellow moving and breathing creatures, we compare ourselves to them, and from these comparisons come an understanding of ourselves. On first comparison to other animals, humans seem to hold unique power. The way humans work in mental abstractions, create complex technology, and communicate, all seem to suggest that we are somehow a higher species. Yet on further comparison to animals, we humans also notice our weaknesses and inabilities. We cannot fly like a bird; we cannot lift giant burdens like an elephant; we cannot claw like a lion; we cannot run like a horse. In physical comparison to so many members of the animal kingdom, we humans are slow, awkward, naked, and unimpressive. But in the give and take of the natural picture, we exercise unprecedented control over animals with our intellect and technology, which leads us to exploit those which we also respect and with whom we feel an affinity. A careful reading of *Paradise Lost* suggests that Milton also dealt with these conflicting ideas of affinity and power. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton's language suggests that he felt a deep spiritual affinity with animals and saw them not only as innately valuable, but innately divine. It has been commented by a number of critics that he solves this issue by promoting a spiritually-centered notion of ecological prudence.

Milton's notion of ecology has already been studied, especially through the works of Ken Hilter and Dianne McColley. McColley states that Milton and many of the poets of his time "embraced new knowledge of nature and recognized the costs of power over

nature intemperately used...seeing nature as habitats and watersheds, rich in connected lives vulnerable to misuse; regarding plants and animals not only as providers of human sustenance, pleasure and wisdom, but also as fellow creatures whose lives belong to themselves" (47). McColley suggests that Milton was a major voice in a trend that called for an ethical reevaluation of nature and that culminated in a collective cultural resistance against ecological abuse. McColley's analysis seems to suggest that Milton's view of animals was a branch of his ecological ethics which derived from his beliefs in creation. This study seeks to develop that assumption by showing that Milton's attitude towards animals was not only a product of his monistic ecology, but also a product of his adherence to a notion of divine hierarchy that centered on his definition of "dominion."

The language of *Paradise Lost* suggests that Milton valued animals as spiritually sentient beings with their own innate divine value, but it also suggests that Milton ascribed to a fairly absolute authority over animals which was expressed through a rational and temperate sense of dominion. Ultimately, Milton's notion of dominion serves a dual purpose of defining not only what an animal is, but also what mankind is, as well as laying bare what mankind's responsibility is to God and his creation.

To construct this take on dominion, Milton had to take a stand in the swirling and diverging currents of theological and philosophical decrees. His stance on dominion involves not only his own interpretation of *Genesis*'s unstable language, but also his erudition in the history of ideas. In *Paradise Lost,* Milton enters into discussion with the complex knot of early modern theology, philosophy, and the sciences to construct his notion of dominion. In this process, he revises many of the traditions on the animal world, demoting the view of animals as mere commodities, and upholding and enhancing the

traditions that ascribe divine worth unto animals. These revisions culminate in a uniquely Miltonic resistance against the ideology of the time by promoting a profoundly religious and spiritual view of the natural world that primarily values animals for their ability to bring humans closer to God and his divine plan, for the benefit of both human and non-human life.

# CHAPTER 1: ANIMALS IN THE EARLY MODERN IMAGINATION

To begin, it is important to illustrate the intellectual environment Milton was working with in *Paradise Lost*. Linda Kalof notes, "there was more philosophical discussion about animals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than at any other time in history before the 1970s" (97). She attributes this to the rise of four trends during this time: the popularity of vivisection in the new experimental science, increased urbanization, increased commodification of animals for food, labor, and entertainment, and the increased availability of print media. There was a clear shift in power in the natural situation. To the early modern, the dominion of mankind over the animal world was expanding. Contact with animals was increasing, but it was through things such as public vivisections, the opening of royal and aristocratic zoos to the public, and an increase in the selection of expensive pets from the New World and the East. If one follows Strauss' notion that "animals are good to think," the food for thought was changing, and thus thinkers were beginning to reform their positions on the natural world and to adjust their views to a new natural situation of expanded power. To some, this meant to reform systems in a way that absolved them of the possible guilt of animal exploitation; to others it meant a reformation of dominion that infused it with stronger stewardship ethics.

To define dominion at that time would not only mean close personal scriptural exegesis, but also entering into the philosophical discussions and debates of the scientific communities. Early modern science was far from secular; it based its study of the natural world on theology and thus had a long tradition of seeking out the meaning of "dominion." Yet Milton had not one, but two different scientific discourses to choose from to form his understanding of the natural world. This was the time of the early modern scientific

revolution. The traditional discourse of Natural philosophy was beginning to be questioned and subverted by the methods of the revolution's foundational thinkers. Evidence would suggest that Milton was conversant with the discussions, debates, and scriptural exegeses of both Natural philosophy and the revolutionary science and used both to construct his own views.

The thinkers of the scientific revolution presented new and controversial definitions of mankind's dominion over nature. It is fairly clear through Milton's prose that he was familiar with the new revolutionary science, launched by such prominent early modern thinkers as Francis Bacon and René Descartes. In *The Life of John Milton,* Barbara Lewalski states that although Cambridge offered only courses in the ancient sciences of Natural philosophy, despite the fact that it was Bacon's *Alma Mater,* there were certainly converts to the new science who taught there. In 1628 Milton composed a poem that asserted "*naturam non pati senium*" [nature does not suffer from old age] which was a Baconian refutation of a common teaching of the ancient sciences. This suggests that Milton was familiar with Bacon's works during his schooling and that he was likely tracking the progress of the scientific revolution throughout his life (Lewalski 31).

Although Bacon promoted an early version of the scientific method that emphasized inductive reasoning and empirical observation, he was also still very much a man of tradition and upheld the stance of spiritual dominion of man over animal. Bacon writes "if we look to final causes [man] may be regarded as the centre of the world; insomuch that if man were taken away from the world, the rest would seem to be all astray, without aim or purpose ... for the whole world works together in the service of Man, and there is nothing from which he does not derive use and fruit" (*Essays* 270). Bacon here

asserts that it is man's divine right to exercise empire over nature and use it for the benefit of mankind. In the *New Atlantis*, Bacon posits his Utopian ideal. Animals, in his Utopia, are enclosed in "parks...not only for view or rareness, but likewise for dissections and trials, that thereby may take light what may be wrought upon the body of man. (211). Bacon very much advocated animal testing and also advocated the selective breeding and the alteration of animals, saying that "By art likewise we make them greater or smaller than their kind is, and contrariwise dwarf them and stay their growth; we make them more fruitful and bearing than their kind is, and contrariwise barren and not generative" (211). Animals, for Bacon, were an anthropocentric means to satisfy humanity's needs and curiosity. This anthropocentric emphasis is fundamental to Baconian thought and, indeed, pervades much of the scientific practice of the 17th century. It is even considered by many naturalists and ecocritics to be an indispensible characteristic of many biological scientific studies today.

Along with Bacon, René Descartes was also an early contemporary of Milton, and his arguments on the spiritual status of animals came to dominate the western notion of animal cognition throughout early modern times. Descartes intensified the anthropocentric assumptions of early modern science. He proposed that animals were automata, i.e. essentially thoughtless, biological machines. He explained this position in a letter to the Marquess of New Castle who inquired about his previous writings on this issue in part five of the *Discourse on the Method*:

> Now it seems to me very striking that the use of words, so defined, is something peculiar to human beings ... there has never been known an animal so perfect as to use a sign to make other animals understand

> something which expressed no passion; and there is no human being so imperfect as not to do so, since even deaf-mutes invent special signs to express their thoughts. This seems to me a very strong argument to prove that the reason why animals do not speak as we do is not that they lack the organs but that they have no thoughts. (206-7)

Given that Descartes had asserted that animals were thoughtless, he also thought that they lacked a cognitive soul and that the only semblance of spirit within them was a kind of kinetic driving force which merely caused the movement of vital fluids and energies in the beast-clock. He maintained that his "opinion is not so much cruel to animals as indulgent to men... since it absolves them from the suspicion of crime when they eat or kill animals" (245). Accordingly, the animal's yelps of pain during the vivisections and lab trials were interpreted as mechanical reactions of the beast clock when its gears were out of whack. Sensation and cognition were viewed as separate in the Cartesian model. In sum, Descartes established a strong cognitive dissonance between animals and humans that allowed for any kind of animal exploitation in the name of progress.

There were, however, other scientific advances that challenged Descartes animal experimentation and Bacon's anthropocentric thinking in early modern science. Robert Hooke, the early modern father of cell theory, objected to vivisection, saying, "I shall hardly be induced to make any further trials of this kind because of the torture of the creature" (quoted in Kalof 124). Astronomers were also deeply invested in the issue of anthropocentrism but for different reasons. Copernican heliocentrism had been confirmed by Galileo's astronomical studies, and geocentrism was revealed to be false. This had serious philosophical implications since geocentrism nourished anthropocentric

worldviews as it posited earth as the center of the universe. Nature was revealing itself to be indifferent to mankind. As Galileo observed, "nature does not care…a whit whether her abstruse reasons and methods of operation are understandable to men" (qtd. in Harrison 106). Scientists of other disciplines concurred that "man as center of the universe" was a flawed notion. Robert Boyle, one of the founding fathers of modern chemistry, described the idea that the earth was created for man's use as "erroneous"(Harrison 106). Similar sentiment was exemplified by even the more theologically-centered major scientific thinkers of the time such as John Ray and Thomas Burnet (Harrison 106). By asserting such claims, these scientists were not only at odds with church edicts, but at odds with many other scientists. Truly, the early modern scientific discourse was one of intense debate and monumental discovery.

Milton's shows familiarity with the opposing side of the anthropocentrism debate through his famous encounter with Galileo in 1638. The details of this meeting are left to speculation, but Milton remarked that "the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licencers thought" (*CPW* 538). Milton here expresses his admiration of Galileo for his courage to challenge the Church's "licensure of thought." Given that Milton was conversant with both Bacon and Galileo, it is likely that he too was invested in this debate of man's place among the cosmos, and in the revolutionary spirit of science, desired to see the world in his own terms.

Yet one must remember that the new science was challenging long-standing traditions, and Milton's knowledge of the natural world was primarily shaped by study in the ancient sciences rather than the new sciences. In *Of Education,* Milton advocates the

use of Natural philosophy to teach "the history of meteors, minerals, plants, and living creatures so farre as anatomy" (983). Since he does not openly advocate the study of the new sciences in his educational ideal, one must assume that although he was conversant with the new sciences, he was not a staunch devotee and might even have been a bit conservative in his scientific views.

The primary methodology of Natural philosophy was to look deductively backward in time to the assumed wisdom of the classical authors who had written extensively on the natural world. In regard to animal studies, Aristotle's *Biological Treatises* and Pliny the Elder's *Natural Histories* were the acclaimed classical cannon. As in most classical scientific works, both the *Biological Treatises,* and the *Natural Histories* are observational texts that present a mixture of views that are derived from observations, histories, and myths. Animals and creatures of fable are presented side by side as the unvarnished truth, and the observations on the animals are sometimes precociously accurate and sometimes wildly incorrect. For example, in the *Biological Treatises* Aristotle states that whales are more like land animals because they respire through a blowhole, yet on another page he will say with confidence that an elephant has a lifespan of around 250 years or that men have more teeth than women. Pliny's *Natural Histories* expound even further mythic notions as he uses legendary and historical sources more profusely than Aristotle. Natural philosophy emulated this methodology and often allowed for the incorporation of literary stories and histories to understand the animal world, allowing Natural philosophy to be couched in purely imaginative works. Yet Natural philosophers did not settle for classics alone. The element of religious faith was a central tenant of Natural philosophy.

One of the main ways Christian faith was infused with Natural philosophy was through the study of a second-century, Alexandrian bestiary titled the *Physiologus,* which was a collection of didactic and moral tales that allegorized various beasts, birds, and fantastical creatures into spiritual concepts, a sort of *Aesop's Fables* for Christians. *Physiologus* tells us tales such as how Pelicans kill their own children and "lament over them for three days," and then "spill their own blood over them to awaken them" (10). Or how the lioness gives birth to still born cubs which are revived three days later by their sire who breathes life into their nostrils (4). Or how the "fox is the figure of the devil" (37). One would think that this contemplative spiritual approach would cause more appreciation for the animal world, given that nature was posited as a teacher of divine lessons. But this was not necessarily the case. The allegorical approach of the *Physiologus* does not designate a valued status to the animals themselves. Rather it is the symbolic significance of the animal that is valuable. Perhaps it was precisely this approach that made *Physiologus* appealing to theologians who wanted to preach a spiritual doctrine of detachment to the world, even as they endeavored to assert that God's divinity was apparent through nature. Bestiary upon bestiary testifies to the tremendous popularity the *Physiologus* had on the discourse of Natural philosophy. Medieval Natural philosophers showed a strong preference for it in their works, as is abundantly clear in the *Bodleain Bestiary of Oxford,* which reads like a series of sermons derived from the *Physiologus* and which makes mostly secondary references to Pliny and Aristotle.

By the early modern period, however, the religious, allegorical approach to nature had become more subdued. Early modern Natural philosophers were moving away from *Physiologus* in their work and focusing more on the classical sources, as is apparent in a

dominant early modern bestiary, Edward Topsell's *Historie of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents and Insects.* Although the *Physiologus's* allegories were falling out of favor, early modern Natural philosophy still very much advocated a spiritually contemplative method of viewing nature. Perhaps Topsell said it best when he wrote, "When I affirm that the knowledge of Beasts is Deuine, I do mean no other thing then the right and perfect description of their names, figures and this is in the creator himself most Deuine and there fore such as is the fountain, such are the streams yssuing fro' the same into the minds of men" (sig.A4r). "Knowledge of Beasts" is divine; in that they lead one to appreciate God through his marvelous creation. Yet, it would also seem that Natural philosophy still advocated for a fairly metaphoric understanding of nature in this respect. Animals were still paths to divinity and divine lessons, but the spiritual questions of Natural philosophy were up for debate and revision. Milton shows an awareness of this contemporary trend in natural philosophy. In "On Education," Milton advocates for the teaching of Natural philosophy via the works of Pliny and Aristotle. But he makes no mention of the *Physiologus* or of modern bestiary writers like Topsell. Let's remember that he even advocates that the sources on "living creatures" be studied "as farre as anatomy." What this could indicate is that, like Topsell, Milton was interested in revising the traditions of Natural philosophy, and because he emphasizes the classical sources in regard to anatomy, we might be justified in assuming that he found problems with the spiritual traditions of Natural philosophy and instead began to develop his own theological views in regard to the spiritual/contemplative nature of this discourse.

Milton's view on science was like the double-faced Roman god Janus; he simultaneously looked both forward and backward in regard to the dual discourses. He had

a revolutionary spirit, and he was not about to uphold tradition blindly. He was judicious about the traditions he wants to uphold and sought to reform, build on, and recreate tradition for the best in regard to God's animal creation.

# CHAPTER 2: MILTON'S THEODICY ON THE SPIRITUAL STATUS OF ANIMALS

Milton's view on the spiritual status of animals was primarily grounded in his personal biblical exegesis which he explains in *On Christian Doctrine*. Milton asserts that his doctrinal defense is part of "the process of restoring religion to something of its pure original state, after it had been defiled with impurities for more than thirteen hundred years" (1158). He makes a point that his doctrine is "drawn from the sacred Scriptures alone" and that "we may rightly insist that Christians should believe in the SCRIPTURES, from which this doctrine is drawn" (1160). Although Milton also believes that "scriptural authority" has its "proper place," his aim in *Christian Doctrine* is to take an orthodox protestant approach to doctrine, which is to rely solely on the Bible to construct theology. The authority of theologians and philosophers is dismissed in favor of a close textual reading of the Bible.

In chapter seven of *Christian Doctrine*, "Of the Creation," Milton argues against the conventional doctrine of *Ex Nihilo*, which is the doctrine that God created the world out of nothing:

> There is a good deal of controversy, however, about what original matter was. On the whole the moderns are of the opinion that everything was formed out of nothing (which is, I fancy, what their own theory is based on!) In the first place it is certain that neither the Hebrew verb, nor the Greek, nor the Latin means to "make out of nothing." On the contrary, each of them always means "to make out of something." (1176)

Milton details a rather extensive list of scriptural passages which imply the act of creation as the action of changing, molding, directing, or beautifying something that is substantive.

He then concludes that "with guidance of Scripture, I have proved that God produced all things not out of nothing, but out of himself" (1177). His doctrine of creation as *Ex Deo* was an affront to the dominant doctrine of creation *Ex Nihilo* and was therefore considered as heretical; Milton's *On Christian Doctrine* was thus an underground document, but, even so, the presence of *Ex Deo* creation is clearly apparent in *Paradise Lost.*

> I send along, ride forth, and bid the Deep
> Within appointed bounds be Heav'n and Earth,
> Boundless the Deep, because I am who fill
> Infinitude, nor vacuous the space. (*PL* 7. 166-169)

Notice how Milton describes God as "the overshadowing spirit" who is boundless and fills infinitude. If God is infinitude, then all things are made of God. In Milton's universe everything is essentially cut from the same divine cloth; God is not just all-present, he is all.

Stephen Fallon observes that "Milton viewed 'life' (physical and mental) as neither the sum of mechanical motions,' nor the function of an 'incorporeal substance,' but as the operation of 'corporeal spirits'" (117). The corporeality of spirits is highly apparent in *Paradise Lost,* especially in regard to Milton's illustration of the Angel Raphael, who eats, sleeps, and even engages in angel sex. The corporeality of spirit, the idea that the spirit and body are an inseparable unit, undermines the dualist school of thought that pervades the theology and philosophy of Milton's time. Milton is abundantly clear on his rejection of the body and soul dichotomy in *Christian Doctrine*, stating, "The idea that the spirit of man is separate from his body, so that it may exist somewhere in isolation, complete and intelligent, is nowhere to be found in Scripture, and is plainly at odds with nature and

reason" (*CPW* 319). Thus Milton strongly asserts the existence of a corporeal spiritual materialism, which rejects spiritual dualism.

This rejection of dualism has strong implications for Milton's illustration of the animal world. Dualism was integral to the dominant philosophical and religious understanding of animals during Milton's time. Descartes based his beast automaton theory entirely on dualistic assumptions. Peter Harrison states that "Descartes held that both reason and perception are mental events which can take place only in incorporeal (that is spiritual and immortal) substances" ("Animal Soul" 522). Descartes assumes that somehow animals are not participants in incorporeal substance. Harrison points out that Descartes was merely revising the dominant Christian dualism that used the Aristotelian philosophical discourse that sought to define these clear categories of spiritual status:

> For Aristotle, human superiority lay in the fact that while plants possessed a vegetative soul, animals a sensitive soul, humans boasted a rational soul. This view was ordained by Augustine and Aquinas, both of whom suggested we owe no direct duties to animals, on account of their inferior, irrational souls. (519)

Descartes takes Aristotle's, Augustine's, and Aquinas' positions one step further by asserting that animals are not just spiritually inferior, but spiritually void. The irony of all these theological positions, whether it is the spiritual inferiority of animals or the spiritual depravity of animals, is that none are entirely justified by Scripture. Milton, being a phenomenal biblical scholar of his time, was well aware of this popular theological misconception and reveals a strong fidelity to the original Hebrew of *Genesis* in the language of *Paradise Lost*.

*Genesis* uses the word "*nephesh*" to describe animals. "*Nephesh*" has a rather extensive definition; *Strong's Hebrew Lexicon* defines "*nephesh*" as "soul, self, life, creature, person, appetite, mind, living being, desire, emotion, passion, the breathing substance or being, the inner being of man." While this definition is most often translated simply as "soul," it is a term loaded with complex theological discussion on the nature of the soul. What is even more important is that humans are also *nephesh.* The first chapter of *Genesis* in the original Hebrew describes both humans and animals as "*nephesh chaya*" which translates as "living soul." Translators of the Bible, however, do not always reveal the sameness of this term when it comes to *Genesis'* description of humans and animals. For example, the *King James Version* of the Bible translates "*nephesh chaya*" in regard to animals as "living or moving creature."*Genesis* 1:20 states "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the *moving creature*."*Genesis* 1:24, states "Let the earth bring forth the *living creature* after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind." Yet, in the context of human beings, "*nephesh*" is translated as "living soul." Genesis 2:7 of the *KJV* states, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a *living soul*." Some might cite the detail that it could be God's "breath of life" or Hebrew term "*ruah*" that causes the distinction between humans being called "living souls" and animals "creatures." Yet animals also have the breath of life or "*ruah*" in them. This is apparent in *Genesis* 6:17 when God states he will flood the earth: "I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die." Since all flesh has the "breath of life" in it, God's breathing in the nostrils of Adam cannot possibly account for this differentiation of translation of *nephesh.*

Rather, it would seem that this is an attempt to assert a spiritual difference between animals and humans that exists within the mind of the translators rather than in the biblical Hebrew.

In the English language, the word "creature" and "soul" hardly have the same connotation. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "creature" as "anything created; a created being, animate or inanimate; a product of creative action; a creation." A creature can be anything, a human, an animal, a plant, a rock, a table, even a Kleenex. "Creature," indicates no spiritual status, and translating "*nephesh chaya*" in connection with animals as "creature" fails to acknowledge the spiritual status animals are assigned in *Genesis*. It works to elevate humans over animals in a way that the Bible does not imply. "Creature" is a more palatable translation for Augustinian and Aquainian views of animals as spiritually inferior, and it even allows for the Cartesian view of the beast automaton. Milton, however, translates the Hebrew more consistently in *Paradise Lost*. When Milton's God creates the animals of the sea and air, he does not just create "moving creatures" but "Reptil with Spawn abundant, *living Soule*" (*PL* 7.388- 390.) Milton's God, when creating the terrestrial animals, does not create "living creatures;" he commands the "Earth bring forth *Soul living* in her kinde,/ Cattel and Creeping things" (*PL* 7. 451-452). And finally, when creating humans, God breathes into Adam "The breath of Life; in his own Image hee / Created thee, in the Image of God/ Express, and thou becam'st a living Soul" (*PL* 7.525-527.) It can be argued that Milton favors this rather purist translation mostly because the specific term supports his monism. The conflation of the corporeal and the spiritual indicated by "living soul" would indeed support his theological stance. Yet, there is so much more in Book Seven of *Paradise Lost* that illustrates his theological views than just his translation of *Genesis*. The creation myth of *Genesis* is remarkably spare, only around

800 words long; Milton's rendition of *Genesis* chapter one in *Paradise Lost* is around 5,000 words long. Milton's views on Scripture often play out strongest within his poetic additions to *Genesis*. This is especially true when one compares the animal world of *Genesis* to that of Milton.

Milton's depiction of the animal world in *Paradise Lost* can be seen as not only more expansive than the *Genesis* narrative, but also more spiritual and inclusive in its approach to the animal world than in *Genesis*. Perhaps this is a result of the inclusive nature of his monism. *Genesis*, and the Bible in general, often place primacy on commodity animals over all other animals. As Elijah Schochet comments:

> The creation narrative of *Genesis* hardly attempts to present a thorough or balanced picture of the animal kingdom. Quite contrary. The crucial factor is an animal's relationship to man; more specifically; its usefulness to man. 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures after its kind, cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after its kind.' It is creatures of value to man i.e. the cattle, the domesticated beasts, who merit first mention. Later, when Adam bestows names upon the fauna of earth, again it is the cattle who are first to be mentioned. (10)

Schochet's comments are true of the Bible. Animals do not hold a central place within Scripture. He cites that "the approximately one hundred and twenty different species of fauna that make their appearance are scattered through the pages of the Bible in different contexts" and that "the animal generally serves merely as a backdrop or natural background behind the stage upon which, man, the principle player, performs his role" (9). Milton,

however, puts more emphasis on animals than the *Genesis* text does. He composes poetic catalogs of beasts, which, Schochet comments, are largely absent from the Bible.

Milton's catalogs in Book Seven are divided in order of their *Genesis* creation, listing far more animals than *Genesis* does. God starts off creating the aquatic animals; *Genesis* 1:21 states, "God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind." Milton specifies this "abundance of kinds" by mentioning, "frie innumeral" [the seemingly countless varieties of fish] corals, fish in "Pearlie shells" [shelled mollusks], fish in "jointed armour" [crustaceans], dolphins, and the Leviathan (*PL* 7. 400-415). When God creates "every fowl to its kind" (*Genesis* 1:21). Milton composes a catalog of aerial animals: eagles, storks, cranes, nightingales, swans, and two roosters, the "crested" one with "clarion sounds" [the poultry rooster], and the one with "gay triane… of Florid hue" [the peacock]. (*PL* 7. 422-445). And lastly, when *Genesis* 1:25 limits its report to, "God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind," Milton yet again includes a catalog of animal kinds, this time terrestrial animals. He shows fidelity to biblical scripture by mentioning the cattle first: "Cattel" [being a blanket term for all bovine and ovine domestics], which "walk'd … in the Fields and Meddowes green: … in flocks…Pasturing at once, and in broad Herds upsprung "(*PL* 7.460-462). Yet after the mention of cattle, Milton's list turns to the wild animals such as the Lion, the Ounce [lynx], the Libbard [leopard], the Tyger, the River horse [hippopotamus], the crocodile, the stag, and the solitary Behemoth. He also includes "minims of nature," insects or worms with specific reference to Emmets [ants], and Bees, and lastly, serpents, which include winged serpents [dragons], and snakes. (*PL* 7. 460-495).

What is most striking about Milton's catalogs in Book Seven is that they are almost exclusively of wild animals. Unlike Genesis, in *PL* there is no extensive catalog of domestic animals. What this would indicate then, is that Milton chooses to emphasize all animals, not just the ones that have been commodified. He indicates that all animals are splendid in their own existence, and that they magnify the power of the creator in the complexity of their forms. He even spends time detailing catalogs of animals that are often considered pests to livestock and cattle: predators, insects, and serpents. What all these details suggest is that Milton felt that all animals have intrinsic spiritual worth. They are not merely man's commodities. For example, when he describes shelled mollusks "in thir Pearlie shells at ease, attend/ Moist nutriment, or under Rocks thir food, " he refrains from a more traditional mention of pearls or jewelry in regard to these animals and instead marvels at their pearly shells as they are gathering nutriment on the rocks (*PL* 7: 407-408). He sees splendor in animals when they simply live their animal lives. McColley comments on this value of animal life in her essay "Zooic Poetry:"

> Milton, in part through mimetic prosody, draws us into sensuous and muscular sympathy with other creatures. As Adam and Eve rest after gardening, the description of animals that "frisking played" before them reports their perceptions and engages ours by rhythmically recreating the rearing and gamboling animals in energetic trocaic and dactylic accents. (148)

McColley suggests that Milton's language creates a kinetic sympathy between humans and animals. Milton's animals are animals of action; the aquatic animals of *Paradise Lost*

sport and "Glide under the Green Wave," and "Graze the Sea weed thir pasture" (*PL* 7. 404, 402). When the birds of the air hatch, they are "Bursting with kindly rupture forth disclos'd," they "fly over Lands with mutual wing" and "towre the mid Aereal skie;" the beasts of the field do not simply rise up from the earth but like the lion "paw to get free" and then "spring as broke from bonds" (*PL* 7. 420, 420, 442, 465). The kinetic energy of these animals is explosive and brimming with vitality. Milton puts the "Living" in "Living Soule." By emphasizing animal kinesis, Milton indicates that animals magnify their creator by simply living their animal life. Milton's animals then are more valuable alive than dead and in their commodified form.

Milton also values animals for their ability to magnify their creator through their instinctual actions. In Milton's universe every animal has fundamental worth. He upholds that God created the "Innumerous living Creatures, in perfet forms" (*PL* 7. 455). He upholds that God's creation was complete and sinless from the beginning and that all animals are God's handiwork. This seems innocuous at first sight, but does much to flout some of the long-standing traditions on animals. It is here that Milton enters in colloquy with the discourse of Natural philosophy.

As stated earlier, Natural philosophers were in the business of confirming and refuting the classical sources of the discourse. One of the main issues of the debate was the divinity of animal creation. According to the old traditions, there were a number of imperfect or abominable animals that came about after the fall into sin. Milton mentions three kinds of these abominable animals, the Libbard [leopard] , the Ounce [lynx ], and the entire class of insects. According to the old traditions, Leopards are the cross between a "leo" and a "pard" or a lion and a panther, and lynxes were thought to be crosses between

wolves and hinds. These notions were popularized by Pliny in his *Natural History* and echoed through many artistic works throughout history. The Christian Natural philosophers assumed these stories were true, and interpreted these animals as postlapsarian abominations, since they were apparently not *directly* created by God. The *Bestiary of the Bodleian Library of Oxford* illustrates one such typical rendition of the leopard and the lynx. It states, "the mystic pard signifies either the devil, full of a diversity of vices, or the sinner, spotted with crimes and a variety of wrongdoings, and the lynx somehow "typifies envious men, who in the hardness of their hearts would rather do harm than good and are intent on worldly desires" (Barber 35, 38). However, the early modern Natural philosophers were questioning and undermining these types of stories, as is exemplified by Edward Topsell in *History of Four-Footed Beasts* when he discusses the Lynx. He states that "there is no wise man that will suppose or be easily induced to believe that Beasts of such hostility, and adverse dispositions in nature, should ever ingender or suffer copulation with each other"(381). Yet he maintains the tradition of the Leopard calling it the whelp of "a lion and a pardal" (378). It is clear that Milton's approach was different from Topsell's, and it was different perhaps precisely because Milton assumed that all creation was divine. Indeed, Milton trumps the philosophic debate by asserting that leopards and lynxes were part of the original creation. He reveals this when he describes the creation of the big cats as they rise from the ground: "The Tawnie Lion, pawing to get free/….And Rampant shakes his Brinded main; the Ounce,/ The Libbard, and the Tyger, as the Moale/ Rising, the crumbl'd Earth above them threw" (*PL* 7. 464-468). Notice how the leopard and the lynx appear with other members of the feline kind, which also includes the much-venerated lion and tiger, both of which are often assigned, in the older traditions, a higher and more

noble status among the beasts. He thus frees the leopard and lynx from their ignoble birth and their connotations with sin.

Insects are another such animal that Milton emphasizes in the original creation, despite the fact that this was not a popular notion during his time, as Frank Manly suggests:

> Most educated men during Milton's time and earlier—in fact ever since the time of the Greeks knew that insects were produced exclusively from corruption, spontaneously generated from rotting leaves, dead bodies, all sorts of putrefaction. And the problem for the exegetes was precisely that: there were no dead bodies and no compost heaps round for them to come from when the world was new. If there were, it would have been a serious argument against perfection. (400)

This tradition conveniently interprets insects as evil, since some species are invasive and parasitic. Yet Milton flouts this tradition as well and places insects in Eden:

> At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,
> Insect or Worme; those wav'd thir limber fans
> For wings, and smallest Lineaments exact
> In all the Liveries dect of Summers pride
> With spots of Gold and Purple, azure and green:
> These as a line thir long dimension drew. (*PL* 7. 475- 480)

Notice how Milton uses the blanket terms "Insect" and "Worme." He does make special mention of the favored insects like ants and bees, but also includes every other minim. These are the "creeping things" of *Genesis*, and they too magnify God's glory. He does not find them bothersome, nor is he revolted by their six legs, but, rather, he marvels at their

"small lineaments," and "spots of Gold and Purple azure and green." By their very beauty, and intricate design, insects, too, honor God. For Milton, even worms host a divine spark of innate beauty and value.

It is clear that in *Paradise Lost* all the creatures that exist in the world are imbued with divinity and worth. They are corporeal spirits, and as such each has worth. Milton's animals are not objects, or beastly automatons, but are subjects, divine subjects of the Creator; they have fundamental worth and are part of the grand orchestra of creation.

# CHAPTER 3: THE SACRED HIERARCHY OF *PARADISE LOST*

## Prelapsarian Dominion and Emblematic Tradition

Even though both humans and animals are sacred living souls, the hierarchy of the human living soul over the animal living soul is very clear. Milton articulates humankind's divine right over nature and the entire animal world, when he repeats the dominion decree of *Genesis* 1:28 in versified verbatim.

> Be fruitful, multiplie, and fill the Earth,
> Subdue it, and throughout Dominion hold
> Over Fish of the Sea, and Fowle of the Aire,
> And every living thing that moves on the Earth. (*PL* 7. 531-535)

The word "subdue" here is particularly significant since it implies a violent sense of conquest. "Subdue" is a fairly accurate English word to translate the Hebrew word "*kawbash*" which *Strong's Hebrew Lexicon* defines as "to conquer, subjugate or violate." Unlike his translation of "*nephesh*," Milton sticks to the traditional translation of this word. Yet it also seems quite out of step with reason for God to command Adam to conquer or violate a place as passive and wonderful as Eden. "Subdue" may simply be employed to emphasize the absolute authority of "dominion." And "dominion" has a far more ambiguous meaning: Hebrew it is the word, "*radah,*" which *Strong's Hebrew Lexicon* defines as "reign, rule or dominate." But as Nahum Sarna comments, it also means "to drive, or tend the flock" (34). Milton, however, given his emphasis on the spirituality of creation, interprets "subdue" and "dominion" in regard to a divine spiritual hierarchy rather than a tyrannical human despotism over nature:

> [God] created all
>
> Such to perfection, one first matter all,
>
> Indu'd with various forms, various degree
>
> Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
>
> But more refin'd, more spiritous, and pure,
>
> As neerer to him plac't or neerer tending
>
> Each in thir several active Sphears assignd,
>
> Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
>
> Proportiond to each kind. (*PL* 5. 471-479)

This passage suggests that Milton felt that various forms were also "various degrees." The nearer the form ascends to God, the more refined, spirituous, and pure it becomes. This is very much akin to *Scala Naturae*, or what is also called the Great Chain of Being. Arthur Lovejoy comments that this is "one of the half-dozen most potent and persistent presuppositions in Western thought" (25). Lovejoy traces The Great Chain from its roots in Platonic Greek philosophy to show that it was a major focus of discussion in the west until the late eighteenth century. The Great Chain had many revisions, but generally arranged the world into this order: at the base are the rocks and elements, then the plants, then the lower animals, the higher animals, humankind, angels, archangels, and finally God himself. Since it was used to create a hierarchy, the Great Chain was often arranged in a way to objectify certain animals and people. It was not uncommon to put parasitic insects and worms very low on the Chain, or to put people of other cultures beneath the European man. Yet it did not always aim at objectification. Some valued the Chain for revealing how it

created a unified, or interconnected world, one that actually did more to blur the distinctions rather than to create clear cut categories. Such was the opinion of John Locke:

> There are some Brutes, that seem to have as much Knowledge and Reason as some that are called Men; and the Animal and Vegetable Kingdoms are so nearly join'd, that if you will take the lowest of one, and the highest of the other, there will scarce be perceived any great difference between them; and so on till we come to the lowest and most inorganical parts of Matter, we shall see everywhere, that the several Species are linked together, and differ but in almost insensible degrees. (49)

Like Locke, Milton resists using the Chain to objectify nature, but uses it as a way to emphasize its beauty and interconnectedness. As he states in *Christian Doctrine,* "matter was not, by nature imperfect. The addition of forms (which incidentally are themselves material) did not make it more perfect but only more beautiful" (1177). For Milton all creation is perfect and beautiful in its own way; it is only that there are ascending forms of perfection and beauty.

What then accounts for the elevated status of humans over animals? If both are living souls and if all forms are perfect, what makes humans elevated to a place of power? What is often cited by theologians is the concept of the "image of God," which was imparted individually by God to Adam on the sixth day of creation. It is the image of God that gives Adam and Eve lordship over the animals.

> Created in his Image, there to dwell
> And worship him, and in reward to rule

> Over his Works, on Earth, in Sea, or Air,
>
> And multiply a Race of Worshippers (*PL* 7. 627- 630)

The theological discourses on the "image of God" are diverse and complex. Fortunately, Milton defines his concept of the "image of God" in *Christian Doctrine*:

> Man was made in the image of God, and the whole law of nature was so implanted and innate in him that he was in need of no command. It follows, then, that if he received any additional commands, whether about the tree of knowledge or about marriage, these had nothing to do with the law of nature, which is itself sufficient to teach whatever is in accord with right reason. (1180)

Milton defines the image of God with innate reason, It is reason that separates Adam from the animals; this is clearly stated in *Paradise Lost*: "With Sanctitie of Reason, might erect/ His Stature, and upright with Front serene /Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence"(*PL* 7. 508- 510). It is here that Milton enters in an age-old philosophical and theological discussion on the differences between humans and animals. The dominant idea was that it was reason that made humans superior. As Erica Fudge states, "discussions of reason in early modern England are discussions of order. Simply put, the human possession of reason places humans above animals in the natural hierarchy. Reason reveals humans' immortality and animals' irrationality reveals their mortality, their materiality" (3). One of the primary sources used to construct human rationality and beast irrationality was Aristotle's *De Anima*. Aristotle maintained that the psyche or soul of the animal, which is more popularly known in Cicero's term the *anima,* is the vital principle, which includes the abilities of sensation, perception, memory, nurturing and growth. The soul of the human is

both *anima* and *animus*, the rational soul, which grants the ability to reason and understand. This idea was certainly adopted by Christian theologians. Augustine writes, "when we say, Thou shalt not kill, we do not understand this of plants, since they have no sensation, nor of the irrational animals that fly, swim, walk or creep, since they are dissociated from us by want of reason and are therefore by the just appointment of the Creator subjected to us to kill or keep alive for our own uses" (26). Thus, animals, according to this dominant view, are spiritually inferior because they have no reason.

Milton's hierarchies, however, are never so static. Often the characteristics of the hierarchy bleed over into the next order. He works with Aristotle's notion of vegetable, animal, and rational spirits fairly directly in Book Five of *Paradise Lost* and challenges its attempt to create static notions of differentiation:

> More aerie, last the bright consummate floure
> Spirits odorous breathes: flours and thir fruit
> Mans nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd
> To vital Spirits aspire, to animal,
> To intellectual, give both life and sense,
> Fansie and understanding, whence the Soule
> Reason receives, and reason is her being,
> Discursive, or Intuitive; discourse
> Is oftest yours, the latter most is ours,
> Differing but in degree, of kind the same. (*PL* 5. 483-492)

Notice how Raphael's discussion of an aspiration of spirits is in keeping with the Aristotelian notion: one spirit builds on another; he, like Adam, has reason. But it would

seem also that the lower ranks experiences shades of the spiritual gifts of the higher ranks. Raphael does not deny Adam's intuition, but states that it is "mostly ours," just as Adam's discourse of reason is most often his. Milton implies that humans, too, can have intuition, but it is of a different form. The same can be said of Milton's view of reason and animals.

In Book Eight of *Paradise Lost*, God says to Adam that animals "also know,/ And reason not contemptibly" (374-75). Milton clearly flouts the dominant tradition here and states that animals do, indeed, have reason. Often the philosophical position that acknowledged reasoning as an ability in animals involved the work of Plutarch's *Moralia*, particularly the three moraliae titled "Whether Land or Sea Animals are Cleverer," "Beasts are Rational" and "On the Eating of Flesh." Here, Plutarch asserts that animals are rational beings but that their rationality is specific to the kind of animal: dogs have dog reason; fish have fish reason; and so forth. Their reason, however, does not put them at a disadvantage, but rather, more often than not, allows them to live lives that are happier than those of humans.

Prolusion VII, composed prior to *Paradise Lost,* reveals that at Milton saw merit in arguments for rationality in beasts:

> At any rate if they are either endowed with some kind of inferior reasoning power, as many maintain, or guided by some powerful instinct, enabling them to practice the Arts, or something resembling the Arts, among themselves. For Plutarch tells us that in pursuit of game, dogs show some knowledge of dialectic, and if the chance to come to cross-roads, they obviously make use of a disjunctive syllogism. Aristotle points out that the nightingale in some sort instructs her offspring in the principles of music.

> Almost every animal is its own physician, and many of them have given valuable lessons in medicine to man; the Egyptian Ibis teaches us the value of purgatives, the hippopotamus of bloodletting. Who can maintain that creatures which so often give us warning of coming wind, rain, floods, or fair weather, know nothing of astronomy? (872)

Notice how Milton quotes two of the main sources of this debate. He paraphrases Plutarch at length in his list of examples. But he also quotes Aristotle, whose arguments were the basis of the side who opposed rationality in beasts. Perhaps he is implying that the opposing side ignores the complexity of Aristotle's works. Aristotle's position on the irrationality of animals is clear in *De Anima*, but is often contradicted by much of his examples in the *Biological Treatises*. At any rate, it is clear from God's words to Adam, that animals "reason not contemptibly" that Milton resolved this debate and did indeed feel that animals were capable of degrees of reason.

Although animals were capable of reason, Milton lauds humankind's superior reasoning over animals; humankind's superior reasoning is an expression of the Image of God and it enables dominion. This accounts for the seeming contradiction as to why Milton frequently refers to animals as "the irrational;" it is merely a laudatory generalization of man's rational superiority. One must wonder though how this reasonable dominion is exercised in an ideal place like the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve, like the animals, are naked vegetarians. There is no conflict for Adam and Eve to solve, rule over, or subdue with their divinely given reason. Rather, Milton's sense of dominion would seem to be an intellectual dominion, expressed through the attempt to answer the questions that reason

incites in the mind. This is apparent in the description of Adam's curiosity shortly after his creation:

> And ye that live and move, fair Creatures, tell,
>
> Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?
>
> Not of my self; by some great Maker then,
>
> In goodness and in power preminent;
>
> Tell me, how may I know him. (*PL* 8. 276-280)

Adam is born with an innate hunger for knowledge, which is, contextually, interpreted as the desire to know and worship his creator. Reason and dominion are thus characterized as innate impulses to worship creation and to look to creation for answers. Notice that Adam directs his questions to the creatures and to all of nature, as if they hold an innate ability to speak of God's glory. Adam admires and seeks to understand the sanctity of the lower levels of the Chain of Being to admire and understand the sanctity of the upper levels. This expresses itself on a more detailed level when God commands Adam to name the animals:

> As thus he spake, each Bird and Beast behold
>
> Approaching two and two, These cowring low
>
> With blandishment, each Bird stoop'd on his wing.
>
> I nam'd them, as they pass'd, and understood
>
> Thir Nature, with such knowledg God endu'd (*PL* 8. 349-353)

Notice how they cower to Adam to show him reverence. The hierarchy of the souls is very clear here. Adam is asserting his intellectual mastery over them. Naming, although physically harmless, is an act of power. Our names come from our parents, our cultures, and, for the colonized, the colonizer. One who names is one who controls Yet although

Adam's power over the animals is certainly anthropocentric; it is not despotic. After he names the animals and becomes knowledgeable of them, he applies his knowledge to understand his own state. He uses his knowledge of the animals to reason with God to give him a companion:

> Of fellowship I speak
> Such as I seek, fit to participate
> All rational delight, wherein the brute
> Cannot be human consort; they rejoyce
> Each with thir kinde, Lion with Lioness;
> So fitly them in pairs thou hast combin'd;(*PL* 6. 389- 394)

Adam uses the natural world to understand his own state. He admires the happiness of the Lion and Lioness, and feels his own life is incomplete without a reasonable companion. Thus animals give Adam the equipage to reason with God. Although animal reasoning is inferior, they teach Adam some of the most salient divine lessons. Such is Milton's view on animals: animals are harbingers of divine wisdom. In *Paradise Lost,* the status of humans over animals is very clear, and it is anthropocentric in the way that animals are to serve the intellect of humans. But it is far from despotic, as it is the animals' innate mark of divinity that calls humans to worship God and to ask Him questions. Adam and Eve value the animals not because they are good to consume, but because they are good to think.

As Adam's prelapsarian dominion is largely cerebral in nature, he is to use his mind "to magnifie his works, the more we know" (*PL* 7. 97). To put it simply, Adam's dominion is also Adam's worship. Yet his dominion is over a spiritually sentient creation. The animals of Eden are all worshipers as well. Milton writes that all "things that breathe,

From th' Earths great Altar send up silent praise /To the Creator (*PL* 9. 194–97). This is quite consistent with the scriptural view of animal praise, which is a frequent theme throughout the Bible, especially in *Psalms*, a number of passages, such as "Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl," reinforce Milton's claim and illustrate the worship of the Lord by all of his creation, including animals (148:7-10). In regard to this universal worship it is mankind's prerogative to seek out a spiritual colloquy with nature. Scripture states:

> But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind? (*Job* 12.7-9)

A scriptural mandate for the believer to ascribe nature with mythological significance, this passage plunges nature into aworld of allusions and metaphors designed to appeal to the tenants of faith. Thus the attempt at ascribing nature with divine significance can easily lead to a view of nature in purely allegorized terms, such as those of the *Physiologus*, where animals are rendered as Aesopian allegories in a Christian mode. So much of the knowledge of animals was based on metaphoric assumptions that anthropomorphized animals with human characteristics became first a medieval and then an early modern trope. Since the understanding of animals was so vastly subsumed in allegorized, mythologized, anthropomorphized visions of animals, it would seem that

Milton would have had a difficult time divorcing his understandings from metaphoric assumptions. Karen Edwards proposes he does not, however, in her introduction to her extensive bestiary of Milton's works. Instead, Edwards makes a case that Milton "rejects the emblematic mode,--and specifically rejects the production of emblematic animals" (124). The study of emblematic animals was very popular at that time, and she states that Milton makes "no recommendation for the study of emblem books in *Of Education* a silence ... that must be regarded as a resistance to the emblematic mode of expression" (124). Rather, she says, "Milton's animals are fully recognized as cultural products. He is what he himself might have called, 'doctrinal and exemplary' in his representation of them: placing an animal in a poem or prose piece, he takes a position on the cultural and political uses which that animal has been and is being put" (128-29). Edwards makes a fascinating argument, but it would seem that she overstates her case. Milton would have needed a certain level of erudition to understand how certain cultures defined animals differently allegorically, and she postulates a Milton who is almost a post-modern critic and who possesses a sense of cultural objectivity to judge animals as cultural, metaphoric constructions. His early modern education on animals, I would argue, however, was so pervaded by mythologized emblematic animals that it would seem that he could not escape it with even his monumental erudition. He clearly writes about many of his animals with emblematic assumptions, whether they come from the Bible, Natural philosophy, or classical sources. The emblematic was a framework of understanding that the early modern could not well escape; instead, they challenged the emblematic with different emblems. Milton clearly challenged metaphors that demeaned the spiritual status of animals and seemed critical of the over-allegorization of nature. But he clearly did this through a

process of revising and challenging emblems rather than rejecting emblems entirely. What seems clear in regard to animals is that he challenged the emblems that demeaned their spiritual worth, and uplifted the emblems that emphasized their inherent holiness as fellow worshipers of God. This process of revising emblematic animals is most revealing in a scene of jovial kinship between Adam and Eve and the animals:

> About them frisking playd
> All Beasts of th' Earth, since wilde, and of all chase
> In Wood or Wilderness, Forrest or Den;
> Sporting the Lion rampd, and in his paw
> Dandl'd the Kid; Bears, Tygers, Ounces, Pards
> Gambold before them, th' unwieldy Elephant
> To make them mirth us'd all his might, and wreathd
> His Lithe Proboscis; close the Serpent sly
> Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
> His breaded train, and of his fatal guile
> Gave proof unheeded; (*PL* 4. 339-49)

This scene has strong scriptural echoes with some very well-known paradisiacal passages from the Book of *Isaiah*:

> The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the

> sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. (*Isaiah* 11: 7-8)

The language and scenario of these passages is remarkably similar. Like the *Isaiah* passage, predators and prey live in harmony with each other in a conflict-free Paradise where they worship God with their actions and play before humans. What is most striking is that Isaiah's passage hits most of the main emblematic animals of the Bible, predators like lions, wolves, leopards and serpents, and also pastoral prey like cattle and lambs. Milton, however, alludes to this passage through the similarities in scene, at the same time as he alters it by focusing primarily on three highly-discoursed emblematic animals in the early modern imagination: the lion, the elephant, and the serpent. His metaphoric revisions of these animals clearly indicate that he is interested in altering their emblematic associations in a way that celebrates their divine worth.

Milton's revision of Isaiah's passage begins by placing primacy on the lion. He is singled out from the Bears, Tygers, Ounces, Pards, because he is the one that "dandles the Kid," much like Isaiah's lion who "lies with the fatling." Of all the predators, he is superlatively docile and, generally, receives more attention by Milton than the other animals. Milton clearly is working with the "king of beasts" emblem in regard to the lion and calls him in Book Eleven, "the Beast that reigns in Woods," or the king of beasts, a concept which has a very long and rich discursive history in the history of ideas in the west (186).

The lion has extensive histories in both the classical and biblical tradition. This often has to do with the fact that the lion was an apex predator, and for pastoral societies such as these two, lions were a fairly common sight and proved to inspire the imagination

with a profound contradiction. Lions were both feared and revered. They were admired and envied for their power and ferocity, but also hated for being a menace to the flock and the occasional human life. The Bible focuses on the lion more than any other wild animal, referencing it around 156 times (Bright 95). *Proverbs* summarizes the biblical treatment of the lion well when it proclaims: "strongest amongst all beasts, [it] turneth not away for any" (30:30). Lions are perceived as nature's finest warriors, tenacious and powerful beings that rarely fail at their endeavors. The lion is used to describe the power of the most significant characters of the Bible. The symbol of the tribe of Judah is a lion, and from that comes a reference to Jesus in the book of *Revelation* as "The Lion of Judah." This metaphor is applied to Christ at one of his most violent moments: the letting loose of the seven seals of the Apocalypse onto the world: "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (5.5). Biblically, lions are often illustrated in a way as to emphasize God's protection for the righteous, which is the central message of the story of Daniel in the Den of Lions, where God commissions an angel to shut the mouths of the hungry lions before which Daniel was thrown on account of his religious beliefs. Lions are thus potent with profound associations of power, aggression and God's sovereignty.

Classical literature often had similar things to say of the lion and emphasized the lion's nobility and royal blood. Pliny said of the lion that it was "the most strong and courageous" and that it will spare those who lie prostrate in front of it (234). Aristotle said that lions were "noble, brave and high-bred" (140). This fairly parallel admiration of the lion in both biblical and classical sources led to a long-standing reverence of the lion and a strong association of the lion with the concept of nobility.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton works with all of these emblematic traditions in his depiction of the lion. He places special focus on the lion throughout the epic. The birth of the lion from the ground is rendered in focused detail:

> The grassie Clods now Calv'd, now half appeer'd
>
> The Tawnie Lion, pawing to get free
>
> His hinder parts, then springs as broke from Bonds,
>
> And Rampant shakes his Brinded main. (*PL* 7. 463- 466)

One can see that Milton characterizes the lion as an innately powerful and aggressive force. Even in the conflict-free Eden, the vegetarian lion bursts forth from the ground as if breaking from prison bonds. He is presented as innately majestic and beautiful. Adam places primacy on the lion as well, and when convincing God to give him a wife, Adam discusses how the lion has his lioness, but he has no consort.

What is most striking about Milton's depiction of the lion in *Paradise Lost* is how he associates it solely with natural hierarchy, not human hierarchy. This is very much a departure from how Milton treats the lion in his other works, where he primarily associates it with monarchy, and thus quotes derogatory biblical passages on the lion with greater frequency. In the epigraph to *Eikonoklastes,* Milton quotes *Proverbs 28:15,* which states "As a roaring Lyon, and a ranging Bear, so is a Wicked Ruler over the poor people" (qtd. in *Edwards* 231). The lion of *Paradise Lost,* however, is associated with the tame lions of Isaiah's paradise imagery instead. There seems little to associate the lions of *Paradise Lost* with earthly monarchy. Rather, Milton seems to be focused on the inherent worth of the lions themselves; his focus lies with the beast rather than the beastly man.

The metaphoric weight of the lion is also connected with the abuse of lions in early modern England. It is likely that lions were the most popular exotic in early modern England. What menagerie owner would not want the majestic king of beasts in their caged Eden? Many of the lions in England were housed at the Tower Menagerie at the Tower of London. Yet the Lion Tower of the Tower Menagerie was customarily considered a bloody circus arena, not a zoo. Lion-baiting, a more exotic form of the ever-popular bear-baiting, was very common. James I had a particular affinity for this blood sport and enjoyed throwing what he considered "criminal animals" to the kings of beasts, in order to see how "lions deal with their refractory subjects" such as when he arranged that a child-killing bear be pitted against the lions (Edwards 234). Milton's illustration of how *wild* lions magnify God's glory and divine plan could also be a reaction to this abusive captivation. In *Paradise Lost* Milton shows how this pinnacle beast reveals God's grace and wonder, not the pride of the monarch. Milton trims the lion's metaphoric weight and shirks the traditions that caused the lion's vilification and suffering, thereby emphasizing the emblems that characterize it as a beautiful creature of God.

Another emblematic animal illustrated in Milton's revision of Isaiah's paradise image is the elephant. Milton writes, "th' unwieldy Elephant/ To make them mirth us'd all his might, and wreathd/ His Lithe Proboscis; (*PL* 7.344-346). Although this appearance of the elephant is rather sparse, it is quite significant. Unlike the other animals in the scene, the elephant shares a very direct relationship with Adam and Eve and functions as their entertainer. The elephant is jovial and clownish, doing all that is in its power to "make them mirth." Milton's inclusion of the elephant in Eden is not surprising. Elephants have always held a significant place in the human imagination. Their unique and immense

bodies ensure this. The elephant was certainly popular during early modern times and often considered an artistic subject, a fact to which many contemporary paintings and drawings attest. Many naturalists held a special reverence for the elephant, as Topsell writes, "There is no creature among all the Beasts of the world, which hath so great and ample demonstration of the power and wisdom of Almighty God as the Elephant: both in proportion of body and disposition of Spirit" (149). One must ask, though, where exactly did Milton and Topsell get this reverence for the elephant, and why is the elephant considered to have such a fine disposition of spirit?

What is most fascinating is that the process of doing emblematic justice to the elephant involves a fight against the sparse and negative traditions presented in the Bible on the elephant. The Bible makes no direct reference to elephants, which is puzzling since many of the authors of the Bible came in contact with elephants, particularly through the rule of their Egyptian, Persian, and Grecian captors. Perhaps the biblical authors avoided elephants for that very reason. The Bible only makes reference to the elephant's ivory, which shows up in a number of places, especially in 1 Kings, in which Solomon's "great throne of ivory ... overlaid with fine gold" and also Ahab's ivory house are described (10:18, 22:39). There is a mention of thirty-two war elephants in the Apocryphal book of *Maccabees*, elephants who were motivated to fight by "the blood of grapes and mulberries." Overall, the Bible's scant and indirect treatment of the elephant presents an emphasis on elephants as either an ivory commodity or a war animal, which may be the reason why Milton places special emphasis on the elephant in *Paradise Lost*.

Milton, Topsell, and other Early Modern naturalists derived their knowledge of elephants almost entirely from classical literature. Elephants play a key role in classical

military history and populate the pages of some of the most famed stories, such as the histories of Alexander the Great, the Persian Empire, the Egyptians, and the tales of two of Rome's most infamous invaders: Pyrrhus of Epirus and Hannibal of Carthage. One might think that classical authors may be inclined to view elephants in a negative light because elephants are often associated with the various enemies of many ancient societies. Quite to the contrary, some of the greatest classical authors show an incredible reverence for the elephant and ascribe to it various virtues. Pliny the Elder, for example, sketches the elephant's virtuosity in his *Natural Histories*.

> [the elephant] in intelligence approaches the nearest to man. It understands the language of its country; it obeys commands, and remembers all the duties which it has been taught. It is sensible alike of the pleasures of love and glory, and to a degree that is rare among men even, possesses notions of honesty, prudence and equity; it has a religious respect also for the stars and a veneration for the sun and moon. (244)

Pliny imbues the elephant with the virtues of an ideal Roman warrior here: patriotism, honesty, obedience, reason, and religious piety. By emphasizing the virtues of the elephant, Pliny implies a criticism of human cruelty to the elephant. He shows how the popular wars and gladiatorial fights have degraded some very virtuous warriors, whether they be man or elephant.

The slaying of elephants in the circus arena was also protested by Roman naturalists, most notably Pliny the Elder and Dio Cassius. In 55 BC Pompey the Great commissioned a dedication of his theater through an opulent gladiatorial display where 500 lions and 20 elephants were scheduled to be slain. The slaying of the elephants caused a

significant uproar amongst the crowd. According to Pliny and Dio Cassius, the elephants ceased to fight when attacked, instead rushed to the gates to try to escape, and after realizing escape was futile, the elephants, as Dio Cassius writes "walked about with their trunks raised toward heaven, lamenting so bitterly...and ... calling upon Heaven to avenge them." Pliny writes that the elephants "when they had lost all hope of escape... tried to gain the compassion of the crowed by indescribable gestures of entreaty, deploring their fate by a sort of wailing," which, as Dio Cassius said, caused the crowd to burst into tears and "invoke curses on the head of Pompey, for which he soon afterwards paid the penalty." Seneca saw this as poetic justice for Pompey who "thought himself above nature's laws" (qtd.in. Scigliono 132). Imbedded in the classical treatment of the elephant is the theme of man's cruelty to animals, of how man forces a virtuous animal like the elephant to enact the vices of the human race.

Thus, by including the elephant in Eden, Milton accomplishes a couple of things. Firstly, he places a living elephant onto biblical context, thereby attempting to eclipse the scant biblical tradition of elephants as a commodity and a war machine and instead praising the elephant's intelligence and jovial character. Adam and Eve share a nearly egalitarian moment with what many naturalists considered to be God's most virtuous animal. Secondly, Milton alludes to an age old discussion of the unwarranted exploitation of animals. Milton, much like Pliny and other classical writers, values the elephant for its cleverness and virtuous character. It is clear here that the elephant is honored by placing it in Eden and by emphasizing details that are derived from the best of its characteristics.

The final of the emblematic beasts of Milton's revision of the Isaiah passage is the serpent: "close the Serpent sly/ Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine/ His breaded train,

and of his fatal guile/ Gave proof unheeded;" (*PL* 4. 347-350). The serpent's proximity to the elephant is suggestive of the tradition that elephants and serpents are natural enemies. It is another revision on Isaiah's vision of the predator/prey neutrality of Paradise, but instead of lion and calf, or wolf and lamb, Milton incorporates the natural antipathy between two giant animals, which are frequently discoursed in classical natural histories and bestiaries. Pliny writes that "India produces the largest [elephant] as well as the dragon, which is perpetually at war with the elephant, and is itself so enormous of size, as easily to envelope the elephants with its folds and encircle them in coils" (259). Often, antipathy between elephants and serpents was used to describe a struggle in which the outcomes were equally fatal; Pliny wrote "the elephant, vanquished, falls to the earth, and by its weight, crushes the dragon which is entwined around it" (259). The antipathy between elephants and serpents is a fruitless battle and representative of one of nature's cruelest moments: senseless conflict. It emphasizes the fall of nature and illustrates how sin infested nature introduces not only predation, but also brutally senseless conflict. The idea of conflict with nature is often embedded in the tradition of the serpent itself.

The serpent certainly receives a great deal of attention in natural histories and bestiaries, but often for reasons that work against it. The serpent is most often an emblem of evil, since it was "cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field" (*Genesis* 3:14). This promoted the fear of snakes, and often snakes were considered to be evil vermin and the natural enemies of humans.

Yet Milton takes an altogether different approach to serpents. Instead of regurgitating the typical anti-serpent emblems, Milton questions o why serpents should be maligned for their curse:

> Serpent though brute, unable to transferre
>
> The Guilt on him who made him instrument...
>
> yet God at last To Satan first in sin his doom apply'd
>
> Though in mysterious terms, judg'd as then best:
>
> And on the Serpent thus his curse let fall. (*PL* 10. 165-167, 172-174)

Milton, a man of erudition, reason, and doctrine, gives no theodicy for God's motives behind cursing the serpent and simply declares it a "mystery." Indeed, Milton seems to find no rational reason for God's curse on the serpent, and so goes out of his way to show in *Paradise Lost* that the serpent was merely Satan's victim and puppet. Milton approaches the snake with an assumption of value that was becoming more common amongst Natural philosophers during his time. Topsell argues in his introduction to his *Historie of Serpents* that serpents are "Diuine, Morall, and Naturall " and that, "we know the blessed Trinity created the whole frame of this visable World by itself, and for good, reasonable, and necessarie causes, framed both the benificiall & hurtfull Creatures, eyther for a Physicall or metaphysicall end" (1). Like Topsell, Milton values the serpent, and in *Paradise Lost,* it would seem that it is entirely for metaphysical reasons.

Understanding of snakes is almost entirely governed by the emblematic during early modern times. This is because the serpent is singled out in *Genesis* over any other animal and assigned its own etiological myth. Although this etiology mostly just provides an anecdote as to why the snake slithers, the vilification of the serpent served the original mythmakers well for the practical purposes of creating a sense of caution in a geographic area rich with venomous snakes, while simultaneously warning against the religions next door for which snakes played an important role in their pantheon. The story also constructs

a guilt ethos which became a focal point in many forms of Christianity; the fear pathos that the myth involves carefully entrenches this guilt ethos in the mind. Thus the significance of the serpent is clear to the point of banality; it emphasizes guilt and divine wrath.

Milton has a powerful Christian emblem to work with in *Paradise Lost*. But he posits the emblematic associations of the serpent in such a way as to simultaneously celebrate the inherent worth of the animal itself and also to suggest a specific interpretation of its associations with divine wrath. This is revealed primarily through the way in which Milton associates the serpent with specific serpentine emblems suggested primarily by the serpent's physical appearance:

> The Serpent suttl'st Beast of all the field,
> Of huge extent somtimes, with brazen Eyes
> And hairie Main terrific, though to thee
> Not noxious, but obedient at thy call. (*PL* 7. 494-508)

Quite possibly, this is a simultaneous reference to two other popular depictions of the serpent, one in Virgil's *Aeneid*, and one in the Bible.

The serpents of the *Aeneid* are quite similar to Milton's serpent in their "huge extent," "brazen Eyes" and the "hairie Main terrific." Virgil writes:

> Two snakes with endless coils from Tenedos
> strike out across the tranquil deep (I shudder
> to tell what happened). Resting on the waters,
> Advancing shoreward, side by side; their breasts
> Erect among the waves, their blood-red crests
> are higher than the breakers. And behind,

their mighty backs are curved in folds. The foaming

salt surge is roaring. Now they reach the fields.

Their eyes are drenched with blood and fire—they burn. (Book II. 286-296)

These serpents were sent by Athena to enact her divine retribution against Laocoon who was impious against temple rules and a threat to the success of the Trojan horse. The dichotomy of fear and beauty Virgil composes here is as vivid as it is deadly. One could hardly think of a more vicious vision of Divine wrath through the imagery of nature. Milton aims for the same beauty/wrath dichotomy here. The power of God is as magnificent as it is deadly. The fact that the serpent is at peace and "not noxious" would also suggest an image of divine peace; as such, it is in the same family of Isaiah's heavenly image.

Yet fieriness of the serpents also suggests a simultaneous reference to the plague of the fiery serpents described in *Numbers*. The story goes that the Israelites were complaining in the desert and accusing Moses and God of bringing them out to the desert to die. And so "the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died" (*Numbers* 21:6). The Israelites beseeched forgiveness from God and asked Moses to intercede on their behalf. So God instructed Moses to construct a fiery serpent of bronze, "and that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live" (21:8). Often the bronze serpent of Moses is interpreted as an allusion to Christ's redemptive work; Moses' serpent promises salvation to those who are divinely cursed. By way of these associations then, Milton steers his reader to a definition of the "enmity" between the serpent and humankind that venerates the serpent in a way that focuses on its power to illustrate God's wrath against humanity, not just God's wrath against serpents. As

"subtlest," it teaches one of the most central and important myths of Christianity. It can be logically argued, therefore, that what is considered the most unholy of beasts in the Christian culture is also its most holy, given that it entails profound emblematic associations with both God's wrath and God's mercy.

Milton's kinship imagery attempts to do emblematic justice to those animals he views as spiritually sentient fellow worshippers. It entails a process of working with and against emblematic assumptions that undermine the inherent divinity of creation and challenges the abuse of metaphor to subtract or distract from what Milton would consider the "true religion."

## Postlapsarian Dominion and Stewardship

It might seem fruitless to indulge in an analysis of prelapsarian human/ animal kinship because this kinship functions in an idealized context only and, therefore, has little bearing on the postlapsarian condition in which early moderns believed. To them, the fall had a profound, transformative effect on the animals:

> Death introduc'd through fierce antipathie:
>
> Beast now with Beast gan war, and Fowle with Fowle,
>
> And Fish with Fish; to graze the Herb all leaving,
>
> Devourd each other; nor stood much in awe
>
> Of Man, but fled him, or with count'nance grim
>
> Glar'd on him passing (*PL* 10. 709-714)

The animals that once played before Adam and Eve now flee from man in terror and glare at him with contempt. The peace between *all* living souls has been shattered. Predation has also been introduced into the animal world, and now animals are at war with each other.

Like Adam and Eve, the animals have been diminished by sin. One must ask though, why must the animals suffer? It seems entirely unfair, given that they are spiritually cognizant beings but did not sin. It is clear through this chain of consequence that the animals do not have free will, and when the upper levels of *Scala Naturae* falter, the lower links feel the consequence. It would seem that the free will to sin is something that is exclusive to humans and angels.

The postlapsarian antipathy between living souls is clearly the consequence of sin. Yet, Milton's language in regard to the corruption of nature suggests that nature is still spiritually sentient and valuable. After Eve sins, the "Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat / Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe, /That all was lost" (*PL* 9. 781-785). Milton posits nature as sighing in pain from a "wound."Given that Milton believed in a spiritually sentient universe, this description extends far beyond the pathetic fallacy. Ken Hiltner presents a discussion he had with Diane McColley that enlightens this issue. Hiltner and McColley note that in the iconography of Milton's time that there was a tradition approaching a "typology of regeneration," making "the fall a type of Crucifixion." Under this typology the fall is depicted as a common wound being shared by humanity and Christ (125). If one follows this logic to its full extent, then Milton's allusion to nature is as a type of Christ. Like Christ, nature must innocently suffer for the sins of others. The idea of man's "wounding" of earth posits nature as victim of humanity and adds an even greater depth to the guilt mythos of the *Genesis* narrative, in that it fully posits the aggressive and troublesome characteristics of nature as due to the fault of humans. Yet, the "wounding" of earth is not derived from the language of *Genesis*. Rather, the Bible describes this degradation of nature in very different terms:

> Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. (*Genesis* 3: 17-19)

*Genesis* describes the transformation not as a wound, but as a curse. Milton shows fidelity to Scripture by reiterating this passage in Book Ten in versified verbatim. But by preceding the transformation of the land preeminently as a wound Milton not only emphasizes a view of nature that functions on a basis of guilt, but also argues against some of the common views of nature concerning the fall. For some, the curse was seen less as consequence of sin and more as a damned obstruction to man's dominion over creation. Some felt that it was man's duty to tame and subdue the curses of nature. This attitude can be seen in the works of Francis Bacon who, in *Novum Organum,* desires to "recover the light over nature which belongs to it by divine bequest" (116). For Bacon, nature was something to reconstruct into the Edenic ideal. His aim was to reverse some of the curses of *Genesis*. His approach functioned on the idea that nature was diminished and imperfect, more or less drained of its divinity, rather than having the powerful spiritual intrinsic value that Milton suggests.

Bacon's view of nature, like that of many of the thinkers during his time, upheld that nature was cursed and home to natural monstrosities that needed to be subdued and reshaped to fit the will of men. Bacon argued that nature existed in three states to justify its colonization:

> She is either free and follows her ordinary course of development as in the heavens, in the animal and vegetable creation, and in the general array of the

> universe, or she is driven out of her ordinary course by the perverseness, insolence, and forwardness of matter and violence of impediments, as in the case of monsters; or lastly, she is put in constraint, molded, and made as it were new by art and the hand of man; as things artificial. (*De Augmentis* 294).

One can see that, for Bacon, the manipulation of nature is not seen as something potentially dangerous or disrespectful. Nature is subject to "perverseness, insolence," and "violence of impediments," and it is also the home of "monsters," which are, in this frame of mind, elements of nature that set themselves against the will of man. This approach assumes that the animal world is imperfect and, in certain cases, monstrous. The use of animals, and the alteration of animal forms, is something that is considered a means to perfection. This can be seen in Bacon's "ideal" treatment of animals in *The New Atlantis*:

> By art likewise, we make them differ in colour, shape, activity, many ways. We find means to make commixtures and copulations of different kinds; which have produced many new kinds, and them not barren, as the general opinion is. We make a number of kinds of serpents, worms, flies, fishes, of putrefaction; whereof, some are advanced (in effect) to be *perfect* creatures, like beasts or birds; and have sexes, and do propagate (212).

Bacon is not so much interested in preserving the natural world as an expression of God's creativity as he is in expanding God's creativity by the creation of new forms—creatures that are, in his opinion, more perfect because they are more suitable to the use of man. He is interested in lifting the curse that was placed on nature, bringing it to a more Edenic

Utopia. E.L. Marilla outlines the difference between Milton's and Bacon's approach to postlapsarian nature.

> Bacon and Milton are at opposite poles of thought. Man, in Milton's conception of him, could expect to find no satisfaction but only suffocation in the more and intellectual atmosphere of Bacon's ideal state as portrayed in the *New Atlantis.* In Milton's philosophy, man is a spiritual being whose basic desires cannot be defined in terms of material comforts. (122)

The idea of Utopia as a means to mend and recreate nature into a semblance of Paradise is something that Milton felt was futile and ultimately erroneous. As Marilla presents, Milton once wrote that "to sequester out of the world into Atlantick and Eutopian polities, which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evill, in the midd'st whereof God hath plac't us unavoidably" (123). To attempt to mend the wound with the manipulation of nature is futile and, ultimately, even a usurpation of the work of God. Milton is interested in "feeling the wound" and meditating on the spiritual comforts of nature rather than contemplating the physical comforts of a Utopian ideal. In Milton's view, the wounds of nature, and the curse that follows, will be healed and dispelled by Christ when he recreates the world. Indeed, the language of *Paradise Lost* and Milton's theology would all point to the conclusion that Milton believed that animals too would be perfected in the resurrection of the world. According to the book of *Revelation*, heaven is a recreated, perfected version of creation, where the earth is purified and purged of the effects of sin and returned to its former edenic glory in which the resurrected will engage in perpetual worship of God. *Revelation* suggests that animals will be part of the resurrection, too, when it states that "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth,

and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever" (5:13). Milton echoes this passages in Book Five "In Heav'n, / [And] on Earth joyn all ye Creatures to extoll / Him first, him last, him midst, and without end" (163–65). McColley argues that Milton believed that Christ's salvation extended also to animals, given that Milton has the Son create them (*Poetry and Ecology* 77). More to the point, the afterlife for Milton is a recreation of the earth perfected by the son of God, with all living things resurrected. Milton states in *Christian Doctrine* that "no created thing can be utterly annihilated" (1178). By feeling the wounds of nature and viewing nature with a collective ethos of guilt, the spiritual power of nature is emphasized and God's dominion over man is more important than man's dominion over nature.

It can also be argued that the wounded creation of Milton's universe actually adds dimensions to Milton's contemplative view of nature. The status of both humans and animals is diminished, and thus the lessons animals teach in the postlapsarian world are designed to bring people closer to God. Before the fall, animals taught lessons on peace with God; now, with Adam and Eve's knowledge of good and evil, the animals have the capacity to teach lessons on God's wrath and mercy. An example of one of these lessons occurs when, after the fall, Eve suggests to Adam that: "Here [Eden] let us live, though in fall'n state, content" (*PL* 11. 185). Nature then "gave Signs, imprest/ On Bird, Beast, Aire," and Adam and Eve witness a disturbing omen:

> The Bird of *Jove*, stoopt from his aerie tour,
>
> Two Birds of gayest plume before him drove:
>
> Down from a Hill the Beast that reigns in Woods,

> First hunter then, pursu'd a gentle brace,
>
> Goodliest of all the Forrest, Hart and Hinde;
>
> Direct to th' Eastern Gate was bent thir flight. (*PL* 11. 185-190)

Milton's language of the "sign" suggests an emblematic interpretation of this passage. One could see this as symbolic of God's wrath on Adam and Eve if they choose to stay. This would posit the lion and the eagle (the bird of Jove) as agents of divine wrath, a status with which they were often associated in both classical and biblical traditions. The two birds of "gayest plume" and the hind, which was the "goodliest of all the forest," could certainly be indicative of Adam and Eve and their status as the pinnacle of earthy creatures. Thus this could easily be interpreted as a divine warning to Adam and Eve not to disobey God further. Yet, there is also a non-symbolic element to this sign that is equally effective. The lion, who was once a gentle friend, who was once the most kindly of the big cats and who "dandled the kid," has turned "first hunter." Through this sign, it becomes abundantly clear to Adam and Eve that Eden has fallen and that the bond of peace that once existed is now in ruin. The predation of the eagle and the lion thus does not really emphasize the diminishment of the animal, but rather the diminishment of the human, who has sinned and has ruined all. This is the true weight of Milton's religious anthropocentrism; nature is the body over which Adam and Eve reign as the head. When nature falls it is the consequence of human action, and thus nature has the power to humble the head and disallow its rule in haughtiness.

One must wonder then, how does dominion exist within a fallen world? If Adam and Eve's actions have become flawed and have caused the pollution of the entire world, then how does a peaceful, divine dominion exist in a world rife with conflict? This was a

contentious issue for many early modern theologians, but Milton reasserts postlapsarian dominion in no uncertain terms: "He gave us onely over Beast, Fish, Fowl/ Dominion absolute; that right we hold /By his donation" (*PL* 12.69-70). Yet, after the fall, Milton clearly delineates two different types of dominion. Adam and Eve's dominion before the fall was peaceful, expressing itself through playing with animals and manuring the trees of God's garden. Satan, however, introduces a different interpretation of dominion to his progeny, Sin and Death. When he lets them loose to plague the natural world, Satan states:

> All yours, right down to Paradise descend;
>
> There dwell and Reign in bliss, thence on the Earth
>
> Dominion exercise and in the Aire,
>
> Chiefly on Man, sole Lord of all declar'd,
>
> Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.
>
> My Substitutes I send ye, (*PL* 10. 398-402)

Satan is very clearly parodying God's own coronation of Adam and Eve. He calls Sin and Death his "substitutes," making a mockery of God's creation of Adam and Eve in the image of God. As those who claim infernal dominion over God's creation, Sin and Death declare that they reign over an "Empire" (*PL* 10. 592). As emperors, Sin commands Death to glut his insatiable appetite on all creation:

> Thou therefore on these Herbs, and Fruits, and Flours
>
> Feed first, on each Beast next, and Fish, and Fowle,
>
> No homely morsels, and whatever thing (*PL* 10. 603- 605)

In this passage, Milton literally demonizes a despotic and consumptive notion of dominion over nature. Sin and Death's dominion over nature posits nature as something to be altered, forced down, and consumed to sate a ravenous and greedy maw.

What also becomes clear through Milton's illustration of infernal dominion is the connection he creates with the self-praise of the ego. It is clear that Godly dominion involves the submission of the ego to the higher power; it is a hierarchy that functions because of a sense of universal worship. Satan's notion of dominion, however, involves only a sense of self-praise. Satan, although humbled to the lowest of the lowest states in the hierarchy, still imagines himself to be highest of the angels and thus finds anything or anyone else beneath him and contemptible. This is especially noticeable when Satan discusses his possession of the serpent:

> O foul descent! that I who erst contended
> With Gods to sit the highest, am now constraind
> Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime,
> This essence to incarnate and imbrute (*PL* 9. 163-167)

The notion of Descartes' beast automaton seems to be alluded to here. Stephen M. Fallon states that "Satan enacts a parody of Cartesian Dualism" (205). The serpent is a living soul and, therefore, its own spiritual unit. By possessing the serpent, Satan is imposing a mind/ spirit duality, and Milton illustrates such a duality as a corruption of nature. What is most noticeable is how Satan objectifies the serpent; the serpent is not a living soul, but merely "bestial slime" that lacks essence. In the same way the beast automaton is merely a clock, devoid of spiritual essence. Milton's criticism of those who view animals and nature as devoid of essence becomes tangible through his demonization of dualism. To deny nature

its sanctity is an act of satanic pride. Milton thus defines a difference between heavenly and infernal dominion. Infernal dominion is rife with the sin of pride; heavenly dominion is based upon humility and worship.

The heavenly dominion of the postlapsarian world functions on a guilt ethos, and the use of animals is often illustrated in a way to maintain this sense of loss and guilt. The Edenic ideal involves a lack of use of animals as a natural source. Adam and Eve were naked vegetarians. It would make sense then that Milton would illustrate the use of animals with religious appropriation to emphasize the sacred bond that has been broken between God and nature. This is apparent in the scene where the Son clothes Adam and Eve in the skins of animals:

> As Father of his Familie he clad
> Thir nakedness with Skins of Beasts, or slain,
> Or as the Snake with youthful Coate repaid;
> And thought not much to cloath his Enemies:
> Nor hee thir outward onely with the Skins
> Of Beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
> Opprobrious, with his Robe of righteousness,
> Araying cover'd from his Fathers sight. (*PL* 11. 216-224)

Here the Son of God is providing protective clothing for his children. Fundamentally, clothing is a protective technology to shield one from the hostile elements. Since Adam and Eve have never known pain or experienced the need for protection, this technology functions as a constant reminder of their mortality. Since they are now aware of their mortality, they feel an "inward nakedness, much more/Opprobrious" because they are now

exposed to the possibility of death. To reinforce this feeling, the Son derives the means of protection (the skins) presumably from the death of an animal. The use of animals as a resource emphasizes that Adam and Eve are, like all other living souls, locked in conflict with nature. Therefore, in regard to kinship, even the simplest of animal technologies, such as the use of wool or hides, reminds one of a fundamental separation from life. The use of animals as resources is to incite shame, rather than prideful dominion over nature.

Yet one must ask how certain kinds of biblical animal use are upheld in this humble dominion over nature. It would seem that animal sacrifice would be one of the most contradictory behaviors in regard to humble dominion. Yet animal sacrifice is introduced in the Bible even before the use of animals for food. The first mention of animal sacrifice is in the story of Adam and Eve's two sons, Cain and Abel. Milton remarks how Abel's sacrifice of "Firstlings of his Flock" was "Consum'd with nimble glance, and grateful steame" by "propitious Fire from Heav'n" (*PL* 11. 436, 440). Milton presents his theological stance on animal sacrifice later on in Book Twelve.

> sacrifice, informing them, by types
> And shadowes, of that destind Seed to bruise
> The Serpent, by what meanes he shall achieve
> Mankinds deliverance. (232-235)

Milton here reiterates the fairly traditional view that sacrifice is a "shadow" of the work of Christ to defeat Satan. But the lamb's spiritual significance as a living soul of a sentient creation adds a further layer of meaning to the significance of the sacrifice. Lambs are known to be trusting and innocent animals; often the paradisiacal state of wild animals is established by associating the animals with a kid or a lamb. Such as Isaiah's wolf and lamb

that lay peacefully together. Lambs are thus similar to the prelapsarian animal. By sacrificing a lamb, the wounds of Christ are presented in shadows, and the wounds of the earth are reenacted. The lamb is a holy substitute for sin and emphasizes how all the wounds of creation will be healed. Sacrifice is so significant precisely because animals have spiritual status, and, in a contradictory way, sacrifice is a means to honor the sanctity of the animal by showing how they reveal the shadows and reenact the most important theological lessons.

The humble dominion over animals is even wrapped up in religious appropriation in regard to the consumption of animals for food. The Bible allows for the consumption of animals for food after the Great Flood, when God strikes the fear of humans into animals and says to Noah, "into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things" (*Genesis* 9:23). This expansion of dominion is part of God's new covenant with humans and nature, but ultimately, the issue of dominion within this covenant is complex and somewhat contradictory. By saving all species of animals, Noah expresses a divinely-ordained sense of compassion towards all living things. Schochet summarizes the traditional debates that have resulted from this expansion of dominion well:

> Is this accommodation due to the fact that Noah and his sons, by virtue of having saved the animals from certain death in the deluge, are now partners, as it were, with God in the creation of the species? Is meat now permitted to man as his apparent inability to maintain the spiritual standards (such as vegetarianism) imposed upon him in the Garden of Eden? (49)

These questions characterize the consumption of animals for food in two entirely different ways. One interpretation could interpret the consumption of animals as a kind of debt that animals pay to mankind because they were rescued by them. Mankind has played an almost divine role in the animal's survival and thus exercised absolute power. Another interpretation could highlight the consumption of animals for food as a mere survivalist mechanism after the flood and gesture toward consumption of animals for food as by no means wrong, despite the fact that it is a departure from the piety of the Edenic ideal and, therefore, an expression of a fallen world. In either interpretation, the charity of Noah is emphasized. According to the Hebrew tradition, Noah is a "*zadik*," a great man of charity, which is a rare and highly honored appellation given only to Noah and the Old Testament Joseph for providing for both humans and animals during times of distress and famine (Schochet 148). In Michael's prophecy to Adam and Eve, Michael emphasizes only the theme of charity towards animals in his summary of the Flood story. Milton is biblically anachronistic by placing the animal's fear of man in the fall, not in the Noah's flood story, interpreting animal's fear of man as a result of sin rather than expanded dominion. He also does not present God's new covenant with man as the expansion of dominion over animals through the consumption of meat; rather, Milton presents the new covenant between man and animal exclusively in terms of charity: "As present, Heav'nly instructer, I revive/ At this last sight, assur'd that Man shall live/ With all the Creatures, and thir seed preserve. (*PL* 11. 871-873). As part of the new covenant, this decree is to last "till fire purge all things new, / Both Heav'n and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell" (*PL* 11. 900-901). Milton thus stresses the ecological stewardship ethic of the Noah story; he explains how it is part of the dominion of man to ensure that all God's creatures survive until the end times.

This is also Milton's final mention of man's duty to animals in *Paradise Lost*, showing how dominion over animals expresses itself in the necessity to preserve all the living souls, whether or not they are directly useful to the technologies of man. Thus Milton's sense of dominion is far from a justification of frivolous exploitation. For like Christ on Easter morning, the earth too will be resurrected and perfected into its previous Edenic ideal, all fowls, fish, land animals, and creeping things included.

# CONCLUSION

When analyzing the Bible and its views on the animal world, one cannot ignore a profound question proposed by the teacher in *Ecclesiastes*:

> I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? (3: 18-21)

Perhaps Milton's view on the status of humans and animals is not really a reaction to the abuse of animals during his time, at least not entirely. Perhaps Milton's theodicy is simply an attempt to answer this profound question posed by the teacher of *Ecclesiastes*. In Milton's view, the fate of beasts and the fate of man are not separate, but intimately interconnected in a grand divine picture. Both man and beast are of one divine breath, and man's preeminence above beasts is also his servitude. Ultimately, it would seem, man's higher status over animals is contingent upon his realization of the humbling notion that he has an intimate and eternal affinity with beasts and that this affinity should motivate him to revere the grand divine picture, and exercise temperance over nature.

Perhaps the term "anthroprocentric" fails to do Milton's perception of animals justice. Perhaps "theocentric" or "theoanthropocentric" describe it more accurately. Milton clearly asserts man's dominion over animals, but this dominion is based on a spiritual

hierarchy that emphasizes a fundamental sense of divinity in all creation and celebrates the spiritual lives of animals during a time when they are being asserted as spiritually bereft. Animals are viewed as an expression of God's intricate creativity, and all animals are valued, from lowest creeping thing, to the king of beasts. Man's dominion over animals is like that of a biblical shepherd king: man occupies an elevated status that is constructed on the basis of humility, temperance, and servitude. Dominion is asserted, but it is a Christ-like dominion of washing feet and a humble dominion of manuring trees, of keeping sleepless nightly vigils over the flocks, or of foddering the mangers or shoveling the countless stalls of Noah's Ark. It is mankind's divine duty to preserve the living souls of God's worshippers, no matter how scaly, furry, feathery, or creepy they may be.

Ultimately, Milton's illustration of animals in *Paradise Lost* is informed by his stances on a variety of debates on the power statuses of both animals and humans. He borrows from both new and old ways of thinking to construct his stance. Like the early modern scientist, he will be quick to demote old ways of thinking in order to make room for the new. Like the classical Natural philosopher, he informs his treatment of animals with traditions and tales of wonder and interest. Like the contemplative Christian mystic of the *Physiologus*, he views nature as an expression of God's wonder and animals as spiritual teachers. Like a Cartesian philosopher, Milton uses animals to discuss the complexity of what it means to be human. It is true what Strauss says, "animals *are* good to think." They "are good to think," because to contemplate what it means to be an animal is to contemplate what it means to be a human through negative space. The discourses on animals, whether they are philosophical or religious, seem to be as nuanced and varied as the discourses about what it means to be human. The boundary between human and non-

human animal is ultimately unstable, and from that instability Milton constructs his own stance, a stance that is as much a product of his time as it is ahead of its time.

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