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UNMOVED EMOTIONS IN SHAKESPEARE AND MILTON

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Abstract

"Unmoved Emotions in Shakespeare and Milton" challenges the longstanding understanding of the relation between emotion and morality as primarily one of motivation and action. On this view, emotions either serve morality by motivating virtuous actions or do the opposite by driving evil actions. This is a plausible position—and yet the passions, affections, humors, and sentiments that saturate English writing in the seventeenth century often arise amid ambiguous moral demands, and they do not always correspond to good- or wrongdoing. Instead, I argue that instances of what I call *unmoved emotions* in the works of William Shakespeare and John Milton expose and challenge latent aspects in how moral requirements are construed in the first place. For these authors, emotions that remain unchanged in the face of reasoning, persuasion, or duty reveal a radical break between the subject and the normative expectations that they inhabit. This break has the potential to transform the perceived requirements of morality and position emotions as sources for normativity and ethical insight, as well as undermine the longstanding association of emotions and the will. My dissertation therefore not only proposes new modes in which Shakespeare and Milton thought about emotional change and resistance to change, but also reflects on the role of literature in shaping moral imagination in seventeenth-century England.

My dissertation falls into two halves. The first two chapters focus on the relation between moral convention, emotional consensus, and sympathy in Shakespeare's plays. The first chapter, "Emotional Obduracy in *The Merchant of Venice*," centers on Shylock's emotional withholding as a clear example of how emotions that resist persuasion throw into doubt the societal and religious presuppositions that inform public morality. I argue that Shakespeare draws on rhetorical convention, Aristotelian ethics, and Renaissance medicine to challenge the assumption that emotions and the ethical requirements with which they are associated are universal and therefore communicable across cultures. The next chapter,

"Learning to Feel in *Measure for Measure*," argues that Shakespeare examines through Angelo's character the different ways of going from an unfeeling to a feeling state. I suggest that *prosopopoeia*, understood both generally as the rhetorical device of personification and more specifically as a feature of early modern humanist pedagogy, plays a central role both in awakening the emotions and in avoiding them.

The final two chapters examine Milton's treatment of unmoved emotions in his divorce tracts and in *Paradise Lost*. Whereas Shakespeare questions our ability to establish common rules of morality based on shared sentiments, for Milton the inability to conform emotions to moral duty has the potential to either elevate them as sources for normativity or undermine individual moral agency. Milton's divorce tracts claim that when a husband is unable to love his wife, legislators should consider human emotional weakness and allow divorce rather than enforce moral ideals. In the third chapter, "The Emotive Sensibility of Milton's Divorce Tracts," I argue that Milton develops a new account of emotion to fit his argumentative goal. His innovation, I suggest, is in developing a naturalist model of emotion that serves as a ground for normativity. The final chapter of my dissertation, "Satanic Ingratitude and Psychological Determinism in *Paradise Lost*," takes the problem of unresponsive emotions to its theoretical limit. Moving from the legal to the religious, Milton's naturalist account of emotion collides with his theological commitment to free will. In *Paradise Lost*, he worries that recalcitrant emotions may prevent people from responding with gratitude to divine goodness and exclude them from participating in virtue.

Acknowledgements

Last year I wrote an essay about gratitude for *Psyche*, a digital magazine about the human condition. Irked by the current cultural trend of treating gratitude as a self-care practice rather than a social sentiment, I argued that contrary to the promises of positive psychology, gratitude does not always feel good. In fact, I insisted, the Hebrew term *assir todah*—the equivalent of the English word *grateful*, whose literal meaning is "imprisoned by thankfulness"—demonstrated that gratitude sometimes saddled us in social bonds from which we would rather be free. My experience at the University of Chicago remains the greatest evidence against my own argument. The people I met here not only enabled me to write this dissertation but also made the past six years happy and meaningful.

The support I received from my academic advisors was consistent, thoughtful, and enthusiastic, and even more appreciated during the current global pandemic that required their resilience and adaptability. Timothy Harrison's example and mentorship helped me make better arguments, but also touched every other aspect of my life. Above all, he made it easy for me to ask him for the support I needed at different stages of my graduate career and was tireless in finding ways to offer it. Mark Miller was a careful and caring interlocutor who helped me see how literature twisted philosophy and theology into shapes like balloons. Joshua Scodel seasoned his immense learning with humor and vulnerability. He helped me time travel into the past and worry less about the future. Richard Strier was honest and meticulous, and I always looked forward to our conversations on early modern, modern, and time-bending topics. Many additional people at the University of Chicago supported me by sharing their experience, advice, feedback, knowledge, comfort, and time. David Bevington made scholarship cheerful and reminded me to look people in the eye. I miss him. Ellen MacKay thought with a special energy that made me surprised at my own thoughts and helped me glimpse the fifth dimension. Noémie Ndiaye showed me that I was working in not

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When I filled out the request forms for my study abroad program in high school, I had only one desire—a snowy Christmas. This is how I came into the home of Jane and Gary Handel and their daughter Margaret in the rural town of Austin, Minnesota. Jane was the first person to tell me about double predestination when I was seventeen years old, and my interest in Christian theology is in no small part due to the lasting impression made by these early lessons. She, Gary, and Margaret have continued to be my family in the Midwest throughout my time in Chicago. My family in Israel—the one into which I was born, and which had to

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Introduction

A plaintiff who refuses to be rhetorically persuasive, a judge whose lack of feeling signals either the epitome of virtue or spiritual deadness, a husband who cannot love his wife, and a fallen angel who cannot love his creator—the protagonists of this dissertation respond to moral duty with emotional detachment. *Unmoved emotion* is the collective term I use to discuss different types of emotional unresponsiveness—obduracy, cultivated detachment, impartiality, lack of emotional activation, fixity, or recalcitrance. This dissertation examines unmoved emotions in two plays by William Shakespeare (*The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*) and in John Milton's divorce tracts and *Paradise Lost*. I argue that in these works, instances of unmoved emotion in the face of duty, which portray characters as morally reprehensible, also destabilize the presuppositions that subtend characters' perceived duties in the first place. Shakespeare draws on humanist structures of emotion, received from Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric* and Cicero's rhetorical works, to stage scenes where characters remain unmoved in the face of unsuccessful persuasion. His treatment of Shylock's mercilessness questions humanist assumptions about the universal communicability of emotions and exposes how social prejudice shapes the moral expectation of mercy in the play. Through Angelo, the deputy whose detached impartiality is also cruelty, Shakespeare doubts the methods of humanist education can produce appropriate emotions and fellow feeling. Milton moves away from humanism, and in the divorce tracts he develops an original account of emotions as natural rather than voluntary phenomena. This revision, which posits emotional dispositions as part of the natural constitution of the human, enables him to derive moral imperatives from emotions instead of subordinating emotions to the requirements of

morality. Satan's failure to love God in his later epic poem, however, drives Milton's naturalist model of emotion into his commitment to the doctrine of free will.

The characters I examine defy the expectations that govern emotional change in their resistance to persuasion. Shylock resists the pressure of the court, Angelo resists Isabella's pleas for mercy, the unhappy husband of the divorce tracts is unresponsive to spiritual advice, and Satan's hostility toward God is unabated even by his own reasoning. The unmoved emotions therefore become the ground for rival interpretations—does Shylock, as he claims, enact the embodied scripts of psychophysiological determinism or, as he is accused by the Venetian Christians, the depravity of his Jewish hard-heartedness? Does the unhappy husband's lovelessness result from an innocent natural antipathy, or from the emotional unruliness associated with sin? The issues at stake in these debates encompass questions about the degree to which emotions are changeable or synonymous with individual personality, and they challenge the sufficiency of Christian theological frameworks for explaining human emotions and their functions, and how they may change.

While many scholarly discussions of the early modern passions highlight the challenges of managing forceful emotions and harnessing them to the service of reason, early modern authors also recognized the utility of passion and condemned lack of feeling as a social and spiritual defect.[1] The ideal of Stoic *apatheia*, a cultivated indifference to external

[1] On the "overwhelming" power of passion see Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 11; on the early modern "fear of emotion" and its association with disease see Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 16; on Renaissance therapies for anger see Maureen Flynn, "Taming Anger's Daughters: New Treatment for Emotional Problems in Renaissance Spain," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (1998): 864–86; on the decline of a rationalist model of self-governance and the emergence of alternative relations between passion and reason see Christopher Tilmouth, *Passions Triumph over Reason: A History of the Moral Imagination from Spenser to Rochester* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); on the utility of passion for promoting physical and spiritual well-being see Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 9–10; however, James

things and circumstances, was still a familiar model for lack of feeling in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Saint Augustine has already criticized the Stoics for their pride in believing that freedom from passion could be achieved independently of God and for their rejection of God's will in making emotions part of "our human condition."[2] Apatheia continued to come under criticism in the sixteenth century, as discussed by scholars such as William Bouwsma, Gordon Braden, and Richard Strier.[3] Jean Calvin denounced Stoicism as an "iron philosophy which our Lord and Master has condemned not only by his word, but also by his example." Christ "groaned and wept," he writes, "and he taught his disciples in the same way."[4] And in Desiderius Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*, the impersonated Folly brings out vividly the opposition of the stony Stoic sage to friendship, conviviality, and humanity.[5]

In addition to apatheia as a suspect moral ideal, lack of feeling could also be a symptom of spiritual deadness. This state was not a cultivated state, but one that reflected the results of original sin. William Fenner's *Treatise of the Affections*, published in 1641 and reprinted six times in the next seventeen years, promises no less than to inform a Christian

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emphasizes that "defences of the functional character of the passions," while central to their interpretation, "are not nearly so strident as the litany of complaint and lamentation" that portray the passions as burdensome.

[2] Saint Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 14.9, 564.

[3] See William Bouwsma, "The Two Faces of Humanism: Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought" in *A Usable Past: Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 47–48; Gordon Braden, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 92–98; Joshua Scodel, *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English* Literature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 2; Richard Strier, "Against the Rule of Reason: Praise of Passion from Petrarch to Luther to Shakespeare to Herbert," in *The Unrepentant Renaissance: From Petrarch to Shakespeare to Milton* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press), 29–58.

[4] Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 3.8.9, 709.

[5] Strier, *"*Against the Rule of Reason," 32–36.

"whether he be living or dying."[6] The book, organized as a series of sermons on the Pauline instruction to "set your affections on things that are above" (Col. 3:2), warns against the spiritual dangers of becoming unaffected: "There is not a prayer we make, but deadnesse of heart gets the day like a Conquerour. Not a duty we perform, but lukewarmnesse proves victor."[7] The theme of deadening dispassion intensifies in Fenner's *Continuation of Christ's Alarm to Drowsie Saints*, where he discusses the loss of affection as one of the ways by which spiritual death occurs: "He may lose all his affections, which is a strange thing; you know what the affections are, they are the wings of the soul; if the wings be off, the bird cannot flie."[8] Fenner's example for such a "heartless, lifeless creature" is Asa of Judah, who relied on secular arts and powers instead of on divine providence: "he was grown to that pass, that though God sent his Prophets to him, yet his affections were not stirred; nay, they were stirred the clean contrary way; he was angry with him."[9] Asa's affections are simultaneously "not stirred" and "stirred the clear contrary way," a paradoxical dynamic that demonstrates what Wendy Anne Lee has described as an "oscillation between impassivity (no feeling) and contempt (bad feeling)" that marks unmoved characters.[10]

The association of unmoved emotions with pride, stoniness, and spiritual depravity is the starting rather than the ending point of my dissertation. The cases I study begin with the condemnation of an unmoved character. But they also move beyond characters' culpability to treat unmoved emotion as the symptom that reveals latent defects in the construction of moral duty. Shylock's emotional vacuity exposes the exclusionary emotion scripts that govern

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[6] William Fenner, *A Treatise of the Affections, or The Souls Pulse* (London: Printed by A. M., 1650), title page. The publication history of the book is found in Tilmouth, *Passion's Triumph over Reason*, 164.
[7] Fenner, *A Treatise of the Affections*, 114.
[8] Fenner, *The Continuation of Christ's Alarm to Drowsie Saints* (London: A.M., 1657), 10.
[9] Fenner, *Christ's Alarm*, 10.
[10] Wendy Anne Lee, *Failures of Feeling: Insensibility and the Novel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018, 2.

Venetian society; Satan's futile attempts to understand his ingratitude toward God raises the concern that psychological determinism limits the possibilities for participating in virtue. In concentrating on cases of unmoved emotion, my dissertation participates in the recent scholarly attention to dispassion in early modern English texts. In her exhilarating book *Failures of Feeling: Insensibility and the Novel*, Wendy Anne Lee traces the axiom that "nothing incites the passions like dispassion" from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century and discusses how this paradox of insensibility expresses "the philosophical problem of narrative."[11] The association of apathy and hostility in both philosophy and literature, whose primary example Lee locates in Thomas Hobbes's description of contempt as "an immobility, or contumacy of the Heart," underlies some of the central claims of my first chapter.[12] In the history of science, David Carroll Simon's *Light Without Heat: The Observational Mood from Bacon to Milton* argues persuasively that carelessness, nonchalance, and indifference are the affections that characterize the scientific imagination of the seventeenth century.[13] Simon's emphasis on a cooler "attitude of calm, outward-facing awareness" offers a compelling alternative to the modern association of scientific inquiry with curiosity and the heat of desire.[14] Finally, focusing on early modern medical culture, Lynda Payne's *With Words and Knives: Learning Medical Dispassion in Early Modern England* builds on Barbara Rosenwein's conceptualization of emotional communities to examine how early modern medical practitioners cultivated emotional detachment from the pain of their patients, a "necessary inhumanity" both unnerving and necessitated by their professional duties.[15]

[11] Lee, *Failures of Feeling*, 1.
[12] Lee, 2, 10, 15–19, especially 15.
[13] David Carroll Simon, *Light Without Heat: The Observational Mood from Bacon to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 1–2.
[14] Simon, *Light Without Heat*, 2–3.
[15] William Hunter (1752), quoted in Lynda Payne, *With Words and Knives: Learning Medical Dispassion in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 6.

"Unmoved Emotions" shares these works' interest in emotional arrest, as well as their authors' intuition that states of unfeeling can nevertheless bear a complex relation to activity or even valuable activity—they can stimulate passion in others (Lee), enable scientific breakthrough (Simon), or require careful cultivation (Payne). At the same time, my dissertation also differs from these studies of dispassion in several important ways. First, whereas at least for Simon and Payne dispassion is functionally positive since it supports scientific inquiry and medical practice, the unmoved emotions of my dissertation are negative and associated with hostility. With the exception of the divorce tracts (where Milton explicitly defends the husband's lovelessness), the productivity of these states unfeeling for reevaluating moral obligations is discovered only upon closer examination. Second, my focus on two canonical authors means that my project does not aim to treat the intellectual history of a specific mood. I rather show how for Shakespeare and Milton unmoved emotion provided a catalyst for reevaluating the conditions that underpin moral action.

The recent discovery that a copy of Shakespeare's First Folio possessed by the Free Library in Philadelphia has once belonged to Milton through the collaborative efforts of Jason Scott-Warren and Claire Bourne has alleviated possible doubts concerning Milton's familiarity with Shakespeare's drama.[16] The digitized copy contains handwritten markings of such passages as the Duke's revulsion at Shylock's mercilessness, Antonio's condemnation of Shylock's hardness of heart, and Lorenzo's speech on musical attentiveness in the final acts of *The Merchant of Venice*, among many others.[17] With *Measure for Measure* Milton has

[16] On the significance of the discovery see also Nicholas McDowell, "Reading Milton reading Shakespeare Politically: What the Identification of Milton's First Folio Does and Does Not Tell Us," *The Seventeenth Century* (16 June 2021), https://doi.org/10.1080/0268117X.2021.1936144

[17] William Shakespeare, *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (London: Printed by Isaac Iaggard, 1623), Rare Book Department, Free Library of Philadelphia
178, 182.

gone so far as to compose an additional stanza for the song performed by Mariana's boy in act 4, scene 1.[18]

Scholars have long considered the dramatic sources that inform Milton's poetic creation of Satan, a connection that is pertinent to my project. Milton's nephew Edward Phillips claimed that Satan's speech at the beginning of book 4, and which stands at the center of my final chapter, was intended as the opening scene of a tragedy.[19] Barbara Kiefer Lewalski compares Satan at the beginning of book 4 to a series of dramatic villains: he is "a Faustian hero" who, though stricken by remorse, is nevertheless unable to repent; a "villain-hero driven by ambition" after the fashion of Macbeth; a "revenge hero" like Richard III; and displays the jealousy and malignity of an Iago.[20] Helen Gardner has also drawn parallels between the degradation of Milton's Satan and the descents from glory of Christopher Marlowe's Faustus and Shakespeare's Macbeth.[21] Like the progress of Marlowe's and Shakespeare's hero-villains, Satan's damnation involves the "incapacity for change to a better state," an insight that underlies my observations on psychological determinism in Milton's representation of Satan in chapter 4.[22] By contrast, Catherine Gimelli Martin asserts that both Shakespeare's Macbeth and Milton's Satan choose evil freely and knowingly— "Ceding his

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[18] Shakespeare, *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, 84. Influential studies of the relationship between Shakespeare and Milton are John Guillory's *Poetic Authority: Spenser, Milton, and Literary History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); and Paul Stevens' *Imagination and the Presence of Shakespeare in* Paradise Lost (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). Maggie Kilgour's "Milton's Macbeths, Or, The Low Road to Shakespeare," a paper presented to the Renaissance Workshop at the University of Chicago (March 14, 2019), offers a detailed survey of additional explorations of the two authors' relationship in literary history.

[19] Cited in Helen Darbishire, *The Early Lives of Milton* (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1932), 72–73.

[20] Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton: Princeton Univesity Press, 1965), 63–64.

[21] Helen Gardner, "Milton's 'Satan' and the Theme of Damnation in Elizabethan Tragedy," in *Milton: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Arthur E. Barker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965): 205–217. Originally published in *English Studies*, n.s. 1 (London: John Murray, 1948): 46–66.

[22] Gardner, "The Theme of Damnation," 207.

free will to the witches much as Satan cedes his angelic imagination to his fallen self-image, Sin, Macbeth abandons his higher conscience or divine image within (his *imago dei*) almost on a dare."[23] My dissertation does not propose that Milton drew on *The Merchant of Venice* or *Measure for Measure* when he invented his Satan, nor does it suggest an alternative to the longstanding association of Milton's Satan with Macbeth and additional Elizabethan dramatic personae. It is rather a study in contrasts that shows how Shakespeare and Milton each responded to the cultural notion of unfeeling in different ways—the first by expressing skepticism about the humanism's promises to cultivate the emotions through pedagogy and rhetoric, the second by developing an account of emotions as a natural and constant part of personality, a secularizing idea that then threatened his theological commitments.

Chapters

My dissertation falls into two halves—the first two chapters discuss cases of unmoved emotions in two Shakespearean plays, whereas the final two turn to examine the determinism inherent in unmoved emotions in Milton's divorce tracts and *Paradise Lost*. The first chapter of my dissertation focuses on Shylock's first speech in act 4, scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice*. In this speech, Shylock ascribes his murderous hostility toward Antonio to the unexplainable working of "humour" (4.1.43) and is consequently accused of being merciless, unfeeling, and hard-hearted. I argue that Shylock invokes psychophysiological determinism as a means for rejecting the presupposition of a shared emotional vocabulary that underlies rhetorical practice. Shylock, I suggest, has already experienced first-hand the failure of the Ciceronian principle that moving others depends on feeling the same passion one wishes to arouse in them when his famous appeal to universal sympathy in act 2, scene 2 was met with

[23] Catherine Gimelli Martin, "The 'Reason' of Radical Evil: Shakespeare, Milton, and the Ethical Philosophers" *Studies in Philology* 113, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 163–97, 193.

Christian dismissal. After learning that his emotions are unintelligible and unconvincing to the Venetian Christians, in act 4 he therefore withholds them from bad faith misinterpretation by representing them as bodily compulsions rather than emotions that are amenable to rhetorical persuasion. In his second speech, however, Shylock implies that the true determinant of emotional sensibilities is not humor but custom—it is the Venetian Christians' habit of dehumanizing slaves and aliens that makes them insensible to those people's emotions. Shylock's unmoved emotion in *The Merchant of Venice* is therefore a form of resistance to participating in a rhetorical practice from which Shylock knows himself to be excluded in the first place.

The second chapter continues to examine the failure of humanistic education to produce appropriate feelings in *Measure for Measure*. My reading of Isabella's supplication in act 2, scene 2 and of Angelo's speech in the fourth scene of the same act traces the use of *prosopopoeia*, understood both generally as the literary trope of personification since antiquity and as a specifically early modern exercise employed in humanist education. I argue that whereas Isabella encourages the unfeeling Angelo to imaginatively inhabit different persons and circumstances in order to arouse his empathy and persuade him to mitigate her brother Claudio's sentence, Angelo's choice to personify the law instead is intended to evacuate agency and the possibility of fellow-feeling from his own person. Nevertheless, I propose, the use of prosopopoeia inevitably forces Angelo to make emotional disclosures—first, the aggression that underlies his rigorous pursuit of justice, and second, his latent acknowledgement of the depravity of his former emotional dormancy before the onset of his lust for Isabella. *Measure for Measure* suggests that prosopopoeia is an unreliable tool for teaching people how to feel, since it can be manipulated to achieve the opposite and distance people from their emotions when they choose to personify the wrong objects in the wrong ways.

In the third chapter, I turn to discuss Milton's defense of unmoved emotions in his divorce tracts, published between 1643 and 1645. I argue that in his advocacy for the legal right to divorce on grounds of emotional antipathy, Milton strives to conceptualize a normatively significant emotional register that is distinct from passion. While he does not strictly adhere to the distinction between passion and affection made by Saint Augustine and developed by Thomas Aquinas, Milton distinguishes between the fleeting upheavals of passion, which should be tempered by reason, and the entrenched nature of certain affections, which dictate conjugal obligation and the lack thereof. For Milton, such affections are appropriate sources for obligation since they are innocent, rational, and free from the effects of original sin. Psychologically, these natural affections belong to the "inmost nature" of the individual and cannot be changed through, say, prayer or dietary adjustments as suggested by Milton's rivals. [24] They rather determine one's compatibility with potential marriage partners and demarcate the possibilities for one's happiness. The project of the divorce tracts is unusual both in deriving obligation from emotion instead of subjecting emotion to obligation and in the conceptualization of innocent natural affections which obligations may be derived.

The fourth and final chapter of my dissertation proposes that in *Paradise Lost*, Milton examines through the character of Satan the full implications of the theory of emotional determinism that he has developed in the divorce tracts. While theological explanations abound for the inability of rebellious angels to repent, the responsibility of sinners for their own hardness of heart, and the spiritual depravation caused by despair, at the beginning of book 4 Milton goes beyond such moralizations of sin and gives Satan a detailed psychological portrait that conveys his emotional entrapment. In the Mount Niphates

[24] John Milton, "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," in *The Divorce Tracts of John Milton*, ed. Sara J. van den Berg and W. Scott Howard (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2010), 1.7, p. 119. All subsequent citations of the divorce tracts are taken from this edition and cited parenthetically, and citations from *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* refer to the 1644 revised edition unless otherwise noted.

soliloquy, Satan arrives at a correct apprehension of his former error and his indebtedness for divine beneficence, but he is nevertheless unable to translate these intellectual insights into feelings of love and gratitude. Instead, he experiences his antipathy toward God as an entrenched and prerational aspect of his personality that leaves him no choice but to renounce good and commit to evil. The figure of Satan, I propose, conveys Milton's anxiety that unchangeable emotions may limit the capacity for moral choice that he usually celebrates. The dissertation concludes with Milton's ambivalence about unmoved emotions: on the one hand, he cannot deny the sinfulness inherent to Satan's emotional fixity. On the other hand, Satan's inability to change his emotions also points to the limitations of theology in describing emotional struggle.

Chapter 1: Emotional Obduracy in *The Merchant of Venice*

Emotions and the Rhetorical Tradition

This chapter examines Shylock's strange representation of emotion in the famous trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice*. Shylock the Jew has come to court to exact the penalty for Antonio's default on Shylock's recent loan and extract a pound of Antonio's flesh as agreed in their contract. Shylock has previously suffered various injustices at the hands of Antonio and his Christian friends, from public humiliations at the Rialto to the absconding of his daughter Jessica with her Christian lover and with a considerable part of Shylock's fortune. But when invited to speak before the Duke, magnificoes, and Venetian court attendants, Shylock surprisingly passes over the opportunity to recount the events that have contributed to his murderous intention. Instead of trying to gain the sympathy of the court, he says:

> You'll ask me why I rather choose to have
> A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
> Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that —
> But say it is my humour: is it answered?[1]

Shylock prefers the pound of flesh to which he believes he is entitled by law over the payment of the principal (now offered by Antonio's friend and beneficiary Bassanio) because it is his "humour," a term that editors regularly gloss as whim or caprice. D. H. Bishop challenges the popular gloss persuasively and prefers the other definition available in seventeenth-century English, that of "a fixed and mastering factor in character."[2] In addition, the term also relies on Galenic humoralism, the medical theory that bodily liquids (blood, choler, black bile, and phlegm) make a definitive contribution to a person's character and

[1] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, New Cambridge Shakespeare, ed. M. M. Mahood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4.1.40–43. All subsequent citations of the play are taken from this edition and cited parenthetically.
[2] D.H. Bishop, "Shylock's Humour," Shakespeare Association Bulletin 23 (1948): 175–76.

emotional constitution. In the speech that follows, as we shall see, Shylock characterizes his "humour" as an emotional inclination that is fixed, bodily, unexplainable, compulsory, and involuntary—a position that is unlikely to win the sympathy of the court.[3]

Conscious of the strangeness of Shylock's response, in his 1765 *Notes to Shakespeare* Samuel Johnson comments that "The Jew being asked a question which the law does not require him to answer, stands upon his right, and refuses; but afterwards gratifies his own malignity by such answers as he knows will aggravate the pain of the enquirer."[4] Shylock's intended rhetorical effect in ascribing what the Duke calls his "strange apparent cruelty" to "humour" is to exacerbate the offense to Antonio and his fellow Venetian Christians (4.1.21), since Antonio will probably lose his life over Shylock's mere whim. Dr. Johnson's comment aptly draws attention to an essential property of rhetorical speech, which is equally essential to its representation in drama—that such speech does not merely convey information but also and importantly, it is intended to produce an emotional effect in the audience. In the case of Shylock's elusive answer, Dr. Johnson proposes that Shylock's desired effect is an increase in pain. I suggest that Dr. Johnson's invitation to read Shylock's words as a rhetorical

[3] In addition to D. H. Bishop, I am aware of three major scholarly treatments of Shylock's speech that come into dialogue with mine. Gail Kern Paster argues that for Shylock and other Shakespearean characters, "humoral thinking is the basis for self-understanding and self-justification in a hostile world." I discuss Paster's view below. Richard A. Posner concentrates on Shylock's defense of liberal principles such as the subjectivity of value and freedom of contract rather than on its representation of emotion, which is at the heart of this chapter. Elsewhere, Posner argues that in *Merchant* moral requirement is derived from convention rather than nature, a claim that, as we shall see, resonates with my conclusions. Richard Strier turns his attention to Shylock's unconscious and argues that the speech demonstrates the opacity of motives that sometimes prevents even sophisticated agents from understanding the grounds for their own actions. My argument will depart from Strier's in ascribing to Shylock a clear and conscious purpose in appealing to "humour." See Paster, *Humoring the Body*, 24; Richard A. Posner, *Law and Literature*, 3rd Edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 137, 236–37; Richard Strier, "'Say It Is My Humour' — What Is Shylock Doing in Saying This?," unpublished paper delivered at the Renaissance Society of America Meeting, 2018, 11.

[4] Samuel Johnson, *Notes to Shakespeare*, The Yale Digital Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, 226. http://www.yalejohnson.com/frontend/sda_viewer?n=108488.

performance with an intended emotional outcome points to a valuable and heretofore understudied avenue for understanding Shakespeare's play.[5] This is not because I agree with Dr. Johnson's analysis of Shylock's intentions (although, as Bassanio's exasperated reply later shows, Shylock's speech does aggravate his audience's distress). It is rather because, by raising the issue of rhetorical effect, Dr. Johnson challenges readers of *Merchant* to consider how the play manipulates expectations surrounding rhetoric and emotion in Shakespeare's England. Shylock's emotional obduracy in the trial scene, I will argue, not only shows how Shakespeare's drama engages inherited ideas about the role of emotion in persuasion, but also reveals the limits of sympathy in cross-cultural encounters. In this, *Merchant* joins a series of cases explored in this dissertation, in which unmoved emotions reveal and challenge latent aspects in the construal of moral requirements.

In this chapter I offer a new way of reading *The Merchant of Venice* in conversation with the rhetorical tradition that saturated Elizabethan humanist education and informed contemporary views of emotion in the period.[6] I argue that in the trial scene Shylock adopts a deliberately anti-rhetorical position that resists the assumptions underlying the widely

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[5] Lorna Hutson and Quentin Skinner have both offered illuminating readings of *Merchant* through the lens of rhetoric, which I address below. See Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 224–38; Quentin Skinner, *Forensic Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 142–48.

[6] The interrelatedness of Renaissance rhetorical practices and understandings of emotion is the subject of many studies. See Robert Cockcroft, *Rhetorical Affect in Early Modern Writing: Renaissance Passions Reconsidered* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Lawrence D. Green, "Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and Renaissance Views of the Emotions" in *Renaissance Rhetoric*, ed. Peter Mack (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 1–25; Wendy Olmsted, *The Imperfect Friend: Emotion and Rhetoric in Sidney, Milton, and Their Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Thomas O. Sloan, introduction to Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971). Peter Mack also addresses the "new emphasis which many renaissance rhetoricians placed on arousing emotions in an audience." See *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380–1620* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4 and *passim*.

accepted Ciceronian imperative that an orator must move his or her audience emotionally, and especially the notion that orators can achieve this goal through sympathy with their audiences. As I show below, Shylock's resistance to rhetoric results from his disillusionment with the Venetian Christians' ability and willingness to properly interpret his own emotional expressions. Instead, Shylock invokes "humour" to represent his emotions as arbitrary psychophysiological phenomena that are impervious to the influence of speech.[7] Cicero famously asserts that the duty of the orator is to instruct, that pleasing the audience is a free gift to them, but that moving them is indispensable: "Docere debitum est, delectare honorarium, *permovere necessarium*" (my emphasis).[8] The idea that "movere" was the principal job of the orator enjoyed widespread affirmation among European Renaissance thinkers.[9] A similar emphasis on the emotions of the audience in Aristotle's newly rediscovered *Art of Rhetoric* crops up throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when humanists such as George of Trebizond, Juan Luis Vives, Daniele Barbaro and John Rainolds focused their exegetical and pedagogical efforts on the appropriate use of the passions in persuasion.[10] For Renaissance readers of Cicero and Aristotle, humanist educators, and preachers concerned with motivating their audiences to virtuous conduct, persuasion depended on emotional as well as intellectual assent.

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[7] For a different and influential account of Shakespeare's use of rhetoric in *Merchant* see Skinner, *Forensic Shakespeare*, 142–48, especially 147. Skinner argues that Shylock deliberately flouts the rules of rhetoric to assert his legal right and due to his "powerful disdain for flattery and ingratiating speech." My account differs from Skinner's on several issues. First, I argue that Shylock does not only flout the rules of rhetoric but rejects the premises that subtend rhetorical practice. Second, I locate Shylock's motive not in his disdain for rhetorical convention, but in his awareness of the ethnocentric assumptions that govern this convention. Third, whereas Skinner argues that Shylock's performance forfeits him the goodwill of the court, I argue the opposite—it is because Shylock knows that the court would be unsympathetic to him that he chooses to reject its rhetorical practices.

[8] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Optimo Genere Oratorum*, trans. H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1949), 1.3, 356–7.

[9] Debora K. Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric: The Christian Grand Style in the English Renaissance* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), 120–21.

[10] Green, "Aristotle's *Rhetoric*," 5–6, 9, 12–13.

As Lynn Enterline shows in her study of how rhetorical education in humanist grammar schools contributed to the formation of what she calls "Shakespearean emotions," to this expectation to stir the audience's emotions was added "the Ciceronian belief that oratory's power to 'move' audiences requires an orator to feel the affect in question himself as a prerequisite for conveying it to others."[11] Rhetoric therefore not only targets the emotions for persuasion, but also relies on a shared emotional understanding between orator and audience, which allows for emotional identification and contagion. Such understanding includes emotional vocabularies and tenors, common values, and above all shared emotion scripts. Emotion scripts are culturally specific narrative recipes for describing affective experience. Whereas simply naming an emotion may not tell us very much about how that emotion was understood by a particular community at a particular time, emotion scripts provide thicker descriptions of what a specific affective experience entails, from the evaluative perception of a given situation to the range of possible responses to it.[12] Emotion scripts therefore afford a holistic method for describing emotions with the specificity they possess in a particular culture at a particular time, and shared emotion scripts are a precondition for mutual understanding between orator and audience.

In the reading I put forth below, I argue that Shylock's representation of his own emotions as involuntary and opaque psychophysiological facts serves to reject the vision of potential panpathy (a feeling common to all mankind) that underlies Ciceronian rhetorical theories in early modern England. Shylock's anti-rhetoricism, as I will show, resists the assumption that as a Jew he could move the emotions of the Venetian Christians who have

[11] Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 2, 132. In a commonplace book recovered by Enterline from the Folger Shakespeare Library archives, a schoolboy writes that Cicero "saith yt is almost impossible for an Orator to stirre up a passion in his Auditors except he be first affected *with the same passion hymselfe*" (121, Enterline's emphasis).
[12] In using this definition I follow Robert A. Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 8–9.

ignored and misinterpreted his emotional expressions throughout the play. In this radical rejection of the ends of rhetoric, Shylock's stance is distinct from other anti-Ciceronian attitudes of Shakespeare's time, such as the preference for plain speech over eloquence.[13] Critiques of Ciceronianism including Desiderius Erasmus' *Ciceronianus* (1528) or the anti-Ciceronian styles adopted by such thinkers as Justus Lipsius, Michel de Montaigne, or Francis Bacon targeted particular rhetorical practices and pedagogical methods for teaching rhetoric.[14] In contrast to these dissenting views, Shylock's refusal to convince the court of the legitimacy of his cause exposes the vacuity of the premises that underlie the art of persuasion as such—that orator and audience necessarily share the same emotion scripts in the first place, and that emotional understanding between orator and audience can be achieved through adapting one's speech to one's audience.

Next, I suggest that in his portrayal of Shylock's court performance, Shakespeare draws (perhaps indirectly) on Montaigne's wide conceptual apparatus of "custom" in order to express skepticism about the possibility of such shared emotional understanding among people of different religions or nations (in the language of the play).[15] Whereas Shylock first

[13] For a discussion of the ideologies associated with plainness and eloquence in the English Renaissance, see Richard Strier, "Paleness versus Eloquence: The Ideologies of Style in the English Renaissance," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 45, no. 2 (2019): 91–120.
[14] Morris Croll, "Attic Prose: Lipsius, Montaigne, Bacon," in *Style, Rhetoric, Rhythm: Essays by Morris W. Croll*, ed. J. Max Patrick, Robert O. Evans, John M. Wallace, and R. J. Schoeck (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), 200.
[15] The question of difference in *Merchant* is multifaceted. Janet Adelman discusses the Christian ambivalence about whether Jewishness was best understood as a religious or racial category in *Blood Relations: Christian and Jew in* The Merchant of Venice (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 4–12. My focus on religious and customary difference and adherence to the ambiguous language of *nation* in the play in no way preclude an analysis in terms of race, and such an analysis has been undertaken often and productively. See also Janet Adelman, "Her Father's Blood: Race, Conversion, and Nation in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Representations* 81, no. 1 (February 2003): 4–30; Kim F. Hall, "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? Colonization and Miscegenation in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Renaissance Drama* New Series 23 (1992): 87–111; M. Lindsay Kaplan, "Jessica's Mother: Medieval Constructions of Jewish Race and Gender in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 1–30; James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the*

uses "humour" to describe his own emotions as involuntary compulsions that are impervious to rhetorical persuasion and therefore inaccessible to the other court participants, he later invokes custom to suggest that the Venetian Christians' habituation has made them insensible to the emotions of people outside their community and all too sensitive to Antonio's plight. While for Montaigne attending to different notions of custom prompted embracing cultural diversity as an antidote against ethnocentrism, however, Shakespeare's *Merchant* is pessimistic about the possibility of cultivating detachment from one's own customs and examining them impartially.[16] In contrast to plays such as *King Lear* that convey "the sense that stripping away custom amounts to endorsing and rehabilitating nature," *Merchant* offers little hope for a space outside of custom where general insights about human nature can be found.[17] As a possible determinant of a person's psychological constitution and a powerful lens for the interpretation of emotional vocabularies, custom in Shakespeare's play demarcates what Barbara H. Rosenwein calls "emotional communities" and limits the possibilities of persuasion among members of different communities who adhere to different emotion scripts.[18] Whereas for Rosenwein, emotional communities admit change and flexibility (a person may inhabit one emotional community at the Rialto and then enter another at the Venetian court), I suggest that the hegemonic emotional community of Venetian Christians in *Merchant* precludes any meaningful expression of Shylock's emotions. Rather than provide a setting for productive intercultural exchange, then, the

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Jews, Twentieth Anniversary Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 197–226.

[16] William M. Hamlin, *Montaigne's English Journey: Reading the* Essays *in Shakespeare's Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 84.

[17] Hamlin, *Montaigne's English Journey*, 68.

[18] See Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 2002): 842–5; *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 23–26; *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 3–10.

multicultural society on which *Merchant*'s Venice depends throws into doubt the expectation that emotions and the ethical practices with which they are associated are universal and therefore susceptible to influence and persuasion through discourse.

My discussion shows how in introducing rival explanations of Shylock's unforthcoming performance at court, Shakespeare's language reveals the crucial role of communal interpretation in making sense of emotions. The court participants' descriptions of Shylock's anger, hatred, and resignation showcase how such emotions are misread by the Venetian Christians as instances of emotional vacuity or instantiations of Shylock's religious status rather than as examples of his resistance. Christian misinterpretation takes the forms of equivocation, appropriation, and ironically, literalism (an interpretive strategy usually attributed to Shylock) in denying Shylock's emotions the status of reasonable responses to circumstances and events. Moreover, Shakespeare employs adjectives such as "unfeeling" and "stony" ambiguously and stretches metaphorical language to its representational limit to reveal the agency of the community in interpreting emotional expression (and the lack thereof) and integrating it into an intelligible view of the individual.

I conclude my analysis with a reading of the play's final act in Belmont, where the Christian Lorenzo and Portia each propose traditional explanations for why certain people are unaffected by music. Drawing on the analogy between music and rhetoric, I argue that Shakespeare ultimately subsumes Shylock's resistance to rhetoric into Lorenzo and Portia's Christianized discussions of the human capacity to be affected by it. The play therefore ends with a reaffirmation of the anti-Semitism that informs Christian misreading of Jewish emotions, which the previous scenes have destabilized.

The literalism and legalism of Shylock's character have often been contrasted with varieties of Christian love and mercy in *Merchant*, whether critics have accepted the purported value system of the play or sought to ironize it.[19] And yet in looking for contrasts, Shylock's insistence on following the letter of the law seems to oppose not only the expectation of pity but also a wider array of ways in which court participants try to engage Shylock emotionally. This array includes the oft-cited exhortations to mercy from the Duke and later from Portia, but also other instances such as the Duke's insinuation that Shylock's "malice" is an assumed "fashion" rather than Shylock's sincere intention (4.1.18); Bassanio's accusation that Shylock's "cruelty" is without excuse (4.1.64); and Gratiano's warning that Shylock's "sharp envy" jeopardizes his immortal soul (4.1.123–26). The logic that underlies such utterances is that emotions both ought to be reasonable (explainable or excusable) and to provide reasons for action (they are, as in Lawrence D. Green's paraphrase of Trebizond's *Rhetoric*, the "well-springs of human action").[20]

It is this underlying logic that Shylock resists in his speech in act 4. A common critical error is useful for illustrating this point. Both Dr. Johnson and Richard A. Posner begin their analyses of Shylock's speech by saying that Shylock delivers the speech in response to the Duke's question. Dr. Johnson writes that Shylock has been "asked a question," and Posner writes: "When the Duke of Venice asks Shylock why he would rather have a pound of worthless flesh than a large sum of money, Shylock replies…"[21] Lorna

[19] For an influential example, see Barabara K. Lewalski, "Biblical Allusion and Allegory in 'The Merchant of Venice'," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (1962): 327–43.
[20] Green, "Aristotle's *Rhetoric*," 5.
[21] Johnson, *Notes to Shakespeare*, 226; Posner, *Law and Literature*, 236.

Hutson prefaces Shylock's speech with a similar introduction.[22] But in the text of the play, the Duke never does ask this question. What the Duke does instead is express his disbelief that Shylock is truly as cruel as he presents himself to be and ask Shylock to show pity for Antonio's predicament.[23] It is Shylock himself who, determined to take what he believes belongs to him by law, anticipates the question and says: "You'll ask me why I rather…" (4.1.40), before scandalizing the court with his answer: "I'll not answer that — / But say it is my humour" (4.1.42–43). Shylock is the one who brings up the question of his own motivation, and then immediately shuts down the possibility of an answer.

I suggest that the intended effect of Shylock's response goes beyond seeking to shock the Christians with the extent of Jewish vengefulness. Instead, I argue that Shylock anticipates the question of his motive and then immediately preempts the answer for two purposes. First, in articulating the question of internal motivations Shylock acknowledges that at the Venetian court he has entered a setting governed by conventions of rhetoric. Here he will be expected to persuade others by providing emotionally compelling reasons, as well as to respond to reasoning that targets his own emotions in order to change his actions.[24] Second, by immediately precluding the prospect of an answer and exchanging the openness of rhetorical persuasion with the opacity of humoralist discourse, Shylock stages his emotional inaccessibility and refusal to engage in the rhetorical practice outlined above.

Shylock's deliberate opacity shares some features of Stephen Greenblatt's concept of Shakespeare's own "strategic opacity," but it is also markedly different from it. For

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[22] Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter*, 232: "For though he is urged by the Duke to explain his desire to pursue a useless suit against Antonio, he refuses."
[23] See *Merchant*, 4.1.16–34. See also Skinner, *Forensic Shakespeare*, 142. Skinner argues that the Duke points out that Shylock is pursuing a *causa admirabilis*, a "strange" cause. "To classify a cause as *admirabilis*," Skinner writes, "is to say, in Quintilian's words, 'that it has been sent up in a manner out of line with the general opinion of men'."
[24] For a discussion of how emotions are "bound up with argument" and the interrelation of "docere" (instruction) and "movere" (moving) in Renaissance religious rhetoric see Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 148–51.

Greenblatt, strategic opacity indexes Shakespeare's method for creating depth in his plays by removing a "key explanatory element" that would otherwise account for a character's actions. By "occluding the rationale, motivation or ethical principle" behind an action, Shakespeare creates a "representation of inwardness" for his characters that exceeds what familiar explanations for their behaviors could achieve.[25] I argue that unlike the enigmatic nature of Hamlet's melancholy (in which Greenblatt identifies Shakespeare's first mature usage of strategic opacity),[26] the deliberate opacity that Shylock adopts in the trial scene is not a feature of his characterization from the start of the play. Shylock's deliberate opacity is rather a reflection of his gradually acquired understanding of the impossibility of communicating his emotions to his Christian audience. It is Shylock the character rather than an overarching dramaturgical logic on Shakespeare's part that generates this opacity.[27] At the same time, the Venetians Christians' attempts to unlock Shylock's interiority and influence his emotions suggest that in *Merchant* Shakespeare was already becoming aware of the ways in which any opacity at all invites an intensification of interpretive effort on the part of an audience, an insight that invites critics and audiences to reconstruct Shylock's point of view in the play.[28]

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[25] Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), 468–69.
[26] Greenblatt, *Will in the World*, 468–70.
[27] The interpretive creativity of both actors and audiences in bringing Shylock to life as a character endowed with coherent perspectives and motivations must be acknowledged, since the emotional scripts I attribute to the Venetian Christians in the play may well closely map onto those of the play's Elizabethan audiences.
[28] The attempt to unlock interiority is thematized in Laurie Shannon, "Likenings: Rhetorical Husbandries and Portia's 'True Conceit' of Friendship," *Renaissance Drama, New Series* 31: Performing Affect (2002): 14. Shannon compares Shylock's desire to pry open Antonio's flesh with Antonio's openness in relation to Bassanio: "My purse, my person, my extremest means / Lie all unlocked to your occasions" (1.1.137–38). For the purpose of this chapter, it is significant that the Venetian Christians oscillate between anti-Semitic determinations of Shylock's character ("for thy desires / Are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous" [4.1.137–38]) and attempts to access and change Shylock's motivations ("Can no prayers pierce thee?" [4.1.126]).

To make his motivations opaque, Shylock invokes Galenic humoralism as an explanatory paradigm for the emotions that drive his suit:

> You'll ask me why I rather choose to have
> A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
> Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that —
> But say it is my humour: is it answered?
> What if my house be troubled with a rat,
> And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
> To have it baned? What, are you answered yet?
> Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
> Some that are mad if they behold a cat;
> And others when the bagpipe sings i'the nose
> Cannot contain their urine: for affection
> Masters oft passion, sways it to the mood
> Of what it likes or loathes. Now for your answer:
> As there is no firm reason to be rendered
> Why he cannot abide a gaping pig,
> Why he a harmless necessary cat,
> Why he a woollen bagpipe, but of force
> Must yield to such inevitable shame
> As to offend, himself being offended:
> So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
> More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
> I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
> A losing suit against him. Are you answered? (4.1.40–62)

Shylock uses four different terms to describe emotional inclination ("humour," "affection," "passion," "mood") and many others for describing different emotional responses, including being "pleased," "mad," incontinent ("Cannot contain their urine"), "forced," and "offended." Editors of the play are divided on the relation between the terms "affection" and "passion" in the speech due to textual difficulties, and some have preferred "Master of passion" or "Mistress of passion," which suggests a stricter hierarchy between the two terms.[29] In

[29] The confusion originates in the First Quarto, which reads:

> And others when the bagpipe sings ith nose,
> cannot containe heir vrine for affection.
> Maisters of passion swayes it to the moode
> of what it likes or loathes (4.1.49–52).

addition, the term "affection" was historically used to denote rational (rather than appetitive) desire in the Christian psychologies of Augustine and Aquinas, an interpretation that is overwhelmed by the catalog of pathological reactions marshaled by Shylock.[30] Instead, Shylock's speech emphasizes the compulsive nature of emotional inclinations and their resistance to change. "Humour" leads to unusual and unexplainable reactions, from the merely eccentric (paying ten thousand ducats for rat poison) to the fully pathological (urinating at the sound of a bagpipe). "Affection" operates in a similar fashion to "humour" insofar as it has "lodged" objects of love or loathing, with regard to which it directs the transient emotional inclinations ("mood" and "passion") that determine behavior. In Shylock's portrayal of human psychology, emotions operate like compulsions that force the person who feels them into certain behaviors. Such behaviors can hardly be called actions, since the affected person cannot exert any agency over them.

Understanding Shylock's "humour" as a psychophysiological determinant of behavior brings into view Shylock's rejection of rhetoric in divorcing emotions from reasons. If emotions are concocted in the inscrutable crevices of the body and operate like compulsions rather than as sources for reasons that are themselves responsive to reasoning, then emotions cannot be susceptible to the kind of persuasion that rhetoric mobilizes and which relies on reasoning. People who cannot tolerate gaping pigs, or cats, or the bagpipe music experience an automatic bodily reaction to the object of their aversion (most pronounced in the case of those who "cannot contain their urine"). A person with such an emotional constitution cannot negotiate their reaction to the abhorred object through appealing to reasons, or give a reason why such a harmless and arbitrary object induces an offensive reaction. In Shylock's

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For a comprehensive account of modern editions, see M. M. Mahood's gloss and Supplementary Note in *The Merchant of Venice*, 179.

[30] For a discussion of affections as the desires of the intellective will in St. Augustine and Aquinas see Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 39–54.

representation of the emotions, they can neither be intelligible to others nor responsive to persuasive speech.

Shylock's deliberately reductive account of the emotions construes them as inaccessible to reasoning by describing emotions as causes rather than as reasons. Whereas a causal account may explain how the changing humoral balance of the body leads to phobias such as those listed by Shylock, a reason would explain the personal history, or purpose, or inward logic that brings forth the same reactions. Importantly, causes remain at the level of objective, impersonal and mechanical explanation, whereas reasons open up the realm of the subjective and the personal. In contemporary terms, an explanation based on psychophysiological causation would say that a person is depressed because of chemical imbalances in his or her brain; an explanation that focuses on reasons would attribute the depression to, for example, disappointment with the way their life has turned out. By relying on the mechanical causation of the body while withholding the subjective experience of his own affection, Shylock divides emotions from personal motivation. On Shylock's account, people who behave according to their emotions do so without agency, their reaction mechanically caused rather than informed by reasons. Persuasion can only be successful where subjective experience is made legible, communicated, and negotiated. By writing off subjective experience from his account of emotion, Shylock, so to speak, removes his emotions from the plane on which rhetorical persuasion occurs and instead treats them as a physiological fact.[31]

[31] Shylock's account therefore rejects the widespread Augustinian notion that the emotions are modulations of the will. See Augustine, *City of God*, 14.6, 555: "If the will is wrongly directed, the emotions will be wrong; if the will is right, the emotions will be not only blameless, but praiseworthy." Shuger discusses how the Augustinian conflation of volition and emotion manifested in Renaissance Christian rhetoric. See Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 133–35.

In pointing to the significance of Shylock's appeal to humoralism my interpretation of Shylock's speech resembles Gail Kern Paster's influential analysis of the trial scene. Reading the entire scene through the lens of Galenic humoralism, Paster argues that Shylock's reference to "humour" participates in a contemporary Elizabethan discourse whereby "men describe and claim individuality," and that the other court participants similarly invoke humoralism in their interactions with Shylock.[32] At the same time, my analysis resists Paster's claim that for Shylock, "humoral thinking is the basis for self-understanding and self-justification in a hostile world."[33] Instead, I suggest that Shylock treats his purported humoralism with irony for the purpose of exposing the anti-Semitism that makes the court participants insensible to his emotions in the first place.

Shylock concludes his speech by comparing the "lodged hate and a certain loathing" he bears Antonio to the phobias invoked in his previous examples. This move from the general pathological reaction (to all gaping pigs, all cats, all bagpipes) to the particular hatred of an individual man reveals the irony of his account. Attributing his hatred of Antonio to the arbitrariness of humor occludes the interpersonal history that has generated Shylock's sentiment, and which is provided in act 1, scene 3. In an aside during that earlier scene, Shylock reveals that he hates Antonio "for he is a Christian," but primarily because he "lends out money gratis, and brings down / The rate of usance here with us in Venice" (1.3.34, 36–37). To these general and pragmatic reasons is added the "ancient grudge" that Shylock bears Antonio in response to Antonio's own hatred of Shylock's "sacred nation" (1.3.39–40). However, we soon learn that Shylock's hatred is also grounded in interpersonal reasons in addition to other general, pragmatic, or historical considerations. Antonio has regularly called Shylock a dog, spit on his beard, and kicked him; and even while asking Shylock for a loan

[32] Paster, *Humoring the Body*, 197, 203–10.
[33] Paster, 24.

Antonio tells Shylock that he (Antonio) is "as like to call thee so again, / To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too" (1.3.122–23).

Shylock's "lodged hate" is therefore grounded in a variety of reasons rather than being an unexplainable wiring of his body that causes him to seek to hurt Antonio. At a crucial moment, though, Shylock mutes the interpersonal history between himself and Antonio, which has been highly visible throughout the play, and reduces the antagonism generated by this history into a mere reflex. In fact, Shylock's suggestion that he hates the individual Antonio in the same way that a person may feel revulsion for a general category (gaping pigs, cats, bagpipes) throws into relief the anti-Semitism of the Venetian Christians (and of potential audiences of the play), for whom Shylock's Jewishness—his own belonging to a general category—is indeed cause for hatred and revulsion. Shylock's invocation of humoralism is therefore not a reflection of Shylock's own self-understanding, but of his understanding of the discursive expectations of the Venetian court and rejection of such expectations. His irony in employing the humoralist discourse outlined by Paster draws attention to the disingenuity of the Venetian Christians' rhetorical appeal to emotion, since they are the ones made insensible to his emotions by their automatic aversion to Jews. In Shylock's speech, the body supplies not a shared language with the Venetian Christians but a refuge from the Christian discourse he does not trust.[34]

Bassanio's response to the speech demonstrates the very insensibility anticipated by Shylock. As the speech comes to a close, Bassanio protests: "This is no answer, thou

[34] See also Strier, "Say it is my humour," 6–8. Strier critiques what he calls Paster's conflation of the natural with the physiological and rejects a literal understanding of Shylock's "humour" as necessarily pertaining to the body, as well as Paster's reading of the entire scene as trading in humoral tropes. Paster, *Humoring the Body*, 204–208. While I am satisfied that Shylock's references to shame and urine and his focus on pathological examples point to an investment in embodiment, I join Strier's skepticism regarding Paster's position that all hydraulic metaphors for the emotions in act 4, scene 1 show a commitment to Galenic humoralism.

unfeeling man / To excuse the current of thy cruelty" (4.1.63–64). This response is perceptive enough in that it recognizes Shylock's rejection of rhetorical discourse in not providing the reasons that would make sense of his proposed causes. In Bassanio's view, even what Paster takes to be a humoral "current" shooting through Shylock's body does not, by its own, provide an explanation for Shylock's behavior. The physiological fact needs to be excused in order to be translated from the mechanical to the motivational. At the same time, the ambiguity of the adjective "unfeeling" is also revealing of Bassanio's perception of Shylock's negative emotion. *Unfeeling* can literally mean "having no feeling or sensation," but it can also mean not having the right kind of feeling when taken in the other sense suggested by the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "Devoid of kindly or tender feelings; uncompassionate, unsympathetic;" in fact, the *OED* lists Bassanio's accusation as an example of the latter sense.[35] The multivalence of the term indicates the Venetian Christian's confusion of Shylock's hostility with a literal lack of feeling. According to Bassanio, true feelings ought to be amenable to reason. By refusing to explain his emotions, Bassanio's exclamation suggests, Shylock forfeits the privilege of having them treated as sources for reasons.

In taking negative and unexplained emotion as equivalent to a lack of emotion Bassanio approaches the attitude with which Solanio confronts Antonio at the play's opening scene. Antonio has rejected several possible explanations for the sadness that inflicts him (it is not his financial ventures at sea, nor is it an undisclosed love interest). In return, Solanio playfully dismisses Antonio's proclaimed sadness altogether:

> Then let us say you are sad
> Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
> For you to laugh and leap, and say you are merry
> Because you are not sad. (1.1.47–50)

[35] *OED online*, *s.v.* "unfeeling, adj." 1.a., 2. Accessed June, 2021, https://www-oed-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/213271?rskey=i7ddh1&result=3&isAdvanced=false (accessed June 28, 2021). On the conflation of unfeeling and bad feeling see also the Introduction; Lee, *Failures of Feeling*, 2, 10, 15–19.

Solanio proposes that if Antonio's sadness cannot be understood in terms of reasons—if it does not correspond to an explanatory event and cannot be communicated to others—then his sadness is merely nominal. In the absence of any tangible explanatory context, sadness can only acquire meaning in relation to other components of Antonio's economy of feelings, where it is the opposite of merriment. But Solanio's tautology suggests that this meaning is arbitrary, and since it does not stick to any worldly object, it can easily be exchanged for its opposite.[36]

When saying that Shylock is "unfeeling," then, Bassanio draws on the expectation that emotion—especially negative emotion—be explained or at least explainable. Shylock has determined to represent his emotions as compulsions rather than sources for reasons. When his hatred and anger remain unexplained, Bassanio's ambiguous usage of the adjective "unfeeling" provides an avenue for dismissing Shylock's negative emotions as no emotions at all, thereby discounting Shylock's potential claims about the Venetian Christians' mistreatment of him.

Emotional Unintelligibility and the Power of Custom

Shylock's anti-rhetorical and anti-affective stance in the fourth act is not a feature of his characterization from the start of the play, but a position he acquires after experiencing first-hand the limitations of rhetorical speech in cross-cultural encounters. I suggest that Shylock's speech in the trial scene is best read as a correction of a previous scene of unsuccessful persuasion in which Shylock's grand emotional expressiveness has proved ineffective. At the beginning of act 3, Shylock is confronted by Antonio's friends Solanio and Salarino. The two

[36] I borrow the language of affective stickiness from Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Second edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 13–14.

friends tease Shylock about the recent loss of his daughter, affirming their part in Jessica's elopement and mocking Shylock's pain:

> SHYLOCK My own flesh and blood to rebel!
> SOLANIO Out upon it, old carrion! Rebels it at these years? (3.1.28–29)

In this exchange it is the Christian Solanio who uses literalism to make a crude joke (pretending that Shylock speaks about an erection) and thereby to deflate the emotional pain expressed in Shylock's metaphor. Shylock replies in earnest: "I say my daughter is my flesh and blood" (3.1.30), to which Salarino retorts that Shylock's flesh and blood are as different from Jessica's as jet is from ivory, and red wine from Rhenish (3.1.31–33). Salarino takes up Shylock's metaphor for the family bond he shares with Jessica and makes it into one about character and spiritual constitution—having converted to Christianity, Jessica is no longer Shylock's daughter.

Soon after this exchange Salarino brings up Antonio's misfortune and poses the same question that Shylock preemptively rejects at the beginning of act 4: "Why, I am sure if he forfeit thou wilt not take his flesh. / What's that good for?" (3.1.40–41). Shylock responds with his most memorable rhetorical performance, which in stark contrast to his speech in the trial scene, both vividly recounts the injustices he has suffered at Antonio's hand and appeals to embodied affective experience as a possible source of cross-cultural sympathy:

> To bait fish withal; if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies — and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? (3.1.42–52)

In contrast to his later speech at the Venetian court, in the third act Shylock treats embodiment not as a means whereby to reduce emotions into compulsions but as the site on which affective experience takes place. Shared among all humankind, the condition of

embodiment provides the precondition for sympathy—knowing from first-hand experience what both harm and comfort feel like. The affections and passions, which come into a hierarchical relation in act 4 (where passion is subordinated to affection), here appear paratactically alongside "hands, organs, dimensions, senses" to convey the bio-affective similarity between Jews and Christians. Affective experience in this speech is not subordinated to the body but continuous with sensory experience, which is a common experience understood by all, especially in the case of touch. The transition from involuntary to voluntary reaction marked by the change from *do* to *shall* ("do we not bleed," "do we not laugh," "do we not die," and then "shall we not revenge?") is significant in that it acknowledges Shylock's agency, which he later denies in act 4. Revenge (in contrast to its representation in the trial scene) is not an automatic reaction like bleeding, laughter, or even death, but rather a voluntary response. Nevertheless, placed on a continuum with physiological reactions, revenge is also a natural response to being wronged, and therefore one that should be understandable to Solanio and Salarino. Shylock's usage of the first-person plural "we" expands the subjective experience of embodiment to include the entire Jewish nation in an attempt to humanize Jews to his Christian audience. In act 3, therefore, Shylock's prose strives to communicate the same universality of emotion that Shylock comes to reject in the fourth act.[37]

One available emotion script that could make Shylock's anger intelligible to his audience is found in Aristotle's *The Art of Rhetoric*. Aristotle defines anger as "desire, accompanied by pain, for revenge for an obvious belittlement of oneself or one of one's

[37] On the emotional evocativeness of Shylock's speech see also John Gross, *Shylock: A Legend and Its Legacy* (New York and London: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 67: "[The lines] are wrenched from Shylock; they have the stamp of anger and spontaneity. And the fact that they are in prose only heightens the impression."

dependants, the belittlement being uncalled for."[38] For Aristotle, the definition of anger is embedded in a social reality. The slight that causes the painful desire for revenge is "uncalled for" when the offender is not in a social position to slight the offended.[39] Moreover, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle describes a virtuous manifestation of anger: "The person who is angry at the right things and toward the right people, and also in the right way, at the right time, and for the right length of time, is praised."[40] Although I will not make the case that Shylock's eventual attempt on Antonio's life demonstrates carrying out anger "in the right way," it is noteworthy that in the Aristotelian tradition anger on its own is not necessarily a vice.[41] It is the social dimension of Shylock's anger that makes it dismissible for Solanio and Salarino (and possibly for Elizabethan and other audiences of the play). For them, Antonio is in fact in a position to slight Shylock, who is a Jew and therefore his social inferior.

However, I suggest that Shylock's anger throws into relief the injustice of this position.[42] Shylock establishes the first constitutive components of Aristotelian anger from the start of his speech, where he asserts that he desires revenge for a slight he has suffered. However, he only comes to articulate the third component—that Antonio is not in a position to slight him—gradually, as the speech progresses. It is only when Shylock arrives at his argument for sympathy among people who all share a universal bio-affective experience that the third element of Aristotelian anger comes fully into view. Since all human beings possess "hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions" (3.1.47), it is unjust to disgrace,

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[38] Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. H. C. Dawson-Tancred (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 2.2, 1378a, p. 142.
[39] David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 43.
[40] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd ed., trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Pub. Co, 1999), 4.5.3, 1125b32–34, p. 61.
[41] The same is true in Christianity, as evidenced by Jesus's anger about the commercial activity at the Temple of God in Matthew 21:12–13.
[42] For anger as a diagnostic for injustice see Philip Fisher, *The Vehement Passions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 172. Fisher discusses the essential role of anger in moral epistemology, where it "lies at the root of an intuitive and manageable sense of daily justice."

hinder, laugh at, scorn, and thwart another person based on a difference in nation. To say that Shylock develops gradually the notion that Antonio's slight is unjust is not to say that it is only at that point that Shylock comes into a realization of his own worth. Rather, I argue that performing anger in accordance with the recognizable emotion script afforded by the Aristotelian model unfolds the horizon within which Shylock's audience can apprehend the injustice of Antonio's behavior. By expressing his anger at Antonio, Shylock provides the setting for understanding Antonio's slights as "uncalled for."

Shylock's speech already anticipates its own failure to move Christian audiences. It does this by pointing to the ineffectuality of emotion scripts that prescribe patience and forbearance once they cross the boundaries of the emotional communities that originated them:

> If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, Revenge! (3.1.53–56)

Humility and sufferance (which means forbearance) are similar and yet culturally specific emotions that both possess a central normative aspect in promoting practices of non-retaliation. Humility requires Christians to imitate the patience of Christ and turn the other cheek in response to injury. Sufferance, while also resonating with the Christian practice of *imitatio christi*, bears in *Merchant* the additional mark of a Jewish national ethos. For Jews, practicing sufferance has been essential to the nation's longstanding preservation among hostile nations. Shylock has explicitly voiced this essential role of sufferance to Antonio in the first act of the play, when saying that he has borne Antonio's abuse patiently, "For suff'rance is the badge of all our tribe" (1.3.102). However, in act 3 Shylock asserts that Jewish sufferance can turn into its direct opposite—revenge—in imitation of Christian humility, which turns vengeful when Christians do not practice humility in their encounters with Jews. Shylock's threat satirizes rhetorical persuasion by exposing the vacuity of Christian example and suggesting that the emotion Christians transmit to Jews is not their

purported humility, but their true vengefulness. In this, Shylock shows that even emotion scripts that prescribe forbearance in one community can translate into violence in the encounter with another.

The flexibility of emotion terms reemerges in the trial scene in the fourth act, when Antonio testifies to his own Christ-like patience:

> I do oppose
> My *patience* to his fury, and am armed
> To *suffer* with quietness of spirit
> The very tyranny and rage of his (4.1.10–13, my emphasis)

Antonio's claim to suffering his affliction in the right way does not only purport to demonstrate his spiritual virtue, but also participates in an affective attitude that marks Christian believers off from nonbelievers. Their ability to accept suffering with a "quietness of spirit" through trust in divine providence supposedly separates Christians from those who rail against their misfortunes.[43] At the same time, Shylock's rival version of sufferance as a means for Jewish national preservation puts pressure on Antonio's interpretation of patience and sufferance.[44] The exchange between Shylock and Antonio in act 1 suggests that Antonio's appeal to Christian standards of virtuous suffering in act 4 is an attempt to appropriate the notion of sufferance for his Christian audience and substitute his own individual suffering for Shylock's narrative of collective sufferance. Whereas Shylock has previously outlined a model of coexistence (however unsatisfactory) based on Jewish sufferance as a response to Christian injustice, Antonio now describes sufferance as a weapon with which he arms himself against Jewish fury and tyranny, on a battlefield for the higher moral—and affective—ground.

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[43] Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 123–24.
[44] For a discussion of the struggles of Christian communities with rival interpretations of suffering, see Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, 126.

As Shylock expects, the emotional expressiveness of his grand speech in act 3 fails to leave an impression on Solanio and Salarino. Antonio's man arrives to summon the friends as the speech comes to a close, and Solanio and Salarino never respond to Shylock. Instead, marking Tubal's arrival, Solanio says: "Here comes another of the tribe; a third cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew." (3.1.61–62). By reinforcing the difference and depravity of Shylock's "tribe," Solanio's remark also highlights the boundaries that prevent the Venetian Christians from understanding Shylock's emotional expression.[45]

In the trial scene in act 4 we therefore find Shylock already awake to the limitations of what his emotional expressiveness can achieve and aware of the failure of emotion terms when they cross community boundaries. Shylock's anti-rhetorical and anti-affective stance, as we have seen, is a response to the impossibility of being heard in the first place. In the previous act Shylock has seen that his own passion does not, as the Ciceronian principle dictates, stir the same passion in his audience. His sorrow over the loss of his daughter has been mocked, and his anger at Antonio's injustice has been dismissed. As a result, he now makes his true emotions inaccessible to Christian interpretations. My reading therefore joins Lorna Hutson's assertion that Shylock's reasons for refusing rhetorical persuasion go beyond the "legalistic 'Old Testament' reasoning of the Jews."[46] But whereas Hutson still views Shylock's refusal "to listen to, or make, any emotional appeal" as part of his allegorical mode of representation—his rigidity "resembles the scholastic refusal to recognize humanism's affirmation of the practical value of arguments based in uncertainty"—I suggest that

[45] For a persuasive discussion of Christian misinterpretations of Shylock's passion in act 2, scene 8 see Sara Coodin, "'This Was a Way to Thrive': Christian and Jewish Eudaimonism in The Merchant of Venice," *The Renaissance of Emotion: Understanding Affect in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, ed. Richard Meek and Erin Sullivan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 82. Coodin argues that while Solanio mocks Shylock's loss as financial rather than familial, Shylock's passion actually expresses the loss of his unique Jewish eudaimonistic vision.

[46] Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter*, 232.

Shylock's refusal to persuade also goes beyond allegory.[47] His emotional obduracy stages not only an opposition between scholastic rigidity and humanist flexibility, but also the limitations of humanism's underlying claims to universality.

The intentionality with which Shylock withholds his emotions about Jessica's betrayal is most evident in moments in which his passion nevertheless erupts to the surface during the trial scene. Such instances of self-disclosure reveal the pain that sharpens Shylock's vengefulness. The first instance occurs when Shylock asserts that the pound of flesh that he demands from Antonio is "dearly bought" (4.1.100). The pound of flesh has not been literally bought; it is guaranteed to Shylock as a penalty for Antonio's default. While Shylock may refer to the loss of his loan, the loss of Jessica presents itself as another likely candidate. Much more explicitly, the second instance of emotional outburst follows Bassanio's and Gratiano's declarations of their loyalty to Antonio, even above the fidelity they owe their wives. Shylock exclaims in response: "These be the Christian husbands! I have a daughter: / Would any of the stock of Barabbas / Had been her husband, rather than a Christian!" (4.1.291–93). The exclamation shows that Shylock still feels concern for Jessica, but at the same time it also demonstrates why Shylock's feelings about the loss of his daughter would be incomprehensible at the Venetian court. Even Portia, a daughter who remained faithful to the will of her deceased father when it might have limited the chances for her own marital happiness, is not moved to sympathy for the betrayed father. Since Jessica's elopement and conversion are considered to be happy occasions by the Venetian Christians, Shylock's emotions about his daughter cannot form the basis for persuasion but remain concealed, apart from these short interjections.

Whereas Shylock first relies on "humour" to reject the premises that underlie rhetorical persuasion and conceal his own emotions, later in the trial scene he comes close to

[47] Hutson, 232–33.

articulating the conditions that make his emotions unintelligible to his Christian audience on the much different grounds of custom—a cultural rather than a physiological explanation. Shylock explains that although the court attendants are appalled by his insistence on taking the pound of flesh that he believes belongs to him, they would find his cause more acceptable had they compared it to other forms of violent possession to which they are accustomed:

> You have among you many a purchased slave,
> Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
> You use in abject and in slavish parts
> Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,
> 'Let them be free! Marry them to your heirs!
> Why sweat them under burdens? Let their beds
> Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
> Be seasoned with such viands'? You will answer,
> 'The slaves are ours.' (4.1.90–98)

Comparing Antonio's suffering with a slave's testifies to the invisibility of suffering when the sufferer belongs to an oppressed group. Shylock calls attention to the hypocrisy of the Venetian Christians in concentrating on the suffering of a single individual when they take the suffering that they inflict on many others to be morally sound. In the emotional community of Venetian Christians, slaves and Jews are dehumanized and their suffering is discounted as unintelligible. At the same time, Shylock is faithful to his cause in asking not for his suffering to be understood, but for his violence against Antonio to be tolerated in the same way that the Christians tolerate their own violence toward their slaves.

Shylock's attempt to defamiliarize slavery aims to disrupt the emotional equilibrium to which his audience has become habituated and reveal the hidden role of custom in its constitution. This latent logic in Shylock's example shows more explicitly in Shakespeare's source material. Critics credit Alexander Silvayn's *The Orator: The Mirror of Eloquence* (translated from French into English in 1596) as the source for Shylock's argument on

slavery.[48] In Declamation 95 of his book, Silvayn relates the story of a Jew who demands the pound of flesh that has been promised to him by his Christian debtor. Addressing the court, Silvayn's Jew tries to take the edge off his strange demand through an explicit appeal to custom:

> It seemeth at first sight, that it is a thing no lesse strange then cruel, to bind a man to pay a pound of the flesh of his bodie, for want of money: Surely, in that it is a thing not vsual, it appeareth to be somewhat the more admirable, but there are diuers others that are more cruell, which because they are in vse seeme nothing terrible at all.[49]

The point that is implicit in Shylock's speech is explicit in the words of Silvayn's Jew. When a practice is not "vsual," it can "at first sight" appear "admirable" (that is, strange). It is the strangeness of the practice that makes it seem "more cruell" than other comparable practices to which one is accustomed. But if a person were to reflect on the practice in question impartially, that person would have to see that it is no more cruel than other cruelties which he or she happily accommodate. In other words, emotional shock is the result of custom rather than of an inherent unreasonableness of the object in question.

While Shakespeare's allusion to Silvayn is well documented, I suggest that his interest in the insurmountable differences created by custom in *Merchant* can be traced (perhaps indirectly) to Montaigne's rich treatment of custom in his *Essais*. Publication timelines make it hard to establish Montaigne's direct influence on Shakespeare in *Merchant*. John Florio's translation of the *Essais* first became available in print in 1603, at least five years after the estimated composition time of the play between 1596 and 1598.[50] Although Shakespeare may have seen Florio's translation in manuscript form before it appeared in print, critics are cautious even when suggesting that Hamlet's later reference to "That

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[48] Gross, *A Legend and Its Legacy*, 19; John Russell Brown, introduction to *The Merchant of Venice*, The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1955), xxxi.
[49] Silvayn, Alexander. *The Orator: The Mirror of Eloquence*. Amazon, n.d.; reproduced in Brown, ed., *The Merchant of Venice*, 169.
[50] Brown, introduction to *The Merchant of Venice*, xxi–xxvii.

monster, custom" takes inspiration from Montaigne.[51] Staged for the first time six years before *Hamlet*, it is therefore unlikely that *Merchant* borrows directly from Montaigne. At the same time, Florio's Montaigne made available to Elizabethan Englishpeople a "shared language," and possibly a conceptual apparatus for discussing the pervading but often undetected work of custom.[52] This chapter makes the claim that *Merchant* already displays Shakespeare's increasing interest in the effects of custom, a development that critics reserve for *Hamlet* and Shakespeare's subsequent plays.[53]

It is also a divergence from custom that initiates the relationship between Shylock and Antonio, who have not been in a business relation before Bassanio's need. Antonio is explicit about his aversion to lending at interest in the first words he speaks to Shylock in act 1, scene 3:

> Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow
> By taking nor by giving of excess,
> Yet to supply the ripe wants of my friend
> I'll break a custom. (1.3.53–56)

Breaking custom for Antonio amounts to abandoning his values for the sake of fulfilling the requirements of a higher value, that of helping a friend in need. Antonio's conduct mirrors Pierre Charron's advice on adhering to unfavorable custom for the preservation of societal quietude: "so that manie times, wee doe justlie that, which justly we aproove not."[54] If Shakespeare divides the stage of *Merchant* between Christian and Jewish perspectives, then Antonio's Christian perspective imbues custom with normative significance whereas Shylock invokes custom as an accidental phenomenon that demarcates emotional communities.

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[51] Florio's translation of the *Essais* was licensed for publication in 1600 and circulated in manuscript form before its first printing. See Stephen Greenblatt and Peter G. Platt, eds., *Shakespeare's Montaigne: The Florio Translation of the Essays* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2014), 42–43; for the connection with *Hamlet* see Hamlin, *Montaigne's English Journey*, 86.
[52] Greenblatt and Platt, *Shakespeare's Montaigne*, 43.
[53] Hamlin, 86.
[54] Pierre Charron, *Of Wisdome* (translated in 1608). Cited in Hamlin, 269.

In his invocation of custom, Shylock takes up the social relativism that was suggested by Montaigne but often rejected by his English readers.[55] Shylock's suggestion that the Venetian Christians' shock at his cruelty is hypocritical since they approve of cruelty when it is beneficial for their purposes echoes Montaigne's claim that becoming entrenched in custom can make people confuse their habits with reason or nature. Practices to which one is habituated can, in Florio's Montaigne, "seeme to be the generall and naturall. Whereupon it followeth, that whatsoever is beyond the compasse of custome, wee deeme likewise to bee beyond the compasse of reason."[56] True to his anti-rhetorical position, Shylock remains unforthcoming in that he only implies what Silvayn's Jew says explicitly and Montaigne investigates at length. Shylock still does not expect to be understood. But his direct allusion to the cruelty of Christians to their slaves, whose suffering the court participants do not perceive, points to the very insight that informs his anti-rhetoricism—his disappointment in the face of repeated Christian misinterpretations of his emotional expressions.

Stony Hearts and Interpretive Communities

So far, I have focused on Shylock's resistance to the secular assumption of universally communicable emotions that underlies rhetorical practice. But rhetorical persuasion also carried specific religious resonances for early modern Christians. Preaching relied on oratorial skill to convert hearts and motivate good works, and by contrast, hard-heartedness such as Shylock is accused of was a symptom of sin. Olivier Millet, in his study of Jean Calvin's rhetorical sources, discusses the power of *persuasio* to convert the will by winning

[55] Hamlin, 68.
[56] Montaigne, "On custome," in Michel de Montaigne, *The Essayes or Morall, Politike and Millitarie Discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne*, trans. John Florio (London: Printed by Val. Sims for Edward Blount, 1603), 50–51.

over "*les sentiments, ou affects, et les 'forces' humaines*."[57] Millet posits that Calvin "*identifie la foi chrétienne avec la persuasion oratoire, à la lumière du couple* docere/movere."[58] Discussing *persuasio* in Calvin's treatment of faith as knowledge, Russ Leo suggests that for Calvin, God as a source of faith operates like a "capable orator who speaks through scripture and worldly phenomena."[59] The spiritual consequence of not being moved is therefore remaining insensible to God and enslaved by sin.

The urgency of converting the heart in order to turn the will toward God also concerns what Paul Cefalu conceptualizes as the complex relationship between the doctrines of justification and sanctification.[60] In justification, a sinner is imputed righteousness and becomes cleansed from sin through their saving faith in Christ. Sanctification, however, involves "the partial renewal of ethical character through a process of integrating a regenerated "new man" with a residually sinful 'old man.'"[61] How exactly the fact of justification leads to appropriately righteous desires and behaviors is a difficult question. The reordering of the will required of regenerate Christians relied in part on effective oratory to stimulate obedience to God. For puritan divine Laurence Chaderton, for example, preaching was no less than the tool by which "all our affections may be changed that we may become new creatures," and being moved by hearing sermons both enabled believers to obey the word of God and served as evidence of their godliness.[62]

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[57] Olivier Millet, "*Docere/Movere*: Les catégories rhétoriques et leurs sources humanistes dans la doctrine calvinienne de la foi," in *Calvinus Sincerioris Religionis Vindex: Calvin as Protector of the Purer Religion*, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser and Brian G. Armstrong, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, 36 (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1997), 35–51, 41.
[58] Millet, "Docere/Movere," 50.
[59] Leo, "Affect Before Spinoza," 87–97, esp. 91, 93.
[60] Paul Cefalu, *Moral Identity in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2.
[61] Cefalu, *Moral Identity*, 2.
[62] Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, 128–29.

Shylock's anti-rhetorical stance therefore occasions an interpretive struggle on the moral and spiritual meaning of emotional obduracy and the refusal to be moved. For the Venetian Christians, such resistance evidences not Shylock's dissenting position and rejection of the ground rules of discourse, but rather Shylock's religious status. This interpretation manifests in accusations that Shylock has a hard or stony heart. The Duke describes Shylock as a "stony adversary" (4.1.4) shortly before Shylock enters the court. Upon Shylock's arrival, the Duke urges him to recognize Antonio's misfortune, which would elicit mercy even from "hearts of flint" (4.1.31). Although the heart of stone is a common trope for describing unyielding dispositions among believers and nonbelievers alike, its religious resonances are indispensable for understanding the Christian paradigms through which Shylock's anti-rhetorical approach is read in the trial scene.

In Pauline Christianity, the "stony heart" signals the obduracy of the will and marks the condition of the Jews who abide by the Mosaic covenant even after the coming of Christ. The sacrifice of Christ has fulfilled Mosaic law and freed believers from obedience to its myriad rules. Under the covenant of faith, God exchanges a heart of flesh for the believer's old stony heart. This heart of flesh is not completely healed from the implications of original sin, but it is recalibrated, to an extent, to desire God and pursue godly actions. The *locus classicus* of this promise of regeneration is in the book of Ezekiel in the Hebrew Bible, where the prophet says: "A new heart also wil I giue you, and a new spirit wil I put within you, and I wil take away the stonie heart out of your bodye, & I wil giue you a heart of flesh."[63] A gloss to the same passage states that the "Spirit" of God "reformeth" and "regenerateth" the heart. The stony heart, being unregenerate and corrupted by sin, is an unresponsive heart, one that is unmoved by the spirit of God. Importantly, the trope can have both individual and

[63] Ezek. 36:26, *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition, with an Introduction by Lloyd E. Berry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). All subsequent citations in this chapter are taken from this edition and cited parenthetically.

collective resonances. A person's heart can be stony until they are converted by God's saving grace and become godly, but Paul's letter to the Romans also encouraged attributing hardness of heart to the Jewish people at large, for their collective rejection of Christ. Paul compares the obstinacy of the Jews to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in the book of Exodus and reaffirms God's sovereign will ("therefore he hathe mercie on whome he wil, & whome he wil, he hardeneth" [Rom. 9:18, 30–31]), by which God has given righteousness to the gentiles and rejected the Jews. The stony hearts of the Jews are therefore both the reason for their condemnation by God and the means whereby they resist divine grace.

The idea that God hardened the hearts of whom he liked and then punished them for their sins caused considerable discomfort among both church fathers and Renaissance exegetes. Calvin rejected Augustine's "superstition" that the correct interpretation of scripture is that God merely foresees the hardening of sinners' hearts rather than effects it, and confirmed that God "destines men's purposes as he pleases, arouses their wills, and strengthens their endeavors," citing Pharaoh as his primary example.[64] An additional debate between Erasmus and Martin Luther similarly concerned the literal interpretation of scriptures, with Erasmus interpreting the hardening of Pharaoh's heart as a "rhetorical trope" for allowing Pharaoh to grow hard in his sin, and Luther defending the deliberate agency of God in Pharaoh's hardening.[65]

Shylock's speech in the fourth act exploits the idea of a will that is enslaved to bodily compulsions, but not to Satanic influences and original sin. The obduracy and arbitrariness of "humour" is aimed at divorcing the appeal to emotions from the appeal to his will. In fact,

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[64] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.4.3–4, 311–12.
[65] Brian Cummings, *Grammar and Grace: The Literary Culture of the Reformation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 177–79. For a survey of interpretations of Pharaoh's hardened heart among church fathers, reformers, and *Midrash Rabbah* see Claire Mathews McGinnis, "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart in Christian and Jewish Interpretation," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (2012): 43–64.

Shylock's reliance on causes rather than reasons for explaining action undermines the connection among will, action, and agency by treating human behavior as the mechanical result of bodily determinants. But whereas Shylock invokes a psychophysiological paradigm to advance his purpose, Antonio asserts a rival explanation for Shylock's emotional obduracy based on Christian notions of hard-heartedness.[66] Antonio expands the Duke's biblical allusion to the stony heart to suggest the impossibility of reasoning discursively with nonbelievers. He intervenes in the exchange between Shylock and Bassanio, asking Bassanio to let the case rest:

> I pray you think you question with the Jew.
> You may as well go stand upon the beach
> And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
> You may as well use question with the wolf
> Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
> You may as well forbid the mountain pines
> To wag their high tops and to make no noise
> When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
> You may as well do anything most hard
> As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
> His Jewish heart. (4.1.70–80)

Antonio's dehumanizing similes for Shylock's obduracy—a rising flood, a hungry wolf, a pine bending in the wind—are all images of overwhelming passion that overflows, demands satiation, or contorts the will by force.[67] Asserting the futility of resisting such violent passions, Antonio claims that Shylock's "Jewish heart" precludes any spiritual change. In other words, Antonio also ascribes Shylock's obduracy to a certain determinism—not the indifferent determinism of the body, but the guilty determinism of the hardened heart.

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[66] By suggesting that Shylock and Antonio rely on separate metaphorical registers, my account once again contradicts that of Paster, who takes the hardness of Shylock's heart to be a humoral, physical reference. See Paster, *Humoring the Body*, 208: "The anti-Semitism of such remarks distracts us from their contemporary logic: that the drying and hardening effects of choler… would toughen the flesh of any heart and render it less receptive to entreaty."

[67] For a discussion of the wolf image in Shylock's characterization see also Ralph Nash, "Shylock's Wolvish Spirit," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1959): 125–28,. Nash proposes that for Elizabethan audiences, the wolf would have represented three of the seven deadly sin: avarice, envy, and wrath (126).

Paradoxically, Antonio describes the endeavor of softening Shylock's heart as itself "most hard." This description stands in direct opposition to Portia's flowery portrayal of the "quality of mercy" which is "not strained" but "droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven" (4.1.180–81). Antonio's description of moving Shylock emotionally as a battle of effort against inevitability is congruent with his characterization as resigned to his fate, but also brings to relief the kind of fate to which Antonio pretends to submit—an accidental encounter with inhuman forces, represented by Jewishness and resisting change, rather than the result of an interpersonal history. A more suspicious reading can even suggest that Antonio takes recourse to this account of Shylock's obduracy precisely at the moment at which Shylock is almost convinced to unfold that interpersonal history, answering Bassanio's exhortations to explain his hatred toward Antonio: "What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?" (4.1.69). Shylock has begun to explain his hatred of Antonio in terms of reasons rather than causes, associating it with a response to injury and prudence about the possibility of a repeated offense. At that moment, Antonio is the one who takes shelter in the inevitability of Shylock's religious status rather than let the case unfold.

Antonio's confidence that Shylock's hardened heart makes him completely impervious to change, especially the kind of change that is associated with Christian charity, makes his sudden demand that Shylock "presently become a Christian" when the trial finally turns against Shylock all the more strange (4.1.383). Portia (disguised as the judge Balthazar) has revealed that the law prohibits the shedding of Christian blood on penalty of death and the confiscation of all of Shylock's possessions. Antonio asks the court to have the punishment mitigated, so long as Shylock converts into Christianity and makes his daughter and her Christian husband his heirs. Antonio's suggestion is of a conversion without persuasion, a submission rather than a regeneration. The dissonance of such a "becoming" without any emotional content is heard most sharply when Portia asks for Shylock's

agreement to the terms of the verdict: "Art thou contented, Jew?" Shylock must reply, "I am content" (4.1.388–89). The transformation of the stony heart into a heart of flesh capable of receiving divine grace is parodied in the forced elicitation of Shylock's contentment. In addressing Shylock as "Jew" but requiring him to express contentment about becoming a Christian, Portia invokes an impossible emotional reality. Not only is it unlikely for Shylock the Jew to welcome his conversion into Christianity, but it is theologically impossible for any sinner (on the Christian paradigm) to welcome their conversion. A true conversion of the heart, had it occurred, would have made the question redundant since a change of heart is itself the sign of conversion. Had Shylock been content, this were a sign that his conversion has already occurred.[68]

Shakespeare foregrounds the crucial role of interpretation for making sense of emotional expression or withheld emotions by comparing Antonio as well as Shylock to a stone. After Antonio has rejected various possible explanations for his sadness in the first scene of the play, Gratiano advises his friend not to cultivate his strange and unexplained sadness:

> Why should a man whose blood is warm within
> Sit like his grandsire cast in alabaster? (1.1.83–84)

Gratiano attempts to put a mirror to Antonio's behavior and warn him against adopting a statue-like demeanor, letting his face "cream and mantle like a standing pond," and adopting a "stillness" to appear like a wise melancholic (1.1.89–90). In other words, Antonio is in danger of becoming stony himself, not due to sinfulness or lack of emotion but because he cultivates the wrong emotion. Antonio's claim that he feels real sadness rather than maintains

[68] Giving Shylock a staged emotional response to the forced conversion was an innovation of Henry Irving's 1879 portrayal of Shylock. See Gross, *A Legend and Its Legacy*, 149: "Leaving the court, he summoned up enough energy to cast a searching look at Gratiano; then he took three slow steps towards the door, stumbled (as though he were about to have a fit), recovered himself, and left the room with a sigh."

a melancholic pose suggests that his statue-like demeanor is the result of inexpressible but deep emotion.[69] In Montaigne's "Of Sadnesse or Sorrowe," the essayist attributes the stillness imposed by sadness to the silence imposed by the inexpressibility of great emotion:

> And that is the reason why our Poets faine miserable *Niobe*, who first having lost seaven sonnes, and immediately as many daughters, as one ouer-burthened with their losses, to have beene transformed into stone;
>
> ———*Diriguisse malis:*
> And grewe as hard as stone,
> By miserie and moane.
>
> Thereby to expresse this mournfull silent stupidity, which so doth pierce vs, when accidents surpassing our strength orewelme vs. Verily the violence of a griefe, being extreame, must needs astonie the mind, & hinder the liberty of hir actions.[70]

On Montaigne's account, loss, grief, and sorrow "astonie" the mind by inhibiting action. The effect of such overwhelming emotions can only be reversed by "bursting afterward forth into teares and complaints," both bodily and verbal expression that relieves the mind of its burden.[71] So even though stoniness may appear to be still, it often masks violent emotion. Both Shylock and Antonio are described as stony, a state in which they present an outward show of emotional detachment that conceals their interior state of mind and invites interpretation. The metaphor's flexibility and susceptibility to interpretation is made explicit in the same conversation, when Salarino tries to identify with Antonio and share his concerns. Salarino suggests that were he in Antonio's shoes with all his fortunes out at sea, even seeing the "holy edifice of stone" at church would make him imagine the "dangerous rocks" that could wreck his vessel and drown his assets (1.1.30–31). A church stone, a stony countenance, or a stony performance are all occasions for interpretation. When a community of friends gathers to interpret Antonio's statuesque behavior, they employ flexibility and identification as ways of arriving at the most advantageous interpretation. When Shylock

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[69] The exploration of sadness and identity is the subject of Erin Sullivan's *Beyond Melancholy: Sadness and Selfhood in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[70] Montaigne, "Of Sadnesse or Sorrowe," in *The Essayes*, 4.
[71] Montaigne, "Of Sadnesse," 4.

appears at the Venetian court, however, the trope of the stony heart serves rather to preempt such interpretive possibilities.

"The sweet power of music": Two Views of Human Affectedness

The conflict between different understandings of emotional unresponsiveness is not left behind when we move back to Belmont in the play's conclusion. The final act of *Merchant* offers two accounts of affectedness that never come into direct dialogue with each other, but have been negotiated throughout the play. The first is represented in Lorenzo's speech and echoes Antonio's appropriative interpretation of Shylock's emotional obduracy during the trial scene. On that account, a person's perceived unaffectedness betrays a depraved nature that is unresponsive to what should be universally moving. The second account is represented in Portia's speech, and treats the capacity to be affected by music (or rhetoric) as largely determined by circumstance.

Lorenzo has ordered music in anticipation of Portia's return. When Jessica remarks that she is "never merry" when she hears "sweet music" (5.1.69), he seems erroneously to praise her as if she had said the opposite: "The reason is your spirits are attentive" (5.1.70). He then offers extensive praise for the "sweet power of music" to affect not only human hearts but even those of wild colts, whose "savage eyes" it turns into "a modest gaze" (5.1.71–79). The effect of music is moving and ameliorating—it draws the listener's spirits and soothes them.[72] In this, music resembles its sister eloquence, which Cicero credits with the power to "gather scattered humanity into one place, or to lead it out of its brutish existence in the wilderness up

[72] The therapeutic effect of music on the emotions has a long intellectual history, even among Stoic thinkers who classified emotion as a type of cognition. Music was particularly cited as a cure for anger in Renaissance spiritual writing. See Maureen Flynn, "Taming Anger's Daughters: New Treatment for Emotional Problems in Renaissance Spain." *Renaissance Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 880.

to our present condition of civilization."[73] Lorenzo's speech culminates with a warning against such people as are unsusceptible to the reforming influence of music:

> Therefore the poet
> Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
> Since naught so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
> But music for the time doth change his nature.
> The man that hath no music in himself,
> Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils,
> The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
> And his affections dark as Erebus,
> Let no such man be trusted! Mark the music. (5.1.79–88)

The extreme emotional obstinacy of completely unaffected persons seems merely hypothetical at first, when Lorenzo says that Ovid could describe how music draws even natural elements since "naught" is impervious to its effects. However, the possibility of precisely such a person soon grows possible and near, when his character acquires definite attributes and becomes the subject of warning. Lorenzo caps his lecture with an exhortation to distrust men who are not moved by the "concord of sweet sounds" and abruptly redirects Jessica's attention to the sounding music. Without his direction, he seems to worry, could she prove as hard and cruel as her father Shylock?[74] It remains unclear whether Lorenzo's initial

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[73] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Cicero III: De Oratore, Books I–II*, trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Racham, vol. 1, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), 24–25 (I.viii.33). The analogy between Lorenzo's speech and Cicero's text is made in Laurie Shannon, "Likenings," 3–26, 21.

[74] In reading increasing concern in Lorenzo's speech I depart from previous interpretations of the scene that view it as unambiguously happy. S. K. Heninger, Jr. associates Lorenzo's contemplation of heavenly harmony with the theme of mercy in the play: "The touches of sweet harmony fall upon us untrained, like Portia's mercy, endowing our lives with music and concord and joy." See *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Mythology and Renaissance Poetics* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library Press, 1974), 4–5. Following closely, Lawrence Danson praises Lorenzo's "pedagogical tact" in teaching Jessica the role of music in both human and cosmic nature and preparing the audience to appreciate it. In contrast to the Christian characters' harmonious conduct, Danson writes, Shylock "willfully prefers his silent entombment in the flesh." See *The Harmonies of the Merchant of Venice* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 186, 188–89. In her more recent introduction to the New Cambridge Edition, M. M. Mahood reads Lorenzo's speech as celebratory of interpersonal and cosmic harmonies but detects an "[u]neasy recollection" in his mention of "treasons, stratagems, and spoils" which could call to mind the couple's sins

inattention to Jessica's words—her concern that her response to the music is inadequate—instantiates his transition from praise to suspicion, or whether it ironizes his own praise for attentiveness.

Lorenzo casts the affective resistance of the "man that hath no music" as a deficit (the lack of music) rather than an active opposition (discord). After maintaining a universal harmony among the singing celestial bodies and sonorous "immortal souls" (5.1.63) at the beginning of his speech, he qualifies his report to omit certain musicless persons from the cosmic scheme. In characterizing the "man that hath no music" as lacking or diminished rather than discordant Lorenzo appears to be excluding such a person not only from the socio-political harmony (since they are "fit for treasons") but possibly also from the count of heavenly immortal souls, through his association with Erebus. Whereas Lorenzo grants that all people are prevented from hearing the harmony of their immortal soul in this life, "whilst this muddy vesture of decay / Doth grossly close it in" (5.1.64–65), he attributes a special kind of insensibility to those who do not have any harmony in themselves in the first place. The ability to respond to music, both celestial and earthly, belongs to the inner man—Lorenzo says that "Such harmony is *in* immortal souls" (5.1.63), but also that the musicless person "hath no music *in* himself" (my emphasis). Whereas the first "in" seems to indicate a relation of inhering, that immortal souls themselves produce music like that of celestial

against Shylock. Below I disagree with Mahood's view that Portia's arrival "restores a sense of moral security" to the scene. See M. M. Mahood, introduction to *The Merchant of Venice*, 41. Finally, David Nirenberg reads the passage as a potential test for Jessica's successful transition into Christianity, and as a result, into humanity. See David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 2013), 539–40. In addition to Nirenberg's reading, I draw evidence for this reading from the recurrent doubt about Jessica's true conversion and assimilation in the play. See Lorenzo's wavering conditionals and final attempt to assimilate Jessica into his own "constant soul" to ensure her good qualities in 2.6.53–58 and Lancelot's suggestion that Jessica will be visited by her father's sins in 3.5.1–6. Jessica's reply: "I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian" (3.5.15) is also ambiguous given that sanctification through marriage was a justification for marrying nonbelievers, not those who have converted into the Christian faith.

bodies although we cannot hear it while shut in the flesh, the second "in" introduces the possibility of emotional deficiency—a person who lacks the capacity to be moved. Lorenzo's treatment of music generalizes from the Ciceronian notion that eloquence has the ability to gather people into organized communities and proposes the existence of a universal community modeled after Christian faith. The music of the spheres moves immortal souls in a way akin to divine *persuasio* that confirms the faith of the godly, by transforming their emotions. Those who are unmoved are therefore both excluded from the universal community and naturally wicked.

In his musiclessness, the unaffected man of Lorenzo's speech fulfills the warning given to the young man of Sonnet 8, who refuses to join his voice to the symphony of "sire and child, and happy mother" through marriage and procreation: "Whose speechless song being many, seeming one, / Sings this to thee, 'Thou single wilt prove none.'"[75] In the case of Shylock, the threat of obliteration manifests not in the literal cutting of his lineage in the future (although Jessica's conversion is a similar loss), but in the erasure of his affective experience in the present.[76] What the Venetian Christians take to be Shylock's inattentiveness evidences not the vain individuality of the young man that needs to be coaxed by the "sweet chid[ing]" of harmonious notes into sociality, but an unnatural defect that marks him off from human society.

Jessica does not get a chance to reply before Portia and Nerissa's arrival interrupts the lovers' conversation. The two women's exchange about the relative merits of different

[75] William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 8" in *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. Colin Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). See also Shannon, "Likenings," 11–13, 21. Shannon compares Lorenzo's speech to Sonnet 8 to highlight what she terms the "homonormativity" of Shakespeare's play.

[76] The obliteration of future lineage does materialize in the predicament of Morocco and Arragon, Portia's foreign suitors who lose the casket test and are therefore bound by their pledge to never marry anyone else. I thank Noémie Ndiaye for drawing my attention to this important detail.

songbirds seems deflationary compared to the ornate image of universal concord spun by Lorenzo. As she hears the music emanating from her house, Portia observes how well the nighttime complements its sounds:

> PORTIA Nothing is good, I see, without respect;
> Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.
> NERISSA Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.
> PORTIA The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
> When neither is attended; and I think
> The nightingale, if she should sing by day
> When every goose is cackling, would be thought
> No better a musician than the wren.
> How many things by season seasoned are
> To their right praise and true perfection. (5.1.99–108)

Editors of the play agree that "respect" in Portia's usage points to the relation of an object to its surrounding: the term is glossed as "regard to its setting" in the Arden edition and as "reference to context" in the Norton.[77] M. M. Mahood compares Portia's commonplace to the conclusion of John Donne's "The Progress of the Soul": "There's nothing simply good, nor ill alone, / Of every quality comparison / The only measure is, and judge, opinion."[78] Portia, however, posits not a relativist approach to quality but the existence of an essence that is only perceived in certain circumstances. Portia acknowledges that the manifestation of value in this world depends on this world's contingencies. In this mortal life we do not apprehend absolutes of goodness and beauty in their simple forms, but only their unstable presentations, which we are forced to constantly measure against the environment in which such virtues appear to gauge their value.

In her emphasis on favorable conditions as a requirement for appreciating the sounds of music Portia invokes the topos of accommodating circumstances, also included in the Ciceronian account of why we never do hear the music of the spheres. Like those who live so

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[77] William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* in *The Norton Shakespeare, 3rd ed.*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York and London: W. W. Norton Company, 2016), 5.1.99.
[78] John Donne, "The Progress of the Soul," in *Complete English* Poems, ed. A. J. Smith (1974), 193; quoted in Mahood, introduction to *The Merchant of Venice*, 171.

close to the Falls of Catadupa that they "lack the sense of hearing because of the loudness of the cataract," Cicero says, our own sense of hearing has been overwhelmed by the mighty sound of the revolving universe.[79] S. K. Heninger and Lawrence Danson both contrast Lorenzo's reverent explanation for the inaudibility of the soul's harmony with this pagan reason for our ignorance of celestial harmony.[80] But the latter account re-enters the text of the play through Portia's response to the music—contingencies can blunt the senses and affect our ability to hear. The same rationale is linked more explicitly to issues of habituation in Montaigne's "Of Custome"—just as "Smiths, Millers, Forgers, Armorers, and such other" become desensitized to the noise their work entails once they have grown used to it, we cannot expect to be able to notice the ever-present music of the spheres, having grown too accustomed to its sound.[81] By importing Cicero's theory of how our senses become blunted and Montaigne's explanation of how custom makes one insensible into her own account of appreciating music, Portia's understanding of affectedness retains some of Shylock's appeal to cultural relativism. At the same time, she does not commit to the same normative conclusions suggested by Shylock's appeal to custom. While Portia allows that the capacity to be affected may be environmentally determined, she nevertheless maintains that the affecting power—the songs of birds, and by analogy the rhetorical message—retains its value whether it is perceived or not.

Neither Portia nor Lorenzo have heard Shylock's speeches about the compulsory nature of emotion or the ways in which it is determined by custom. Lorenzo has remained in Belmont during the trial, and Portia was waiting outside the courtroom. Shakespeare employs

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[79] Marcus Tullius Cicero, *The Dream of Scipio*, in *Ethical Writings of Cicero: De Officiis; De Senectute, De Amicitia, and Scipio's Dream*, trans. Andrew P. Peabody (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1887), 81.
[80] Heninger, *Touches of Sweet Harmony*, 5; and in Danson, *The Harmonies of the Merchant of Venice*, 187.
[81] Montaigne, "Of Custome," in *The Essayes*, 47.

the generalized nature of their expositions and the abstraction of rhetoric into music to give the impression of a resolution that restores harmony to the play. Whereas rhetoric is made messy by content and tradition, Shakespeare construes music as an art that occasions an emotional effect that is immediate and intuitively understood. Its saturating influence, which is easy to understand if not to conceptualize, makes music an attractive tool for speaking about affectedness as a decontextualized trait that can be similarly easily understood. By reducing rhetorical language into mere sound, Shakespeare seems to smooth out the contradictions of the play's previous drama and provide an account of rhetorical influence that reconciles Christian perspectives on emotional obduracy. Such obduracy, the final act suggests, is caused by defects of spirituality or environment. Shakespeare suppresses the ideologically driven intentionality of Shylock's anti-rhetoricism, which recedes into a note in the background.

Coda: Shylock and Socrates

In his 1570s lectures on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, John Rainolds, Greek Reader at Corpus Christi College from 1572 to 1578, takes Socrates as an example for why rousing the emotions is crucial for achieving justice at a court of law. Socrates has accepted the death sentence imposed on him by Athenian law with equanimity and proceeded to drink hemlock without resistance. Rainolds protests Socrates's resignation: "And what of not moving the emotions, because Socrates did not move them? We must drink poison, because Socrates drank it! … They [Socrates and Rutilius] did not arouse the emotions, and thus the most righteous men were condemned."[82] Rainolds is adamant that moving the emotions can lead to verdicts that

[82] John Rainolds, *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, ed. and trans. Lawrence D. Green (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1986), 148-49.

are more just and correct than not moving them. Socrates has meant to be virtuous, but the result was the death of an innocent man. Whereas Russ Leo argues persuasively that Shakespeare knew Rainolds's anti-theatrical polemic some twenty years later, I cannot venture a similar claim about Rainolds's lectures on rhetoric.[83] The lectures were never published, although some of them were incorporated into Rainolds's later public orations and printed.[84] But it is tempting to think about the analogy between these two characters: like Socrates who explicitly disclaims using persuasive rhetoric to save himself in *Apology*, Shylock refuses to use persuasive rhetoric in the Venetian court. Infused with remorse for a history that cannot be changed, Rainolds's outcry throws into relief the tension between the emotional force of Shylock's predicament and the fiction of an impartial, blind justice that eventually falls upon him.

[83] Russ Leo, *Tragedy as Philosophy in the Reformation World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 123.
[84] Lawrence D. Green, introduction to *John Rainolds's Oxford Lectures on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 49.

Chapter 2: Learning to Feel in *Measure for Measure*

In the previous chapter, I have argued that Shylock represents himself as emotionally unmoved because his true emotions of grief about his daughter and anger at Antonio are continuously dismissed or misconstrued by the Venetian Christians. The Venetian court attendants interpret Shylock's mercilessness as emotional lack—in his insistence upon exercising what he believes to be his legal right, he is unfeeling, stony, and unpierced. In *Measure for Measure*, written about six years after the composition of *Merchant*, Shakespeare returns to the troubled relationship between emotional responsiveness and the law.[1] The position of the unfeeling legalist is now occupied not by the alien who desires, as Bradin Cormack suggests, "to become the law's proper subject," but by Angelo, the powerful deputy and temporary substitute of the Duke of Vienna.[2] Duke Vincentio has left Angelo in charge of the state during his supposed absence (he remains at hand in disguise) precisely because Angelo's unmoved disposition would allow him to enforce the law more strictly than the Duke has formerly done. If the Duke were to suddenly exact severe penalties upon his people, who have become accustomed to laxity, "'twould be… tyranny."[3] The Duke seems to believe that Angelo's "precise" disposition makes him a suitable candidate for restoring the force of justice in Vienna. Angelo's preciseness, however, leads to a result that rivals the monstrosity of Shylock's bond: when he learns that the young gentleman Claudio has had sex

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[1] The play was probably composed in summer 1604. See J.W. Lever, introduction to *Measure for Measure*, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), xxxi.

[2] Bradin Cormack, "Shakespeare Possessed: Legal Affect and the Time of Holding," in *Shakespeare and the Law*, ed. Paul Raffield and Gary Watt (Oxford and Portland, OR: Hart Publishing, 2008), 84.

[3] William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* in *The Norton Shakespeare*, 3rd Ed., ed, Stephen Greenblatt (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016), 1.3.36. All subsequent references are taken from this edition and cited parenthetically.

with his fiancée Juliet resulting in her pregnancy, Angelo sentences Claudio to death for fornication.[4] In *Measure for Measure* as in *Merchant*, the tension between the unyielding requirements of the law and the horror of their real-life application stands at the dramatic core of the play.

This chapter examines Angelo's unmoved emotions from the perspective of emotional education, or the process of learning how to feel. Angelo, as described by Claudio's friend Lucio, is one who

> never feels
> The wanton stings and motions of the sense
> But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge
> With profits of the mind, study and fast. (1.4.59–62)

Angelo's purported freedom from sensuality, Lucio says, results from habituation that weakens his natural appetites—by denying himself bodily pleasures and concentrating instead on intellectual pursuits, he has been able to stop feeling altogether. William Empson unpacks the normative implications of Lucio's description, which "implies that sensuality is only one of the normal functions of the senses," as well as "that to neglect them is to become *blunted*, *heavy* (cruel) and so forth."[5] Angelo's lack of feeling, therefore, is linked to his insensitivity toward others. The Duke has also stated that Angelo "scarce confesses / That his blood flows or that his appetite / Is more to bread than stone" (1.4.51–53). His description of Angelo's unmoved disposition also contributes to the impression that Angelo's lack of feeling is morally ambiguous: on the one hand, he relies on Angelo's severity to "strike home" the licentiousness of his people, but on the other hand he himself wishes to avoid the "slander" that such severity would cause if he were the one to enact it (1.4.41, 43). From the

[4] For a discussion of the legal status of Claudio and Juliet's union see Posner, *Law and Literature*, 157–58. I concur with Posner's conclusion that "Shakespeare is not concerned with depicting law realistically in either its substantive or its procedural aspects" (158).
[5] William Empson, *The Structure of Complex Words* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977), 273–74.

first act and throughout the play, then, Angelo's unmoved emotion is the subject of moral speculation—it is associated with virtue but also with cruelty.

As the play progresses, I suggest, Shakespeare explores through Angelo's character how people go from being unfeeling to feeling, and how this process can go awry when it produces emotion of the wrong kind. I begin with a comparison of Portia's appeal to mercy in *The Merchant of Venice* and Isabella's supplication in *Measure to Measure*, where my purpose is to show how in each play, the emotional capacity for mercy is linked to subtle dynamics of power. Whereas Portia manipulates the logic of the Sermon on the Mount to convey to Shylock the fragility of the power he claims to derive from contract law, Isabella uses the same scriptural source to produce in Angelo a sense of agency sufficiently strong for him to grant mercy to Claudio, but not so excessive that it might further harden his heart. Isabella's appeal to mercy, I suggest, relies on Angelo's imaginative capacity to envision himself in a less powerful position. The next section argues that *prosopopoeia*, understood both generally as the literary trope of personification since antiquity and as a specific exercise in humanist education, plays a central role in the pedagogical dynamic between Isabella and Angelo.[6] Isabella proposes prosopopoeia as an exercise that would awaken Angelo's empathy by teaching him to imagine other people's circumstances. Angelo, however, manipulates the trope to reinforce his unfeeling position by choosing the law as the object of personification instead of other people. Nevertheless, as I hope to show, the use of prosopopoeia inevitably forces Angelo to make emotional disclosures. The final section argues that Angelo's newfound lust for Isabella following their interview results from his strict association of all feeling with vice. But even though Angelo interprets his attraction to Isabella as a sin that has

[6] See Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 79–88; James J. Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1–34.

completely altered the course of his action, his personification of his own heart and passions in act 2, scene 4 reveals his latent understanding that emotion could be morally valuable.

Power, Mercy, and the Capacity to Feel

As I said, the similarity between the persuasion scenes in *Merchant* and *Measure for Measure* is remarkable.[7] In the first, Portia (disguised as Judge Balthazar) delivers a speech about the quality of mercy in order to move Shylock to spare Antonio and abandon his suit. In the second, Isabella begs Angelo to show mercy to her brother Claudio and commute his sentence. Portia says:

> The quality of mercy is not strained,
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
> It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.
> 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest, it becomes
> The thronèd monarch better than his crown.
> His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
> The attribute to awe and majesty,
> Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
> But mercy is above this sceptered sway.
> It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
> It is an attribute to God himself,
> And earthly power doth then show like God's
> When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
> Though justice be thy plea, consider this:
> That in the course of justice, none of us
> Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,
> And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
> The deeds of mercy. (*Merchant* 4.1.182–200)

[7] Similarities between the two plays' legal dramas abound. Richard Posner discusses various parallels among the two plays, including the "grandeur" in Isabella's and Portia's appeals to mercy, the extreme severity of the legal provisions invoked, and Angelo's and Shylock's temperaments: "Like Shylock, Angelo is at once austere, a stickler for law, and beneath his cold exterior prey to a lawless, violent passion." See Richard Posner, *Law and Literature*, 156–63, especially 155. On the theme of justice and mercy in the two plays see Michael Jay Willson, "View of Justice in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*," *Notre Dame Law Review* 70, no. 3 (1995): 695–726. On the role of equity in the two plays see Daniela Carpi, "Law, Discretion, Equity in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*," *Cardozo Law Review* 26, no. 6 (May 2005): 2317–30.

Although she does not name it, Portia's speech manipulates the theological logic of the Sermon on the Mount, which gives *Measure for Measure* its title. Jesus's instruction to "judge not" underlies Portia's warning that pursuing justice to the exclusion of mercy leads to damnation: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matthew 7:1–2). Despite the conciliatory message of the sermon, Portia's usage of it contains a menacing tone. The scriptural dictum locates the wellsprings of mercy in the more primal emotion of fear, resounding the worldly warning implicit in Portia's heavenly speech—if Shylock chooses justice over mercy, justice will be "measured to [him]" not in the next life but in this one.[8] The capacity for mercy is therefore closely connected to the threats perceived by a specific person. The theological background of Portia's praise of mercy only emphasizes the irony of the trial's conclusion, when Shylock's punishment is construed as a merciful act on Antonio's part, and judgment is disguised as mercy.

In addition to the strangeness of expecting a Jew (the title that Portia indeed uses to address Shylock) to act like a Christian, Portia's promises of merciful sovereignty ring inappropriate when addressed to an alien whose presence is merely tolerated in the city of Venice. Mercy, Portia says, is a mightier sign of sovereignty than crown and scepter and elevates worldly sovereigns into godliness. At the same time, for a king mercy should only "season" justice and not replace it altogether. A king that always prefers mercy to justice loses his ability to rule and leads his kingdom into anarchy. As Elizabeth M. Pope has observed, the administration of justice is "the highest and most important of the ruler's

[8] Katharine Maus makes a similar point on the sermon's affective tone: "For a passage often construed as offering hope and renewal, Christ's formulation is remarkably menacing. He reveals that the transcendence of talion law itself turns upon a principle of taliation." See Katharine Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 173.

specific duties," and it is "here more than anywhere else he and his deputies must act consciously as substitutes of God."[9] In his capacity as judge the ruler must therefore maintain a careful balance of mercy and justice.[10] Shylock, however, is not a king. As an alien and a Jew, he is visibly discriminated against by the law.[11] He does not have the authority to administer justice, but rather depends on its administration by the Duke of Venice. His position is therefore as far as can be from that of the kings that populate Portia's speech. Portia likens Shylock to a ruler in a way that may be intended to flatter him, but also discloses a menacing truth about the limitations of Shylock's agency—he only possesses any measure of sovereignty over his situation insofar as he is willing to extend mercy to Antonio. Refusing to extend such mercy will result not in Shylock's becoming a tyrant like the merciless king, but in his punishment by a tyrannical law. Taken as a continuation of the Venetian Christians' other challenges to Shylock's emotional withholding (discussed in the previous chapter), Portia's exhortation to mercifulness connects the capacity to feel mercy with the feeling of fear and the understanding of one's limited agency over one's fate. Being persuaded to feel a certain way is therefore intimately related to realizing one's position in existent power relations.

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[9] Elizabeth Marie Pope, "The Renaissance Background of *Measure for Measure*" in *Shakespeare Survey* 2, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949), 74.

[10] See also Lever, introduction to *Measure for Measure*, lxiii–lxv. Lever acknowledges that "the precept not to judge presented a hard case for all concerned with the workings of secular authority," and outlines the balancing of justice and mercy in Renaissance political texts such as James I's *Basilicon Doron* and Thomas Elyot's *The Governour*. The "true ruler or judge," Lever summarizes, "was not the most holy or zealous of men, but he whose reason and moderation exalted him above mere pity and passion."

[11] As Richard Strier has observed, the Venetian law that forbids the shedding of Christian blood "distinguishes between 'aliens' and citizens, and is specifically aimed only at aliens." See Richard Strier, "Shakespeare and Legal Systems: The Better The Worse (But Not Vice Versa)," in *Shakespeare and the Law: A Conversation Among Disciplines and Professions*, ed. Bradin Cormack, Martha Nussbaum, and Richard Strier (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 192.

The same recourse to implicit worldly threats is not available to Isabella. Angelo is in full possession of Duke Vincentio's judicial powers and cannot be intimidated. Isabella's plea for mercy, although it depends on the same logic of substitution inherent to the Sermon on the Mount, therefore, takes a different direction—she simultaneously uses the notion that mercy behooves sovereigns to remind Angelo, a stickler for the law, of his authority to exonerate her brother, and implies that even he, although he may currently feel secure, could find himself in need of mercy under different circumstances:

> Well, believe this:
> No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
> Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
> The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe
> Become them with one half so good a grace
> As mercy does.
> If he had been as you, and you as he,
> You would have slipped like him, but he like you
> Would not have been so stern. (2.2.59–67)

Isabella's emphasis on the greater value of mercy in comparison to other symbols of authority (the crown, the sword, the truncheon, the robe) is appropriate to Angelo's position as ruler, however temporary. The speech promises that mercy would confer grace on Angelo's rulership rather than compromise his status. At the same time, the prominence of Angelo's authority as substitute king, deputy, and judge in Isabella's speech also seems to refute a continual vitiation of agency in Angelo's own self-description: "Look, what I will not, that I cannot do" (2.2.53); "He's sentenced. 'Tis too late" (2.2.57). Time and again, Angelo responds to Isabella's persuasion by insisting that there is no one to be persuaded: "It is the law, not I, condemn your brother" (2.2.81). His understanding of his judicial role is not as an interpreter of the law but as a mere vehicle for its exercise, and as such he claims to be powerless to change the law's dictates. Angelo's relinquishing of personal agency to the law (which I discuss in the next section) prompts Isabella to remind him, with rich images of sovereignty, that as deputy to the Duke he stands above the law. His role endows him with

the Duke's powers of discretion, whereby he can—and should—temper justice with mercy. Indeed, in his parting words the Duke had instructed Angelo: "In our remove be thou at full ourself. / Mortality and mercy in Vienna / Live in thy tongue and heart" (1.1.43–45).

The conclusion of the speech, where Isabella tells Angelo that he would have "slipped" like Claudio had he been in his place, is therefore less of a non-sequitur to her previous exaltation of mercy than it may initially seem. In both instances Isabella directs Angelo's attention to his own agency. He has more agency over Claudio's sentencing than he believes (or pretends) he has, but not so much that he is invulnerable to the same passions that have caused Claudio's "slip." Isabella's words are aimed at increasing Angelo's sense of agency without also boosting his pride. Moreover, she invites Angelo to imagine himself as truly powerless in the face of the law, which is the position of the accused rather than the judge. Angelo's impotence with regard to legal requirement is feigned, Claudio's is real. Like Portia, Isabella mobilizes delicate dynamics of power in her exhortation to mercy. But whereas Portia would show Shylock his actual weakened position even when he believes he is empowered by the law, Isabella faces the more delicate task of showing Angelo that he possesses the power to extend mercy as well as the general human weakness that leads people to need it.

Since Angelo rejects her appeal to imaginative empathy with Claudio, Isabella abandons subtlety and articulates the scriptural threat of future judgment straightforwardly to drive home the point that he is as susceptible to the passions that lead to transgression as anyone else. She exclaims:

> Alas, alas,
> Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once,
> And He that might the vantage best have took
> Found out the remedy. How would you be
> If He, which is the top of judgment, should
> But judge you as you are? Oh, think on that,
> And mercy then will breathe within your lips
> Like man new made. (2.2.73–79)

The adverbial phrase "as you are" resonates with Isabella's previous hypothetical suggestion: "If he had been *as* you, and you *as* he" (2.2.65, emphasis mine). In the earlier case, Isabella has used *as* to indicate likeness. The invitation to imagine himself "as" Claudio is an opportunity for Angelo to imaginatively inhabit Claudio's circumstances—his love for Juliet and earnest intention to marry her, his becoming overcome by a desire that would soon be legitimated by their marriage, his grief over the impending loss of his life and future happiness. In that case *as* provides the necessary imaginative bridge that Angelo needs to develop empathy toward Claudio, and which could then lead to mercy. In the present case, however, *as* assumes the more definitive meaning of "in the manner or way that."[12] Angelo as he actually is, is not Angelo as imagined in another man's place. Whatever sinful vices he finds in himself if he consents to the self-scrutiny urged by Isabella are not imagined, but real. Since Angelo has refused the imaginative exercise of inhabiting another person's circumstances, Isabella skips ahead of the exercise to tell him straightforwardly that he already needs as much mercy as Claudio or anyone else does. *As* has been used to reveal the proximity of imagined likeness to true nature. In her invocation of the Sermon on the Mount, then, Isabella transforms the scriptural warning against judgment into a lesson in emotional identification and flexibility—that imaginatively attributing to oneself the emotions of another is a tool for to learning more about one's true emotions.

Angelo, like Shylock, remains unmoved. But are the two intransigent characters unmoved in the same way? I have argued that for Shylock, emotional withholding is an acquired strategy to protect him from bad-faith Christian misinterpretation. His response to Portia—"My deeds upon my head! I crave the law" (4.1.202)—reasserts his rejection of

[12] *OED Online*, s.v. "as, adv. and conj." 8.a. Accessed March, 2021, https://www-oed-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/11307?rskey=J1NoFt&result=6&isAdvanced=false

Christian affective vocabularies (including Christian interpretations of sufferance and the hardened heart, discussed in the previous chapter).[13] In Angelo, however, Shakespeare explores unyielding emotion not in a character that is excluded from the normative discourse but in one who is too well assimilated into normative ideals in its striving to embody the law. Whereas *Merchant* shows that being affected emotionally requires a shared and equitable emotional vocabulary, *Measure for Measure* explores how much the capacity to feel depends on imagining oneself in relation to other people. To do this, Angelo must develop an awareness of both his power and his weakness.

Prosopopoeia and the Personified Law

Prosopopoeia—the personification of inanimate objects, entities, or absent persons—plays a central role both in Isabella's attempted emotional education of Angelo and in his resistance to that education.[14] Whereas Isabella encourages Angelo to personify herself and Claudio in order to arouse his empathy for her brother, this section proposes, Angelo instead manipulates the trope in ways that preserve his emotional detachment. Faced with Angelo's intransigence, Isabella confronts him with a series of appeals to reconsider her brother Claudio's sentencing. Her appeals take the shape of imaginative exercises, designed to arouse Angelo's pity by invoking counterfactual states. First, Isabella asks Angelo to imagine

[13] For a discussion of the affective and legal valences of "I crave the law" see Cormack, "Shakespeare Possessed," 83–85, 99–100.

[14] Julie Orlemanski offers a succinct definition in "Prosopopoeia, Medium Specificity, and the Art of Centralized Administration, in Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*," an unpublished paper given at the University of Chicago Medieval Studies Workshop (May 14, 2021), 7: "Prosopopoeia lends to abstractions, inanimate objects, institutions, deities, collectives, or someone who is merely absent a mode of appearing in language. It sometimes anthropomorphizes, as when nature is portrayed as a beautiful woman, but even more fundamental to its operations is a fictive presencing, through the attribution of speech or corporeality."

himself in her place: “But might you do’t and do the world no wrong, / If so your heart were touched with that remorse / As mine is to him?” (2.2.54–56). Here, she invites Angelo to imagine that he had had a relationship with Claudio similar to her own, which would incline him to feel “remorse” for him.[15] The invitation also shows Angelo that what he is able to do is closely connected to how he feels about specific circumstances. Next (as I discussed above) Isabella asks Angelo to imagine that he were in Claudio’s shoes and Claudio were in his: “If he had been as you, and you as he, / You would have slipped like him, but he like you / Would not have been so stern” (2.2.65–67). This is an invitation for Angelo to imagine himself as powerless rather than as one who cares about a powerless person. He is to imagine himself abstracted from his current position and high estimation of himself and realize the fragility of his humanity. Angelo resists this attempt, too. Isabella then exclaims: “I would to heaven I had your potency / And you were Isabel” (2.2.68–69), not so much as an invitation for Angelo to see the situations through her eyes but as a lamentation of his refusal to do so. She then moves on to the most powerful substitution of place and power that she can conjure: “How would you be / If He, which is the top of judgment, should / But judge you as you are?” (2.2.76–78). The hypothetical substitutions proposed by Isabella—first with herself, then with Claudio, and finally with God—are all intended to shift Angelo’s perspective from its current situatedness to a position of diminished power. This imagined change of power, Isabella suggests, might lead to emotional change—had Angelo been subjected to the power of another in the way that he currently inflicts his own power, his vulnerability might have made him more sympathetic to Claudio’s present condition.

[15] For an analysis of Isabella’s character as primarily motivated by the value of interpersonal relationships see Erika Rackley, “Judging Isabella: Justice, Care, and Relationships in *Measure for Measure*,” in *Shakespeare and the Law*, ed. Paul Raffield and Gary Watt (Oxford and Portland, OR: Hart Publishing, 2008), 65–79.

In focusing on Isabella's pedagogical use of prosopopoeia, my work expands on that of Katharine Eisaman Maus, who observed that "[i]n *Measure for Measure* as in Matthew, appeals for mercy commonly involve similar invitations to occupy, imaginatively, another person's position."[16] A similar example is supplied by Escalus, who, citing the centrality of contingency, cautiously asks Claudio "whether you had not sometime in your life / Erred in this point which now you censure him, / And pulled the law upon you" (2.1.14–16). Maus suggests that such imaginative exercises in taking the place of another are intended as preventative measures against enacting the sins one is invited to imagine: "Angelo, the slow learner who cannot suppose himself capable of Claudio's 'slip,' is made physically to reenact it. If he were able to put himself in Claudio's place in the conditional, hypothetical way Isabella and Escalus propose, he would not need to do so in actuality."[17] The primary consequence of Angelo's refusal to inhabit "Claudio's place," for Maus, is found in the dramatic action—Angelo falls victim to the bed trick whereby he unknowingly has sex with Mariana, to whom he has formerly been betrothed. He is now in a similar position to Claudio's, having committed fornication with his (Angelo's) fiancée. The moral of the play is therefore a lesson in humility, that one should not consider oneself above the actions one disdains even to imagine. While I agree with Maus's emphasis on the pedagogical purpose of substitution in Isabella's appeal, my specific focus on the rhetorical trope that underlies such substitution allows for two additional observations: first, that Isabella's pedagogy is designed not only to teach Angelo a moral lesson but also a specifically emotional one. In this lesson, the capacity for emotional variation is directly linked to the ability to imagine oneself in different circumstances. Second, focusing on the trope that Isabella introduces, and that Angelo manipulates reveals the continuity in the characters' dialogue (as opposed to its

[16] Maus, *Inwardness and Theater*, 173.
[17] Maus, 174.

construal as a dynamic of supplication and refusal), and shows how their conversation represents emotional responsiveness or the lack thereof as a dynamic of animation and vitiation.

Isabella's urging of Angelo to imagine himself in hypothetical situations where he inhabits the role of another person makes use of prosopopoeia, understood both as the rich rhetorical trope of classical origins and, more specifically, as a pedagogical method employed in Renaissance humanist education.[18] As a rhetorical figure and literary device prosopopoeia, literally translatable as *face-making*, is the personification through language of persons and things that cannot speak. In his third-century treatise *On Style*, Demetrius of Phalerum assigns prosopopoeia the function of anthropomorphizing dead ancestors and conceptually abstract, geopolitical entities, and credits the rhetorical device with producing an "energy of style."[19] Its role is to energize, animate, and enliven texts. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* lists the various functions of this trope under the heading of *conformatio*:

> Personification [*conformatio*] consists in representing an absent person as present, or in making a mute thing or one lacking form articulate, and attributing to it a definite form and a language or a certain behavior appropriate to its character.[20]

[18] While the immediate context of *Measure for Measure* is that of Christian theology, the play's attention to persuasion and emotional instruction discloses its humanistic interests. The play's debt to classical sources is also evidenced in the Duke's Senecan consolation of Claudio in the prison cell (3.1.5–41), and in its thematic exploration of a theocracy such a promoted in Plato's *Laws*. See Debora Shuger, *Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England: The Sacred and the State in Measure for Measure* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 9–38.

[19] Paxson, *Poetics of Personification*, 12. This paragraph relies on Paxson's historical survey of prosopopoeia.

[20] I cite from the Loeb edition, which attributes the text to Cicero; however, others attribute it to an anonymous author. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Loeb Critical Edition, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 4.66, 398–99.

Personification, the *Rhetorica* concludes, "is most useful in the divisions under Amplification and in Appeal to Pity" (*proficit plurimum in amplificationis partibus et commiseratione*), a function that makes it especially potent for Isabella's goal of moving Angelo to pity.[21]

The efficacy of personification for persuasion is repeated in the *Institutio Oratoria*, where Quintilian assigns prosopopoeia the specific role of inventing "a hypothetical voice for a client in a court of law."[22] Quintilian writes that

> by this means we display the inner thoughts of our adversaries as though they were talking with themselves (but we shall only carry conviction if we represent them as uttering what they may reasonably be supposed to have had in their minds); or without sacrifice of credibility we may introduce conversations between ourselves and others, or of others among themselves, and put words of advice, reproach, complaint, praise or pity into the mouths of appropriate persons.[23]

Quintilian's treatment of prosopopoeia as a tool in adversarial legal systems highlights the fictionality that underlies prosopopoeitic efforts as well as it limits—the words we "put" [*damus*] into the mouths of others have to be reasonable [*non sit absurdum*] for them, and the characters to whom we attribute speech must be "appropriate" [*idoneas*], but the standard for credibility is plausibility rather than factuality. It is ultimately the role of an impartial judge to decide between the colorful versions of events presented by different advocates. Quintilian cautions that using prosopopoeia to create credible fictions makes "a great demand on our powers of eloquence," and the efficacy of such fictions when successful is accompanied by an equal risk of failure: "either they will move our hearers with exceptional force because they are beyond the truth, or they will be regarded as empty nothings because they are not the truth."[24]

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[21] Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 4.66, 400–401. Also cited in Paxson, 13–14. Paxson later discusses Cicero's distaste to the use of personification (16).
[22] Paxson, 17.
[23] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, vol. 3, Loeb Classical Library, trans. H. E. Butler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann LTD, 1959), 9.2.30, 390–91.
[24] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 9.2.33, 392–93.

In its Renaissance pedagogical application, prosopopoeia was employed throughout the Latin education of English schoolboys and, according to Lynn Enterline, shaped their emotional lives. At the most advanced levels of Latin acquisition, exercises in prosopopoeia required students to produce an oration for a hypothetical state by impersonating an ancient or mythological figure. Textbooks like the *Epitome* of Susenbrotus and the *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius "directed pupils essentially to place themselves in hypothetical or imaginative situations, sometimes historical, sometimes mythological, and to create their own Latin text."[25] Among the examples found in the *Progymnasmata*, which also supply Lynn Enterline's primary case studies of prosopopoeia in Shakespearean drama, are prompts that ask students to compose orations in the voices of various classical women in grief, such as Niobe or Hecuba.[26] Enterline's study of *vulgaria* (introductory exercises in translation) also shows that the use of prosopopoeia was not limited to ancient or mythological cases. Instead, the scope of impersonation exercises expanded to include contemporary situations as well as mythological ones, and everyday figures rather than exclusively the dead. Exercises in translation would "depart from precursors by making impersonations of familiar people the foundation for language learning," including getting up from bed to go to school, apologizing for misbehaviors, and impersonating a schoolmaster's complaint about workplace politics.[27] Isabella's repeated suggestions that Angelo assume her or Claudio's set of concerns—the "remorse" she feels for her brother (2.2.54), the weakness of their positions in comparison to himself—similarly draw on the imaginative capacity for perspectival shift and its associated affective implications. Enterline writes that by making students take on the position of familiar persons, exercises in translation transformed "familiar situations into mise-en-scènes

[25] Leonard Barkan, "What did Shakespeare read?" in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 36; also quoted in Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, 80.
[26] Enterline, 83.
[27] Enterline, 80–82.

of dramatic personation," a practice that simultaneously relies on the familiarity of familiar experiences and defamiliarizes them.[28] Affecting the social education of schoolboys as well as their progression in Latin, these exercises would populate everyday life with "characters *qua* characters—voices to assume, or not, as need arises."[29]

Isabella's appeal for mercy, I suggest, draws on both the presumed efficacy of prosopopoeia in a court of law and on its pedagogical usefulness for initiating practices of feeling. Her plea is essentially an invitation to personify different characters—herself (a sister in grief over her brother's sentencing), Claudio (a lover forced to die because of an understandable mistake), and Angelo's future self (a sinner facing God on Judgment Day). In asking Angelo to inhabit the circumstances and feelings of different characters, she draws on a pedagogical tradition by which students learned not only Latin grammar but also emotional vocabularies and expressions. At the same time, Isabella's pedagogical focus turns out to be ineffective in the legal context of her encounter with Angelo. Instead of taking on the role of advocate and performing the advanced exercise of prosopopoeia herself by giving voice to her incarcerated brother, she asks Angelo to do so. But the potential of *conformatio* to arouse pity in the *Rhetorica*, as well as the special potency of the trope in the court of law that Quintilian praises, depend on the skill of the advocate, not the judge. The advocate rather than the judge is the one who can "voice the feelings of the unhappy victims, men whose appearance alone would call forth tears even though they uttered never a word."[30] It is therefore Isabella who should make Claudio, sentenced to death, present as if she were bringing him back to life. In her attempt to arouse Angelo's sympathy, Isabella fails to personify Claudio herself through giving speech to his special circumstances.[31]

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[28] Enterline, 81.
[29] Enterline, 81.
[30] Quintilian, *Institutio*, 6.1.26, cited in Paxson, *Poetics of Personification*, 18.
[31] Lever posits a similar criticism of Isabella: "At no point in the crucial debate of II. ii does she set forth Claudio's special case, or urge the arguments for moderation which stem from his

Although Angelo fails to respond to Isabella's pleas to personify specific familiar people (herself, the condemned Claudio, and even his own future self on Judgment Day), his refusal to engage Isabella emotionally still engages her rhetorically by taking the form of personification. Angelo, as we shall see, manipulates prosopopoeia to represent himself as the mere voice of the law, a position that eliminates his judicial agency and prevents him from considering Claudio's personal circumstances or changing his sentence. At the same time, I suggest, even if prosopopoeia helps Angelo maintain his detachment from Isabella's grief and Claudio's misfortune, the emotional potency of the trope (which Angelo tries to quell) nevertheless reemerges in his personification of the law and leads to inadvertent emotional disclosures on his part.

Angelo's assertion—"It is the law, not I, condemn your brother" (2.2.81)—relinquishes his agency and instead imputes it to the law in personified form. By attributing the verb *condemn* to the law, Angelo transforms it from a corpus of inert written rules and precedence to an entity with the power to condemn people directly. Ascribing absolute agency and authority to the law allows Angelo to suppress the role played by human beings in the administration of justice—his selective use of prosopopoeia to animate only the letter of the law instead of the "full" selfhood and judicial agency of the Duke is the rhetorical trick that enables his extreme prioritization of legal edict over judicial discretion (1.1.43). Interestingly, Angelo's anthropomorphizing of the law consists entirely in describing the law's actions—he does not imbue the law with speech, even though making inarticulate things articulate is one of the central practices of prosopopoeia. Whereas Socrates in the *Crito*

individual plight." Lever, introduction to *Measure for Measure*, lxviii. My analysis does not answer the question *why* Isabella fails to use personification to represent Claudio's circumstances. At the same time, it would be remiss not to acknowledge the ample discussion that has been dedicated to Isabella's moral and emotional qualities. George L. Geckle's survey provides a sense of the main criticisms of her character, as well as some of the central defenses. See George L. Geckle, "Shakespeare's Isabella," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1971): 163–68.

stages a conversation with the laws to show that obedience to them is ultimately grounded in contractual consent ("Socrates," they say, "is this the agreement you made with us, or did you agree to abide by the verdicts pronounced by the state?"), Angelo's coercive model requires no dialogue but relies on the law's unmediated action. It might be said that for Angelo, the letter of the law itself is sufficient speech.[32]

In its prioritization of action, Angelo's personification of the law reverses the usual force of the trope—it is he that is mute on legal matters, and the law takes the part of the true agent that animates him. Through Angelo, himself void of volition, the law can act. Angelo goes beyond giving the law "a mode of appearing in language," and instead strives to give it a mode of acting in the world.[33] In practice, Angelo says that he has no authority to deviate from the letter of the law. Thomas Hobbes's theory of personation, published in *Leviathan* almost fifty years after the composition of the play, provides a helpful articulation of the principles that govern this dynamic. Hobbes defines a person as "he *whose words or actions are considered either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of another man, or of any other thing to whom they are attributed, whether truly or by fiction.*"[34] A "natural" person is one who represents their own words or actions, whereas a "feigned or artificial"

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[32] Plato, "Crito," in *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, Loeb Classical Edition, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard Univeristy Press, 1914), 50d, 177.

[33] Orlemanski, "Prosopopoeia, Medium Specificity, and the Art of Centralized Administration," 7.

[34] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1994), 1.16.1, 101 (original emphasis). All subsequent citations of this text are taken from this edition and indicated parenthetically. For a discussion of Hobbes's theory of personification see Andrew Escobedo, *Volition's Face: Personification and the Will in Renaissance Literature* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 2017), 84–87. For Hobbes, Escobedo concludes, "all personhood is comparable to theatrical presentation… Thus, although Hobbesian personation differs importantly from traditional premodern personification, it does not predicate political consent or authority on a special notion of self or will. Consent and authority produce, rather than derive from, personhood as Hobbes conceives it" (87). Strier discusses the evacuations of persons from the dynamic of Hobbesian personation in the second part of *Henry IV*. See Strier, "Shakespeare and Legal Systems," 175–76.

person, as Angelo purports to be, is one who represent the words or actions of another (1.16.2). Personhood for Hobbes is essentially action ("a *person* is the same that an *actor* is, both on the stage and in common conversation"), and personation is acting as oneself or another (1.16.3). When one person personates another; that is, when one acts or speaks in the name of another, the first is called the *actor* and the second, the *author* (1.16.4). The author's consent authorizes the actor to act in the author's name. It is a dynamic like this author-actor relationship that Angelo seeks to invoke when he personifies the law. While "it is the law, not I condemn your brother" gives specific form to the law per the *Rhetorica* (the law takes the form of a human being who is able to condemn another), it also articulates a specific power dynamic in which the law is the sole possessor of agency, and Angelo is the powerless party. Angelo's role in this dynamic is not to apply the law or to involve his own volitions in making judicial decisions, but to function as a *prosopon*, the mere face of the law. His use of prosopopoeia is as vitiating as it is animating; he relinquishes agency by describing himself as merely the actor that acts according to the authority of the law. His own volitions, whatever they may be—even he were to feel mercy—are irrelevant.

Importantly, Angelo's attribution of agency to the law deviates from the Hobbesian model on one significant issue. Ever wary of abstract and variously interpretable sources of power, Hobbes is clear that "things inanimate cannot be authors" (1.16.9). Inanimate things (like the law) do not possess agency that they can confer on others, and it can be dangerous to allow people to assume more power than they ought to have by purporting to act in their name. Whoever wishes to personate an inanimate object, then, must first possess authority over that object before they can act in its name. An overseer, for example, has the authority over the bridge he or she oversees and can therefore act for the bridge in procuring its maintenance (1.16.9). But the baker walking across the same bridge cannot do the same. In essence, one who personates an inanimate object is a "natural person" acting on their own

authority. Such a person is not engaged in an author-actor relationship with the inanimate object, and his or her personation of it can be understood as a stylistic choice rather than a system of authorization. Since personating inanimate things depends on a system for determining authority over them, Hobbes concludes that "such things cannot be personated before there be some state of civil government" (1.16.9). In *Measure for Measure*, the law is an inanimate thing that cannot by itself give authority. Angelo, as deputy to the Duke, is the one who possesses authority over it. But when he personifies the law—"the law, not I"—he does not treat this personification as a merely stylistic choice. Angelo rather invokes a power dynamic akin to Hobbes's author-actor relationship, where the law is the author and he is the actor. By rhetorically imagining the law as a person who condemns others, Angelo also imagines it as an author who can authorize action in its own name. It is through the prosopopoeitic imagining of the law, which transforms it from an inanimate thing into a person, that Angelo can then personate the law as an actor personating an author. In correlation, Angelo's evacuation of his own agency accentuates his character as not a person but a persona, one licenses extremes of merciless justice or puritanism.

Indeed, the representative of civil government required by Hobbes is the one that Angelo was tasked with personating in the first place. As I said above, the Duke has instructed Angelo to be "at full ourself" in his absence and entrusted him with "mortality and mercy in Vienna" rather than only the enforcement of the law (1.1.43–44). Isabella, as suggested in the previous section, also strives to remind Angelo that the Duke has authorized him to act in his name as sovereign, not only in the name of the law. Yet Angelo chooses the limited personification of the law over personifying the "full" person of the Duke. In personifying the law rather than the sovereign who possesses authority over it, he manipulates the rhetorical trope that Kathy Eden terms "the fiction of the resurrected lawmaker," an interpretive strategy allowing courts to accommodate particular circumstances

by appealing to the legislator's intentions.[35] Cognizant of the fact that the real-life circumstances and contingencies greatly exceed the paradigmatic scenarios the written law could account for, Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* suggests to rectify the defects of the general rule by "deciding as the lawgiver would himself decide if he were present on the occasion."[36] Cicero adopts the same method in *De inventione*, where he proposes the claim that "the author of the law himself, if he should rise from the dead, would approve this act, and would have done the same if he had been in a similar situation."[37] By contrast, Angelo imagines the letter of the law as resurrected rather than the lawmaker in order to prioritize the written rule over the intended flexibility of the lawmaker:

> The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept.
> Those many had not dared to do that evil
> If the first that did th'edict infringe
> Had answered for his deed. Now 'tis awake,
> Takes note of what is done, and like a prophet
> Looks in a glass that shows what future evils
> Either new, or by remissness new-conceived
> And so in progress to be hatched and born,
> Are not to have no successive degrees,
> But ere they live to end. (2.2.91–99)

But even though Angelo intends for his speech to demonstrate the absolute agency of the law the imaginative effort of prosopopoeia ultimately divulges to the audience his own emotional investment in legal formalism. In Angelo's speech the personified law inhabits a drama where forces of good must confront forces of evil. The law resembles a sleeping giant, a prophet, a policy maker, and an executioner. It perceives, understands, and makes plans. Evils are also personified as newly conceived embryos that must be eliminated before they come into the world. These evils are "hatched" like vipers, but they can also be "born," like

[35] Kathy Eden, *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 15.
[36] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 5.10.5; quoted in Eden, *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition*, 16.
[37] Cicero, *De inventione*, 2.47.139; quoted in Eden, 16.

human beings. The analogy between future evils and newly conceived fetuses, while not unique to Shakespeare, assumes a special significance in the context of the play.[38] In its focus on unborn offspring conceived through carelessness, the image reveals an additional target of Angelo's pious aggression—Claudio and Juliet's unborn child. This target, which is innocent and therefore harder to delegitimize than Claudio himself, emerges only during Angelo's flight of fancy. As Angelo begins to populate the world of the personified law with other dramatic personae—the unborn children that the law seeks to "end"—his true affective investment in legal enforcement is revealed: the aggressiveness with which he pursues it, even his anger. Angelo therefore demonstrates Andrew Escobedo's observation that "personifications are trajectories of volitional energy that have taken on a life of their own."[39] Although he has undermined his own volitions and claimed impartiality and emotional detachment ("Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son, / It should be thus with him" [2.2.82–83]), the more he becomes involved in the project of prosopopoeia, the less his image of the law appears to be emotionally detached. It no longer serves as a psychological model for Angelo's hard-heartedness, when the impartiality of the law has allowed Angelo to disengage from other human beings and their specific circumstances. Rather, through personification, the law becomes what Angelo has denied being—a person that possesses both volition and intention. Angelo has attempted to escape Isabella's appeal for affective engagement, but personification has brought him back into his affective motivations.

[38] See, for example, Psalm 58:3: "The wicked are strangers from the womb: *even* from the belly have they erred, and speak lies." I thank Kashaf Qureshi for bringing this source and its affective evocativeness to my attention.
[39] Escobedo, *Volition's Face*, 3.

Angelo does undergo a transformation from unfeeling to feeling, but it is not the empathetic awakening envisioned by Isabella. Instead, he responds to her appeal to pity with sexual desire.40 Although the extent of Angelo's corruption later becomes evident in his sexual exhortation of Isabella (he invites her to "give up [her] body" to him in exchange for her brother's life [2.4.53]), initially he is confused about the moral nature of his feelings. At this earlier point Angelo's newfound desire seems open to multiple interpretations. After Isabella's departure at the end of act 2, scene 2, his immediate reaction is to interpret his breeding sense as sinful lust:

> Oh, fie, fie fie!
> What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?
> Dost thou desire her foully for those things
> That make her good? (2.2.174–77)

For Angelo, who (Lucio tells us) has detached himself from sensual pleasures and committed to "profits of the mind" (1.4.62), his sexual desire for Isabella can only be immoral. At the same time, among his various expressions of self-loathing, Angelo also briefly allows for a positive interpretation of the same feeling: "What, do I love her, / That I desire to hear her speak again / And feast upon her eyes?" (2.2.179–81). For a fleeting three lines, Angelo approaches the rhetoric of a courtly lover praising a beloved lady's voice and eyes. This tender moment suggests that the erotic desire Angelo likens to a "carrion… / Corrupt with virtuous season" could conceivably enjoy the more noble description of love (2.2.169–70). Angelo quickly dismisses this possibility and concludes that his feelings for Isabella result

[40] Female supplication met with male erotic desire is a familiar trope. In one example, Leah Whittington discusses Petrarch's rewriting of Livy in the *Africa*, where Massinissa falls in love with the Carthaginian queen Sophonisba after seeing her beg for her life. Whereas in Livy Sophonisba exploits her sexuality knowingly, Petrarch transforms the queen into a lyric lady after the fashion of a courtly beloved. See Leah Whittington, *Renaissance Suppliants: Poetry, Antiquity, Reconciliation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 98–106.

from devilish machination, but the possibility that erotic desire also marks the onset of the fullness of love has been introduced.

At the end of the speech we also learn that Angelo is surprised by his feelings: "Ever till now / When men were fond, I smiled and wondered how" (2.2.188–89). The disclosure that he never understood men's fondness (understood as doting affection or even a foolish tenderness) complicates Angelo's characterization by making him appear not like one who has labored to quell sensual appetites, as Lucio has described him, but as a novice at feeling. If we believe his statement (Angelo's previous engagement to Mariana may present evidence to the contrary), it changes Angelo from one who suppresses his appetites through strict spiritual and physical training to one who has heretofore confused inexperience with virtue. When his feelings are stirred by the suppliant Isabella, he makes a detrimental interpretive choice to understand his desire as lust rather than love, and once contaminated by sin, he gives his "sensual race the rein" (3.1.157). The foil to this decision is Duke Vincentio, who, moved by Isabella's virtuous petition for Angelo's life at the end of the play, decides to marry her. While the Duke's powerful position makes it unlikely that Isabella, who intended to become a nun, could refuse his proposal, it is hard to ignore the difference between the coercive reciprocity staged by Angelo and the Duke's more genuine idea of mutuality: "I have a motion much imports your good, / Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline, / What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine" (5.1.538–40). Both Angelo and the Duke are moved by the same attraction to Isabella's virtuous pleas for pity, but whereas Angelo interprets his feelings as sinful lust, the Duke, as evidenced by his actions, interprets his own as the noble passion that leads to marriage.

Yet despite Angelo's association of desire with the devil, his personification of his passions in a later speech also reveals his latent understanding of the spiritual value of emotion. Prosopopoeia, which has facilitated emotional disclosures in Angelo's

personification of the law, also leads to an indirect revelation of his spiritual need for emotional awakening. In act 2, scene 4 Angelo likens his newfound and overwhelming passion for Isabella to instances of potentially harmful mass displays of affection:

> O heavens!
> Why does my blood thus muster to my heart,
> Making both it unable for itself
> And dispossessing all my other parts
> Of necessary fitness?
> So play the foolish throngs with one that swoons:
> Come all to help him, and so stop the air
> By which he should revive; and even so
> The general subject to a well-wished king
> Quit their own part and in obsequious fondness
> Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
> Must needs appear offense. (2.4.19–30)

The analogy is complex. Throughout the play, blood has been used to indicate what the editor of the Norton edition has glossed as "basic passions." In the previous act, the Duke says that Angelo "scarce confesses / That his blood flows, or that his appetite / Is more to bread than stone" (1.3.50–53). For the Duke, blood flow is closest somatic marker to appetite, the most animalistic of human volitions and the most basic form of affection. In a similar vein, Escalus urges Angelo to consider whether, when "the resolute acting of [his] blood / Could have attained th'effect of [his] own purpose" (2.1.12–13), he might not have acted as Claudio had. For Escalus, blood stands for sexual desire that possesses an almost independent power to obtain its object. Finally, Lucio tells Isabella that Angelo is "a man whose blood / Is very snow-broth, one who never feels / The wanton stings and motions of the sense" (1.4.58–60). Once again, blood is associated with the unruliness of desire and the responsiveness of the senses. When Angelo says that his blood musters his heart and dispossesses his "other parts," he means that his soul is overcome by its appetitive faculty, and he is incapacitated in the face of his desire.

The passions for which blood stands, however, are not inherently evil, as Angelo had falsely concluded in his previous speech in act 2, scene 2. In this later speech, their virtuous

potential, though gone awry, is revealed through their personification as a well-meaning but uncouth crowd. The "foolish throngs" that "come all to help" intend to "revive" the swooning person, but they end up disrupting his breathing. The loving subjects would express their "obsequious fondness" for the king, but their actions end up causing offense. The fondness that Angelo has previously claimed was completely foreign to him is now reconstrued as an affection that is fundamentally positive but requires regulation. Angelo's heart is compared first to "one that swoons" in a crowd and then to a king.[41] Likened to a fainted person, the heart has ceased its vital functions as "the seat and fountain of life" and "the seat and organ of all passions and affections."[42] No longer feeling passion and no longer conveying blood to the body, it risks spiritual and physical death.[43] The heart is synecdoche for Angelo himself, whose insensibility puts him at spiritual risk. At the same time, as a physical organ that can be personified, it also provides Angelo the distance that allows him to consider his passions in a positive light. Whereas the consensus among the play's characters is that Angelo's emotional rigidity is an essentially virtuous disposition, Angelo's personification of his heart and passions allows for a different interpretation of his emotional condition: he is not unmoved like the Stoic sage who exercises perfect self-control, but rather like an unconscious person who needs to be brought back to life. If his heart was touched by the passions more moderately, the analogy suggests, Angelo would be restored to health. The problem only arises when he is overwhelmed by excessive passion that overwhelms his other faculties.

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[41] The metaphorization is conventional. See Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Holbrook Jackson (New York: New York Review Books, 2001), 153: "Of this region [the chest] the principal part is the heart, which is the seat and fountain of life, of heat, of spirits, of pulse and respiration, the sun of our body, the king and soul commander of it, the seat and organ of all passions and affections." For an additional discussion of the two-way metaphorization of the heart as king see also Robert A. Erickson, *The Language of the Heart, 1600–1750* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 64–65. Erickson invokes an earlier passage in Burton, which he uses to discuss how William Harvey's *Motions of the Heart* uses the trope as a "model for the proper relationship of king and commonwealth."

[42] Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 153.

[43] For the connection of lack of feeling to spiritual death see the introduction.

Angelo's "foolish throngs" speech therefore sheds light on his resemblance to the prisoner Barnardine, who is also affected by spiritual dullness: "A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless of what's past, present, or to come; insensible of mortality, and desperately mortal" (4.2.136–39). Barnardine's drunken stupor renders him insensible to the world, to time, and to life itself. A drunk and a murderer, he has become insensible through self-abandonment, which seems like the opposite of the "study and fast" that have gained Angelo his Stoical reputation (2.1.62). Nevertheless, Angelo's likening of his heart to a fainted person, one whose insensibility is the result of physiological failure, makes his state sound like that of the drunken prisoner. When Barnardine refuses to "die today for any man's persuasion" (4.3.53), the Duke exclaims: "Unfit to live or die! O gravel heart" (4.3.57). As Barnardine's "gravel heart" comes to resemble Angelo's swooning heart in its insensibility, Angelo's unyielding disposition is recast as a sign not of self-control but of a failure to participate in life in the first place.[44] Angelo, who in his previous speech awakens the sleeping law ("the law… hath slept" [2.2.91]), now by personifying his sleeping heart as a fainted person approaches the insight that it is his sleeping heart that requires awakening through personifying it as a fainted person. But for an unfeeling heart, too much passion (as too much blood) all at once is incapacitating rather than reviving. Angelo's speech provides a glimpse into his psychology, where we learn that he does not know how to moderate his emotions and integrate them into his mental life in a beneficial way.

The conventional personification of the heart as king in the next four lines, whereby the seat of passion is also assigned the role of sovereign, suggests an alternative model of

[44] For a discussion of Angelo and Barnardine's insensibilities as variations of human life see Timothy Harrison, "Forms of Sentience in Early Modernity" (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2014), 147–54.

self-governance to Angelo's usual subordination of passion to strict moral rules.[45] The heart is the organ of affection, and as a king its rule cannot be dissociated from its affective function. The well-meaning subjects that desire the presence of the king and cause offense by crowding him do so through uncoordinated action rather than by revolt. By analogy, excessive passion is not a rebellious faculty that rises against reason, but too much of a good thing—blood rushes to the heart to convey love but overwhelms it in a way that makes the passion inappropriate. The key term is "untaught love," a potentially beneficial emotional energy that ends up causing offense because it has not been refined through proper education. The Duke has acknowledged a similar dynamic between ruler and subjects in the first act of the play:

> I'll privily away. I love the people,
> But do not like to stage me to their eyes.
> Though it do well, I do not relish well
> Their loud applause and aves vehement,
> Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
> That does affect it (1.1.67–72).

Passionate displays of affection are fundamentally benevolent and occasionally allowing them is useful, but sovereignty requires both love for the people and distance from their excessive flattery. For Angelo, self-governance similarly depends on acknowledging the positive core of passion. Although the lesson is never learnt, Angelo's closest approximation to insight is achieved through the emotional energy afforded by personification.

[45] Burton assigns the head the role of "privy counselor and chancellor to the heart" (150).

Measure for Measure examines the possibilities of prosopopoeia for emotional learning. A trope that infuses texts with life and energy and a central element of schoolboys' socialization, prosopopoeia promises to teach emotional scenarios, practices, and vocabularies. Shakespeare's play suggests that the most important potential benefit of prosopopoeia for emotional education is its potential for cultivating empathy by imagining oneself in another person's position. But as *The Merchant of Venice* demonstrates and *Measure for Measure* elaborates, exercises in personification do not always achieve this educational goal. Prosopopoeia's power to enliven and energize texts even beyond the intentions of their authors (as demonstrated in Angelo's partial acknowledgement of his need for emotional awakening) reveals the centrality of emotional education for ethical conduct, but the trope nevertheless sometimes fails in achieving this education in full.

Chapter 3: The Emotive Sensibility of Milton's Divorce Tracts

Passions, Obligations, and Emotive Sensibility

In turning to Milton in this chapter and the next, I shift my focus from unmoved emotions in their social and interpersonal contexts, where they reveal the dependency of purported universal ethics on an imagined and unstable emotional consensus, to the context of what Milton, following Paul, terms the "inner man" (*Tetrachordon* 308). The central problem of the divorce tracts is one of unmoved emotion—a husband that does not love his wife. In his striving to extricate such a husband from his unhappy marriage by legalizing divorce, I argue, Milton attempts to articulate how the conditions of human affectivity also constrain what can reasonably constitute moral obligation. In other words, when a perceived obligation contradicts deeply felt emotional convictions, this obligation is revealed to have been spurious in the first place. The following chapter then shows how the claims of the divorce tracts inform Milton's psychology of sin in *Paradise Lost*.

The departure point for this chapter is Victoria Kahn's persuasive claim that in the divorce tracts, Milton reverses the usual order of passion and obligation: "Milton made passion itself a source of obligation rather than having obligation dictate passion."[1] My goal is to expand on the nature of the emotions that Kahn discusses under the heading of "passion" to show that Milton develops unique affective categories that provide a source for normativity. In arguing that an unloving husband should be able to divorce his wife, Kahn says, Milton derives duty from passion instead of conforming passion to the requirements of duty. The relation between passion and obligation is descriptive as well as prescriptive.

[1] Victoria Kahn, *Wayward Contracts: The Crisis of Political Obligation in England, 1640–1674* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 199.

Where there is no passion, Milton seems to say, there is no marital obligation either. As Jean H. Hagstrum succinctly says and Milton vehemently argues, in the divorce tracts "love creates marriage as the sun creates the day."[2] Love has a constitutive role in marriage, and its absence is evidence that a couple has not been joined by God in the first place.[3]

This new subordination of obligation to passion stands in stark contrast not only to received notions about the subservience of passion to virtue, but also specifically, to the instruction customarily found among other matrimonial writers in Milton's time. Writers such as Robert Cleaver, John Dod, and William Gouge took love to be "the proper duty of the husband" rather than his privilege.[4] They read Paul's instruction: "Husbands, love your wives" as closely bound with the authority husbands held over their wives.[5] Conjugal love, for these authors, was meant to temper the husband's superior power and persuade wives to submit to their husbands willingly.[6] By contrast, Milton takes the superiority of husbands not to saddle them with a greater duty of love, but to give greater weight to their love or hatred in determining the validity of the marriage bond. Since, as Milton never ceases to remind us,

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[2] Jean H. Hagstrum, *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 24. Although Hagstrum's example is illustrative of the conviction with which Milton argues that marriage is constituted internally rather than by ritual, I disagree with his emphasis on the role of changing dispositions over time for Milton's doctrine of divorce. Whereas Hagstrum concludes that the marriage ends "when the sun sets," an occurrence that might result from "personal change" (24), I do not see in the divorce tracts any accommodation for ending a marriage that has grown sour over time. Since, as we shall see, matrimonial compatibility results from the immutable nature of the marriage partners, it seems impossible that compatible partners would become incompatible and vice versa. For Milton, a change in feeling must be understood as the discovery of an incompatibility that has been present, though latently, all along.

[3] This claim is repeated throughout the divorce tracts. See for example *Doctrine* 1.13, 133: "so when it shall be found by their apparent unfitness, that their continuing to be man and wife is against the glory of God and their mutual happiness, it may assure them that God never joined them."

[4] John Halkett, *Milton and the Idea of Matrimony: A Study of the Divorce Tracts and Paradise Lost* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970), 82–85, especially 83.

[5] Halkett, *Milton and the Idea of Matrimony*, 82.

[6] Halkett, 83.

both woman and marriage were created "for man" (*Doctrine* 2.1, 136; 2.15, 168), marriage laws ought to prioritize men's emotions toward their wives.

As Kahn has observed, when passions are understood as a source for obligation, they are "not just a motive for obligation but an obstacle as well."[7] This is because we do not control our passions, at least not entirely. So, while passion does act as a strong motivator to consent to an obligation, it nevertheless maintains its original opacity—we may not know why we are moved to take on certain obligations and not others, even as we derive social and political obligations based on our passions. More pertinently to the subject of marriage, passion becomes an obstacle to obligation when it is absent. The husband who cannot love his wife finds himself in a double bind—on the one hand, the law obligates him to remain in his unhappy marriage; on the other hand, his own passion tells him that he cannot possibly be bound in the same marriage. Kahn summarizes the problem and its implications for Milton's longstanding theological commitments: "In psychologizing charity, Milton both answered the question of motive and introduced an element of psychological determinism that was in tension with his emphasis on free will."[8] Milton's description of the unhappy husband who is bound in marriage against his desire conveys the paradox of such an obligation:

> And there is no Christian duty that is not to be seasoned and set off with cheerfulness, which in a thousand outward and intermitting crosses may yet be done well, as in this vale of tears, but in such a bosom-affliction as this, crushing the very foundations of his inmost nature, *when he shall be forced to love against a possibility,* and to use a dissimulation against his soul in the perpetual and ceaseless duties of a husband, doubtless his whole duty of serving God must needs be blurred and tainted with a sad unpreparedness and dejection of spirit, wherein God has no delight. (*Doctrine* 1.7, 119, my emphasis)

Milton distinguishes "outward… crosses" from "bosom affliction"—whereas the former can be endured, the latter sets an insurmountable obstacle to marriage. Since being "forced to love against a possibility" presents a paradoxical requirement to achieve the unachievable,

[7] Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 201.
[8] Kahn, 200–201.

the only way to fulfill the requirements of an unhappy marriage is for the husband to perform a "dissimulation against his soul," an effortful deception that makes the drawn-out duties of the husband "perpetual and ceaseless." This passage in *The Doctrine* bears out Kahn's persuasive claim that letting passion determine obligation confronts Milton with the constraints of passion—its irresistibility and seemingly arbitrary choice of object—as well as its allowances.

My reading of Milton's divorce tracts begins where Kahn leaves off. Whereas Kahn examines the love and hatred that according to Milton make or break a marriage under the heading of *passions*, I argue that in the divorce tracts Milton attempts to develop a new register for speaking about human affectivity that would advance his argumentative goal. This register is troubled, inchoate, and full of contradictions, precisely because its author aims to articulate a form of affectivity that is at once powerfully compelling and distinct from the violent power of passion. Whereas passions are traditionally understood as motivators that inform human action, the emotions described in the divorce tracts determine ways of human being. Such emotions circumscribe the horizons for individual happiness, they provide reasons rather than require the rule of reason, they are sources of identification rather than threats to individual coherence and integrity (not to adhere to such emotions, as we have seen, is a "dissimulation against [one's] soul"), and they determine which society a person can inhabit peacefully. Milton's account of human affectivity in the divorce tracts does not, I suggest, replace his more traditional understanding of the passions as upheavals that ought to be governed by reason. It rather articulates an additional facet of emotional life that dignifies emotion as a source for moral obligation and different ways of living.

Milton employs a variety of terms for discussing the deeply held emotional convictions he defends in the divorce tracts, which I address in my discussion below. Sometimes grouped under the heading of *affection*, they are "natural affections and

disaffections" (*Doctrine* 2.7, 152), or "radical and innocent affections of nature" (*Doctrine* 2.21, 185).[9] At other times, Milton addresses three foundational emotional dispositions—loneliness, love, and hatred. Loneliness is "begot in paradise" and still drives people to seek the society of a fit partner in marriage; love defines and sustains the marital bond; and hatred for an unfit wife is "not that hate that sins, but that which only is natural dissatisfaction and the turning aside from a mistaken object" (*Doctrine* 1.4, 115). *Nature* emerges as a key term for distinguishing the foundational emotions of loneliness, love, and hatred, which cannot be altered, from transient passions. Finally, Milton sometimes uses paradoxical language to convey the uniqueness of such emotions. In addition to sinless hatred, for example, *The Doctrine* also describes the righteous longing for a mate as a "rational burning" (*Doctrine* 1.4, 114)—an expression that yokes the burning of passion with the coolness of reason.

Discussing Milton's project therefore requires a special term to capture Milton's multifaceted and innovative characterization of emotion in the divorce tracts and to distinguish the emotions he defends from the more limited category of passion. *Emotive sensibility* has been used by James Grantham Turner to describe the importance of emotion in *Areopagitica*: "Even before the fall, Milton assumes, passion and emotive sensibility are the very constituents of humanity."[10] The term is helpful for my purpose as well due to its despecification of emotion categories. While, as we shall see, I perceive a break between Milton's characterization of emotion in *Areopagitica* and his project in the divorce tracts, Turner's *emotive sensibility* nevertheless creates the linguistic space necessary for discussing

[9] Nevertheless, it would be too simplistic to say that Milton distinguishes virtuous affections from violent passions. *Affection* is not a strictly positive term in Milton's economy of emotion, as shown in his acknowledgment of the "violent affections" of youth (*Doctrine* 2.21, 190).

[10] James Grantham Turner, *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 179. Whereas Turner uses "emotive sensibility" to indicate a similarity between *Areopagitica* and *The Doctrine* in relation to Milton's fluid movement between pre- and postlapsarian states, I later propose a fundamental difference in the type of emotive sensibility invoked by the two treatises.

the "radical and innocent affections," the "rational burning," and the natural causes that lead to divorce under a single heading.

Pursuing Milton's account of emotive sensibility illuminates the contribution of the divorce tracts to the history of emotions, an angle that has not yet been adequately addressed despite recent scholarly interest in Renaissance passions in general and in Milton's view of the passions in particular.[11] With their exegetical effort, vivid emotional language, and radical positions on both marriage and liberty, the divorce tracts invite a variety of interpretational approaches. Some readers have argued that the tracts reveal aspects of Milton's self-narration (although the position that the tracts manifest Milton's public response to his private predicament, his desertion by Mary Powell, is largely abandoned).[12] Others have situated the divorce tracts in the context of Milton's other civil war prose during the 1640s. Arthur Edward Barker has discussed Milton's development of the concepts of Christian and natural liberty in the tracts, and Ernest Sirluck illuminates Milton's indebtedness to contemporary developments in the theorization of natural law.[13] Focusing on marriage and sexuality, authors such as Hagstrum, John Halkett, and Turner have concentrated on Milton's unusual

[11] For recent scholarship on the passions in Milton's works see Karis G. Riley, "Milton, the Passions, and the Knowing Body," *The Seventeenth Century* 35, no. 1 (2020): 31–53; Michael Schoenfeldt, "'Commotion Strange': Passion in Paradise Lost," in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, ed. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Tilmouth, *Passions Triumph over Reason*, 190–209; Chien-Wei Yang, "From Passion to Affection: Milton's System of Emotion in Paradise Lost," *Tamkang Review* 0, no. 2 (June 2020), n.p.

[12] On Milton's self-representation in the divorce tracts see Stephen M. Fallon, "The Spur of Self-Concernment: Milton in His Divorce Tracts," Milton Studies 38 (2000): 220–42; Annabel Patterson, "No Meer Amatorious Novel?," in *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose: Essays*, ed. David Loewenstein and James Turner (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[13] Arthur Edward Barker, *Milton and the Puritan Dilemma: 1641–1660*, Studies and Texts, no. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 98–120; Ernest Sirluck, introduction to *Complete Prose Works of John Milton, Vol. II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 12–52, 150–58.

expectations from conjugal love in the divorce tracts.[14] By contrast, little work has been done to examine how the divorce tracts also participate in the seventeenth-century effort of characterizing and categorizing the emotions.[15] While for writers such as Edward Reynolds, William Fenner, Jean-François Senault, and Thomas Wright, analyzing the passions and affections is an explicit and methodical effort, for Milton it is secondary and, I suggest, subservient to his argumentative cause. Driven by the needs of this cause, Milton's entanglement in the theorization of the emotions produces insights that are not as readily accessible to more methodical thinkers. Milton's desire to justify divorce on emotive grounds and his willingness to derive obligation from emotion make him contend with the fact that powerful emotion is experienced not merely as an external force or compulsion, but also as a reason for action with which the person who feels it can identify.

Milton's tracts often labor to distinguish the love or hatred that a husband may bear toward his wife—inclinations that he views as fundamental and unchangeable—from mere passion. The cruel bonds of an unhappy marriage, Milton says, compel "not against a sudden passion but against the permanent and radical discords of nature," and the inclinations that determine whether a marriage would be successful or miserable result from "a peculiar sway of liking or disliking in the affairs of matrimony" (*Tetrachordon* 278). Such feelings are both more general and more specific than regular passions. They are more general because they

[14] Hagstrum, *Sex and Sensibility*, 24–34; John Halkett, *Milton and the Idea of Matrimony*; Turner, *One Flesh*, 188–229.

[15] Sharon Achinstein suggests that "wrath, the sundering of bonds, is Milton's subject in his divorce tracts" and that "Milton's advocacy of human volition and emphasis on the importance of individual feelings forge the basis of his vision of the political subject." See Sharon Achinstein, "A Law in this matter to himself': Contextualizing Milton's Divorce Tracts," in *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 175, 184. My work extends Achinstein's observation that Milton makes "emotional and political breakthroughs" in the divorce tracts (175). However, as I discuss below, I perceive a divide in the divorce tracts between "human volition" and "individual feelings"—a divide already present in Achinstein's parenthetical remark that Milton's language is "intriguingly pessimistic in its invocation of the 'irremediable disposition of man'" (180).

are not transient moods that come over a person and then leave them as they were, but rather stalwart inclinations that define a person's nature. Their greater specificity is in belonging to the exclusive context of matrimony, since, as Milton is happy to grant, there are many "who can be friendly, can respect each other, yet to marry each other would not for any persuasion" (*Tetrachordon* 278). This specificity can again be explained by the intimacy of the marriage bond, which necessitates greater emotional concord than do more casual relationships. The "permanent and radical discords of nature" therefore point to a person's essential characteristics, those traits that make one oneself. In other words, whereas passions for Milton are rash and unreliable, the love or hatred that determine the success of marriage are permanent and foundational.

It would also seem wrong to argue that in either the divorce tracts or in *Paradise Lost*, the texts I examine in this second half of the dissertation, Milton condones the idea that ungovernable passion should be taken into consideration in assessing moral obligation. Taking to the traditional understanding of passions as forceful but transient upheavals, in *Paradise Lost* Milton describes their usurpation of reason as a direct result of the fall:

> but high winds worse within
> Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
> Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
> Their inward state of mind (9.1122–25)

The similarity in wording between *The Doctrine* and *Paradise Lost* is instructive. Whereas Adam and Eve also experience "hate" and "discord," they experience such emotions under the heading of passion rather than as the more radical disaffection described in *The Doctrine*. Adam and Eve are not expected to act on the hatred and discord they feel but rather to overcome such passions and find reconciliation in order to rebuild a world for mankind.[16] In

[16] For a discussion of the "new if fragile structure of human relationships" after the fall in *Paradise Lost* see Kevis Goodman, "'Wasted Labor'? Milton's Eve, the Poet's Work, and the Challenge of Sympathy," *ELH* 64, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 415–46, especially 431.

contrast to the violent passions that pursue one another, each taking the other's place, in *The Doctrine* Milton invokes the unchangeable emotions of "nature's resistless sway in love or hate" and "radical discords" as legitimate reasons for divorce (*Doctrine* 2.21, 186; *Tetrachordon* 278).[17] Such disaffections are located in the divorce tracts at a more fundamental level of human identification than mere passion, and it is in this sense that I treat them as a case of unmoved emotions. While Milton uses similar terms (hatred and discord) for individual passions and emotive sensibilities, he invokes different kinds of feeling in each case. Adam and Eve after their fall suffer upheavals of passion that ought to be remedied, whereas the unhappy postlapsarian husband of Milton's time feels a stable, natural affection that ought to be obeyed.

Yet to observe the difficulty that Milton would have had in condoning passion traditionally conceived as a source for obligation, one does not have to look so far into the future as *Paradise Lost*. In *Areopagitica,* published in the same year as the second edition of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644), Milton illustrates a thoroughly different relationship between emotion and normativity than the one that emerges in *The Doctrine* and the later divorce tracts. In contrast to the model of *The Doctrine* that derives obligation from emotive sensibility, *Areopagitica* for all its liberal treatment of the press, employs a more traditional model of psychomachia in relation to passion. *Areopagitica* contains an account of the passions that, as Turner writes, also ascribes them a crucial role in human life. At the same time, this account is distinct from that of the divorce tracts, both in its focus on passion as opposed to a wider range of emotive sensibilities and in the more traditional and recognizable relationship it portrays between a person and his or her passions. Milton

[17] It is worth noting how Milton's position about the impossibility of affective change may be at odds with his own biography—shortly after their marriage in 1642, Milton's new wife Mary Powell left him and returned to her family in Oxfordshire. However, Powell returned to her husband after three years. See Nicholas McDowell, *Poet of Revolution: The Making of John Milton*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 371.

famously asserts the importance of the passions for the virtuous living of the warring Christian:

> If every action which is good, or evill in man at ripe years, were to be under pittance, and prescription, and compulsion, what were vertue but a name, what praise could be then due to well-doing, what grammercy to be sober, just, or continent? many there be that complain of divin Providence for suffering *Adam* to transgresse, foolish tongues! when God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had bin else a meer artificiall *Adam*, such an *Adam* as he is in the motions. We our selves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force: God therefore left him free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did he creat passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly temper'd are the very ingredients of vertu?[18]

In this oft-cited passage, passions are the "ingredients of vertue" in the same way that yeast and flour are the ingredients of bread: they must be selected, portioned, processed, and monitored to arrive at a successful outcome. As movements of the will, passions are necessary for human freedom, since without them there would be no voluntary action, either sinful or virtuous. At the same time, the most important action a person takes in relation to his or her passions in *Areopagitica* is that of choosing. Reason chooses which passions ought to be heeded and under what circumstances, which ought to be resisted, and which ought to be tempered. Therefore virtue, which manifests in sobriety, justice, and continence, results from restraining the passions rather than indulging them.

Milton's emphasis on the role of reason in choosing among the passions suggests that people experience their passions not as properties essential to themselves but as influences that are external to their core personhood. The continuity between "passions within us" and its apposition, "pleasures round about us" indicates that passions correlate to the external world, where "pleasures" refers to the sources of pleasure or its objects. We are surrounded by sources of pleasure, which rise to our passions. At the same time, since the passions are

[18] John Milton, *Areopagitica*, in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton, Vol. 2*, ed. Ernest Sirluck (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 527.

within us, they are subject to human sovereignty. While passions can feel compelling, they nevertheless also present themselves to reason's judgment as discrete entities. The psychological model of *Areopagitica* therefore brings to mind Spenserian allegory in which a subject meets tempting passions and attempts to respond to them virtuously by relying on their reason and spiritual strength.[19] Fittingly, the paradigmatic example of innocent passion in *Areopagitica* is Adam's prelapsarian encounter with a "provoking object." The forbidden fruit offers an external provocation which, however tempting or agitating, nevertheless remains subject to choice. Whereas the passions of *Areopagitica* can be understood as movements of the will, the emotive sensibilities of the divorce tracts are features of nature.[20] They are not susceptible to the influence of reason or to the procedures or choice. Affection and disaffection in marriage are absolutes that cannot be tempered or otherwise controlled, and they do not admit degrees. Reading *Areopagitica* and the divorce tracts side by side shows that in the 1640s Milton was developing two distinct views of human affectivity—the first was traditional and recognizable, while the second was new and complex.

The account of emotion in each treatise, I suggest, is fitted to its argumentative end. In *Areopagitica* Milton, arguing against the licensing act of 1643, was anxious to prove that an abundance of provocations freely printed in books would not lead to moral degeneration but rather to an increase in truth and virtue. This goal required Milton to portray passion as a necessary but ultimately conquerable challenge to moral choice. In the divorce tracts, however, Milton was laboring to persuade his audience not of a different procedure for

[19] For a discussion of Spenser as representative of the psychomachic model of the soul see Tilmouth, *Passion's Triumph Over Reason*, 37–74.
[20] On the evacuation of the will from Milton's divorce tracts compared to Bucer's justifications of divorce, see Halkett, 30: "Bucer takes matrimony wholly out of the context of the formal legal contract and makes it a bond dependent upon constant mutual agreement. This constant agreement, an act of will, seems to represent the measure of marital concord. For Milton, on the other hand, matrimony is dependent upon a harmony of natures rather than will."

achieving a virtuous commonwealth, but of a different understanding of morality—one which conforms to the dictates of the human heart. To do this, Milton had to convince his audience that human emotion was not an instrumental faculty that could be harnessed or controlled, but an essential aspect of human thriving. The moral framework developed in the divorce tracts is based on the advancement of such thriving: "The general end of every ordinance, of every severest, every divinest, even of Sabbath is the good of man, *yea his temporal good not excluded*" (*Tetrachordon* 278, my emphasis). The advancement of temporal good, Milton insists, included the cultivation of emotional wellbeing in marriage.

Milton's understanding of emotion in *Areopagitica* relies on the eclectic but recognizable foundations of the Platonic hierarchy of the soul, Aristotelian ethics, and Spenserian psychomachia, and it fits the author's commitment to a strong emphasis on free will. By contrast, the unique emotive sensibility of the divorce tracts better complements Milton's emerging understanding of the human animal as a holistic creature, in particular his description of man as a living and feeling body in *The Art of Logic* and as "an animate being [*animal*], inherently and properly one and individual, not twofold or separable… namely a body or substance which is individual, animated, sensitive, and rational" in *On Christian Doctrine*.[21] Emotive sensibility in the divorce tracts is not a faculty that takes a discrete place in the economy of the soul, but a diffuse quality of human nature. In addition to his insistence that human beings are at once sensitive and rational as a species, Milton also makes the further claim that the spirit of life that God has breathed into his creatures was unique in each individual person: "Nor did he merely blow that sprit in, but in each actual person he shaped

[21] John Milton, *The Art of Logic*, in *The Works of John Milton*, ed. and trans. Allan H. Gilbert, vol. 11 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), 466–67 (Milton's formulation is "homo est animal; animal est corpus sentiens; corpus sentiens est vivens"); John Milton, *On Christian Doctrine*, in *The Complete Works of John Milton*, ed. and trans. John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington, vol. 8 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 302–303.

it, inwardly implanted it, and enhanced and distinguished it with its own faculties."[22] The commitment to describing certain human affections of the individual as immutable, essential to individual identity, and morally authoritative sets Milton's vision of human psychology in line with his developing views of human nature at large.

In the preface to *The Doctrine*, Milton worries that followers of Error and Custom would reject his "industry of free reasoning, under the terms of humour and innovation" (*Doctrine*, Preface, 94). He anticipates that the claims of his treatise will be read not as the fruit of rigorous exegesis but as the result of humour—either a whim or an idiosyncratic trait of his own character. In this preemptive move, Milton not only reassures his audience that his analysis is based on a faithful reading of scripture, but also prepares them to receive his ideas about human emotion as something different from mere "humour." By telling his audience upfront that the disaffection, natural discord, and hatred he is about to discuss do not result from humor Milton creates space for describing emotive sensibility anew, and at the same time present it as a self-evident phenomenon, one that has been here all along. In the next sections, I attempt to bring Milton's account of emotive sensibility into view, both by describing its main features and through contrasting it with other available understandings of human emotions.

Rationality and Determinism in Milton's Emotive Sensibility

After establishing that the emotive sensibility that Milton develops in the divorce tracts is distinct from passion, my purpose in this section is to characterize it. This is not a straightforward endeavor because, I suggest, Milton's priorities pull him in contradictory directions. On the one hand, to justify changing the law to accommodate human affection and

[22] Milton, *On Christian Doctrine*, 300–301.

disaffection, the love and hatred on which matrimonial success is predicated must be rational and innocent, since the law cannot protect irrational or evil practices. On the other hand, the same love and hatred must also be deterministic and unalterable, because Milton's argument is considerably weakened if such feelings can be changed. I discuss Milton's account of affection as rational first, and next his deterministic account of affection.

When he labors to distinguish innocent longing for a mate from mere lust, Milton describes such longing as a "rational burning that marriage is to remedy," and desire as an "intelligible flame" (*Doctrine* 1.4, 114). In this mood, Milton endows affection and disaffection with the dignity of reason in order to distinguish them from mere "bestial burning, which frugal diet, without marriage, would easily chasten" (*Doctrine* 1.9, 127). The adjectives "rational" and "intelligible" are tasked with lifting the burning desire for a mate up from the realm of passion into the higher endeavors of the mind. At the same time, the conflation of reason and affection is only possible at the cost of employing an oxymoron, since even if reason desires, it does not burn. As David Aers has observed, the "other burning" hailed by Milton, although it is labeled as rational, "is specifically erotic too, an urgent desire, not the wish for a chat."[23] Milton's concern with "misyoking" throughout the divorce tracts nevertheless leaves room for the yoking together of reason and urgent desire (*Doctrine* 1.10, 128).

Milton is most insistent that longing for a fit helpmate is a rational feeling when he contrasts his own position with that of canon law, which permits divorce in cases of adultery but not of disaffection. The law that views sexual infidelity as a more legitimate reason for divorce than disaffection, he says, has its priorities reversed. Instead of honoring "that

[23] David Aers, "'Rational Burning': Milton on Sex and Marriage," *Milton Studies* 13 (1979): 3–33, 17. Turner also notes the tension between Milton's emphasis on mental union and the erotic tenor of his style: "He floods his text with Eros, but feels so 'unspeakably wrong'd' by the emphasis on physical sexuality in current divorce law that he veers towards the opposite extreme." See Turner, *One Flesh*, 194.

intellectual and innocent desire which God himself kindled in man," it protects only "sublunary and bestial burning, which frugal diet, without marriage, would easily chasten" (*Doctrine* 1.9, 127). For Milton, Paul's dictum: "It is better to marry than to burn" does not intend marriage as a remedy for "the mere motion of carnal lust, not the mere goad of a sensitive desire" (*Doctrine* 1.4, 113). Rather, in Milton's idiosyncratic interpretation of scripture, the burning meant by Paul is "this pure and more inbred desire of joining to itself in conjugal fellowship a fit conversing soul" (*Doctrine* 1.4, 114). This higher "inbred" desire is a stable feature of human experience rather than a carnal "motion." Milton argues that the rationality of such a desire makes it more irresistible:

> This is that *rational burning* that marriage is to remedy, not to be allayed with fasting, nor with any penance to be subdued; which how can he assuage who by mishap hath met the most unmeet and unsuitable mind? Who hath the power to struggle with an *intelligible flame*, not in Paradise to be resisted, become now more ardent by being failed of *what in reason it looked for*… (*Doctrine* 1.4, 114, my emphasis)

Although for Milton the longing for a suitable partner is something different from a sexual urge, the passage still leaves much room for speculation as to what this longing is. Turner rightly emphasizes the larger stakes Milton holds: "Milton's general argument, of course, is that sex must not be abstracted from spiritual considerations and promoted to the supreme determinant of marriage."[24] However, it is still not clear what is the nature of such spiritual considerations when they are cast in terms of reason and rationality.

The contrast between desiring "in reason" from desiring in the flesh implies the existence of distinct desiring faculties in a single person, where reason has specific desires appropriate to itself. At the same time, Milton imports the compelling power of passion and appetite to convey the power of "rational burning." The adjectives *rational* and *intelligible* function to locate the source of desire, but they also seem to serve as intensifiers—a rational burning cannot be allayed or subdued, an intelligible flame cannot be resisted even in

[24] Turner, 197.

paradise. As a higher faculty than "mere motion of carnal lust" (which we may also call appetite), reason also has more urgent needs. Rather than a sovereign over passion and appetite as it operates in the Platonic model of the soul, reason in the divorce tracts retains all the dignity of the sovereign but compels with the urgency of passion.

Milton is vague about how what a person "look[s] for" in reason is an appropriate object of rational desire. Adam in paradise and lonely postlapsarian men do not burn in search of objects of contemplation, but of a fit helpmate. Help with what? In one of the rare moments where Milton describes what a successful conversation between husband and wife would look like, it does not look like an intellectual exchange. Milton rejects the idea that "a thousand friends and brother *Adams*" would better alleviate Adam's loneliness in paradise than the company of Eve (*Tetrachordon* 254). Instead he argues that the wife's role is to provide repast from intellectual work: "We cannot therefore always be contemplative or pragmatical abroad, but have need of some delightful intermissions, wherein the enlarged soul may leave off a while her severe schooling" (*Tetrachordon* 256). Why, then, does reason desire a wife? Is the only function of rational desire to provide a break from arduous reasoning? By raising these questions and attending to the passionate terms that qualify Milton's appeal to reason, I aim to show that Milton's usage of *reason* and *rational* avoids committing to the implications of these terms. Milton needs rationality because it gives him the terms for conferring dignity and stability on the emotive sensibility that he wishes to distinguish from more violent passions. At the same time, he resists the central implication of a desiring reason, which is that reason would desire the very rational conversation that Milton's vision denies to the desirable wife. The relationship Milton imagines with a fit wife in *Tetrachordon* is based on desire, pleasure ("delightful intermissions"), relief from labor and even playfulness. These remedies for natural loneliness, which is part of the human condition since the creation of Adam, are distinctly emotional.

The tension between Milton's claim that erotic desire is rational and the fact that for Milton, the end of such a desire is a partner whose company provides a respite from "contemplative" conversation, is heightened in the following paragraph, where he recounts Diotima's speech in Plato's *Symposium*:

> But all ingenuous men will see that the dignity and blessing of marriage is placed rather in the mutual enjoyment of that which the wanting soul needfully seeks, than of that which the plenteous body would joyfully give away. Hence it is that Plato in his festival discourse brings in Socrates relating what he feigned to have learnt from the prophetess Diotima, how Love was the son of Penury, begot of Plenty in the Garden of Jupiter. Which divinely sorts with that which in effect Moses tells us, that Love was the son of Loneliness, begot in Paradise by that sociable and helpful aptitude which God implanted between man and woman toward each other. (*Doctrine* 1.4, 114)

Milton's consideration of Diotima's speech emphasizes the source of love but alters its Platonic telos, a fact that makes Irene Samuel's claim that in the divorce tracts "Milton is doing little more than apply his Platonic theory of love to the institution of marriage" largely overstated.[25] The importance of the myth of the birth of Eros for Milton is its needful reinforcement of the connection between purpose and institution—because God has made Adam naturally lonely and given him marriage as a cure for his loneliness, all true marriages must recapture, "at least in some proportion" (*Doctrine* 1.4, 115), the joy of Adam and Eve's first union in paradise. However, in contrast Diotima's scheme, for Milton that union is actualized "between man and woman toward each other." Unlike Eros, whose goal is to transcend the love of beautiful boys and grow to love the form of beauty itself, Miltonic Love was never intended to transcend the marriage bond and lead the lover into contemplative activity.[26] What the soul "needfully seeks" is a specific person whose nature complements that of the seeker rather than a universal form. When mutual love occurs, an individual can

[25] Irene Samuel, *Plato and Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1947), 157.
[26] Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 211B–211C, 59.

know that he or she has found what they sought, according to his or her individual nature. Milton has invoked Diotima's myth, but he arrives at Aristophanes's conclusion.[27]

In *Tetrachordon* Milton turns to Aristotelian causality, where he finds a better vocabulary for conveying the connection between purpose and institution that he had sought in the *Symposium*. Milton insists that in the case of marriage efficient and formal causes are indivisible: "divine institution [the efficient cause of marriage] hath such influence upon the form, and is so a conserving cause of it, that without it the form is not sufficient to distinguish matrimony from other conjunctions of male and female, which are not to be counted marriage" (*Tetrachordon* 269–70). One such conjunction, as we soon find out, is a loveless marriage. The efficient cause of marriage is its divine institution in Genesis, where God created marriage to serve as a remedy against natural loneliness. The formal cause of marriage, that which makes a union of male and female into a marriage rather than a merely carnal connection or empty union by law, is "[t]hat consent… which is a love fitly disposed to mutual help and comfort of life" (270). Since God has ordained marriage to cure loneliness, then only the relationship that indeed cures it can be called marriage. The form of marriage therefore "naturally aris[es] from the very heart of divine institution in the text" (270). The complete definition of marriage according to Milton is therefore "a divine institution joining man and woman in a love fitly disposed to the helps and comforts of domestic life" (269). Where a relationship between man and woman fails to actualize such love there is no marriage but rather a "nullity" (270). Emphasizing that the origin of marriage in the Biblical past (its institution and efficient cause) is inextricable from the love that constitutes marriage even in the present (its formal cause) eliminates the need for the drama of the *Symposium* and allows Milton to derive the present definition of marriage from scriptures without the need for myth. Free from the idea, invoked in Diotima's myth, that

[27] I thank Richard Strier for a conversation that helped me develop this point.

worldly erotic desire is subservient to the higher ends of contemplation, Milton can develop his doctrine of divorce primarily in affective terms. It is the lack of love that disqualifies a union of male and female from counting as a true marriage.

When Milton does not try to describe the desire for a mate as rational, he seems even more drawn to describing love and hatred as deterministic, arational, and possibly arbitrary.[28] In a revision added to the 1644 edition of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton asserts that sympathy and antipathy result from secret and unexplainable natural causes:

> And that there is a hidden efficacy of love and hatred in man as well as in other kinds, not moral but natural, which though not always in the choice yet in the success of marriage will ever be most predominant, besides daily experience, the author of Ecclesiasticus, whose wisdom hath set him next the Bible, acknowledges, 13.16: *A Man,* saith he, *will cleave to his like*. But what might be the cause, whether each one's allotted genius or proper star, or whether the supernal influence of schemes and angular aspects, or this elemental crasis here below, whether all these jointly or singly meeting friendly, or unfriendly in either party, I dare not, with the men I am likest to clash, appear so much a philosopher as to conjecture. (*Doctrine* 1.10, 128)

The *efficacy* that inclines one to love some people but not others is best described as "A process or mode effecting a result," rather than the more common interpretation: "power to effect the object intended."[29] For Milton, love and hatred do not obey intention. Rather, nature works in individuals through unknown causes to bring like together with like. Milton is at least open to the possibility that similar powers direct the movement of the stars as those

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[28] In foregrounding the deterministic aspect of Milton's emotive sensibility, I diverge from another recent reading that emphasizes rational and agential aspects of the passions in Milton's oeuvre. See Riley, "Milton, the Passions, and the Knowing Body," 46. Riley argues that by contrast to recent humoralist accounts of the early modern passions, "Milton's monism makes matter active, independent and conscious — and therefore free." My focus on Milton's determinism also resists an overemphasis of the rationality of contracting agents, such as proposed in Charles Hatten, "The Politics of Marital Reform and the Rationalization of Romance in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*," *Milton Studies* 27 (January 1992): 95–113, especially 98: "In proposing that divorce be allowed to dissolve a marital union *on the basis* of its contractual character, he [Milton] places a rational model of marriage as a quasi-commercial venture, undertaken by individualist and rational actors, at the heart of his conception of marriage."

[29] *OED online, s.v.* "efficacy, n." 1., 2. Accessed December, 2020, https://www-oed-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/59736?redirectedFrom=efficacy (accessed February 08, 2021).

that stir human hearts.[30] Milton adheres to an uncharacteristic intellectual modesty in refraining from adjudicating the reasons for affection and disaffection—fortune, astrology, and natural philosophy are all possible candidates for explaining why some people can share conjugal love whereas others cannot. The fact that similar hidden natural principles govern "other kinds" of creatures further removes love and hatred from the direction of reason, since they are determined for humankind in the same way that they are determined for animals.

Milton's two characterizations of emotive sensibility—rational, intellectual, and intelligible on the one hand, but natural, unexplainable and deterministic on the other—are not always as easily distinguishable from one another as the two examples above may suggest (a "rational burning" as opposed to a "hidden efficacy"). For instance, in the preface to *The Doctrine* Milton condemns laws imposed "even against the venerable and secret power of nature's impression, to love whatever cause be found to loathe" (*Doctrine* 1.1, 104). The relation between secrecy and causality in this sentence is strange. On the one hand, the "power of nature's impression" is secret, that is inaccessible to human intelligence.[31] Nature does not divulge how certain impressions come into existence, and the correct response to such impressions as love or hatred is reverence rather than enquiry. On the other hand, the same natural impression also takes the shape of causality—it is impossible "to love whatever *cause be found* to loathe" (my emphasis). If there is cause to loathe anything, then why is the

[30] Halkett makes a similar point: "by using the analogies of elemental attraction, astronomical conjunction, and divine demarcation not merely as analogies but as other manifestations of the same natural principle, can Milton give to "fitness" as he defines it the quality and resonance of a moral absolute." See Halkett, 54. For a different perspective on Milton's metaphors see Kester Svendsen, "Science and Structure in Milton's Doctrine of Divorce," *PMLA* 67, no. 4 (June 1952): 444. Svendsen argues that Milton's "references to natural science" in the divorce tracts "constitute something like a dominant framework through which the prose argument is made effective."

[31] *OED online, s.v.* "secret, adj. and n.". 1.g. Accessed June, 2021, https://www-oed-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/174537?rskey=Yknp3H&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed March 11, 2021): "Abstruse, recondite; beyond ordinary apprehension or beyond unaided human intelligence."

power of nature's impression secret rather than intelligible? If we must respond to nature's impressions with reverence, why do we need cause to obey them? Milton describes love as a mysterious impression that ought to be heeded, but also raises the expectation that it would make sense. As we shall see, a corresponding tension between blameless disaffection and hostility toward a blameworthy wife (one who gives cause to loathe her) characterizes the divorce tracts throughout.

We have seen that when Milton pursues a deterministic account of human affection and disaffection he appeals to nature, specifically understood as individual nature, in order to explain the origin of such affections and why they should be heeded.[32] Halkett makes a similar point: "marriage cannot exist where unfitness exists, whether this unfitness is a defect of nature—understood as *individual* nature—or of will."[33] He explains that

> Milton makes God's promise to Adam a promise to all mankind that his matrimonial partner shall meet the requirements of his mind and spirit. Unlike most of his Puritan contemporaries Milton consistently interprets the phrase *"adiutorium simile sui"* so that the likeness of personal disposition takes precedence over the likeness of kind.[34]

Importantly, the "requirements of his mind and spirit" are derived from what Milton has called "the foundations of his inmost nature" (*Doctrine* 1.7, 119). These are inalienable aspects of a person's individual constitution. In his 1644 revision to *The Doctrine*, Milton conceives of this natural constitution in affective terms. He describes how love and hatred

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[32] In addition to his discussion of individual nature, Milton also appeals to nature in other capacities throughout the divorce tracts. In particular, his outcry against the "unnatural" marriage of unfit partners ("chained unnaturally together" [*Doctrine* 2.16, 170]) uses the same rhetoric that was used to condemn perceived violations of the natural order concerning sexual relationships and the family. For an overview of the moral category of the unnatural in early modern Europe, see Lorraine Daston, "The Nature of Nature in Early Modern Europe," *Configurations* 6, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 149–72, 156. See also Halkett, 52: "While it is not surprising that Milton carries into his argument the same rhetoric of denunciation which the clergy had used against relationships which they felt violated the natural order, he regards as unlawful what the ordinary divine would have considered merely inappropriate or unfortunate."

[33] Halkett, 47 (original emphasis).

[34] Halkett, 47.

course through the entire creation and determine which people would be harmonious together and which contrary:

> Seeing then there is a twofold seminary or stock in nature from whence are derived the issues of love and hatred, distinctly flowing through the whole mass of created things, and that God's doing ever is to bring the due likenesses and harmonies of his works together, except when out of two contraries met to their own destruction, he moulds a third existence; and that it is error, or some evil angel which either blindly or maliciously hath drawn together in two persons ill embarked in wedlock the sleeping discords and enmities of nature lulled on purpose with some false bait, that they may wake to agony and strife… (*Doctrine* 1.10, 129)

Milton's use of *seminary*, derived from the Latin *seminarium* or "seed-plot," suggests that love and hatred were first created and cultivated by God, and then propagated (like plants that have matured, bred animals, or the arts) throughout creation.[35] The presence of love and hatred throughout creation and their absolute rule over the possibilities for affection and disaffection, however, makes it hard to understand why people sometimes do end up marrying the wrong person in the face of the powerful contrary forces that would keep them apart, a difficulty that Milton resolves either through the blindness of error or the maliciousness of evil spirits.[36]

Milton describes how love and hatred are distributed throughout creation to show that the same natural affections that course through the entire universe are also expressed in the "hidden efficacy of love and hatred" that operates in human beings (*Doctrine* 1.10, 129). This operation of love and hatred, as observed by Halkett above, is based on individual

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[35] *OED online, s.v.* "seminary, n.1." Accessed March, 2021, https://www-oed-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/175684?rskey=nZgdPT&result=1 (accessed March 22, 2021). I thank Karis G. Riley for bringing this etymological connection to my attention. See also Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr (London: Penguin Books, 1978), Proem to Book 6.3–4: "Reuele to me the sacred noursery / Of virtue." Whereas Spenser's narrator admires how virtue was first "by the Gods with paine / Planted in earth, being deriu'd at furst / From heauenly seeds of bounty soueraine" (ll. 7–9), Milton suggests that both love and hatred have been cultivated by God.

[36] Fallon acknowledges the complexity of the passage and takes it to demonstrate Milton's commitment to an account of blameless disaffection in *The Doctrine*, as opposed to his belligerence against a blameworthy wife in *Tetrachordon*. See Fallon, "The Spur of Self-Concernment," 233–34.

dispositions. Milton's account of the tendency of individuals to love or hate different marriage partners, I suggest, also demonstrates his Aristotelian understanding of individual nature. In his *Physics*, Aristotle defines nature as "a principle of movement (or change) and rest."[37] Milton ascribes similar principles of movement and rest to individual affections, as individuals are moved to love some people but not others. If forced into a marriage with an unsuitable wife against his natural affections, a man will eventually come to hate her. But whereas, as Lorraine Daston clarifies, for Aristotle "the unnatural is not the impossible but the undesirable," Milton asserts that a marriage against nature is not a true marriage at all, but rather an empty legal imposition: "Shall we say that God hath joined error, fraud, unfitness, wrath, contention, perpetual loneliness, perpetual discord… shall we say this is God's joining?" (*Tetrachordon*, 302).[38] The answer, of course, is no, and Milton deems such unhappy unions as annulled as well as unnatural. In cases where discord follows after marriage, what comes into light is that the marriage was invalid in the first place. Nature prescribes as much as it describes.

A precursor to Milton's ideas, Montaigne has also powerfully yoked a strong conception of individual nature with an inexplicable principle of interpersonal affection. In "Of friendship," Montaigne describes the mysterious sources of his friendship with Étienne La Boétie:

> If a man urge me to tell wherefore I loved him, I feele it cannot be expressed, but by answering; *Because it was he, because it was my selfe.* There is beyond all my discourse, and besides what I can particularly report of it, *I know not what inexplicable and fatall power, a meane and a Mediatrix of this indissoluble union.* Wee sought one another, before we had seene one another, and by the reports we heard one of another; which wrought greater violence in us, than the reason of reports

[37] Aristotle, *The Physics*, trans. Philip H. Wicksteed and F.M. Cornford, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 1.2.192b, 107.
[38] Lorraine Daston, *Against Nature* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019), 12. Daston gives the example of lending money at interest—whereas money does not naturally beget money, the practice is still possible.

> may well beare: I thinke by some secret ordinance of the heavens, we embraced one another by our names.[39]

Love cannot be traced to its individual causes but instead calls for larger-than-life explanations. It exceeds expectations, moves with violence, and seems to result from an "inexplicable and fatall power" that lies beyond expression. For Montaigne as well as for Milton, scale provides an exemption from explanation—it is because we do not know much about the powers that move the universe that we can depend on them for an account of our deeply felt convictions. A more specific explanation of love that relies on the beloved's specific traits would be deflationary and make love conditional. Paradoxically, mechanical and natural explanations of the sort still used today to describe a strong interpersonal attraction—the feelings of "chemistry" or "a click"—contribute to the mystification of love rather than reduce it to its material causes.[40] Montaigne's resistance to reductionism shows up in his insistence that love requires the total person rather than a specific cause ("*Because it was he; because it was my selfe*").

Richard Strier has argued that in contrast to postmodern accounts of Montaigne that view the essayist as devoid of a consistent character and essentially in flux, Montaigne in fact believed in the existence of a core personality or basic nature that is either inborn or settled in early childhood.[41] In the essay "Of repenting" Montaigne discusses individual nature by way of expressing his skepticism about the possibility of repentance. Repentance can only be a superficial act since a person's core personality remains ever the same. "Naturall inclinations," Montaigne says, "are by institution helped and strengtned, but they neither change nor exceed… These original qualities are not grubd out, they are but covered, and

[39] Montaigne, "Of Friendship," in *The Essayes*, 92. My emphasis.
[40] I thank Richard Strier for bringing these contemporary examples to my attention.
[41] Strier, "Self-Revelation and Self-Satisfaction in Montaigne and Descartes," in *The Unrepentant Renaissance*, 208–29. This paragraph relies on Strier's work.

hidden."[42] Strier foregrounds Montaigne's debt to a passage in *De officiis* where Cicero introduces the two aspects of human nature: "we are invested by Nature with two characters, as it were: one of these is universal, arising from the fact of our being all alike endowed with reason and with that superiority which lifts us above the brute… The other character is the one that is assigned to individuals in particular."[43] Elaborating on the second, Cicero enumerates the great "diversities of character" whereby some people are witty, others are studious, some serious, others jolly, and so on.[44] Whereas Cicero shows a moderate optimism about the possibility of habituation when he instructs each person to "hold fast to his own peculiar gifts, in so far as they are peculiar only and not vicious," Montaigne acknowledges that vices can also be a part of entrenched character and therefore resistant to change.[45]

Whereas Cicero and Montaigne both describe human nature in terms of its core qualities, virtues, and vices, Milton emphasizes the emotional responses of love and hatred over character traits as constituents of human nature. When a man is forced to love a woman he cannot love, the emotional results of their union are devastating: "a polluting sadness and perpetual distemper" (*Doctrone* I.6, 118), a "disturbance of mind" that makes people lose trust in divine providence, and a "desperate and vicious carelessness at being tricked through natural loneliness into an even lonelier snare in marriage (*Doctrine* I.7, 119). We have seen that for other matrimonial writers such negative emotions are moral challenges that the husband must meet with effort and prayer, but for Milton they result from the unalterable nature of the individual. Milton goes beyond describing human nature in terms of general dispositions (for example, being a choleric who is inclined to anger) and anchors even

[42] Strier quotes from M. A. Screech's translation. For consistency, I continue to quote from Florio's. See Montaigne, "Of repenting," 454.
[43] Strier, 223–24; Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De officiis*, trans. Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1913), 1.30.107, 108–9.
[44] Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.30.108, 108–9.
[45] Cicero, 1.31.110, 112–13. Montaigne, 454; Strier, 225.

specific emotions toward a particular person in a fixed and consistent nature. We have seen that Milton only came to articulate his claims about the existence of a "hidden efficacy of love and hatred" and "twofold seminary or stock in nature" from which love and hatred issue in the 1644 revised edition of *The Doctrine*, and he clearly meant for this new emphasis to strengthen his argument.[46] Fortifying the status of emotion may have been necessary in order to rebut some of the responses to the 1643 edition, which cast Milton as a libertine who advocated "divorce at pleasure."[47] Milton's argument depended on the idea that certain iterations of love and hatred are radical, unchangeable, and distinct from passions.

Milton's assertion that "indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind" that lead to natural hatred arise from "a cause in nature unchangeable" was not universally compelling (*Doctrine* 1.1, 107), and it did not convince the anonymous author of *An Answer to a Book, Intituled The Doctrine and Discipline for Divorce* (1644).[48] The author tackles the subject head on and objects that "there is no such disposition in nature as is unchangeable" (*An Answer* 412). "Philosophy" and "Naturall History" teach us, he argues, that "by careful use of diet and the help of Physick, there is no disposition or constitution but may be altered, if not altogether, yet in a great measure" (412). If natural remedies fail, the author reminds Milton that grace can nevertheless have an ameliorating effect on all hearts: "by the grace of the Gospel, the Lionish dispositions shall so be changed that they shall be fit for the society of milder nature" (412). Finally, if this change also fails to take place, the author admonishes

[46] In this I add to Sara J. van den Berg and W. Scott Howard's assessment that the main developments in the 1644 edition concerned the nature of law. See their introduction to *The Divorce Tracts of John Milton*, 22–23.
[47] William Riley Parker, *Milton's Contemporary Reputation: An Essay Together with A Tentative List of Printed Allusions to Milton, 1641–1674, and Facsimile Reproductions of Five Contemporary Pamphlets Written in Answer to Milton* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1940), 17.
[48] The Answer was published after the publication of the revised 1644 edition of *The Doctrine*, but Milton asserts with contempt that "this idle pamphlet comes reeling forth against the first edition only" (*Colasterion* 364).

that no one should "take advantage of his own corruption" by bending the law to accommodate the depravity of his or her own nature.

The author of *An Answer* therefore advances two alternatives to Milton's deterministic view of human nature, both of which can conveniently apply to the nature of an individual person. First, he turns to the widespread understanding of psychophysiological nature as it emerges in the humoral body. While humoral constitutions can incline people to certain moods and behaviors, the author insists that they can nevertheless be managed and improved.[49] Second, he offers a theological account of individual nature in terms of the shape original sin takes in a single person. In this view, lovelessness for one's partner or the clashing of personalities should be interpreted as vices that demonstrate the soul's fallenness and natural depravity, and therefore they are better restrained than indulged. I discuss Milton's reply to the first suggestion first, and then move on to discuss his insistence that the hatred described in the divorce tracts is sinless.

Milton addresses the objections of *An Answer* in *Colasterion*, one of the least studies of the divorce tracts. In his reply he once again refuses to "dispute philosophy," although this time out of contempt for his rival rather than under the guise of intellectual modesty (*Colasterion* 373). To the author's first suggestion Milton replies with the teaching of "all experience": That whereas medicine can be helpful for evacuating unnatural excesses from the body, medicating a person's "healthy constitution… to alter his natural temperament and disposition of mind" can lead to "death or madness" (373). Furhermore, even if the husband survives the attempt, his new constitution may still prove as incompatible to that of his wife

[49] For a discussion of moral sovereignty over the humoral body see Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2–3. Schoenfeldt argues that humoral psychology, which "possesses a remarkable capacity to relate the body to its environment," can appear "at once deeply materialist and incorrigibly determinist," although in practice it allows for self-control "through diet and evacuation."

as the old one (373). Milton concludes his rebuttal with direction to the friends and followers of his opponent: "I send them by his advice to sit upon the stool and strain, 'til their cross dispositions and contrarieties of mind shall change to a better correspondence, and to a quicker apprehension of common sense and their own good" (374).

Despite his open contempt to inducing humoral change in *Colasterion*, in *The Doctrine* Milton's language does conflate the unchangeable dictates of nature with the hydraulic imagery that describes the passage of the humors through the body:

> Let us not be thus over-curious to strain at atoms, and yet to stop every vent and cranny of permissive liberty, lest nature wanting those needful pores and breathing-places which God hath not debarred our weakness, either suddenly break out into some wide rupture of open vice and frantic heresy, or else inwardly fester with repining and blasphemous thoughts, under an unreasonable and fruitless rigour of unwarranted law. (*Doctrine* 2.22, 192)

Kester Svendsen has read this and other "imagery from anatomical and medical lore" as demonstrative of how "nature and reason oppose the diseases of bad marriage and canon law."[50] While I agree that the drama underlying the image is that of a battle between oppression and liberation, I also want to draw attention to Milton's manipulation of the trope of a nature that cannot be suppressed. Nature, when it is not allowed its proper outlets (by ending an unhappy marriage) may acquire the characteristics of bad humor, either erupting in vice or festering in blasphemy.[51] Milton has labored to distinguish the affections of love and hatred from the passions of lust and malice, but his language nevertheless acknowledges a continuity between the radical, natural affections and the more harmful passions. The latter can be avoided if the former are heeded.

Another testimony to the family resemblance between natural love and hatred and the more dangerous passions comes up in Milton's exegetical efforts to prove that Jesus'

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[50] Svendsen, "Structure in Milton's 'Doctrine of Divorce'," 442.
[51] Aers notes a similar conflation of the spiritual and the physical: "it is as if the "acts of peace and love" themselves "flow" like an excremental "mixture" from a soul-penis." See Aers, "'Rational Burning'," 16.

prohibition of divorce in Matthew 5:31–32 was meant only to rebuke the Pharisees and not to abrogate Mosaic law for all Christians. In *The Doctrine*, Milton writes that Jesus was addressing only the Pharisees when he said "*Moses for the hardness of your heart suffered you*, that is such as you, *to put away your wives*" (*Doctrine* 2.8, 154, original emphasis). The hard-hearted Pharisees divorced with "unbounded license" rather than reserve divorce for cases of natural hatred (*Doctrine* 2.8, 154). In Milton's interpretation, Jesus corrected the licentiousness of the Pharisees with an equal measure of strictness, but he did not mean by the same words to forbid divorce to all Christians. Hardness of heart in *The Doctrine* therefore means wickedness, which sometimes takes advantage even of a righteous law. God has suffered the wicked Pharisees to take advantage of the law that permits divorce to the righteous.

In *Tetrachordon*, however, Milton adjusts his former position and instead acknowledges two types of hard-heartedness: the first is the universal "imperfection and decay of man from original righteousness," a general weakness suffered by all humankind as a result of the fall, whereas the second is a more specific "stubborn resolution to do evil" (*Tetrachordon* 311–12).[52] The first kind of hard-heartedness accounts for the general imperfection of postlapsarian life which includes war, captivity, commerce, and undeserved wealth and poorness (*Tetrachordon* 312), as well as erroneous marriage to an incompatible partner, and therefore also justifies divorce. Since postlapsarian life cannot be perfect, divorce is necessary to accommodate the present capacities of humankind. However, the law

[52] For interpretations of the shift in Milton's account of hard-heartedness see Fallon, "The Spur of Self-Concernment," 234–35; Sirluck, Introduction to *Complete Prose Works*, 154–55. Fallon argues that Milton "can argue for a universal yet not necessarily sinful hardness of heart after the Fall, but when push comes to shove he does not want to count himself among the herd, even concerning qualities wherein the herd is sinless." Sirluck asserts that in expanding his definition of hard-heartedness Milton amended the limitations of his former argument in The Doctrine and integrated into his new argument the demand for natural liberty under the jurisdiction of the secondary law of nature in addition to Christian liberty.

can never permit actions based on the second type of hard-heartedness, which is a straightforward commitment to evil. Mosaic law therefore allowed divorce for the first type of hard-heartedness, but not the second.

Hard-hearted people of the second kind, however, who were not merely imperfect but also stubbornly evil, sometimes took advantage of the law and divorced their wives for petty reasons. To illustrate his point, Milton contrasts the Pharisees, who authorized divorce for "any sudden mood" or "rashly, as his [the husband's] choler prompts him," with the person who realizes through "sober and cool experience" that he "cannot love… with that sincere affection that marriage requires" (*Tetrachordon* 319). Ironically, hardness of heart, the trope for being emotionally unmoved, here approaches its literal opposite and describes a passionate person who acts too quickly on his passions. We now learn that transient passions can in fact feel similar to the kind of hatred and discord that justify divorce, but true natural affections reveal their nature through the trial of time and cool reflection. In contrast with passions that overwhelm and usurp reason, the emotive sensibility that Milton develops in the divorce tracts is a type of affection that may not be felt immediately, but is sure to be discovered eventually, at the end of a person's "long debate within himself" (*Tetrachordon* 319).

Innocent Affections

I now return to Milton's reply to the second course of action suggested by the author of *An Answer*: trusting in divine grace and waiting until it improves the nature of the intractable wife. Milton rejects this suggestion on the ground that "many persons, gracious both, may yet happen to be very unfitly married" (Colasterion 374). The idea that two "gracious" people—justified Christians at the least, but possibly also full of grace and gracious toward one

another—may nevertheless prove a poor match in marriage due to no fault in either is intuitive to 21st-century readers. A similar recognition of the variegated forms of human incompatibility informs the current practice of no-fault divorce. Milton's resistance to the assumption that two "gracious" persons should work out their differences as an act of faith and remain married to each other takes two forms in the divorce tracts: first, as we have seen above, Milton insists that the hidden efficacy that produces love and hatred is "not moral but natural" (*Doctrine* 1.10, 128). The affections of love and hatred in marriage are distinct from the passions of love and hatred that bear spiritual implications related to their objects. Whereas for Augustine, for example, the love of God is a disposition of the will that ought to order all the other loves of the righteous, Milton assigns the love of a spouse to an altogether different category from the loves that modulate a person's will. As we have seen, this love is an expression of nature rather than will, and it therefore bears no moral implications. To this effect, Milton warns Parliament that, "when things indifferent shall be set to over-front us under the banners of sin, what wonder if we be routed, and by this art of our Adversary, fall into the subjection of worst and deadliest offences?" (*Doctrine*, Preface, 98).

Second, for these natural affections to be worth heeding, Milton also asserts that they are innocent. The longing for a partner in marriage is "a burning less to be contained than that which is fleshly, and more to be considered as being more deeply rooted even in the faultless innocence of nature" (1.4, 114), and the causes that sometimes lead a husband to seek divorce "reside… deeply in the radical and innocent affections of nature" (*Doctrine* 2.21, 185). The natural longing, love, and hatred that govern the institute of marriage derive their innocence not from their object (as is the case for a well-ordered love in the Augustinian model) but from their source—these affections are innocent because nature is innocent, and nature is

innocent because it was created by God.[53] Divorce in particular obeys "the first and most innocent lesson of nature," which is "to turn away peaceably from what afflicts" (*Tetrachordon*, 278). The emerging concept of "innocent affections" allows Milton to distinguish the love and hatred that determine happiness in marriage from mere passion, whose unruliness is the result of original sin. In its innocence, natural love is distinct from the lust that the law protects erringly, and innocent, natural hatred is "not that hate that sins, but that which only is natural dissatisfaction and the turning aside from a mistaken object" (*Doctrine* 1.4, 115). In contrast with the hate and discord that fallen Adam and Eve experienced in paradise, which were merely evanescent passions, innocent affections reflect God's design—the desires he implanted in Adam from the moment of creation and the laws of nature that determine satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Milton's insistence on the innocence of nature is theologically remarkable because it overlooks the adverse effects of the fall on human nature emphasized by Protestant thinkers. Calvin writes that although in paradise man possessed an "upright nature," after the fall human nature was ruined by "corruption and deformity."[54] He specifically warns against "singling out only those natural evils of man, lest we seem to attribute them to the Author of nature."[55] God has created human nature innocent, but this originary innocence has been altogether lost because of original sin. After the fall, human beings have become "vitiated and perverted in every part of our nature."[56] By contrast, Milton insists on continuity between originary and postlapsarian nature. The continuity between then and now is expressed in the similarity of emotive sensibility between Adam and contemporary men—the same natural

[53] For a discussion of the moral authority of nature see Daston, "The Nature of Nature in Early Modern Europe," 157: "Because God was "the Author of nature," the natural order was ipso facto a moral order."
[54] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.15.1, 183.
[55] Calvin, 1.15.1, 183.
[56] Calvin, 2.1.8, 251.

loneliness is felt today as Adam has felt in Eden, and the same innocent love draws like people together. Milton even links hatred, which is a feature of postlapsarian life but not of life in paradise, to the originary and innocent affections. Refusing to admit that natural hatred is sinful, Milton contends that hatred is an innocent reaction to sinful circumstances: "If then marriage must be as in the beginning, the persons that marry must be such as then were" (*Tetrachordon* 316). After the fall, the corruption of human nature caused incompatibilities and errors in choosing a partner, but the hatred that keeps incompatible partners away from each other remains for Milton an innocent instinct. His elevation of postlapsarian nature to the state of innocence that it possessed before the fall mirrors his simultaneous downplaying of the potential helpfulness of grace to improve the compatibility of mismatched couples. The grace possessed by "gracious" people is not enough to make them into suitable marriage partners. Rather, it is their innocent nature, preserved from before the fall and expressed in their innocent affections, that determines their potential to love each other and lead a happy marriage.

Milton's exceptional usage of the term "innocent affection" is further demonstrated by comparison to other contemporary usages. For example, in Gilbert Saulnier du Verdier's *The romant of the romants*, the shepherdess Miralinda gently rejects the passionate advances of her lover Clarisel while reassuring him of her love: "do not you consider that I should be most unworthy of your love, if my affection were not innocent and pure"?[57] Miralinda's innocent affection is a praiseworthy iteration of erotic love, contrasted with the "million of flames which consume" Clarisel.[58] In a theological context, the Scottish Presbyterian Samuel Rutherford condemns the hateful and envious Pharisees as worse than Pontius Pilate who actually ordered Jesus's crucifixion due to their evil affections: "it is cleare in ill actions, the

[57] Monsieur Verdere, *The Love and Armes of the Greeke Princes. Or, The Romant of the Romants*, trans. Gilbert Saulnier (1640), 53.
[58] Verdere, *The Love and Armes*, 53.

lesse affection the better; *Pilats* slaying of Christ, had lesse hatred and envie, then the Scribes and Pharisees killing of him; and the more innocent that the affection bee, the bad action is the lesse evill; feare is a more innocent affection then hatred."[59] By admitting of degrees of innocence with regard to affection, Rutherford is able to assign varying severity to sinful actions according to their motivations.

While Milton's usage shares some features of these anecdotal examples, but it also goes beyond them. Like du Verdier, Milton uses innocent affection to describe a kind of love that is different from mere lust. But despite Milton's lifelong interest in the virtue of chastity, the innocent love of the divorce tracts derives its innocence from its origin in human nature rather than from its chaste expression. Like Rutherford, Milton employs innocent affection to distinguish between sinful passion and a more basic instinct of self-preservation (for Rutherford, fear). But in contrast to Rutherford, Milton advocates not for a spectrum of sinfulness and innocence but for a clean break. For Milton, the emotive sensibility felt in the "radical and innocent affections of nature establishes an altogether different order of emotion from other kinds of affections or passions " (*Doctrine* 2.21, 185). Milton derives the innocence of these affections from their origin in the prelapsarian state of humankind and its original design by God.

Milton's innovation especially stands out against the backdrop of another early modern Protestant doctrine that categorized the affections into two distinct orders, the one sinful and the other partially innocent—the doctrine of the regeneration of hearts and sanctification of the believers discussed in chapter 1. Whereas for preachers like the Puritan divine Laurence Chaderton, quoted in that earlier discussion, spiritual regeneration changed the affections "that we may become new creatures," for Milton innocent affections derive

[59] Samuel Rutherford, *A Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons at their Late Solemne Fast, Wednesday, Janu. 31*. (London: Richard Cotes, 1644), 23.

their innocence from their origin rather than from their renewed orientation.[60] A systematic investigation of the regenerate affections will appear some one hundred years after the publication of the divorce tracts, in *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* written by American preacher Jonathan Edwards (1746). Taking the affections to be "the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul," Edwards divided human affections into two categories, the natural and the gracious.[61] The natural affections were universal and grounded in self-interest, even as some of them (such as gratitude, discussed in the following chapter) were better than others. The gracious affections rather "arise from those influences and operations on the heart, which are spiritual, supernatural, and divine."[62] These affections were guided by God rather than by self-interest and demonstrated the reorientation of the will by divine grace. For Milton, however, innocent affections are not the regenerate affections of the believer who has come to desire God through divine grace. They are innocent because they belong to a class of emotions created by God and essential to human nature. While Milton's innocent affections, like the regenerate heart, also hearken to the emotive sensibility that existed before the fall, they are different from the regenerate heart in that they have never been lost in the first place.[63] In the continuity Adam's innocent longing for meet help and postlapsarian loneliness, love, and hatred, Milton finds a sense in which we can never fail to do good—our own good.

The emergent emotive sensibility of the divorce tracts therefore draws a picture of emotion that is essentially innocent, irresistible, and stands at the core of individual nature and identity. In a secondary way, Milton also tries to describe such emotions as rational,

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[60] Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, 128–29.
[61] Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections, with an Introduction by the Rev. David Young, Perth*. (Glasgow: Printed for Chalmers and Collins, 1825), 76.
[62] Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 230.
[63] For a discussion of how Milton shows his readers "the extent to which their lives remain paradisal" in *Paradise Lost*, see Timothy Harrison, *Coming To: Consciousness and Natality in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 72–76.

although that seems to be, in large part, motivated by the need to combat negative portrayals of these emotions. A central question remains unanswered: having found a justification for divorce based on blameless affections that arise from the inscrutable mental constitution of the individual and require no further explanation beyond themselves, why does Milton so often still blame divorce on the wife? The hostility toward the unfit wife, which is already felt in *The Doctrine*, reaches a high peak in *Tetrachordon* when Milton complains that the word *wife* "does not signify deceitfully under this name an intolerable adversary, not a helpless, unaffectionate and sullen mass, whose very company represents the visible and exactest figure of loneliness itself" (*Tetrachordon* 320). These are hard words to read. And it is also hard to understand why, after arguing at length that disaffection can arise from blameless nature, Milton nevertheless feels the need to accuse the wife of being both an active adversary and a dehumanized, unresponsive mass to justify divorcing her. I briefly introduce three plausible explanations and then discuss my own.

Stephen M. Fallon has addressed the question directly, and argued that Milton's hostility toward the unfit wife results from his effort to represent himself as "heroic, as chosen because of eminent virtue."[64] Although in *Tetrachordon* Milton admits that hardness of heart is a universal weakness, "when push comes to shove he does not want to count himself among the herd, even concerning qualities wherein the herd is sinless."[65] Faulting the cunning wife for divorce allows Milton to diminish the role of his own weakness in leading to the unfortunate outcome. A second possibility concerns Milton's patriarchalism, even his misogyny. Charles Hatten has argued that Milton's "indictment of the tyrannic wife is not accidental but arises from the incompatibility between the tract's rationalizing conception of social life and its commitment to gender hierarchy."[66] While my reading resists Hatten's

[64] Fallon, "The Spur of Self-Concernment," 235.
[65] Fallon, 235.
[66] Hatten, "Marital Reform and Romance," 100.

analysis of marriage in the *The Doctrine* as a strictly rational institution, Milton's commitment to gender hierarchy in the divorce tracts is undeniable. In a similar vein, Mary Nyquist has shown that Milton's exegesis of the creation of man and woman in Genesis in the divorce tracts strongly favors a masculinist reading of the source text, at the expense of more egalitarian readings available in his time.[67] By extension, the same exegesis supports Milton's conclusion that "woman was created for man, and not man for woman" (*Doctrine* 2.15, 168). When a marriage fails, then, Milton is inclined to view the husband as the primary injured party. Third, it is possible that Milton's oscillation between arguing from blameless nature and casting the husband as a victim reflects the ongoing divided commitments of the author. Finding the same problem in *Paradise Lost*, Richard Strier has discussed Milton's commitment to a rationalist model that supports free choice on the one hand, and his attraction to an "alternative vision of ethical life" as spontaneous on the other hand.[68] Milton may hurl accusations at the deceitful wife when he is in the first mood, and appeal to blameless nature when he is in the second.

My addition to these three attractive explanations is that Milton's two modes of argumentations are not only contrary, but also complementary. Whereas the reasons for disaffection are "unaccountable and secret" and concern our "inmost nature" (*Doctrine* 2.21, 184; 1.7, 119), the feeling of disaffection necessarily targets its object. In contemporary terms, just as we cannot say why we love someone, but once in love we can list many qualities we admire about them, so in disaffection we cannot say why we dislike someone, but we can list many of their unattractive qualities once our disposition toward them is

[67] Marry Nyquist, "The Genesis of Genderd Subjectivity in the Divorce Tracts and in Paradise Lost," in *Re-Membering Milton: Essays on the Texts and Traditions*, ed. Mary Nyquist and Margaret W. Ferguson (New York: Methuen, 1987), 105–10.
[68] Richard Strier, "Milton's Fetters, or, Why Eden Is Better than Heaven," in *The New Milton Criticism*, ed. Peter C. Herman and Elizabeth Sauer (Cambridge: Cambridge Unviersity Press), 43.

established. This quality of emotion, that it is felt to be both internally constituted and as corresponding to features of the environment at the same time, is already baked into the Mosaic permission of divorce on which Milton relies. Deuteronomy 24:1 invites a similar oscillation between external and internal experience:

> When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. (*Tetrachordon* 271)

Much depends on what counts as divorcable "uncleanness," which Milton wishes to interpret as broadly as possible. But the Deuteronomy text already contains the tendency of emotion to oscillate between subjective preference and objective fact. Not finding "favor" depends on the finding of "uncleanness" in the wife, but the language of the passage, when read as a law that lists cumulative conditions rather than a description of human psychology, makes available the possibility that a person may find some uncleanness in his wife but she will nevertheless find favor in his eyes. The opposite also sounds possible, that a wife might not find favor in the eyes of her husband, but since he has not found any uncleanness in her, he cannot send her away. The uncleanness of the wife therefore serves as a test for the reasonability of the husband's affection. It has the power to legitimate an emotion through an acceptable cause. The emotional consensus that has underlain ethical discourse in *The Merchant of Venice* therefore reemerges in the law's view of what, in modern legal terms, would constitute a reasonable response to circumstances. Milton's oscillation between appealing to the subjective natural affection of the husband and caluminating the wife points to a similar felt experience of disaffection: on the one hand, as part of his "inmost nature" it feels personal and inalienable. On the other hand, disaffection may also feel justified, which leads Milton to adopt a hostile approach toward the wife.

At the same time, Milton also resists the requirement for emotion to be reasonable. Like the fictional Shylock, Milton insists that an unhappy husband owes no explanation for

his desire to divorce even a perfectly good wife. Citing an example from Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks*, Milton writes that when asked why he would dismiss his wife for "no visible reason," Paulus Emilius answered: "*This shoe… is a neat shoe, a new shoe, and yet none of you know where it wrings me*" (*Doctrine* 2.21, 187, original emphasis). Emotional dispositions are private states that legitimate a person in pursuing his or her rights and preclude the need for an explanation, because they are personal. The same reasons that make Paulus dismiss his wife may not make Gnaeus dismiss his. But in contrast to Shylock, Milton does not appeal to the purportedly immutable law as the arbiter to grant him his heart's desire but urges the point that the law should conform to human emotion and allow divorce in cases of unchangeable disaffection. In the divorce tracts, we therefore see Milton also oscillating between claiming the full privilege of emotions as private and inexplicable states, and justifying the same emotions based on reasons that can be understood by others. While Milton advances a view of psychological determinism, he cannot describe the experience of it without using terms that would be understandable outside of the husband's heart.

I have argued that the emotive sensibility of the divorce tracts suggests a radical identification with one's emotions. Love and hatred constitute the unchangeable nature of an individual and circumscribe the possibilities for his or her happiness. Such emotions are blameless, they retain the innocence they possess from creation, and they determine a person's capacity for taking on specific obligations. It will be twenty years before Milton explores the full and alarming implications of his theory of emotive sensibility in his epic poem *Paradise Lost*, through a character whose lovelessness makes him perpetually and irredeemably unhappy, not with a single relationship that can be terminated but with the greatest relationship of all—that of a creature and their God. Departing from the critical tradition that examines the compelling continuities between the divorce tracts and Milton's depiction of Adam and Eve's marriage in *Paradise Lost*, the final chapter of my dissertation

suggests that the figure of Satan offers Milton's most subversive exploration of the psychological determinism he advances in the divorce tracts.[69] Milton has explored the topic of temptation throughout his oeuvre in *Comus*, *Areopagitica*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Paradise Regained*. The divorce tracts allow an additional avenue for exploring the psychology of sin in Satan's character—sin as the result of radical and unchanging emotion.

[69] See Halkett, *Milton and the Idea of Matrimony*, 98-138; Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 207–22; Nyquist, "The Genesis of Gendered Subjectivity," 114–24; Turner, *One Flesh*, 228–29.

Chapter 4: Satanic Ingratitude and Psychological Determinism in *Paradise Lost*

Satanic Feeling and Impossible Repentance

The argument opening the fourth book of *Paradise Lost* summarizes Satan's emotional agitation and his final resolution as he stands on the brink of Eden: "[Satan] falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions, fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil."[1] In the argument, the conjunction "but" suggests that Satan's confirmation in evil stands in contrast to his former emotional turmoil. Beset with "many doubts" and "many passions," the argument suggests, Satan has had the opportunity to reconsider his "bold enterprise," and yet he ultimately chooses to carry it on. His prolonged deliberation makes the decision worse. When Satan narrates the same event soon thereafter, however, he charts a different route from passion to decision, one that deemphasizes moral choice and embeds it in the contingencies of emotional responsiveness. The soliloquy on Mount Niphates initially focuses on the inexplicability of Satan's ingratitude to God—although he understands that grateful praise would be the well-deserved and "easiest recompense" for divine beneficence, for him it is nevertheless "burdensome" (4.47, 53). The intellectual insight that he ought to feel grateful to God does not move him emotionally. Satan then examines his obdurate emotions through a series of questions and counterfactuals, only to conclude that repentance, foreclosed by his entrenched hostility toward God, is impossible:

> But say I could repent and could obtain
> By act of grace my former state; how soon
> Would height recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
> What feigned submission swore: ease would recant

[1] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, 2nd ed. (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2007), 214. All subsequent references to the poem are taken from this edition and cited parenthetically by book and line number.

> Vows made in pain, as violent and void.
> For never can true reconcilement grow
> Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep:
> Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
> And heavier fall (4.93–101)

It is the realization of his fundamental hatred of God that eventually leads Satan to recommit to evil: "So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear, / Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost; / Evil be thou my good" (4.108–10). In his own understanding, then, Satan "confirms himself in evil" based on a personal antipathy rather than a general proclivity to wickedness. Where personal reconcilement with God is impossible, so is pursuing goodness, which is the primary quality of God.[2]

Satan's conclusion is remarkable for its determinism, so at odds with his characteristic claims of self-determinacy—even conscious of the disastrous results of his former errors, he says, he could never feel otherwise than he feels. And since he feels hatred, resentment, and ingratitude, he is unable to enjoy, let alone reciprocate divine beneficence. As a result, evil must take the place of good as the ultimate end of his striving. Although the imperative "be" rhetorically indicates willful commitment, this verbal gesture of self-determination follows Satan's conclusion that things could not have been otherwise. Satan is unable to persuade himself to obey God—that is, in the full sense of *persuasion* emphasized by Jeffrey Masten, where the duty of obedience would be sweet or pleasing as well as intellectually convincing.[3] As he experiences it, the soliloquy suggests, his moral choice is limited by the affordances of his psychology. Whereas the argument of book 4 outlines a moral story allocating moral

[2] On the distinction between personal and general motivations for Satan's revolt in Protestant theology see Stella P. Revard, "Satan's Envy of the Kingship of the Son of God: A Reconsideration of 'Paradise Lost,' Book 4, and Its Theological Background," *Modern Philology* 70, no. 3 (February 1973): 190–94, especially 191. Whereas for Luther, the conception of evil in Satan implied "a strong antipathy for the good," other theologians ascribe the onset of Satanic evil to his anger about the Son's privilege.
[3] Jeffrey Masten, *Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare's Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 95–96.

responsibility, I suggest, Satan's soliloquy demonstrates what Paul Cefalu terms the "approximately real ethical quandaries" whereby literary texts "expose the limitations of the theoretical apparatus found in dogmatic theology."[4]

While Milton's theodicy advises against preferring Satan's perspective to that of the argument (and many commentaries are dedicated to refuting it), the very perspectivism of the poem recommends not to dismiss it either. As Timothy Harrison has observed, *Paradise Lost* is a poem that is primarily routed through "the perspectives of its characters."[5] Harrison argues that "Milton occupies the first-person scene of thought in order to examine and represent the conditions of possibility that underpin free choice."[6] The form of the poem foregrounds characters' experience and self-understanding to explore moral problems. Giving voice to Satan's psychological experience of emotional obduracy, as well as to his understanding of how it limits his moral choice does not substitute a Satanic explanation of sin for a theological one, but it acknowledges theology's limitations in explaining emotional phenomena. The major theological accounts of sin in the poem foreground the blameworthiness of free but sinful agents ("Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell" [3.102]), but they do not advise on how emotions such as pride, hatred, or ingratitude can be overcome. By leaving the discussion of negative emotions' moral implications to Satan, Milton expresses a genuine worry about the power of emotion to restrict moral choice, a concern that stands in contrast to his explicit theodicy.[7]

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[4] Cefalu, *Moral Identity*, 7.
[5] Harrison, *Coming To*, 33.
[6] Harrison, 34.
[7] In emphasizing deterministic considerations in Milton's representation of emotion, my argument differs from a recent reading of the passions as active forces in Milton's thought. See Karis G. Riley, "Milton, the Passions, and the Knowing Body," *The Seventeenth Century* 35, no. 1 (2020): 31–53, especially 46. Riley argues that by contrast to recent humouralist accounts of the early modern passions, "Milton's monism makes matter active, independent and conscious — and therefore free."

The concern implicit in the Mount Niphates soliloquy is that emotion is not, as suggested by Michael Schoenfeldt's summary of early modern sensibilities, "an external force that needed to be tamed and subjugated for the human subject to live well," but rather the more entrenched "intrinsic element of personality."[8] As we have seen, Milton has previously explored the possibility that certain affections were unchangeable and belonged to a person's "inmost nature" in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. In that earlier text, Milton has maintained that it was abhorrent for the law to force a man to "love against a possibility, and to use a dissimulation against his soul in the perpetual and ceaseless duties of a husband" when his profound emotions inclined him otherwise (1.7, 119). According to *The Doctrine*, an individual's nature includes certain emotional affordances that allow one to love some people but not others. The price of suppressing unchangeable disaffection is self-deception that transforms the loving duties of the husband into continual toil. The labors of insincere affection reemerge in a modified fashion in Milton's epic poem, where Satan laments "the debt immense of endless gratitude, / So burdensome, still paying, still to owe" (4.52–53). The unhappy husband of the divorce tracts and the character of Satan in *Paradise Lost* alike face claims on their emotional lives—to love one's wife in the first, God in the second.

When he is caught by the angelic guard in paradise, Satan also explains his escape from hell on similar grounds to those that motivate the unhappy husband to seek an end to his pain. "To turn away peaceably from what afflicts," Milton writes in *Tetrachordon*, is "the first and most innocent lesson of nature" (278). Satan repeats this rationale to Gabriel: "Lives there who loves his pain? / Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell, / Though thither doomed?" (4.888–90). Milton construes the husband's pain as guiltless and natural, whereas Satan's usage plays on "the double early modern sense of 'pain' as hurt and

[8] Michael Schoenfeldt, "'Commotion Strange': Passion in *Paradise Lost*," 67.

'punishment'" highlighted by Joshua Scodel.[9] Scodel observes that Satan fails to recognize the "pain" caused by Sin's emergence from his head as punishment (2.752).[10] In book 4 Satan does acknowledge his punishment (he is "doomed" to hell) but nevertheless equivocates on "pain" to claim the natural right to avoid it. Self-preservation instinct, he suggests, trumps obedience to moral rules. Whereas Milton vehemently asserts that conjugal affection or disaffection are "not moral, but natural" (*Doctrine* 1.10, 128), the same redeeming position is unavailable to Satan. But reading Satan's appeal to escaping pain as a moral perversion of *Tetrachordon*'s argument would be too facile. Milton's insistence that emotional pain can lead to "despair" and "thoughts of atheism" in *The Doctrine* charts a two-way road between pain that merits deliverance and pain that indexes punishment (*Doctrine* 1.7, 120). Natural pain can become blameworthy when it turns into despairing atheism, whereas pain that is misconstrued as blameworthy (the pain of a loveless marriage) is actually guiltless.

Satan's disaffection comes to resemble a fixed "inmost nature" through his failed efforts to imagine a more positive relation to God. His realization that his emotional constitution would have led him to revolt even had he been created "some inferior angel" and his admission that even if he "could repent" he would eventually end up recanting his vows (4.59, 93) echo Michel de Montaigne's skepticism about the value of repentance in light of the deep-seated nature of personality, discussed in the previous chapter. What leads Montaigne to reject repentance, we may recall, is the futility of its inherently counterfactual mode:

> For my part, I may in generall wish to bee other then I am; I may condemne and mislike my universall forme; I may beseech God to grant mee an undefiled reformation, and excuse my naturall weaknesse; but mee seemeth I ought not to tearme this repentance noe more then the displeasure of being neither Angell nor *Cato*. My actions are squared to what I am and conformed to my condition. I cannot doe better: And repentance dooth not properly concerne what is not in our power; sorrow dooth. I may imagine infinite dispositions of a higher pitch, and better

[9] Joshua Scodel, "Edenic Freedoms," *Milton Studies* 56 (2015), 178.
[10] Scodel, "Edenic Freedoms," 178.

> governed then myne… I flatter not my selfe: in like circumstances, I should ever bee the same.[11]

Since certain personality traits cannot be "grubd out" and would always lead to the same actions, repenting past decisions is as vain an endeavor as wishing oneself to be a different person or creature altogether.[12] Satan knows that his repentance would be short-lived, and his pessimism about the possibility of changing his entrenched negative emotions toward God resembles Montaigne's on the possibility of uprooting "natural cosubstantiall and intestine vices."[13] The understanding that his "unbounded hope" would have led him to turn against God regardless of his position in the heavenly hierarchy disconnects Satan's hostility to God from specific events and circumstances (4.58–63), grounding it instead in a mental constitution that would have inevitably manifested when met with the appropriate occasion. Such occasion, importantly, would not have been the cause for his negative feelings but only the catalyst for revealing them. In other words, counterfactual thinking allows Satan to describe his sin as a persistent aspect of his personality rather than as a discrete action. His empiricist statement—"we know no time when we were not as now" (8.859)—while deficient as proof of his self-creation, is nevertheless useful as a description of Satan's psychological experience. While other angels speculate about the exact moment when Satan turned sinful (Gabriel speculates that he "servilely adored / Heaven's awful Monarch… in hope / To dispossess him" [4.959–61], and Raphael describes to Adam the fateful night when Satan, sleepless, first "thought himself impaired [5.665]), Satan's self-narration construes his hostility toward God as a fixed part of his psychology rather than the result of a particular event.

[11] Montaigne, "Of Repenting," 454.
[12] Montaigne, 454.
[13] Montaigne, 454.

Satan's first-person examination of his sinful affections stands out among other accounts of the origin of evil in *Paradise Lost*: Sin's recounting of her springing out of Satan's head in book 2; God's curt remark in book 3: "Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell" (3.102); and Raphael's narration of the outbreak of the war in heaven in book 5. Despite the differences among these three accounts, they all share a fundamentally diachronic understanding of sin—it had not been there, and then it was. There was a moment in which Satan "fell." Sin entering the world is an event in time and diegesis. The rebellion in heaven took place in history. By contrast, Satan's soliloquy implies that the psychological experience of sin is boundless. His certainty that sin would have happened even had circumstances been different, and that it could happen again, suggest that from the point of view of the sinful subject sin has no beginning, but rather is coterminous with the sinner. It is for this reason that Montaigne offers "beseech[ing] God to grant . . . undefiled reformation" as the only remedy for fundamental vices—to change such natural inclination, one has to look outside of oneself.

From a theological standpoint, the rigidity of Satan's emotional hostility toward God indeed demonstrates the results of his sin. In *De Doctrina Christiana*, Milton writes that the hardening of hearts suffered first by Pharaoh and later by the Jews is a "punishment for those already markedly impious," a claim echoing the Augustinian position that some sins are a punishment for other sins.[14] God did not induce evil in Pharaoh's heart, Milton says, but "was only teasing out Pharaoh's hardness, already known to him."[15] Applied to Satan's inability to repent, Milton's position makes it clear that Satan's obduracy is his own fault, not God's. Helen Gardner recognizes in Satan's inability to repent the popular theological belief, affirmed by Aquinas and John Donne, that unlike human sinfulness the fall of the angels is

[14] Milton, *On Christian Doctrine*, 1.4, 111; McGinnis, "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart," 54.
[15] Milton, *On Christian Doctrine*, 1.4, 111.

irreversible.[16] But whereas Aquinas explicitly states (and Donne agrees) that the angels' inability to repent results from their irrecoverably corrupted wills ("*quid-quid in eis est naturale, totum est bonum et ad bonum inclinans, sed liberum arbitrium in eis est in malo obstinatum*"), Milton's God makes a more vague pronouncement about the irreversibility of the angels' fall:[17]

> The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
> Self-tempted, self-depraved: man falls deceived
> By the other first: man therefore shall find grace,
> The other none (3.129–32)

God does not say whether the angel sort will not "find" grace because he will not grant it or because their wills have been irrecoverably corrupted (as Aquinas thinks), so even if he gave them grace, they would not have been able to receive it. Abdiel certainly thinks that repentance is possible when he urges Satan to "hasten to appease / The incensèd Father, and the incensèd Son, / While pardon may be found in time besought" (5.846–48), although he adds the extra condition that it must be done in a timely manner. If Abdiel is right, then God's pronouncement that the angels will not find grace means not that their free will has been destroyed but that he will not forgive them even if they ask for his forgiveness. Satan, of course, does not know this, and seems to assume that repentance would be possible if only he could change how he felt about God.

Perhaps to distract from the troubling image of God damning a beseeching sinner, in book 4 Milton focuses on Satan's reasons for not repenting; that is, his unmoved hostility toward God.[18] His speech gives voice to what Richard DuRocher has described as "the psychological point that 'hardening of the heart' involves a failure of emotional

[16] Gardner, "Satan and the Theme of Damnation," 206–207.
[17] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Supplement Q. 16, A. 3; quoted in Gardner, 207.
[18] This point was made by Joshua Scodel.

responsiveness, a kind of affective fixity or numbness."[19] As the previous chapter shows, Milton has labored to establish the validity of human psychology outside the influence of sin, as well as the legitimacy of emotional unresponsiveness in interpersonal contexts. In his epic poem, I propose, he expands his exploration of emotional obduracy to include the psychology of sinfulness. But while Milton has previously distinguished a general hardness of heart that ought to be accommodated by the law from the "stubborn resolution to do evil" (*Tetrachordon* 312), Satan's soliloquy shows that the "resolution to do evil" is already enmired in the difficulty of softening one's own heart. Satan's psychological entrapment therefore imports into *Paradise Lost* a concern about the limitations of free choice in the face of affective fixity.

Satan's psychological portrait therefore reveals a different aspect of emotional obduracy than the theological explanations it receives elsewhere in the poem. For example, in book 6 Raphael describes to Adam the obduracy of the rebelling angels, which increases even after they have witnessed the Son's restoration of the heavenly landscape:

> Before him power divine his way prepared;
> At his command the uprooted hills retired
> Each to his place, they heard his voice and went
> Obsequious, heav'n his wonted faced renewed,
> And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.
> This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdured,
> And to rebellious fight rallied their powers
> Insensate, hope conceiving from despair.
> In heav'nly spirits could such perverseness dwell?
> But to convince the proud what signs avail,
> Or wonders move the obdúrate to relent?
> They hardened more by what might most reclaim (6.780–91)

For Raphael, the rebellious angels' obstinacy in the face of undeniable "signs" is a symptom of their pride. The psychology of pride, however, is hard to understand. Raphael is baffled

[19] Richard DuRocher, "'Tears such as Angels weep': Passion and Allusion in *Paradise Lost*," in *Their Maker's Image: New Essays on John Milton*, ed. Mary C. Fenton and Louis Schwartz (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2011), 39.

that the angelic "foes" could remain unmoved even after they "saw" the miraculous restoration of heaven to its former smiling peacefulness.[20] "Perverseness" supplies the only explanation for how evidence or the Son's divine nature could harden rather than "reclaim" the wills of these angels, and it is a vague one. Such perversity, as Anne T. Barbeau has observed, amounts to a rejection "not only of the Messiah's political authority but also his natural authority over the elements of heaven."[21] Raphael's storytelling continuously acknowledges the heroic connotations associated with the angels' intransigence and reframes it as a result of their sinfulness rather than heroic virtue. "Stood," for example, a key term for understanding moral perseverance in both *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, is paired with "obdured" to show that the rebellious angels' headstrong resistance is a sign of hard-heartedness rather than steadfastness. The enjambment of "powers / Insensate" reveals that although the rallying of powers may seem like an expression of military zeal, it rather betrays emotional unresponsiveness. As DuRocher paraphrases, "the fixed posture of Satan's crew only *appears* to be the virtue of heroic warriors; in reality, it externalizes their inner despair."[22] The emphasis of Raphael's storytelling is pedagogical—he describes emotional obduracy as something that may appear alluring but is in fact sinful and unnatural. Yet Satan's Mount Niphates speech, this chapter proposes, complements and complicates moralizing treatments of emotional obduracy by subordinating moral choice to the contingencies of emotion. In the next section I suggest that Satan correctly identifies gratitude as a moral duty whose essence is an affective experience. I argue that Satan's articulation of ingratitude in the Niphates speech revises the Senecan notion that thankfulness, requiring no

[20] William Kerrigan also comments that pride, in this passage, is "not something well-understood." See William Kerrigan, *The Sacred Complex* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 242.
[21] Anne T. Barbeau, "Satan's Envy of the Son and the Third Day of the War," *Papers on Language and Literature* 13, no. 4 (Fall 1977): 364.
[22] DuRocher, "Passion and Allusion," 39.

material means, provides an easy way for all people to repay their benefits. Rather, his perceived inability to feel gratitude hinders Satan from participating in virtue. The final section argues that Satan's perceiving of gratitude as a burden conveys a tension between creativity and createdness that underlies his prerational affective experience.

Gratitude as Moral Debt

Satan's ingratitude is the primary example of his emotional obduracy, demonstrating how emotion can remain recalcitrant even in the face of moral and intellectual judgment:

> Ah wherefore! he deserved no such return
> From me, whom he created what I was
> In that bright eminence, and with his good
> Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
> What could be less then to afford him praise,
> The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,
> How due! yet all his good proved ill in me,
> And wrought but malice; lifted up so high
> I sdeind subjection, and thought one step higher
> Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
> The debt immense of endless gratitude,
> So burdensome, still paying, still to owe;
> Forgetful what from him I still received,
> And understood not that a grateful mind
> By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
> Indebted and discharged; what burden then? (4.42–57)

Satan laments his inability to feel grateful to God despite his understanding that gratitude is rightfully owed for the ample gifts of divine beneficence he has enjoyed before his fall. Whereas Raphael expresses surprise that the rebellious angels could remain obdurate even after witnessing miraculous signs of the Son's divinity, Satan reflects on the more disturbing fact that his emotions remain obdurate even despite his own virtuous conclusions. Signs are an external means for persuasion that can be misinterpreted and doubted, but personal conviction should win over the heart—the fact that it does not should concern Milton, for whom moral choice and the possibility of self-governance are the grounds for moral

responsibility. In the case of ingratitude for divine beneficence, emotional recalcitrance is worse than other instances where emotion revolts against reason and virtue, because such ingratitude constitutes sin rather than motivates it. When Angelo is consumed by lust for Isabella despite his best judgment, for example, he can still, at least theoretically, decide not to act on his passion. The same course of action is not available to Satan. Since the feeling of gratitude itself is the appropriate repayment for God's benefits, his persistent ingratitude already constitutes a sin rather than motivates it. Satan's ingratitude therefore epitomizes the blurring of inwardness and action that Protestant ethics inherits from Stoicism—if emotions are endowed with as much weight as actions, it is hardly possible for anyone to escape culpability.

In raising the concern that the requirement of gratitude as the sole repayment for divine beneficence may exclude some from participating in virtue, Milton offers a corrective to the Senecan emphasis on gratitude as the primary repayment of benefits. In *De beneficiis*, widely available in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Seneca applies the Stoic teaching that prioritizes inward disposition over outward conduct to the economy of gift exchange, arguing that the primary aspect of giving and receiving benefits is the spirit in which these actions are done.[23] For this reason, the repayment of benefits is accessible to all members of society regardless of their financial status: "To plead bankruptcy is, surely, most disgraceful, just for the reason that, in order to perform the promised payment, what is needed is not wealth, but the desire; for, if a benefit is acknowledged, it is returned."[24] Seneca's theory

[23] *De beneficiis* first appeared in English in 1569, in the partial translation of Nicholas Haward, and later in the complete translations of Arthur Golding (1578) and Thomas Lodge (1614). Milton, of course, would have had access to the original Latin text as well.
[24] Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *On Benefits*, in *Seneca: Moral Essays*, vol. 3, trans. J. W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 1.1.3. All subsequent citations of this text are taken from this edition and cited parenthetically. See also M. G. Barclay, *Paul & The Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans 2015), 48: "This Stoic reevaluation of 'goods'… is offered as a way of alleviating the problems of a system in which such things continue to be exchanged. Thus, donors should be concerned first and foremost

empowers even the weakest members of society to repay the benefits they receive, promoting a model of social equality based on the common capacity to feel. In his study of gratitude in *Paradise Lost*, Peter E. Medine usefully shows how Seneca's philosophy of gratitude is developed in the theology of Thomas Aquinas, where the emphasis on inward disposition rather than outward conduct empowers all believers to repay the moral debt incurred by God's infinite beneficence: "Gratitude is thus an empowering virtue: *si faciat quod possit*, even the pauper *can* — that is, *is able to* — repay the greatest of gifts."[25]

Medine's account emphasizes the connection among feeling, freedom, and facility in Aquinas's thought. Since thankfulness happens in the believer's heart, repaying divine beneficence, however great, is always within the easy reach of the indebted. Medine applies Aquinas's position to Satan's ingratitude in book 4:

> Satan's understanding of his debt to God is standard and orthodox. It is a debt that is endless, one that necessitates paying still and owing still; but it is also a debt that by one's very owing of it one discharges it. That is, by *feeling* the debt one repays it… That frame of mind [gratitude] depends on recognition and acknowledgment of the basic reality of God's beneficent creation and the individual's undeserved creation. Satan recognizes and acknowledges this reality, but he cannot accommodate himself to it. He thinks that doing so would entail inferiority. He disdains subjection and inferiority; he aspires to superiority. The result is profoundly ironic: perfect misery and complete loss of freedom.[26]

Medine affirms Satan's intellectual understanding that he owes God an "endless" debt and identifies Satan's moral problem as an emotional one. The specific operations of this emotional problem, however, remain obscure. Gratitude "depends on recognition and acknowledgement," but it is also clear that such recognition and acknowledgement are not sufficient for producing it. As Medine says, Satan already "recognizes and acknowledges" his

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with eliciting *gratitude*: this element of the 'return' is certainly necessary." (Original emphases.)

[25] Peter E. Medine, "Gratitude and Paradise Lost," in *Milton and the Grounds of Contention*, ed. Mark R. Kelley, Michael Lieb, and John T. Shawcross (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2003), 122.

[26] Medine, "Gratitude and Paradise Lost," 141.

debt despite his persistent ingratitude. Medine then suggests that the problem is that Satan cannot "accommodate" himself to his debt due to his disdain for subjection. The key to accommodating reality and recalibrating Satan's emotions to a grateful harmony with God would be to adjust his beliefs about inferiority and superiority. At the same time, Satan's past tenses ("sdeind," "thought," "understood") indicate that he already understands that mistake. More troubling yet, Satan's example is that of one who *feels* the debt and yet does not repay it. Feeling the debt without also welcoming it is not enough to constitute a grateful, virtuous response to God, and Satan does not feel the debt in the right way. Instead of joy and the desire to repay the benefits he has received, he feels burdened. Seneca and Aquinas (and Medine) praise gratitude for its spontaneity, but Satan's example shows that not everyone experiences spontaneous gratitude. As Scodel argues, in *Paradise Lost* Milton distinguishes spontaneous (voluntary) motion from other types of freedom such as the freedom to choose between different options.[27] The fact that gratitude is spontaneous, resulting from an inner impetus, does not mean that it can also be freely chosen. Satan's spontaneous feeling is being burdened by gratitude, and he cannot choose to feel grateful instead. The spontaneity of gratitude is what makes it unachievable for him.

Gratitude ought to be easy though, a fact of which Satan is aware. His struggle against the affective limitations on his ethical agency emerge even at the moment in which he describes the purported ease of gratitude. The formulation "the grateful mind / By owing owes not," I suggest, alludes to and revises Seneca's celebratory "*reddit enim beneficium, qui debet*" (1.1.3) Whereas J. W. Basore renders the sentence as "if a benefit is acknowledged, it is returned," Miriam Griffin and Brad Inwood's recent translation is closer to the Latin: "the person who owes a benefit repays it."[28] Satan changes the impersonal *qui*, or "person," of

[27] Scodel, "Edenic Freedoms," 153–58.
[28] Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *On Benefits*, trans. Miriam Griffin and Brad Inwood (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 1.1.3.

Seneca's dictum into the more limited "grateful mind." The adjective *grateful* qualifies the type of mind who is able to repay a benefit by owing it—not every mind is capable of such a feat, but only one that is already grateful.[29] Satan's speech treats the acknowledgement of debt, so central to Seneca and Aquinas, as a cognitive function rather than an emotional one. By qualifying the type of person that can feel gratitude in addition to acknowledging their debt, Satan represents gratitude as a prerational affective disposition that inclines the mind to welcome or reject divine beneficence. Gratitude, in this view, is a property of individuals rather than an emotional state that anyone could inhabit. Like the affection a person may feel toward some people but not others in the divorce tracts, gratitude is a favorable disposition one may have toward one's benefactor, or not have it.

In contrast to Medine's validation of Satan's acknowledgement of debt, other readers of *Paradise Lost* sometimes portray gratitude as an entirely free, overflowing, and natural response to divine beneficence, and consequently interpret Satan's apprehension of debt as evidence of his sinful, transactional worldview. In this interpretation, Satan's perception of debt where he ought to see only divine generosity is erroneous and reductive. Tzachi Zamir argues that the ideal form of gratitude in Milton's poem is realized in "becoming the giving," a deep sense of identification with the benefactor that only the self-sacrifice of the Son achieves in full.[30] Zamir is explicit on the inappropriateness of Satan's position and its implications: "Satan's failure to sustain gratitude issues from his inability to dissociate gifts

[29] See also Neil Forsyth, *The Satanic Epic* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 222. Forsyth argues that Milton exploits the pun to convey that Satan cannot be "grateful" since he is denied "grace." Forsyth's position shares my interest in determinism in *Paradise Lost*, but it also suggests a causal relation between theological doctrine (God will not grant Satan grace) and its subjective manifestation along Lutheran and Calvinist lines (Satan cannot feel grateful). By contrast, I do not make a case for determinist elements in Milton's theology.

[30] Tzachi Zamir, *Ascent: Philosophy and Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 165.

from debt."[31] In other words, Satan feels burdened by divine beneficence because he does not see that divine gifts require no repayment. They are free, and therefore there is nothing in them to burden him at all. Colin Burrow similarly detects the wrong priorities in Satan's economic language: "The jingle of money (afford, recompense, pay, due, debt, paying, owe, received, owing, owes, pays, indebted) dominates all areas of experience."[32] However, plucking Satan's words out of context like so many coins eludes the efficacy of his poetic language for conveying how his recalcitrant emotion rather than his misunderstanding creates a sense of burden in the Niphates soliloquy (in addition to Burrow's curious inclusion of "received" as one of the contaminated terms). While my argument builds on previous accounts that assign Satanic ingratitude a central role in the constitution of a sinful consciousness, in the remainder of this section I suggest that the dichotomy between spontaneously overflowing gratitude on the one hand and Satanic transactional mindset on the other hand has been overstated.

Understanding gratitude primarily as a spontaneous response to divine beneficence that on its own terms requires no repayment obscures the fact that in *Paradise Lost* gratitude is not only free but also owed. Satan certainly feels this, but he is not the only one. For Adam and Eve as well, the feeling of gratitude is closely related to the fulfillment of an obligation. As a modulation of the will, gratitude disposes Adam and Eve to obey the Father voluntarily for as long as they do so, because obedience is the direct expression of their thankfulness.[33] More importantly though, Adam and Eve's practices of gratitude reveal, as we shall see, that they believe it is an expected return for benefits received. The idea that gratitude constitutes

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[31] Zamir, *Ascent*, 132.
[32] Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1993), 254. In addition, compare to Medine, 141: "The language of gratitude pervades the speech: service (45), praise (46), thanks (47), debt (52), and the word 'gratitude' itself (52)."
[33] In other words, gratitude makes Adam and Eve's obedience to God spontaneous. On Milton's attraction to a model of spontaneous rather than rationalist morality see Strier, "Milton's Fetters," especially 43–44.

the repayment of a debt is therefore not a Satanic innovation, but a moral stance that is shared among virtuous characters in Milton's epic.

In their conversation in book 4, a parallel of the Niphates soliloquy, Adam and Eve plainly state that gratitude is the return due for the "manifold delights" they receive from God (4.435): "For we to him indeed all praises owe," says Eve, "And daily thanks" (4.444–45). Acknowledging their indebtedness does not compromise their innocence or enjoyment of the Father's gifts. Adam and Eve see gifts everywhere in Milton's paradise, including even the "gift of sleep" (4.735). Rulers in paradise but subjects in the Father's kingdom, the state of their ownership is best described in Adam's words to the angel Raphael: "Two only, who yet *by sovereign gift* possess / This spacious ground" (5.366–67, my emphasis). Possession by gift is a conditional form of ownership. Milton's admiration for the provision in the Justinian Code that "permits the giver to recall his gift from him who proves unthankful towards him" in *Tetrachordon* shows that in his view, gifts are never completely separate from their giver (280).[34] This is ontologically as well as morally true in the case of the Father who sustains creation, continually giving it to Adam and Eve as they continually receive it. Nor can the gift of creation, since it is made from the substance of God and requires his constant sustenance, ever depart from the Father and come into the absolute possession of his creatures. All ownership in paradise is therefore under a double aspect, belonging to the giver as well as the recipients.

This ontological necessity informs the moral standards for possession by gift in the poem. The garden is Adam's and Eve's to work and enjoy, but God determines the rules as to how. Even Satan offers only a modest flattery to Eve when he begins his temptation: "all things thine / By gift" (9.539–40), although the enjambment already anticipates his sinister suggestion that all things could become Eve's, without qualification. Paradise epitomizes M.

[34] I thank an anonymous reviewer at *Milton Studies* for bringing this to my attention.

G. Barclay's statement, in his study of Paul's theology of the gift, that "gifts not only belong to people, they are invested with the personality of the donor."[35] In Milton's epic, this principle means that the gifts of paradise do not only bespeak the existence of "some great maker" (8.278) whose existence Adam derives from natural phenomena soon after his first awakening, but also initiate a relationship of mutual duties between Adam and Eve and that maker, the Father. Enjoying the Father's gifts not only points to the Father's existence, but also approximates his presence. The inalienability of divine gifts from God himself receives its most poignant expression in Adam's self-condemnation after the fall: "thy reward was of his grace" (10.767), where the genitive expresses both the origin of Adam's previous reward and its content. God's graciousness is the source of the gift, and the gift itself is grace. That gift of grace and the various gifted pleasures enjoyed in paradise are inalienable from the Father, because even when they are given they do not depart from him and go into the hands of a recipient, but rather bring the recipient closer to him.[36]

Nevertheless, the Father is quick to remind the heavenly host that Adam and Eve do in fact have a kind of possession over the gifts they have received from him, insofar as they have both the freedom to use these gifts according to their free wills and the responsibility for their choices. This attitude animates the Father's castigation of Adam in book 3: "he had of me / All he could have" (3.97–98). Milton is anxious to express a similar sense of

[35] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 53; quoted in Barclay, *Paul & The Gift*, 15.

[36] Inalienable possessions are those that cannot be given away or sold, or possessions that do not entirely depart from the giver even when they are given. See Barclay, *Paul & The Gift*, 20: "There are possessions that simply cannot be alienated (given away) at all, without loss of individual or group identity. There are others that are in one sense given, but in another sense still belong to the giver… but "inalienable" goods serve to remind us of the strong investment of the giver in the gift."

responsibility for received gifts in *A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*, where the elder brother urges the younger brother to trust in their sister's virtue:[37]

> My sister is not so defenceless left
> As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
> Which you remember not.
>
> *Sec. Bro.* What hidden strength,
> Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?
>
> *E. Bro.* I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
> Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own:
> 'Tis Chastity, my brother, Chastity.

A virtue that is bestowed by heaven but can nevertheless be termed one's own accentuates the same double ownership that Milton later develops in *Paradise Lost*. It is an inner disposition that could not be sustained if it were not for divine help, but nevertheless creates a deep sense of responsibility and ownership in the person who possesses it. The lady's chastity instantiates a gift that derives its goodness and sustenance from its source but remains up to the recipient to preserve. Possession by gift is therefore an expression of providence in Milton's paradise, where the temporal continuity of divine gifts sustains the ongoing relationship of created beings with their maker.

In addition to demonstrating Adam's understanding that gifts bind one to the giver and incur a general debt of gratitude, Adam's expressions of thankfulness frequently convey the further notion that the return for a gift ought to be proportional to its magnitude. Adam and Eve's gracious hospitality of the angel Raphael is therefore framed as the repayment of a gift: "well we may afford / Our givers their own gifts" (5.316–17). The same principle is expressed more effusively in Adam's desire to repay Raphael's generous storytelling: "What thanks sufficient, or what recompense / Equal have I to render thee, divine / Historian" (8.5–7). Finally, Adam gravely acknowledges to the angel that, "to the infinitely good we owe /

[37] John Milton, *Comus*, in *The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. William Vaughn Moody (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924), 414–420.

Immortal thanks" (7.76–77). As created beings who are therefore finite Adam and Eve cannot repay the Father's infinite goodness with equally infinite gratitude, but as immortal beings they can nevertheless offer the next best thing—to be thankful to the Father for as long as they live, which, they have no reason to suspect otherwise, would be forever.[38] Adam's joyful extension of immortal gratitude to the Father is a foil to the Satanic dread of a debt of "endless gratitude" (4.52). Adam's use of the word "immortal" enfolds a grateful acknowledgement of his and Eve's own immortality into his understanding of the extent of their debt—whereas the debt is onerous in Satan's mind, for Adam the never-ending nature of gratitude is only barely proportional to the infinite goodness of the Father.

Adam and Eve's prelapsarian practices of thankfulness therefore demonstrate their strong sense that divine gifts put their recipients under an obligation toward the Father, a view that Burrow and Zamir associate with Satan. Far from sinful though, the understanding that benefits incur a debt is intimately linked to Milton's representation of the Edenic relationship between human beings and the Father. This relationship is initiated with a gift and sustained through its reciprocation with gratitude. Although human gratitude can never match the magnitude of divine gifts, it still operates as the primary way in which Adam and Eve can relate to the Father and have a filial relationship with him. Taking gratitude to be a debt owed to the Father is therefore not indicative of a flaw in one's response to divine beneficence but rather a correct apprehension of the structure of prelapsarian giving and receiving.

This concurrence of emotional spontaneity and moral duty is captured in Christopher Ricks's beautiful analysis of the adjective "grateful," whose seventeenth-century meaning is both "thankful" and "pleasing." This unity of enjoyment and repayment, Ricks suggests,

[38] On immeasurable gratitude corresponding to "heavenly superfluity and excess" in *Paradise Lost* see Emily Stelzer, *Gluttony and Gratitude: Milton's Philosophy of Eating* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, (2017), 7.

testifies to the "innocent integrity of Paradise" where pleasure and thankfulness are two related aspects of the same experience.[39] Ingratitude on the other hand, which Ricks credits with being "the great theme of the poem," is the mark of a fallen consciousness.[40] Ricks's analysis, while demonstrating the harmony of receiving gifts and reciprocating them in prelapsarian paradise, deemphasizes the giver, whose presence generates the expectation of a return and introduces the tension of obligation into the interpersonal bond inaugurated by divine gifts. The giver, however, is an essential part of the cycle of giving, receiving, and returning gifts, whose emblematic image is the dance of the Three Graces of Greek religion. These goddesses are not absent from Milton's paradise, where they show up as part of the panoramic view that Satan beholds directly after the Niphates soliloquy: "while universal Pan / Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance / Led on the eternal spring" (4.266–68). Bridging Satan's soliloquy on gratitude and Adam and Eve's conversation on the same topic, the Three Graces are weaved into Milton's representation of nature, which is kept in eternal bloom through the cycle of giving, receiving, and returning divine beneficence.

In summary, critical discussions of gratitude in *Paradise Lost* have sometimes bypassed the problem of Satan's emotional obduracy, either by denying that gratitude is expected as the repayment of debt in the first place or by taking Satan's negative feelings to result from his flawed reasoning. The result is too sharp and artificial a dichotomy between the language of gratitude and that of debt in the poem. If gratitude demonstrates innocence, heartfelt acknowledgment of God's goodness, spontaneous overflowing of praise, and a humble but ardent desire to reciprocate divine beneficence, then the logic of debt argues the opposite—Satanic rejection or denial of heavenly love, the misunderstanding of divine beneficence, bookkeeping and sinful resentment.

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[39] Christopher Ricks, *Milton's Grand Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 113.
[40] Ricks, *Milton's Grand Style*, 113.

I argue instead that the language Satan uses to describe his debt represents not a fundamental mistake about the appropriate relationship among created beings and the Father, but Milton's concern about the psychological inability to conform one's emotions to the moral obligations outlined by theology. To express this concern, Milton draws on a Senecan tradition that places the feeling of gratitude under the pressure of obligation. Although Seneca's philosophy of gratitude is empowering insofar as individuals can repay their debts through gratitude alone, it also raises the moral stakes for having the right emotional response.

The Burden of Gratitude

I have said that Satan experiences his ingratitude to God as an ingrained aspect of his personality—a prerational disposition and a fixed psychological trait that would not have changed even had circumstances been different, and which consequently constitutes a hindrance for desiring and pursuing goodness. This section characterizes Satan's ingratitude as a defining feature of his relation to God and suggests that the burden Satan associates with gratitude results from his inability to accept the fact of his createdness. Although the analogy of Satan to an unhappy husband is useful for recognizing in his character the type of unchangeable disaffection Milton describes in the divorce tracts, this section departs from that analogy in order to examine ingratitude in Satan's failed filial relation to God. Satan's relationship with God is fraught with the denial of his creaturehood, notable in the fact that unlike Adam and Eve, he never addresses God as father.[41] To explore how Satan's personality is shaped in relation to a paternal figure, I begin my reading with a modern

[41] This was brought to my attention by Shira Wolosky in a class on "Interpretive Strategies and Literary Tradition" taught at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Fall 2011.

treatment of gratitude in child-parent relationships that also argues for the dependence of moral capacities on emotional ones.

In her 1957 essay "Envy and Gratitude," Melanie Klein outlines two emotional attitudes that develop in infancy and determine an individual's affective landscape in adulthood. Klein identifies the first object of envy and gratitude as the feeding breast, which the infant perceives to be an omnipotent source of nourishment. The fully gratified infant "feels that he has received from his loved object a unique gift which he wants to keep," which Klein terms "the basis of gratitude."[42] Gratitude for the good breast not only prepares the infant for a gratifying social life in adulthood, but also enables one to ultimately establish "trust in one's own goodness."[43] By contrast, the infant may also become envious of the breast that they cannot control and which may sometimes not satisfy their needs, and come to resent the goodness on which they depend. When this happens, the breast is envied because "the infant feels that it possesses everything he desires and that it has an unlimited flow of milk, and love which the breast keeps for its own gratification."[44] Klein speculates on the moral implications of envy: "I would even suggest that it [envy] is unconsciously felt to be the greatest sin of all, because it spoils and harms the good object which is the source of life."[45] Desiring a unique gift, perceiving one's own envy as sinful, and targeting the creativity on which one depends for sustenance with the destructive energy of envy, all converge in the literary instance that Klein provides to illustrate her theory:

> The spoiling of creativity implied in envy is illustrated in Milton's *Paradise Lost* where Satan, envious of God, decides to become the usurper of Heaven. He makes war on God in his attempt to spoil the heavenly life and falls out of Heaven. Fallen, he and his other fallen angels build Hell as a rival to Heaven, and become the destructive force which attempts to destroy what God creates. This theological idea seems to

[42] Melanie Klein, *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works, 1946–1963* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 188.
[43] Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 188.
[44] Klein, 183.
[45] Klein, 189.

> come down from St Augustine, who describes Life as a creative force opposed to Envy, a destructive force.[46]

In Klein's brief reading of Milton's plot, it is envy of divine creativity that precipitates Satan's destructive enterprise. Others have discussed a similar antagonism between Satanic envy and divine creativity in *Paradise Lost*. Barbeau notes a particular hostility to divine creativity in the rebellious angels' envy of the Son—after witnessing his rehabilitation of the heavenly landscape, "they end up envying him not merely his hierarchical position but also his creative and restorative powers which arise from his divine nature."[47] In addition, according to Barbeau Satan's hostility toward divine creativity manifests as denial on Mount Niphates, where he ignores the "light, heat and creative energy of the sun" to which his speech is addressed and instead "focuses on his usual linear, one-dimensional, vertical pattern of existence."[48] Expanding the topic of Satanic envy's targeting of creativity, Maggie Kilgour proposes that Satan's envy is "generated by and set in opposition to the creativity concentrated in and expressed by the Son," as well as "the creative energy of the poet himself."[49] Whereas creativity is nourishing and generative, envy constrains and destroys.

Klein's contribution to the already nuanced critical conversation on Satanic envy is in situating the emergence of envy and gratitude at the prerational stage of infancy and subordinating moral capabilities to the development of these opposite emotional capacities. Klein explains infant envy as a type of mistrust of the feeding breast that later frustrates the ability to achieve a "feeling of unity with another person."[50] This explanation, based on the infant's experience of their relation to an omnipotent source of love and nourishment, offers an alternative to Augustine's famous observations on infant jealousy.[51] Augustine describes

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[46] Klein, 202.
[47] Barbeau, "Satan's Envy of the Son," 364.
[48] Barbeau, 367.
[49] Maggie Kilgour, "Satan's Envy and Poetic Emulation," in in *Their Maker's Image*, 52.
[50] Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, 188.
[51] This connection was brought to my attention by an anonymous reviewer at *Milton Studies*.

the irrational anger of a "full fed" baby at the sight of "another child that sucked away its milk from it."[52] The baby's jealousy is unwarranted, since he is already satiated and lacks nothing. The example of the "*zelantem parvulum*" therefore serves as proof for Augustine that his nature has been sinful since infancy, even if he can no longer remember that time. Klein, however, grounds envy not in an irrational destructive urge but in the desire to enjoy a "unique gift." While Satan has had no infancy (nor does Klein claim that he has), Klein's theory is helpful for imagining an inaccessible cause that determines emotional dispositions toward the source of goodness, which consequently limit moral capacities. Klein describes an emotional genealogy of the capacity to ascribe goodness to oneself and relate positively to others in turn. Milton does not place emotional attitudes synchronically prior to ethical consciousness, but I contend that he similarly turns to gratitude in order to explore prerational affective dispositions that determine the scope of ethical action and the ability to pursue the good.

Satan's understanding of divine beneficence betrays a tension between his apprehension that God's love is "dealt equally to all" (4.68), therefore not corresponding to individual rank or merit (a fact that may make it less "unique"), and his growing acknowledgement that God has created him (Satan), thus giving him as unique a benefit as one can possibly receive. Satan's addressing of his complaints to the sun, a source of creative energy that, according to Seneca, "rises also upon the wicked" without discrimination (4.26.1), shows his lack of appreciation for benefits that are bestowed too liberally. Seneca warns against indiscriminate giving that may alienate recipients instead of calling them into commitment: "Whoever gives a benefit to anyone you please, has gratitude from no one… at a public feast… one may well say: 'What favour, pray, has he conferred upon me? The same,

[52] St. Augustine, *Confessions*, vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library, translated by William Watts (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912), 1.7, 20–21.

to be sure, that he has conferred on that other fellow… Did he consider that I was worthy of it? He merely indulged a personal wickedness!'" (1.14.1). Like the begrudging guest at the public feast, Satan desires a gift that reflects his understanding of his personal worth, not one that is given indiscriminately without regard to individual merit. Satan has argued that angels, "if not equal all," are yet "equally free" (5.791–92)—a position that has led him to resist what he views as the tyranny of the Son. In his mind God has bestowed on the Son a special, unmerited favor, a fact that makes it hard for him to be content with merely "free love" (4.68).

God's bestowal of unique benefits, however, does not and cannot correspond to merit. As Adam says later in book 4, created beings can possess "nothing merited" since they receive all things from God (4.418). Instead, God's love is made unique by his giving of gifts that correspond to individual need. The creation of Eve is the primary example of God's distinctive gifts to Adam. The loneliness that Adam experiences before Eve's creation puts him in a special position for appreciating the relationship that the benefits received with gratitude inaugurate.[53] Adam is driven to ask the Father for a companion, an action that makes explicit the otherwise latent relationship of giver and recipient. The conversation between Adam and the Father reveals not only Adam's self-knowledge, but also the Father as a person: a gentle educator who is moved by fatherly care. The Father's promise of a companion for Adam implies a greater understanding of Adam's need than he himself realizes: "What next I bring shall please thee, be assured, / Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, / Thy wish, exactly to thy heart's desire" (8.449–51). The lavish terms with which the Father describes Adam's gift anticipate the ways in which Eve will exceed Adam's expectations, even his knowledge about what he is capable of receiving. When Adam has

[53] On the creation of Eve as a transaction between God and Adam see also Nyquist, "The Genesis of Gendered Subjectivity," 114.

asked for a companion, he has merely requested someone with whom he can share "rational delight" (8.391), citing as a reason the fact that the brutes of paradise are incapable of conversation. Although Adam has a sense that animals enjoy a special kind of union fit for pairs of male with female ("lion with lioness; / So fitly them in pairs thou has combined" [8.393–94]), his request does not anticipate the kind of visceral erotic attachment he will later feel for Eve.

The Father not only gives Adam a gift uniquely suited to his needs, but also the capacity for desiring that gift in the first place. It is the image of God, "imparted" to Adam, that makes him desire the company of a rational creature. The Father commends Adam for "expressing well the spirit within thee free, / My image, not imparted to the brute" (8.440–41). The Father's image is the foundational gift that enables Adam to receive subsequent gifts, while also highlighting the fact that divine gifts are thoroughly unalienable from their giver. What makes Adam human and distinguishable from the beasts is also what makes him partake of the divine, the image of God that cannot be detached from the God that has given it. Earthly gifts, Calvin has said, are how God chooses to "show himself to be our Father."[54] Through receiving the "last best gift" of Eve (5.19), Adam becomes acquainted with what B. A. Gerrish has called the "paternal image of God" and experiences God's "devoted, affectionate care" in addition to knowing God as a "great maker" (8.278).[55]

The reciprocal relationship between the Father as giver and Adam as grateful recipient then forms the basis for Adam's voluntary obedience to God's commandment. Adam discusses the central role of gratitude in disposing him to obey God in his conversation on gratitude with Eve in book 4:

> Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
> Dearer thyself than all; needs must the power

[54] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3.9.3, 715.
[55] B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharisic Theology of John Calvin* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 28.

That made us, and for us this ample world
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite,
That raised us from the dust and placed us here
In all this happiness, who at his hand
Have nothing merited, nor can perform
Aught whereof he hath need, he who requires
From us no other service than to keep
This one, this easy charge, of all the trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only tree
Of knowledge, planted by the tree of life,
So near grows death to life, whate'er death is,
Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou knowst
God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree,
The only sign of our obedience left
Among so may signs of power and rule
Conferred upon us, and dominion given
Over all other creatures that possess
Earth, air, and sea. Then let us not think hard
One easy prohibition, who enjoy
Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
Unlimited of manifold delights:
But let us ever praise him, and extol
His bounty, following our delightful task
To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers,
Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet. (4.411–39)

Adam's description of an "easy charge" and the enjambed "to keep" create the expectation that the duty he is about to discuss is the charge of stewardship. Surprisingly, however, the speech lands on the negative duty imposed by the prohibition. Abstaining from the fruit of the tree of knowledge requires the effort of obedience—it is at least possible to think the prohibition "hard," and Adam's long meditation on it reveals a preoccupation with the one gift that has been withheld, even among the "manifold delights" offered by life in paradise.[56] At the same time, shifting his focus to the gratitude he bears the Father makes the prohibition "easy." For Adam, therefore, gratitude is a means for internalizing the divine commandment

[56] Zamir makes a similar point regarding Adam's preoccupation with the forbidden tree. See Zamir, *Ascent*, 132: "The lack of a syntactic break that would separate Adam's expression of gratitude from the reference to the tree should give us pause. Adam, the poem suggests, is already fixated upon that single forbidden option."

and making it into a personal motivation by contextualizing it in the interpersonal relationship with the Father.

Strikingly, Adam ascribes to gratitude an even greater motivational role for obeying divine law than the penalty of death. This threat ("God has pronounced it death") is mentioned only in a cursory way, and Adam's fear of death is downplayed by the fleetingness of the phrase "whate'er death is" (4.425).[57] Adam rather views the abundant gifts bestowed on him and Eve, as well as God's goodness as evidenced by those gifts, as his main motivation for obeying the divine commandment. For Adam, gratitude is what Victoria Kahn has called "the means by which the law is assimilated into one's own disposition."[58] Gratitude is not only the reason for obedience, but the means by which the Father's will, expressed in his law, is assimilated into Adam's own disposition.[59]

Whereas Adam happily acknowledges God's unique gifts and transforms them into virtuous motivation, Satan cannot move beyond the feeling of indebtedness. With all previous serpentine logic shed, Satan's account of his sin comes down to the fact that he experiences God's gift as a burden rather than as an occasion for joy:

> So burdensome, still paying, still to owe;
> Forgetful what from him I still received,
> And understood not that a grateful mind
> By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
> Indebted and discharged; what burden then? (4.53–57)

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[57] However, Joshua Scodel argues that Adam's fear complicates his moral freedom. See Scodel, "Edenic Freedoms," 175–81.

[58] Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 200. Kahn's original context is that of interpretive labor in the divorce tracts.

[59] Daniel Juan Gil raises the concern that the law in *Paradise Lost* expresses *merely* the Father's will, regardless of whether his will is good or bad. Without committing to Gil's conclusion that this understanding of the law would make God a tyrant, I find it appealing to think about the prohibition as an expression of God's will because such thinking highlights the interpersonal dimension of obedience in the poem. Adam justifies obedience based on his relationship with the Father rather than based on his evaluation of the prohibition itself. See Daniel Juan Gil, "The Law of Slavery as a State of War: Equiano Reads Milton," an unpublished paper presented at the Conference on John Milton in Birmingham, AL (October 17–19, 2019).

Burden is associated with the guilt of sin in Ps. 38:4: "For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me."[60] In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus promises to replace the heaviness of sin with the lightness of his yoke: "For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30, KJV). But Satan associates his feeling of burden not with guilt but rather with the demand for gratitude, whose supposed effortlessness makes his torment worse. Since Satan here assumes the full responsibility for his sin, it is tempting to read the question "what burden then?" as merely rhetorical rather than genuinely interrogative. Read as a means for self-castigation, the question has a similar impact to that of "what could be less" (4.46), the implied answer being nothing at all. The question would then only serve to punctuate Satan's momentary clarity and heap more guilt on his shoulders for refusing even the "easiest recompense" in return for God's generosity. The paradoxical light burden from the Gospel of Matthew become, for Satan, a normative requirement that he fails to fulfill—the burden should be light, but for him it is heavy. But there is good reason to read "what burden then?" as a genuinely open-ended rather than rhetorical question. The question halts the flow of remembrance and divides Satan's lamentation of past mistakes from his counterfactual statement: "Oh had his powerful destiny ordained / Me some inferior angel, I had stood / Then happy" (4.58–60). Standing between history and alternative history, it derives its dramatic impact from Satan's continuous experience rather than from a moment of erroneous judgment in his past and functions as a constant anchor amidst Satan's shifting understanding. In enquiring about the nature of the burden he feels, then, Satan wonders why acknowledging his debt to God does not, as it should, also lead to the repayment of that debt.

[60] Ps. 38:4, *Authorized King James Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983). For a discussion of the traditional association of sinful guilt with burden see also Dayton Haskin, *Milton's Burden of Interpretation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 25–26.

Milton's ambivalent employment of the term *burden* throughout the poem reveals the deeply conflicted nature of such a feeling. The word sometimes refers to sin and sometimes to fertility and abundance. Adam tells Raphael that nature "by disburdening grows / More fruitful" (5.319–20), and Eve looks forward to offspring who would "Help to disburden nature of her birth" (9.624), both agricultural metaphors that emphasize the nourishing function of created nature. At the same time, heaven is also "disburdened" (6.878) by the ejection of the rebel angels, and Adam finds the blame for all of mankind's corruption the heaviest burden of all: "Fond wish! Couldst thou support / That burden heavier than the earth to bear, / Than all the world much heavier, though divided / With that bad woman?" (10.834–37). In these instances, *burden* rather conveys the impact of sin, which causes violence and guilt that ought to be overthrown for peace to be restored. Although dividing their guilt cannot lighten the burden of Adam's and Eve's sin, mutual care can achieve this goal if they "strive / In offices of love, how we may light'n / Each other's burden" (10.959–61). The two registers of sinfulness and fertility are welded most strikingly in Sin's description of the birth of Death: "my womb conceived / A growing burden" (2.766–67). Here, creative power is directly connected to its opposite, the conception of death.

The relationship between sin and fertility is especially potent in Kleinian terms. If envy targets the source of life, then it makes sense for Satan's envious desire to be not only destructive but also invested in possessing the creative power of birth. To be "self-begot, self-raised" (5.860) is the ultimate envious fantasy because it aims to achieve autonomous creativity and independence from the source of life. Satan's creativity, an energy whose paradoxical nature Wendy Olmsted aptly describes as an "energetic counterforce of destruction" or "resourceful undoing," is an inseparable element from his destructive envy.[61]

[61] Olmsted, *The Imperfect Friend*, 145. But whereas Olmsted argues that "*Paradise Lost* expresses Satan's envy in terms of competition for honour" (142), I view Satanic envy as an existential struggle with the state of createdness.

The burden that takes the place of gratitude for divine creation in Satan's psyche is therefore a complex emotional state that grounds emotional obduracy in a desire for creativity. Marcel Mauss's aphorism that a gift is received "with a burden attached" because it comes with the expectation of a counter-gift becomes an existential challenge in *Paradise Lost*, where receiving divine beneficence means not only owing a debt of gratitude but also accepting one's own limitedness as a created being.[62] In paradise, the primary way of participating in creativity is expressing gratitude. Adam and Eve deliver thankful "orisons" in "various style" and "numerous verse" (5.145–46, 150), enjoying a poetic participation in creativity through appreciation of God's creation[63]. By contrast, desiring to possess a creative power independent of God leads only to a barren burden.

The burden that forecloses the possibility of virtuous gratitude, importantly, does not represent a discreet and intelligible passion that Satan ought to regulate with the aid of reason; it is rather felt as a general negative disposition toward divine beneficence. Whereas the "pale, ire, envy and despair" that alter Satan's appearance belong to the order of vehement passions that obscure reason or warp judgment (4.115), Satan's burden weighs him down rather than agitates him, a metaphor that suggests the experience of an unmovable disposition rather than the passing throes of passion. When Milton discusses the passions in *Paradise Lost* he often describes then as powers with the capacity to disrupt reason to the subject's detriment. Under this description, the title of passion also prescribes its own cure, the cultivation of temperance as celebrated in *Areopagitica*. Appropriately, one of the first effects of the fall is an alteration in the human mind whereby the passions are unleashed from the governance of reason:

high winds worse within

[62] Mauss, *The Gift*, 53, quoted in Barclay, *Paul & the Gift*, 14.
[63] Haskin's argument that for Milton, as for John Bunyan and the reformers, *burden* was associated with Biblical interpretation, bears out the connection between burden and creativity. See Haskin, *Milton's Burden of Interpretation*, 25–28.

> Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
> Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
> Their inward state of mind (9.1122–25).

By contrast to the passions that shake postlapsarian humanity, the burden that Satan feels belongs to a different affective register, not a violent upheaval that obstructs virtuous action, but a dull feeling that nevertheless limits Satan's ability to enjoy divine beneficence or reciprocate it. In Kleinian terms, the burden represents Satan's inability to identify with the divine goodness that nourishes him, and therefore from being good at all.[64]

Ironically, the emotional obduracy that Satan experiences is itself an experience of being given something, insofar as emotions are felt as quasi-external forces rather than ones determined by an individual. Satan finds his persistent ingratitude for divine beneficence as a preexisting disposition rather than one that he decides to cultivate. Satan seems to address simultaneously this recalcitrant, given part of himself and the giver when he exclaims: "Oh then at last relent: is there no place / Left for repentance, none for pardon left?" (4.79–80). Satan is the one who needs to relent (both in the sense of "to soften" his heart and in the sense of "to repent"), but only God can answer whether there is place left for pardon as well as repentance.[65] Raphael's moralizing observation that "the proud" cannot be moved to "relent" acquires psychological depth in Satan's exclamation (6.789–90), where he comes close to acknowledging a part of himself that is not self-determined but passive and recalcitrant. In a speech that has heretofore addressed the sun as a substitute for God, Satan's addressing of the

[64] See also Gordon Teskey, *Delirious Milton: The Fate of the Poet in Modernity* (Cambridge, 2006), 74. In his discussion of the moral quality of Chaos, Teskey remarks that "the only action that can make a being good [is] the expression of gratitude for being created."
[65] *OED online, s.v.* "relent, v.1".3.b., 7.a. Accessed June, 2021, Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/161875?rskey=53lfIs&result=4&isAdvanced=false (accessed July 01, 2021).

part of himself that feels given to him is also the moment when he mostly closely approaches addressing God.

The extent of Satan's insight on his own givenness and therefore his own createdness is fully articulated in Satan's recognition of his poor repayment of divine beneficence: "he deserved no such return / From me, whom he created what I was / In that bright eminence" (4.42–44). Satan's admission builds on Abdiel's rebuke at the onset of the heavenly revolt in book 5 (earlier in time, but later in the diegesis):

> Shalt thou give law to God, shalt thou dispute
> With him the points of liberty, *who made*
> *Thee what thou art,* and formed the powers of Heaven
> Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being? (8.822–25, my emphasis)

Abdiel makes a point about the implications of divine agency. Since God ascribed certain capacities to each creature's "being," no created being can aspire to exceed what they have received from God. While Abdiel is clearly making a moral point, he is also stating an ontological fact—nobody can aspire to be anything that God has not intended them to be. In Satan's revision of Abdiel's words, this assertion of limitless divine agency is transformed into an understanding of the personal, psychological implications of givenness. The tension between feeling oneself to be a *who*—a subject possessing unique thoughts and emotions—and yet knowing oneself to be a *what* as part of divine substance expresses the paradoxical sense of possession and dispossession initiated by God's gift.[66] The burden of gratitude that forecloses Satan's desire for autonomous creativity is also associated with the burden of

[66] The problem of being simultaneously a *who* and a *what* is illustrated vividly in Hannah Arendt's reading of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, where Augustine addresses the question of *who* he is to himself, but *what* he is, to God. Arendt writes that "if we have a nature or essence, then sure only a god could know and define it, and the first prerequisite would be that he is able to speak about a 'who' as if it were a 'what.'" Arendt's skepticism about a *whatness* whereby human nature can be articulated invokes Satan's sense of alienation from the divine perspective. See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 10.

accepting his own createdness. The Father has created Satan as a "whom," a person possessing a distinct subjectivity, but also as a "what," an individuated being formed of the divine substance from which all created beings are made. Whereas "what" refers directly to Satan's eminence in heaven prior to his fall, it also suggests an impersonal contrast to "who"—a glimpse at what Satan might appear to be from the divine perspective rather than from the vantage of his own subject position. In viewing himself simultaneously as the possessor of the unique gift of his own personhood, and as the substance of the same gift insofar as he is part of the creation that God fashioned, Satan articulates the most radical implication of possession "by gift" in *Paradise Lost*—the fact that although one's distinct selfhood is completely one's own, it remains at the same time unalienable from the Father who created it.

Satan's resolution, "Evil be thou my good" (4.110), finally expresses his resignation to what he perceives to be the affective limits on his moral agency. While Milton maintains his commitment to free will throughout the poem, his representation of recalcitrant ingratitude as an entrenched personal antipathy associated with a desire for autonomous creativity casts doubt about the possibility of overcoming sinful emotions and regaining a state of virtue. Satan further damns himself by choosing evil over good, but the self-examination that leads to that choice reveals not the deliberation described in the argument to book 4 but a repeated running up against an affective boundary that limits his moral choice. In the Niphates soliloquy Milton confronts the implications of his former attempt to defend certain negative affections in the divorce tracts as legitimate sources for moral obligation—the possibility that negative affections are indeed unchangeable but are nevertheless sinful.

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