

Southern Methodist University

SMU Scholar

English Undergraduate Distinction Projects

English

Spring 5-15-2021

The Serpent, the Apple, and the Fall: Deciphering the Biblical Undoing of Mankind in 17th Century English Literature

Natalie Mauriello
nmauriello@smu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.smu.edu/hum_sci_english_distinction



Part of the [Literature in English, British Isles Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Mauriello, Natalie, "The Serpent, the Apple, and the Fall: Deciphering the Biblical Undoing of Mankind in 17th Century English Literature" (2021). *English Undergraduate Distinction Projects*. 4.
https://scholar.smu.edu/hum_sci_english_distinction/4

This Distinction Project is brought to you for free and open access by the English at SMU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Undergraduate Distinction Projects by an authorized administrator of SMU Scholar. For more information, please visit <http://digitalrepository.smu.edu>.

Natalie Mauriello

Dr. Wilson

ENGL 5381

29 April 2021

The Serpent, the Apple, and the Fall: Deciphering the Biblical Undoing of Mankind in 17th

Century English Literature

Since the first commentary was written on the Christian gospels, mankind has sought to ascertain the causes of the biblical Fall of Man from a state of perfect obedience under God to a state of disobedience under Satan. Scholars have repeatedly returned to The Book of Genesis in an attempt to understand humanity's role in the Universe, prompting many to extract and produce their own versions of the legendary story of the Fall. John Milton's epic, *Paradise Lost*, has for so long been considered to be one of the greatest poems ever written on the state of human nature and the root of all evil.¹ The complex entanglement of religiosity and morality in *Paradise Lost* make it difficult to grasp the labyrinthian twists and turns of Milton's presentation of the true fault of good and evil within the story, compelling the reader to look first into his distinctive literary style, as well as the texts which precede him, as a pathway to a more complex understanding of his accusations. Due to the complex literary genealogy of Milton's work, it is therefore crucial to analyze and compare the differing attitudes and form within the text which draw upon earlier works and inspire later literary adaptations of the Fall. To investigate the depth of Milton's literary scholarship, I have chosen to expand my analyze into *Paradise Lost* through an examination of Abraham Cowley's *Davideis* and Jeremy Taylor's *Deus Justificatus*, two other

¹ Poole, William. *Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost*. Harvard University Press, 2017, ch. 1.

significant English works on the same subject, in order to explore how these three writers interpret the causes of the Fall.

I have chosen these other texts, which both precede *Paradise Lost* by nearly ten years, in order to analyze how each author stylistically approaches their respective works in order to present a specific claim about the cause and nature of all human evil. Due to Milton's using of blank verse in tandem with his complex syntax throughout *Paradise Lost*, I found it highly important to examine each other author's respective writing style in order to investigate how freely they play with their discussion of good and evil in relation to both the biblical account and Milton's text.² Milton's dynamic writing evidently presents itself as a sort of commentary upon the more traditional style which preceded his work, prompting a larger discussion of the efficacy of blank verse itself. Milton argues for the malleability of blank verse, as can be witnessed throughout *Paradise Lost*, as it allows the author to venture into any direction that they would like regardless of traditional restrictions. In contrast to the bold confidence of this idea, Cowley and Taylor expand upon more traditional concepts of religiosity and politics, serving as a conservative foundation for which Milton responds with great fervency, expressing the broad range of depictions of the Fall present in English literary history.

So often in our modern world, many ancient texts which at one time held immense popularity in both public and scholarly sectors can be so easily overlooked and forgotten, lost in the constant and overwhelming sea of contemporary literature readily available with the click of a button. However, there is real value and meaning to be recovered from these lost texts, which is why, in addition to my writing, I have also chosen to include encodings from each of these texts, translating each author's articulate words into a specific data formatting which is readable in a

² Corns, Thomas. *Milton's Language*. Cambridge University Press, 1990.

digital environment on the web. While *Paradise Lost* is still regularly reprinted and studied, *Davideis* and *Deus Justificatus* are just a few of the plethora of texts seemingly long forgotten, neglected in the wake of modern literary works. By approaching these texts through encoding, I am able to analyze all three through the same encoded schema and data standards, enhancing the connections between them in order to produce a more digestible collection. Taking these works from the archives and metamorphosing them into modernized editions works to present a current version of each text, advancing our understanding of *Paradise Lost* as both an isolated work and a critique on the political and religious affairs prominent at the time. Through this digital analysis, a discernable framework of connections between these texts comes to light, allowing for a more modern exploration of mankind's intrinsic identity through the narrative of the Fall.

1.1 *Paradise Lost* and Milton's Version of the Fall

Milton's 1667 version of the notorious tale of the fall, *Paradise Lost*, has long been disputed by scholars and academics alike, as many have attempted to best their literary rivals with their own interpretations of this ancient tale. This theodicy is one of true betrayal and unparalleled sin, as the first human creations of God himself, Adam and Eve, sent mankind into a spiral of chaos and disorder through their eating from the Tree of Knowledge. This pandemonium signified mankind's ultimate loss of innocence and the calamitous divine fall from grace, marking Adam and Eve as traitors at the hands of the serpentine malevolence of Satan. Milton's interpretation of the fall has remained at the forefront of literary scholarship for centuries, as his complex interrogation of mankind's slipping from God's grace has served to both mystify and thrill even the most circumspect of readers.

When the text was originally published, it contained ten books with more than ten thousand lines of verse chronicling this biblical fall, effectively cementing Milton's place as one of the most significant English poets of all time, and *Paradise Lost* as one of the most unique

religious commentaries ever created. Milton, who vehemently rejected the concept that rhyming was necessary for poetry, structured *Paradise Lost* in such a way that the reader finds themselves floating in the terrifying chasm between Heaven and Hell, drifting between the ethereal twilight of good and evil alongside Adam and Eve. Milton works to effortlessly to combine a plethora of literary and stylistic elements, including “balanced quantities, narratives, images, characterizations, etc., all of which lead to heightened awareness of the texture and concepts embodying this magnificent statement of God’s purpose.”³ Milton’s utilization of blank verse throughout, due to its traditionally being used in the genre of tragedy, describes the Fall in terms of heroes and villains, creating another layer of complexity over the narrative of mankind’s fatal understanding of all knowledge of good and evil.

Prior to Milton’s employment of such a distinctively unique form in *Paradise Lost*, blank verse was almost exclusively used in tragedies, though Milton attempted to distinguish between dramatic and heroic forms of blank verse. English blank verse is believed to have been introduced by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, placing its origins starkly in the early sixteenth-century.⁴ Tracing its history back through the Renaissance, blank verse was heavily championed by Italian poet and humanist Gian Giorgio Trissino, who vouched for its importance in providing “*enargia*”, or vividness, to epic poetry.⁵ Milton’s defiant rejection of rhyme scheme was evident throughout his time as a scholar, as he was often noted as expressing his extreme distaste for the poetic feature, which he felt caused the reader to become distracted from the true meaning of the work itself. Because of this purposeful authorial choice, which serves to draw focus to Milton’s ideas and the poem itself, *Paradise Lost* is heavily riddled with blank verse, save for the preface,

³ Shawcross, John T. “The Balanced Structure of *Paradise Lost*.” *University of North Carolina Press*, vol. 62, no. 5, Oct. 1965, pp. 696.

⁴ Hardison, O. B. “Blank Verse before Milton.” *Studies in Philology*, vol. 81, no. 3, 1984, pp. 253–274.

⁵ Hardison, Jr., pp. 260.

which attracted a plethora of attention for both Milton and the work itself, forever connecting both to literary fame.

Milton's resolute writing choices proved to be more than simply bait to lure in the most suspicious of critics, as many scholars have noted the vast significance that this decision has generated within the tale of Milton's Fall itself. By using blank verse throughout *Paradise Lost*, Milton effectively "recalls the unrhymed hexameter of the ancients...[this] was a deliberate affront to the conventions of English versification".⁶ The structure and form of the epic appear to call upon the works of historians, metamorphosing a style traditionally associated with the heroic and allowing the reader to understand the tragic deeds and tales from history as it is applied to the central narrative of Christian thought. Reading and interpreting *Paradise Lost's* blank verse forces the reader to stay alert to the elements of tragedy sprinkled throughout the intermingled model of heroism and drama, completely transforming the narrative in order to augment the drama and interest of the Fall itself by using blank verse.

Milton's decision to use blank verse throughout *Paradise Lost* evidently reflects a strongly didactic tone uncommon among most heroic epics. The lack of rhyming within Milton's epic leaves his own interpretation strikingly clear, as his own beliefs are very plainly at the forefront of the work itself. As has been referenced previously, Milton held a stark credence in the distracting nature of rhyme, which visibly translates into his straightforward interpretation of the Fall, as he notes in the front matter of *Paradise Lost*:

Not without cause therefore some both Italian, and Spanish Poets of prime note have rejected Rhime both in longer and shorter Works, as have also long since our

⁶ Poole, ch. 16.

best English Tragedies, as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, triveal, and of no true musical delight.⁷

While heroic epics often utilize the pageantry of the rhyme scheme as a way to augment and inspire drama⁸, *Paradise Lost's* instructive blank verse succeeds in exemplifying the frank nature and deeply melancholic tone of mankind's first mistake, prompting the reader to grasp Milton's belief in the full condemnation of Eve as a character. Thus, it becomes exceedingly obvious that this seemingly minor stylistic choice sent permanent ripples through traditional literary scholarship of the Fall, effectively making the tale more human and eliciting a more emotional response from the reader.

Due to Milton's unique structure and stylistic decisions within *Paradise Lost*, I have chosen to encode several key moments from within the epic in which Milton points directly to specific causes of the Fall. I have encoded many speeches within my research, including those of Satan and Eve, two of the epic's most controversial key characters, which expresses the complex relationship between Milton's blank verse and the creation of tragedy in *Paradise Lost*. The actions and words of each character are inflamed with emotion as Milton utilizes metric variation within blank verse, essentially mirroring the tone and cadence of speech and providing a sense of realism to their individual voices and personalities. This individualistic quality can therefore be interpreted as an inclination into the passion and intensity of Milton's own religious beliefs, which the reader can discern through the vehemency of the lines of *Paradise Lost* itself.

Milton's Fall is not only stylistically unique, but also extremely vivid in its content, as it attempts to explain the ways of both mankind and God, taking inspiration from the Book of

⁷ Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Global Language Resources, Inc., 2001, *DjVu E-Books*, triggs.djvu.org/djvu-editions.com/MILTON/LOST/Download.pdf, front matter.

⁸ Shawcross, pp. 696.

Genesis while still building upon his own distinct concepts of human morality and free will. Milton adopts a didactic tone throughout the work, evoking a strong sense of drama within the very opening of Book I, as he works to paint a picture of the intense battle between goodness and evil in the form of God versus Satan. The syntax throughout fosters a distinguishing sense of preoccupation within the character of Satan, who Milton presents at the forefront of the work as an identity of cunning wickedness which is depicted as a counter to Eve's gullibility concerning the nature of evil, having only ever been subject to that of goodness. Milton presents Eve's naivety as the root of mankind's fall from grace, highlighting the pliable nature of her mind as the beginning of humankind's moral freedom apart from God. To fully understand Milton's tale, it is truly necessary to understand the origin of his linguistic and creative style within the writing of *Paradise Lost*, as his own deeply engrained beliefs inevitably contribute to his credibility and power as a biblical storyteller.

Milton begins *Paradise Lost* in medias res, or in the middle of things, which serves to transpose the reader directly into the heat of the moment in the tense battle between good and evil.⁹ This distinctive choice plunges the once-simple tale into passionate action, transforming the traditional biblical story into one of tragedy, drama, and emotion. Beginning Book 1 in the middle of the strained conflict between Heaven and Hell allows the reader to explore their own prior knowledge and beliefs about the age-old tale of the Fall and expand upon notions of morality, politics, and free will as Milton transposes aspects of tragedy onto Christian theology. Through this, a palpably tense tone is immediately created, forcing the reader to think deeply about the tragedy which has just been laid out before them.

⁹ Greenblatt, Stephen. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2019, pp. 821.

Milton expands upon the association between free will and bodily autonomy throughout his story, utilizing the traditional biblical narrative as a point of contingency in which he disputes the root causes of original sin. Milton's approach to the structure and verse of his epic provides a bold depiction of the banishment of mankind from the Garden of Eden, which becomes evident within the first lines of Book 1. The first book serves as a sort of introduction into his intricate illustration of the Fall, attuning the reader to the leading characters operating within the capriciousness of Milton's own beliefs. Most central to Milton's epic is his portrayal of the fallen angel, Satan, and his role in leading Adam and Eve to their own temptations within the Garden of Eden. As is told in the Book of Genesis, Satan takes the form of the conniving serpent in order to lure the newly formed and extremely malleable couple towards sin within the Garden of Eden. Milton emulates this within *Paradise Lost*, effectively highlighting his work as predominantly biblically accurate in terms of its content while still maintaining his own distinctive structure. Milton's portraying of Satan in the form of the serpent, which will be analyzed in-depth further into my research, augments the depth of the fallen angel's malevolence and profound evil as he coaxes the naïve and unaware Eve into sin. Milton presents the tragedy as an intermingling of his own ideas and that of the Book of Genesis, projecting the blame plainly upon Eve, as she, the "mother of mankind", forsakes the obedience of her newly formed humanity. This instigation within the first lines of Book I establishes the suspenseful tone prevalent throughout the entirety of *Paradise Lost* as Milton begins to delve deeper into his investigation and justification of God's virtue.

Opening Book 1, Milton adopts the voice of the omnipotent narrator, who sets the scene for mankind's greatest fault. Proposing this mistake as the figurative opening of Pandora's box, Milton writes:

Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
 Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast
 Brough Death into the World, and all our woe,
 With Loss of Eden, till one greater Man
 Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat.¹⁰

This famous opening statement serves to establish many essential pieces of Milton's literary puzzle, as the reader is instantly presented with the complete calamity which struck mankind from the perfection and magnificence of Eden. Posing the Fall as an issue requiring the rescuing of man from a higher power, which the reader can then interpret as Jesus Christ, Milton underlines the depth and intensity of this error, portraying the release of the knowledge of good and evil at the hands of Eve as exceptionally tragic. The choice of blank verse, a tragic form, reinforces this idea as Milton continues his investigation into the root of the cause of the Fall itself. Though this introduction does provide a strong background for Milton's biblical commentary, it is necessary to grasp the true significance of these few lines, as Milton largely depicts mankind as in need of saving. Milton highlights a believed lack of capability amongst Eve's character as a woman, who he argues chose to commit sin on her own accord at the hands of Satan. Milton's describes the Fall as stemming from mankind's "disobedience", marking mankind, or, more specifically, Eve, as fully responsible, as "God created humans free, and their sin is their own fault."¹¹

As Milton works to weave the literary cloth of his narrative of the Fall, one specific character moves to the forefront of the reader's gaze. Satan, who has been cast through a

¹⁰ Milton, lines 1-5.

¹¹ Poole, ch. 1.

multitude of different lens as the antithesis of all that is good and virtuous, specifically God himself, is notably the first character who speaks in *Paradise Lost*. In Book 1, Milton establishes Satan as having fallen from the graces of God prior to the opening of the epic, placing his character as entangled in the fiery trenches of Hell. Satan's first speech in Book 1 establishes an intense, impassioned tone, augmenting the energy and power of his words as he proves himself extremely embittered and far from the beauty and righteousness of Heaven, noting:

That Glory never shall his wrath or might
 Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
 With suppliant knee, and deifie his power,
 Who from the terrour of this Arm so late
 Doubted his Empire, that were low indeed,
 That were an ignominy and shame beneath
 This downfall; since by Fate the strength of Gods
 And this Empyreal substance cannot fail,
 Since through experience of this great event
 In Arms not worse, in foresight much advanc't,
 We may with more successful hope resolve
 To wage by force or guile eternal Warr
 Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe,
 Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy
 Sole reigning holds the Tyranny of Heav'n.¹²

¹² Milton, lines 110-124.

Satan's fervid words furnish a tone of both respect and hatred for Heaven and God as the omnipotent monarch, which he refers to as "the Tyranny of Heav'n." Milton works to express Satan's contemplation of his own free will versus perfect unity under God, proving his favor instead to bodily autonomy. Hidden amongst the boldness of Milton's words lies the true conflict, as Satan exposes the complexity of human nature through his exploration of free will. In the above excerpt, Milton utilizes ardent diction to express the deep-rooted bitterness spawned within Satan, his emotive and intense nature spouting endlessly from his deeply entrenched hatred. Satan's describing of God as "our grand Foe" and the traditionally pious beauty of his kingdom as "the Tyranny of Heav'n" serves to immediately characterize his acidic resentment within his first speech, effectively foreshadowing the havoc which he would later reek upon the innocence of mankind.

Portraying this most infamous fallen angel as the foremost antihero within *Paradise Lost*, Milton extrapolates upon the narrative of the traditional heroic epic. He highlights Satan's determined and undaunted nature despite the immense physical torment he endures in the pits of Hell as a foretelling of the tragedy which would later occur. Mirroring what would be a conventional heroic storyline, Satan's impassioned speech in Book 1 sets forth a tone of force and intensity largely associated with a hero's valorous return following a great loss. Milton uses this in order to generate a sense of sympathy within the reader for Satan's identity as a hero despite his conventional biblical identity as a villain. Despite his noted respect for the generosity and abundance provided by God for the angels in Heaven, it is clear that Satan despises God as the ultimate authority, a film of bitterness encapsulating the entirety of his speech and evoking a deep sense of melancholy as an echo of empathy builds from within the reader.

Satan's fiery character, both figuratively and literally, bleeds heavily into Book 2, as the reader can observe his tangible desire for revenge bubbling just beneath the surface like a raging volcano. Chewing over several different plans to overthrow the inequitable nature that is God's Heaven, Satan calls for action among his subjects, pronouncing:

For none sure will claim in Hell
 Precedence, none, whose portion is so small
 Of present pain, that with ambitious mind
 Will covet more. With this advantage then
 To union, and firm Faith, and firm accord,
 More then can be in Heav'n, we now return
 To claim our just inheritance of old,
 Surer to prosper then prosperity
 Could have assur'd us.¹³

Sitting atop a golden throne as if reclaiming the role of God within Hell, Satan talks through the idea of a bloodthirsty battle for the recovering of Heaven, emphasizing his enthusiasm for a place in which autonomy among all would reign supremely above the inequity which he perceives as dictatorship of God's Heaven. This speech in Book 2 serves to solidify the strength and dedication of Satan's rebel army of fallen angels, as Milton again perpetuates themes of perseverance and deep-rooted resolve amongst the tremendous agony of Hell. Milton's portrayal of this enthusiasm and staunch purpose is seemingly overshadowed by the presence of ultimate evil, highlighting its intensity to prevail amongst the customary chronicle of good versus evil as

¹³ Milton, lines 31-40.

Satan and his subjects elect upon the very decision that would irrevocably shake Heaven, Hell, and everything in between: the judgement to corrupt mankind.

In direct juxtaposition to the unfaltering wickedness of Satan's character, Milton's Eve is very noticeably painted as a figure of fumbling naivety and ignorance. By casting Eve through the light of a scathing commentary on female identity, Milton effectively shifts the weight of mankind's fatal mistake onto her. Woman, who is graciously recounted as molded from the rib of man in the Bible, has forever been plagued with the fault of mankind. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton concentrates heavily on the perceived foolishness and innocence of Eve's character, drawing upon many traditional ideals of women as the less intelligent, more foolish counterpart to the valor and brains of man. From a stylistic point of view, Milton's Eve is both surprisingly and strikingly complex, provoking a distinctive reading of the dense intricacies at play in the Fall itself. This becomes evident within her speech in Book 4, in which she introduces herself and, in effect, thrusts herself into the middle of the narrative of the Fall:

As I bent down to look, just opposite
 A Shape within the watry gleam appeared
 Bending to look on me, I started back,
 It started back, but pleas'd I soon returnd,
 Pleas'd it returnd as soon with answering looks
 Of Sympathie and love; there I had fixt
 Mine eyes till now, and pind with vain desire
 Had not a voice thus warnd me, what thou seest,
 What there thou seest fair creature is thy self.¹⁴

¹⁴ Milton, lines 460-468.

In the above excerpt, Eve describes her discovery of her own perfect self, which she sees for the first time in the reflection in the water of Eden, and she is evidently shocked by her own loveliness and beauty. This description provides the narrative with its first impression of Eve, reflecting several unique ideals of Milton's Fall itself as Eve takes direct command of her own character and identity. Milton's portrayal of Eve's individual character amongst the weight of the biblical narrative works as a tool for inserting her into the role of taking on the blame of mankind's descent from perfection. Unlike many other texts on the same subject, Milton provides Eve with a character and identity of her own apart from Adam, essentially portraying her as fully responsible for the fault of the Fall. Milton's portrayal of Eve's ignorant persona offers a striking contrast to her more independent introduction, as her naïve and foolish character serves to highlight her weakness and vulnerability as both a woman and a key part of *Paradise Lost* while her strong command of her existence seems to shift her understanding of her actions. Milton's salient introduction of Eve can thus be interpreted as a seemingly accurate retelling of the biblical depiction of Eve as the instigator and cause of the release of evil into the perfection of Eden.

As the reader traverses deeper and deeper into the twisted lines of *Paradise Lost*, the menacing tendrils of Satan's malevolence can be seen taking shape in the form of his presence in the Garden of Eden as a serpent. Milton depicts Satan as implanting himself within the innocence of Eden, his flickers of malice lying in wait for the first opportunity to slither into Eve's gullible nature. As Book 4 continues, Milton again brings many concepts of free will to the surface in his discussion of Eve's femininity as he describes Satan's stealing into the Garden of Eden, in which he tempts Eve with expressions of free will and notions of autonomy and power apart from God:

Know ye not then said Satan, fill'd with scorn

Know ye not mee? Ye knew me once no mate
 For you, there sitting where ye durst not soare;
 Not to know mee argues your selves unknown,
 The lowest of your throng; or if ye know,
 Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
 Your message, like to end as much in vain?¹⁵

In contrast to the marked purity and perfection of Heaven, Satan's appearance in Eden serves to augment the intensity of his bitterness and hatred for the glory and righteousness from which he was banished. In the form of a toad, Satan materializes to Eve, feeding her the first whispers of moral corruption, introducing mankind to concepts of power, control, and false promises. By planting the seeds of manipulation within her garden of purity through his referring to phrases like "lowest of your throng", Milton's depiction of Satan comes to represent the omnipresent conflict between complete free will and obedience under God, effectively feeding Eve the knowledge necessary to fault her completely for the Fall. Most interestingly, however, is Milton's portrayal of the root of all evil in this section, as he fuses the fault of Eve with the tactfully conniving nature of Satan's evil in order to render a complete image of the transition from good to evil.

Due to Milton's creation of such three-dimensional characters, *Paradise Lost* is truly one of the most remarkable epics ever written in the English language, cementing it into literary history for hundreds of years. Milton's command of blank verse manufactures a tale not only riddled with drama and tragedy, but also with dense religious and political commentary in critique of many who attempted to delineate their own versions of the Fall years prior. His

¹⁵ Milton, lines 826-833.

confident and assertive tone permeates the narrative as a whole, casting a shadow over the opposing opinions of his earlier opponents. It is in the analysis of these rival texts that we can find the very root of Milton's contention with the traditional heroic epic, as well as how his unique approach serves to pivot the narrative toward the connection between free will and bodily autonomy amongst good and evil.

1.2 *Davideis* and Cowley's Unfinished Narrative of the Fall

Paradise Lost is very obviously not the first—or the last—biblical commentary written as an analysis of the Bible and human nature, as countless others have attempted to wrangle their own understandings of the Fall. A little over ten years before Milton published his legendary work, another English poet, Abraham Cowley, was conceptualizing his very own version of the Fall, which he encapsulated in his unfinished 1656 poem, *Davideis*. While Cowley's poem is seemingly overshadowed by the fame and popularity of *Paradise Lost*, *Davideis* is one of the most unique works of religious interpretation in literary history, alluding to many deeper concepts of human identity within its discussion of the character of David. David, who has appeared within literature countless times—most prominently as a young man claiming victory over the giant Goliath—evidently instigates a story of unmistakable drama and tragedy, one which Cowley whittles into his larger discussion and analysis of the Old Testament and religion as a whole. Cowley was greatly inspired by his orthodox subservience to the holiness and sanctification of religious texts, using the pen as a powerful tool to strike out against the desecration and profanity of religion often seen within commentary works of the time.¹⁶ Due to this, *Davideis* has a palpably different tone than that of *Paradise Lost*, in which Milton prompts the reader to view the narrative through a specifically tragic lens, as Cowley works to draw his

¹⁶ McLaren McBryde, Jr., John. "A Study of Cowley's *Davideis*." *University of Illinois Press*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1899, pp. 30.

own blueprint of the antiquated story of the Fall through a more convoluted description of the tale of David.

Within his preface to *Davideis*, Cowley's indignation and religious infatuation are clearly discernable, as he incites his own dissatisfaction with the disrespectful handling of religious topics within literature. Cowley immediately asserts a starkly resentful tone, prompting his religious ardor to materialize further with each passing line, writing:

It is not without grief and indignation that I behold that *Divine Science* employing all her inexhaustable riches of *Wit* and *Eloquence*, either in the wicked and beggarly *Flattery* of great persons, or the unmanly *Idolizing* of *Foolish Women*, or the wretched affectation of scurril *Laughter*, or at best on the confused antiquated *Dreams* of senseless *Fables* and *Metamorphoses*. Amongst all holy and consecrated things which the *Devil* ever stole and alienated from the service of the *Deity*; as *Altars*, *Temples*, *Sacrifices*, *Prayers*, and the like; there is none that he so universally, and so long usurpt, as *Poetry*. It is time to recover it out of the *Tyrants* hands, and to restore it to the *Kingdom of God*, who is the *Father* of it. It is time to *Baptize* it in *Jordan*, for it will never become clean by bathing in the *Waters of Damascus*.¹⁷

Lacking the rhyme scheme of the epic itself, Cowley's preface stands out immediately, not only for its biting discontentment with the literary works of those before him, who he calls out by name later, but also for its dissimilarity to the rest of *Davideis* itself. Cowley writes of his discontentment with those who wrote before him, extrapolating upon the power of Satan, or, in his own words, "the Devil", to usurp the beauty and scholarship of poetry in favor of scathing malevolence. Following this vehement vexation with the very nature of poetry and literature

¹⁷ Cowley, Abraham. *Davideis, a Sacred Poem of the Troubles of David*. 1656, *The Abraham Cowley Text and Image Archive*, cowley.lib.virginia.edu/works/davideis1.htm.

itself, Cowley essentially sets himself up for failure within his unfinished epic as the passion prominent within the preface seems to drop off within the actual poem. It is, however, worth noting that “Cowley [was] the first to take up the challenge of writing a Virgilian epic on Christian matter”, and he took on this massive project while still a very young man.¹⁸ *Davideis* has come to be interpreted as the foundation for Milton’s later critique, as Cowley’s preface can be interpreted as an attempt to maintain historical truth and religious accuracy while inevitably handicapping his ability to completely fulfill his religious vision.¹⁹

Utilizing rhyme throughout, unlike Milton, the main section of Cowley’s *Davideis* can be analyzed through an entirely different lens than that of *Paradise Lost*, which many believe was written as a formalist critique of Milton’s more traditional opponent²⁰. Within the first lines of *Davideis*, Cowley’s confident writing style begins to fade as his exceptionally religious nature remains at the forefront of the narrative. Having written his epic during his time at Cambridge, beginning in 1638, Cowley’s work adopts a strongly amusing and almost juvenile tone, the near-playful rhyme scheme seeming to contrast and undermine the severity of his demands for the respect of religious texts:

I sing the Man who Judahs Scepter bore
 In that right hand which held the crook before;
 Who from the best Poet, best of kings did grow;
 The two chief gifts Heav’n could on Man bestow.
 Much danger first much toil did he sustain,

¹⁸ Starke, Sue. “‘The Eternal Now’: Virgilian Echoes and Miltonic Premonitions in Cowley’s *Davideis*.” *Christianity and Literature*, vol. 55, no. 2, 2006, pp. 196.

¹⁹ Starke, pp. 198.

²⁰ Poole, ch. 11.

Whilst Saul and Hell crost his strong fate in vain.²¹

Preceding *Paradise Lost*, Cowley maintains the form and style of the classic heroic epic while still heavily expressing his strict Christian ideologies, playing upon the use of rhyme in order to reinforce this idea. As shown in the excerpt above, beginning in Book 1, Cowley adopts a far more playful tone than Milton's more bleak blank verse, which can be interpreted as a result of his young age at the time of its conception, opening the reader up to the capricious ebb and flow of success and defeat within the classical narrative of the heroic epic. His diction in this section presents a vastly different portrayal of the nature of the fallen angel as a whole, calling upon deeper themes of religiosity through his referencing of the scepter of Judas in order to parallel the sinfulness of God's two greatest enemies.

Cowley was heavily criticized for his unfinished *Davideis*, with many opponents, including Milton, commenting upon the juvenile nature of the epic itself.²² In direct contrast to the sweeping claims made in the preface, Cowley completed only four of the twelve proposed books, instead falling short of the expansive analysis of religiosity and literature which he had promised earlier. Cowley's Universe within the narrative is structured rather uniquely, prompting many to observe and attack the convoluted mixing of details and rather informal tone between the lines. Though the poem does begin much like Milton's *Paradise Lost*—in the middle of the story—Cowley introduces his fallen angel as Lucifer in Book 1, again contradicting his own description of “the Devil” within the preface. Cowley models the character of Lucifer as the traditionally bitter archangel thrown from the perfection of Heaven, tied forever to the fiery wrath of evil in Hell, noting:

²¹ Cowley, lines 1-6.

²² Dykstal, Timothy. “The Epic Reticence of Abraham Cowley.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1991.

No bound controls th' unwearied space, but *Hell*
Endless as those dire *pains* that in it dwell.
 Here no dear glimpse of the *Suns* lovely face,
 Strikes through the *Solid* darkness of the place;
 No dawning *Morn* does her kind reds display;
 One slight weak beam would here be thought the *Day*.
 No gentle *stars* with their fair *Gems* of *Light*
 Offend the tyr'anous and unquestion'd *Night*.
 Here *Lucifer* the mighty *Captive* reigns;
Proud, 'midst his *Woes*, and *Tyrant* in his *Chains*.
 Once *General* of a guilded *Host* of *Sprights*,
 Like *Hesper*, leading forth the spangled *Nights*.
 But down like *Lightning*, which him struck, he came.²³

Cowley's graphic diction in the above excerpt paints his Lucifer in the image of weak and almost pitiable creature, trapped within the confines of the deserved agony and torture of life in Hell. Though Cowley does employ extremely vivid imagery in this section, it is undermined by his own rhyme scheme, which, as Milton later observes, actually does detract the seriousness which he was so determined to express in the preface. Cowley essentially destroys his own credibility in the bulk of his work, as he heavily contradicts the rules which he set for himself in the preface. However, Cowley's Lucifer lacks the strength and malevolent enthusiasm of Milton's Satan, which can ultimately be attributed to his "desire to be faithful to the classics again conflict[ing] with his faith", sacrificing literary scholarship for biblical accuracy.²⁴

²³ Cowley, lines 83-95.

²⁴ Dykstal, pp. 103.

Though Lucifer does call upon several other characters and forces within his underworld, much like in *Paradise Lost*, he lacks the zeal and robust power of wickedness predominantly associated with this most infamous fallen angel, which can be interpreted as a sharp contrast to his dedication to religious truth in the preface of *Davideis*. Failing to prove his success over the opponent spirit Envy, who herself is vividly described as inspiring a debate upon the nature of Heaven and Hell, Lucifer shows himself to be devoid of the all-knowing unholy passion commonly associated with his character:

She spoke; all star'ed at first, and made a pause;
 But strait the general murmur of applause 220
 Ran through Deaths Courts; she frown'd still, and begun
 To *envy* at the praise *herself* had won.
 Great *Belzebub* starts from his burning Throne
 To' embrace the *Fiend*, but she now furious grown
 To act her part; thrice bow'd, and thence she fled;
 The *Snakes* all hist, the *Fiends* all murmured.
 It was the time when silent night began
 T'enchain with *sleep* the busie *spirits* of Man;
 And *Saul* himself, though in his troubled breast
 The weight of *Empire* lay, took gentle rest.²⁵

Cowley's depiction of Lucifer's inability to best even his own rival in Hell seems to allude to a deeper sense of powerlessness that greatly juxtaposes Milton's king of darkness and evil.

Eroding his ego and undercutting his power, this interaction serves to wear down the traditional

²⁵ Cowley, Book I, lines 219-230.

image of evil within the tale of the Fall, provoking a sense of confusion within the reader that is absent in the other texts.

Cowley's *Davideis* clearly presents a vastly different narrative than that of *Paradise Lost*, as he works to create a puzzling disjunction of contradictions and discrepancies within his rather unsuccessful quest to merge the classical heroic epic and his own religious beliefs. Seemingly unnecessarily intermingling the biblical retelling of Heaven and Hell with the heroic tale of David, Cowley plays upon the long-established characterization of God, utilizing the tortuous misery of Hell as a tool of comparison to the magnificence of Heaven, writing:

But an *Eternal Now* does always last.
 There sits th' *Almighty*, *First* of all, and *End*;
 Whom nothing but *Himself* can comprehend.
 Who with his *Word* commanded *All* to *Be*,
 And *All* obey'd him, for that *Word* was *He*.
 Only he spoke, and every thing that *Is*
 From out the womb of *fertile Nothing* ris.
 Oh who shall tell, who shall describe thy throne,
 Thou Great *Three-One*?²⁶

In Satan's act of bitter admiration for the glory of God, Cowley, as many critics have pointed out, takes an immense liberty in his characterization of God in Book 1. In describing the peace and serenity of Heaven, Cowley enforces a theme prevalent throughout the narrative as a whole: divine messages. While chronicling God's faultlessness in the eyes of his many devoted subjects, Cowley chooses to utilize another angel as the messenger of God's words to David, repeating his

²⁶ Cowley, Book I, lines 363-370.

message on Earth instead, again displaying his inability to command both his own beliefs and the traditional heroic epic. Cowley's words essentially work to deepen the gap between his own depiction of God as needing assistance from other angels and the biblical portrayal of God as omnipotent and all-powerful.²⁷

Preceding *Paradise Lost* as one of the first English epics, it is clear that Cowley's *Davideis* diverges greatly from what can be perceived as a successful biblical commentary, regardless of the unfinished nature of the poem itself. Though Cowley found great success during his lifetime, his works, including that of the disorganized *Davideis*, have found themselves buried under a cloak of neglect, overlooked by the popularity of the likes of Milton.²⁸ However, it is extremely important to analyze earlier works such as this in order to fully understand and appreciate the complexity of Milton's own story of mankind's fall from grace. Cowley's poem can be perceived as an extremely discombobulated, and often highly denounced, attempt at blending and conceptualizing both his core religious beliefs and the heroic epic, chiefly serving to create a serpentine literary patchwork of the religious and the political which Milton effectively uses as a stepping stone to draw upon in his own commentary years later.

1.3 *Deus Justificatus* and Taylor's Formal Approach to the Fall

Published in the same year as Cowley's *Davideis*, Jeremy Taylor's *Deus Justificatus* serves as a precursor to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, introducing the doctrine of original sin into the literary world of English poetry. Known for his strong command of prose and established career as a cleric, Taylor's contributions on the very essence on human nature itself add a complexity to the literary revival of religion which Milton would come to analyze in his own work later.²⁹

²⁷ Dykstal, Timothy. "The Epic Reticence of Abraham Cowley." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1991, pp. 104. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/450445.

²⁸ McBryde, Jr., pp. 454.

²⁹ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Jeremy Taylor". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9 Aug. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jeremy-Taylor>.

Bringing in concepts of consistently Anglican doctrines, Taylor's pious nature, despite the many unfortunate occurrences throughout the course of his life, including multiple imprisonments and poverty, oozes within his words. Written in the form of two letters, *Deus Justificatus* handles the origin of mankind's sin, as well as mulls over many concepts of free will, as in *Paradise Lost*, referring to human nature as vastly confusing and mystifying, observing:

Mankind
 was born to be a riddle, and
 our nativity is in the dark; for
 men have taken the liberty to
 think what they please, and to
 say what they think; and they
 affirme many things, and can
 prove but few things; and take
 the sayings of men for the Ora|cles
 of God, and bold affirma|tives
 for convincing arguments.³⁰

Taylor does not utilize any specific rhyme scheme throughout his work, bringing the text more similarly to the later *Paradise Lost*. Adopting a more didactic tone, Taylor is able to assert his introduction into the root of mankind's sin, his doctrinal nature simple and pedagogic.

Describing mankind as a "riddle", Taylor effectively removes himself from the narrative, proving himself as a more unbiased narrator than that of Cowley and approaching the text with a sort of omnipotence present throughout *Paradise Lost*.

³⁰ Taylor, Jeremy. *Two Discourses of Original Sin*. London: Richard Royston, 1656; Text Creation Partnership. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A63754.0001.001/1/4?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>, pp. 2.

At the foremost position of prominence within this work is Taylor's confidence, even within the confines of imprisonment, as he expresses a more formal approach to the letters in order to elucidate both the very identity of mankind's fall and the preceding essence of free will as an instrument for sin. As a well-respected and highly praised author, Taylor wastes absolutely no time in expressing the full extent of his assuredness in his own beliefs, writing:

Adam turned his back upon the
 Sun, and dwelt in the dark and the
 shadow; he sinned, and fell into
 Gods displeasure and was made naked
 of all his supernatural endowments,
 and was ashamed and sentenced
 to death, and deprived of the
 means of long life, and of the Sacrament
 and instrument of Immortality,
 I mean the Tree of Life; he then
 fell under the evils of a sickly body,
 and a passionate, ignorant, uninstructed
 soul.³¹

Adopting a pragmatic tone in order to plainly explain the chain of events responsible for something as tragic as the Fall, contrasting the emotive nature of *Paradise Lost*, Taylor seems to extensively juxtapose the juvenile rhyme scheme that can be seen at play within other texts, including *Davideis*. Omitting the presence of Eve from his retelling of the Fall, Taylor

³¹ Taylor, pp. 12-13.

effectively shifts the blame starkly upon Adam, who he notes in explicitly unpleasant detail as falling victim to the repercussions of his own actions. Taylor discusses further the very seed which grew to into the venomous flower that would become the evil of mankind, confidently identifying the root of this as the omnipresence of original sin. In contrast to Milton, rather than discussing whether or not the original sin of man existed prior to the Fall, Taylor confidently cites this as undoubtably existing and lying wait for the opportunity to latch onto mankind. As can be gleaned from his biting tone, Taylor's immense respect for the narrative and truth of religiosity trickles even into his criticism of Adam's irrevocable blunder, as he distinctly mentions the Sacrament itself. In a contrasting manner to that of Milton and Cowley, Taylor constructs a narrative of Adam as the sole flaw in the absolute righteousness of God's creation, completely excluding the traditional tale of Eve and the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

Taylor undoubtably presents a unique perspective on the very temperament of mankind, good, and evil, provoking a plethora of discussion which Milton freely plays upon within *Paradise Lost*. Prevalent within Taylor, however, is the subject—or lack thereof—of gender dynamics, in which his omitting of Eve from the narrative serves to represent a heightened sense of sexism within its description of the Fall itself. As has been referenced earlier, Taylor's exclusion of Eve throughout his text establishes a palpably condescending tone, as he expresses the Fall as specifically Adam's fault, implying thus that all women are subject to the choices and decisions of men. In analyzing this through the lens of *Paradise Lost*, Milton's extreme shifting of the blame of the Fall solely onto the shoulders of Eve can be interpreted in response to Taylor's own erasure of her character from the entirety of his story.

Taylor ventures into unconventional territory stylistically, his writing exciting many specific literary elements not commonly found in other religious commentaries. Within the pages

of *Deus Justificatus*, he employs the word “Adam” over one hundred and thirty times, while the word “Eve” is mentioned zero times throughout the entirety of the work, paralleling his own belief in the complete fault of Adam. Taylor inevitably exploits repetition within his description of mortal sin, frequently repeating Adam’s name, writing:

This was the great effect of
Adams sin which became therefore
 to us a punishment because of the
 appendant infirmity that went along
 with it; for *Adam* being spoiled
 of all the rectitudes and supernatural
 heights of grace, and thrust
 back to the form of nature, and
 left to derive grace to himself by
 a new economy, or to be without
 it; and his posterity left just so as
 he was left himself.³²

This repetition inevitably shifts the discussion from the Fall itself onto the idea of mankind’s true morality and the concept of free will, thus extracting key postulations on the very nature of human identity as a whole through Taylor’s discussion of the blame of Adam. As is noted above, Taylor presents the idea of the Fall as a result of Adam’s deliberate and free “turning” from God into evil, creating a timeline spanning from the “original sin” to the unlocking of evil into the world. His self-assured tone throughout highlights not only his strongly Anglican beliefs, but

³² Taylor, pp. 22.

also his highly contended reliance on the idea that mankind, or, more specifically, Adam, at one time freely made the decision to commit sin. Shedding the juvenile pessimism of Cowley, Taylor plainly comments:

The foot moves at
 the command of the Will and by the
 empire of reason, but the passions are
 stiff even then when the knee bends,
 and no bridle can make the Passions
 regular and temperate. And indeed
 (Madam) this is in a manner the
 sum total of the evil of our abused
 and corrupted nature; Our soul is in
 the body as in a Prison; it is there
tanquam in alienâ domo, it is a sojourner,
 and lives by the bodies measures
 and loves and hates by the bodies
 Interests and Inclinations.³³

Taylor's command of the usually highly graphic and unsettling nature of Adam's perceived free ability to choose the evil which he was presented with strongly insinuates the omnipresence of original sin even prior to his fateful error. Taylor's Fall comes to represent a sense of resigned understanding of mankind's sinfulness, which is something palpably excluded from both Cowley and Milton's works. By presenting this in the form of evocative imagery of mankind's sin in the

³³ Taylor, pp. 20.

form of an impassioned soul trapped within the prison of the body, he shifts the blame not only onto Adam, but also onto the very construction of man's being, weaving a story of inevitable downfall.

Deus Justificatus is unmistakably a text very unlike the other two which I have chosen to analyze, providing instead to be a more intricate narrative of the reflections and opinions of those in a position of religious power during the time of Milton. Taylor's more formal approach to the Fall represents an inherently levelheaded command of not only language, but respect for the deeply religious nature of the narrative itself, which is something distinctly lacking in both Milton and Cowley's texts. The integration of the discussion of free will dually contributes to the somewhat biting nature of his description of the root cause of all evil, reminding the reader of Milton's own deliberation of the same topic. Thus, this text serves as only a small fragment of those which paved the way for Milton's literary and scholarly development through the creation of *Paradise Lost*.

The presence of so many great literary investigations into the biblical narrative of the Fall creates a strong atmosphere for discussion, opposition, and growth. Through a deeper analysis into the true meaning and broader significance Milton's *Paradise Lost*, it becomes exceedingly clear that both his content and stylistic choices metamorphose the age-old tale of the source of mankind's sin into literary tragedy. His extensively poignant words evoke a strong sense of emotion within the reader, casting the Fall through a particularly tragic light which had previously remained undiscovered. Abraham Cowley's *Davideis* and Jeremy Taylor's *Deus Justificatus*, despite their lesser popularity amongst English literature, precede *Paradise Lost* by forming a framework for which Milton could build his epic upon. The mistakes of his opponents only serve to further the passion and force of his words, as Milton's blank verse works in

conjunction with his vivid imagery of Satan, Eve, and the Fall itself to create a vibrant tapestry of emotion, drama, and tragedy. By utilizing encoding within my research into all three texts, I was able to effectively grasp the full scope of literary scholarship and elaborate upon Milton's exploration of human nature, free will, and sinfulness throughout *Paradise Lost*.

Appendix 1

Text Encoding

```

<TEI>
<teiHeader>
  <fileDesc>
    <titleStmt>
      <title>Paradise Lost, Davideis, Deus Justificatus</title>
      <author>Milton, John; Cowley, Abraham; Taylor, Jeremy</author>
    </titleStmt>
    <publicationStmt>
      <authority>Natalie Mauriello, Senior at Southern Methodist University,
2020</authority>
      <pubPlace>Southern Methodist University</pubPlace>
    </publicationStmt>
    <sourceDesc>
      <bibl>
        <title>Paradise Lost, Davideis, Deus Justificatus</title>
        <author>Milton, John; Cowley, Abraham; Taylor, Jeremy</author>
        <pubPlace>London, England</pubPlace>
        <edition>Copy graciously shared by the Poetry Foundation.</edition>
      </bibl>
    </sourceDesc>
  </fileDesc>
</teiHeader>
<text>
<body>
  <div type="ParadiseLost">
    <head>PARADISELOST</head>
    <sp who="#Narrator">
      <speaker>NARRATOR</speaker>
      <p>
        <l>OF Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit</l>
        <l>Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast</l>
        <l>Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,</l>
        <l>With loss of Eden, till one greater Man</l>
        <l>Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,</l>
        <l>Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top</l>
        <l>Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire</l>
        <l>That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,</l>
        <l>In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth</l>
        <l>Rose out of Chaos: or if Sion Hill</l>
        <l>Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd</l>
        <l>Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence</l>
        <l>Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,</l>

```


<|>That with no middle flight intends to soar</|>
 <|>Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues</|>
 <|>Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.</|>
 <|>And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer</|>
 <|>Before all Temples th' upright heart and pure,</|>
 <|>Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first</|>
 <|>Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread</|>
 <|>Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss</|>
 <|>And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark</|>
 <|>Illumin, what is low raise and support;</|>
 <|>That to the highth of this great Argument</|>
 <|>I may assert Eternal Providence,</|>
 <|>And justify the wayes of God to men.</|>
 </p>
 </sp>
 </div>
 <div type="Satansspeech" n="1">
 <head>SATAN'SSPEECH</head>
 <sp who="Satan">
 <p>
 <|>If thou beest he; But O how fall'n! how chang'd</|>
 <|>From him, who in the happy Realms of Light</|>
 <|>Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst out-shine</|>
 <|>Myriads though bright: If he whom mutual league,</|>
 <|>United thoughts and counsels, equal hope</|>
 <|>And hazard in the Glorious Enterprize,</|>
 <|>Joynd with me once, now misery hath joynd</|>
 <|>In equal ruin: into what Pit thou seest</|>
 <|>From what highth fall'n, so much the stronger prov'd</|>
 <|>He with his Thunder: and till then who knew</|>
 <|>The force of those dire Arms? yet not for those,</|>
 <|>Nor what the Potent Victor in his rage</|>
 <|>Can else inflict, do I repent or change,</|>
 <|>Though chang'd in outward lustre; that fixt mind</|>
 <|>And high disdain, from sence of injur'd merit,</|>
 <|>That with the mightiest rais'd me to contend,</|>
 <|>And to the fierce contention brought along</|>
 <|>Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd</|>
 <|>That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,</|>
 <|>His utmost power with adverse power oppos'd</|>
 <|>In dubious Battel on the Plains of Heav'n,</|>
 <|>And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?</|>
 <|>All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,</|>
 <|>And study of revenge, immortal hate,</|>
 <|>And courage never to submit or yield:</|>
 <|>And what is else not to be overcome?</|>

<|>That Glory never shall his wrath or might</|>
 <|>Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace</|>
 <|>With suppliant knee, and deifie his power,</|>
 <|>Who from the terrour of this Arm so late</|>
 <|>Doubted his Empire, that were low indeed,</|>
 <|>That were an ignominy and shame beneath</|>
 <|>This downfall; since by Fate the strength of Gods</|>
 <|>And this Empyrean substance cannot fail,</|>
 <|>Since through experience of this great event</|>
 <|>In Arms not worse, in foresight much advanc't,</|>
 <|>We may with more successful hope resolve</|>
 <|>To wage by force or guile eternal Warr</|>
 <|>Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe,</|>
 <|>Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy</|>
 <|>Sole reigning holds the Tyranny of Heav'n.</|>

</p>

</sp>

</div>

<div type="Satan'sspeech" n="2">

<head>SATAN'SSPEECH</head>

<sp who="Satan">

<speaker>SATAN</speaker>

<p>

<|>Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heav'n,</|>
 <|>For since no deep within her gulf can hold</|>
 <|>Immortal vigor, though opprest and fall'n,</|>
 <|>I give not Heav'n for lost. From this descent</|>
 <|>Celestial vertues rising, will appear</|>
 <|>More glorious and more dread then from no fall,</|>
 <|>And trust themselves to fear no second fate:</|>
 <|>Mee though just right, and the fixt Laws of Heav'n</|>
 <|>Did first create your Leader, next free choice,</|>
 <|>With what besides, in Counsel or in Fight,</|>
 <|>Hath bin achievd of merit, yet this loss</|>
 <|>Thus farr at least recover'd, hath much more</|>
 <|>Establisht in a safe unenvied Throne</|>
 <|>Yielded with full consent. The happier state</|>
 <|>In Heav'n, which follows dignity, might draw</|>
 <|>Envy from each inferior; but who here</|>
 <|>Will envy whom the highest place exposes</|>
 <|>Formost to stand against the Thunderers aim</|>
 <|>Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share</|>
 <|>Of endless pain? where there is then no good</|>
 <|>For which to strive, no strife can grow up there</|>
 <|>From Faction; for none sure will claim in Hell</|>
 <|>Precedence, none, whose portion is so small</|>

<|>Of present pain, that with ambitious mind</|>
 <|>Will covet more. With this advantage then</|>
 <|>To union, and firm Faith, and firm accord,</|>
 <|>More then can be in Heav'n, we now return</|>
 <|>To claim our just inheritance of old,</|>
 <|>Surer to prosper then prosperity</|>
 <|>Could have assur'd us; and by what best way,</|>
 <|>Whether of open Warr or covert guile,</|>
 <|>We now debate; who can advise, may speak.</|>

</p>
 </sp>
 </div>

<div type="Eve'sspeech" n="1">
 <head>EVE'SSPEECH</head>
 <sp who="Eve">
 <speaker>EVE</speaker>
 <p>
 <|>O thou for whom</|>
 <|>And from whom I was formd flesh of thy flesh,</|>
 <|>And without whom am to no end, my Guide</|>
 <|>And Head, what thou hast said is just and right.</|>
 <|>For wee to him indeed all praises owe,</|>
 <|>And daily thanks, I chiefly who enjoy</|>
 <|>So farr the happier Lot, enjoying thee</|>
 <|>Præeminent by so much odds, while thou</|>
 <|>Like consort to thy self canst no where find.</|>
 <|>That day I oft remember, when from sleep</|>
 <|>I first awak't, and found my self repos'd</|>
 <|>Under a shade of flours, much wondring where</|>
 <|>And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.</|>
 <|>Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound</|>
 <|>Of waters issu'd from a Cave and spread</|>
 <|>Into a liquid Plain, then stood unmov'd</|>
 <|>Pure as th' expanse of Heav'n; I thither went</|>
 <|>With unexperienc't thought, and laid me downe</|>
 <|>On the green bank, to look into the cleer</|>
 <|>Smooth Lake, that to me seemd another Skie.</|>
 <|>As I bent down to look, just opposite,</|>
 <|>A Shape within the watry gleam appeard</|>
 <|>Bending to look on me, I started back,</|>
 <|>It started back, but pleas'd I soon returnd,</|>
 <|>Pleas'd it returnd as soon with answering looks</|>
 <|>Of sympathie and love; there I had fixt</|>
 <|>Mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,</|>
 <|>Had not a voice thus warnd me, What thou seest,</|>
 <|>What there thou seest fair Creature is thy self,</|>

<|>With thee it came and goes: but follow me,</|>
 <|>And I will bring thee where no shadow staies</|>
 <|>Thy coming, and thy soft imbraces, hee</|>
 <|>Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy</|>
 <|>Inseparablie thine, to him shalt beare</|>
 <|>Multitudes like thy self, and thence be call'd</|>
 <|>Mother of human Race: what could I doe,</|>
 <|>But follow strait, invisibly thus led?</|>
 <|>Till I espi'd thee, fair indeed and tall,</|>
 <|>Under a Platan, yet methought less faire,</|>
 <|>Less winning soft, less amiablie milde,</|>
 <|>Then that smooth watry image; back I turnd,</|>
 <|>Thou following cryd'st aloud, Return faire Eve,</|>
 <|>Whom fli'st thou? whom thou fli'st, of him thou art,</|>
 <|>His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent</|>
 <|>Out of my side to thee, neerest my heart</|>
 <|>Substantial Life, to have thee by my side</|>
 <|>Henceforth an individual solace dear;</|>
 <|>Part of my Soul I seek thee, and thee claim</|>
 <|>My other half: with that thy gentle hand</|>
 <|>Seisd mine, I yielded, and from that time see</|>
 <|>How beauty is excelld by manly grace</|>
 <|>And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.</|>
 </p>
 </sp>
 </div>

<div type="DavideisPreface">
 <head>DAVIDEISPREFACE</head>
 <sp who="#Narrator">
 <speaker>NARRATOR</speaker>
 <p>

<|>It is not without grief and indignation that I behold that Divine Science employing all her</|>
 <|>inexhaustable riches of Wit and Eloquence, either in the wicked and beggarly Flattery of</|>
 <|>great persons, or the unmanly Idolizing of Foolish Women, or the wretched affectation of</|>
 <|>scurril Laughter, or at best on the confused antiquated Dreams of</|>
 <|>senseless Fables and Metamorphoses. Amongst all holy and consecrated things which</|>
 <|>the Devil ever stole and alienated from the service of the Deity; As Altars, Temples,</|>
 <|>Sacrifices, Prayers, and the like; there is none that he so universally, and so long usurpt,</|>
 <|>as Poetry. It is time to recover it out of the Tyrants hands, and to restore it</|>
 <|>to the Kingdom of God, who is the Father of it. It is time to Baptize it in Jordan, for it</|>
 <|>will never become clean by bathing in the Waters of the Damascus.</|>

</p>
 </sp>
 </div>
 <div type="Davideis">
 <head>DAVIDEIS</head>

```

<sp who="#Narrator">
<speaker>NARRATOR</speaker>
  <p>
    <l>I sing the Man who Judahs Scepter bore</l>
    <l>In that right hand which held the crook before;</l>
    <l>Who from the best Poet, best of kings did grow;</l>
    <l>The two chief gifts Heav'n could on Man bestow.</l>
    <l>Much danger first much toil did he sustain,</l>
    <l>Whilst Saul and Hell crost his strong fate in vain.</l>
  </p>
</sp>
</div>
<div type="Davideis">
<head>DAVIDEIS</head>
<sp who="#Narrator">
<speaker>NARRATOR</speaker>
  <p>
    <l>No bound controls th' unwearied space, but Hell</l>
    <l>Endless as those dire pains that in it dwell.</l>
    <l>Here no dear glimpse of the Suns lovely face,</l>
    <l>Strikes through the Solid darkness of the place;</l>
    <l>No dawning Morn does her kind reds display;</l>
    <l>One slight weak beam would here be thought the Day.</l>
    <l>No gentle stars with their fair Gems of Light</l>
    <l>Offend the tyr'anous and unquestion'd Night.</l>
    <l>Here Lucifer the mighty Captive reigns;</l>
    <l>Proud, 'midst his Woes, and Tyrant in his Chains.</l>
    <l>Once General of a gilded Host of Sprights,</l>
    <l>Like Hesper, leading forth the spangled Nights.</l>
    <l>But down like Lightning, which him struck, he came.</l>
  </p>
</sp>
</div>
<div type="Davideis">
<head>DAVIDEIS</head>
<sp who="#Narrator">
<speaker>NARRATOR</speaker>
  <p>
    <l>She spoke; all star'ed at first, and made a pause;</l>
    <l>But strait the general murmur of applause</l>
    <l>Ran through Deaths Courts; she frown'd still, and begun</l>
    <l>To envy at the praise herself had won.</l>
    <l>Great Belzebug starts from his burning Throne</l>
    <l>To' embrace the Fiend, but she now furious grown</l>
    <l>To act her part; thrice bow'd, and thence she fled;</l>
    <l>The Snakes all hist, the Fiends all murmured.</l>
  </p>

```

```

<l>It was the time when silent night began</l>
<l>T'enchain with sleep the busie spirits of Man;</l>
<l>And Saul himself, though in his troubled breast</l>
<l>The weight of Empire lay, took gentle rest.</l>
</p>
</sp>
</div>
<div type="Davideis">
<head>DAVIDEIS</head>
<sp who="#Narrator">
<speaker>NARRATOR</speaker>
<p>
<l>But an Eternal Now does always last.</l>
<l>There sits th' Almighty, First of all, and End;</l>
<l>Whom nothing but Himself can comprehend.</l>
<l>Who with his Word commanded All to Be,</l>
<l>And All obey'd him, for that Word was He.</l>
<l>Only he spoke, and every thing that Is</l>
<l>From out the womb of fertile Nothing ris.</l>
<l>Oh who shall tell, who shall describe thy throne,</l>
<l>Thou Great Three-One?</l>
</p>
</sp>
</div>
<div type="DeusJustificatus">
<head>DEUSJUSTIFICATUS</head>
<sp who="#Taylor">
<speaker>TAYLOR</speaker>
<p>
<l>Mankind</l>
<l>was born to be a riddle, and</l>
<l>our nativity is in the dark; for</l>
<l>men have taken the liberty to</l>
<l>think what they please, and to</l>
<l>say what they think; and they</l>
<l>affirme many things, and can</l>
<l>prove but few things; and take</l>
<l>the sayings of men for the Ora|cles</l>
<l>of God, and bold affirma|tives</l>
<l>for convincing arguments.</l>
</p>
</sp>
</div>
<div type="Deus Justificatus">
<head>DEUSJUSTIFICATUS</head>
<sp who="#Taylor">

```

```

<speaker>TAYLOR</speaker>
  <p>
    <l>Adam turned his back upon the</l>
    <l>Sun, and dwelt in the dark and the</l>
    <l>shadow; he sinned, and fell into</l>
    <l>Gods displeasure and was made naked</l>
    <l>of all his supernatural endowments,</l>
    <l>and was ashamed and sentenced</l>
    <l>to death, and deprived of the</l>
    <l>means of long life, and of the Sacrament</l>
    <l>and instrument of Immortality,</l>
    <l>I mean the Tree of Life; he then</l>
    <l>fell under the evils of a sickly body,</l>
    <l>and a passionate, ignorant, uninstructed</l>
    <l>soul.</l>
  </p>
</sp>
</div>
<div type="Deus Justificatus">
  <head>DEUSJUSTIFICATUS</head>
  <sp who="#Taylor">
    <speaker>TAYLOR</speaker>
    <p>
      <l>This was the great effect of</l>
      <l>Adams sin which became therefore</l>
      <l>to us a punishment because of the</l>
      <l>appendant infirmity that went along</l>
      <l>with it; for Adam being spoiled</l>
      <l>of all the rectitudes and supernatural</l>
      <l>heights of grace, and thrust</l>
      <l>back to the form of nature, and</l>
      <l>left to derive grace to himself by</l>
      <l>a new economy, or to be without</l>
      <l>it; and his posterity left just so as</l>
      <l>he was left himself.</l>
    </p>
  </sp>
</div>
<div type="Deus Justificatus">
  <head>DEUSJUSTIFICATUS</head>
  <sp who="#Taylor">
    <speaker>TAYLOR</speaker>
    <p>
      <l>The foot moves at</l>
      <l>the command of the Will and by the</l>
      <l>empire of reason, but the passions are</l>

```

<|>stiff even then when the knee bends,</|>
<|>and no bridle can make the Passions</|>
<|>regular and temperate. And indeed</|>
<|>(Madam) this is in a manner the</|>
<|>sum total of the evil of our abused</|>
<|>and corrupted nature; Our soul is in</|>
<|>the body as in a Prison; it is there</|>
<|>tanquam in alienâ domo, it is a sojourner,</|>
<|>and lives by the bodies measures</|>
<|>and loves and hates by the bodies</|>
<|>Interests and Inclinations.</|>
</p>
</sp>
</div>
</body>
</text>
</TEI>

Works Cited

- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Jeremy Taylor". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 9 Aug. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jeremy-Taylor>.
- Corns, Thomas. *Milton's Language*. Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Cowley, Abraham. *Davideis, a Sacred Poem of the Troubles of David*. 1656, *The Abraham Cowley Text and Image Archive*, cowley.lib.virginia.edu/works/davideis1.htm.
- Dykstal, Timothy. "The Epic Reticence of Abraham Cowley." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1991, pp. 95–115.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2019.
- Hardison, O. B. "Blank Verse before Milton." *Studies in Philology*, vol. 81, no. 3, 1984, pp. 253–274.
- McLaren McBryde, Jr., John. "A Study of Cowley's Davideis." *University of Illinois Press*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1899, pp. 454–527.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Global Language Resources, Inc., 2001, *DjVu E-Books*, triggs.djvu.org/djvu-editions.com/MILTON/LOST/Download.pdf.
- Poole, William. *Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost*. Harvard University Press, 2017.
- Shawcross, John T. "The Balanced Structure of *Paradise Lost*." *University of North Carolina Press*, vol. 62, no. 5, Oct. 1965, pp. 696–718.
- Starke, Sue. "'The Eternal Now': Virgilian Echoes and Miltonic Premonitions in Cowley's *Davideis*." *Christianity and Literature*, vol. 55, no. 2, 2006, pp. 195–219.
- Taylor, Jeremy. *Deus Justificatus. Two Discourses of Original Sin*. London: Richard Royston, 1656; Text Creation

Partnership.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A63754.0001.001/1/4?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>, pp. 2.