
This is the **published version** of the bachelor thesis:

Morales Garcia, Sara; Curbet, Joan, dir. Anticipations of the fall : Eve and the implications of individual freedom in Milton's Paradise Lost (1667). 2015. (801 Grau en Estudis Anglesos)

This version is available at <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/137837>

under the terms of the  license

**Anticipations of the fall:
Eve and the implications of individual
freedom in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667)**

TFG Estudis Anglesos

Supervisor: Dr Joan Curbet

Sara Morales Garcia

June 2015



Acknowledgments

This academic essay would not have been possible without the help of many people. I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Joan Curbet Soler who, despite the circumstances, has continued helping and advising me. Secondly, I would also like to thank my family and my best friend for their invaluable emotional support.

Table of contents

Abstract.....	1
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Milton's earlier approaches to the subject.....	5
3. <i>Paradise Lost</i> : the anticipations of the fall in the character of Eve.....	9
4. Conclusions	15
5. Further Research	17
6. Bibliography.....	18

Abstract

John Milton offered in his works several discussions about ethics, morality, religion and politics. Some of these ideas were adopted and followed later by well-known Romantics such as Keats, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Shelley, who adapted them and used them to vindicate the Romantic ideals (Brisman; 1973). One of these controversial ideals was the link between individual existence and freedom.

This idea of freedom as the basic element of individuality was not explored in detail by other writers until the nineteenth century. However, long before, John Milton had presented the subject of freedom and free will in the figures of Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* (1667). Critics devoted to the study of these characters in the poem have focused on the moral and unmoral acts of these two human characters, especially in what concerns the central event of the Fall, that is presented in Book IX. Nonetheless, little has been commented about the anticipations of this ending in the poem, and their implications for Milton's discussions of individual freedom.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the idea of freedom in *Paradise Lost*, concentrating specifically on how this idea manifests itself in the character of Eve in the events previous to the Fall, and how these events are related to her later downfall. In other words, I will discuss how the theory of free will is applied to the character of Eve in *Paradise Lost* and how it is a dichotomy represented in her figure, as related to the whole concept of the Fall. To do so I will analyze how this idea is exposed in other works by John Milton and in the moments that precede the Fall in *Paradise Lost*. Besides, I will discuss how the individual freedom and liberty of choice of Eve is developed in this epic poem.

1. Introduction

The seventeenth century is well-known for the political conflicts that took place in England. The absolutist government of the monarchs James I and Charles I, the Commonwealth, the rise of capitalism and imperialism enabled the emergence of new debates and ideas, particularly about the individuality and agency of men. Religion was far from being a simple or taken-for granted topic; on the contrary, the discontent of the political environment caused a questioning of religion as well. Therefore, at Milton's time religion and politics could not be completely isolated from each other.

John Milton offered in his works several discussions about ethics, morality, religion and politics. Some of these ideas were discussed, adopted or followed later by well-known Romantics such as Keats, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Shelley, who adapted them and used them to vindicate the Romantic ideals (Brisman; 1973). One of these controversial ideals was the link between individual existence and freedom. Milton's epic *Paradise Lost* (1667) explores, apart from all the politics, social and moral expressions within the poem, this very controversial topic. John Milton rejected the authority of both the King and the Church and opted for the individual relationship between man and God. In *Paradise Lost* this complex subject matter is linked to the significance and meaning of sin, which, far from being seen in traditional terms, is revised and discussed in detail. For Milton, the act of sin is not only an act of evil, but it also implies an act of independence and rebellion, that is announced quite early in the epic poem. As we will see later on, free will, autonomy and reason are implied in his understanding of the Fall.

The most relevant aspect of the present paper will be the notion of free will in Milton's epic *Paradise Lost*. It was complicated in Milton's time to express the idea that human beings were created individual and independent, with the full capacity to act and to decide. In Calvinist and Puritan contexts, it was very difficult to negate predestination. William Myers states in *Milton and Free Will* that "the denial of either the possibility or desirability of deliberate acting" was complex not only in Milton's time but "probably represents the greatest single difficulty facing contemporary readers of Milton" (Myers, 1939; 22). This individuality is manifested in the characters of *Paradise Lost*: Satan, God, the Angels, Adam and Eve. Each one decides on his or her own; Satan decides to betray God because of ambition, God creates humans even though He knows they will

sin, the Angels choose the faith and servitude to God, and Adam and Eve choose to sin. Namely, the characters in *Paradise Lost* are free to choose and to act individually; thus, they have what we call free choice or free will. This is the topic that I want to discuss in this paper, but I will try to do it by concentrating on a specific character. Apart from discussing the idea of free will and its difficulties in *Paradise Lost*, the concept will be analysed specifically through Eve's character, and through the description and language of the character while she lives in Eden, before actually going on to commit the original sin.

For a long time, Eve's sin was discussed by critics of the poem according to social moral constraints. The interpretation of her character was relatively straightforward: she committed evil eating the fruit while she has been told not to do so; thus, she was rightly punished with Adam by God and expelled from Paradise. But today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Milton's readers know that is not that simple. In *Paradise Lost* controversy and moral ambiguity are present all the time, and very especially in Eve. This is one of the reasons why her character has been revised in many occasions from a feminist perspective. This process has occurred slowly over the last decades, offering a solid alternative to the old image of Milton as a doctrinal poet. As Stanley Fish asserts in his book *How Milton Works* (2001):

“Milton criticism sometimes offers us the choice between an absolutist poet with a focused vision and a single overriding message and a more tentative, provisional poet alert to the ambiguities and dilemmas of the moral life.”
(Fish, 2001; 5)

In the present paper, I will try to present an image of Milton that corresponds more to the second of these two possible images of the poet. The act of sinning committed by Eve in *Paradise Lost* is just as controversial, or potentially polemical, as the many moments of anticipation of the Fall. In my opinion, what is significant in the poem is not only the actual moment when Eve eats the fruit, but also the various moments of the epic in which the arrival of sin is anticipated. The present paper is going to focus on these moments, since most of the bibliography already deals with the exact moment of the Fall in detail, and in my work I would like to focus on how that moment is prepared, or suggested, earlier on in the poem.

Briefly, the aim of this paper is to analyze the idea of freedom in *Paradise Lost*, concentrating specifically on how this idea manifests itself in the character of Eve in the circumstances previous to the Fall, and on how these events are related to her later downfall. I will begin by analyzing how this idea is explored in other works by John Milton, which were written during the first years of the Civil War, in order to show how this topic was developed early on in the poet's more theoretical and polemical prose works. In the central body of the paper, I will discuss how the theory of free will is applied to Eve, and how there is an ongoing dichotomy between freedom and submission represented in her figure before the Fall is actually represented. And finally, I will try to reach a solid conclusion concerning the importance of these moments of anticipation for the representation of Eve, understood as a free character, throughout the whole poem.

2. Milton's earlier approaches to the subject

Christianity was an essential part of culture in seventeenth century England. As I have stated in the introduction to this paper, in this period religion and politics were almost impossible to divide. The political conflicts that broke out were based, to a large extent, on differences of religious opinion: this was especially so in the case of the Civil War, in the contrast and conflict between the followers of King Charles and the republicans, among whom Milton had a prominent position. As a humanist and a political thinker, Milton placed his faith in literature as a valid tool for the education of the general public in religious and political matters. In *The Reason of Church Government* (1642), Milton asserted that religion should be painted out and described in “a solid and treatable smoothnesse” (Milton, 2003; 171). In other words, the complexity of religion can be adequately represented in the elegant language of writing. Milton tried to maintain this approach throughout his career, and he did so very specifically, and repeatedly, in what concerned the topic of free will.

The topic of the Fall is recurrent in some of Milton's works before *Paradise Lost*. What is especially interesting is the fact that the characters of Adam and Eve are used repeatedly by the poet in these earlier works, as examples of the importance of free intellect, or of the need to act independently and without constraints. This does not imply that Milton saw them in a purely positive light: for him, they were clearly responsible for original sin, and therefore were guilty of having brought death into the world. He did not adopt the reivindicative positions on Adam and Eve that the Romantic poets would, later in time. But it is nevertheless true that he repeatedly explored through them the ambiguity of freedom, and the fact that self-determination was, in itself, a good and basic value that determined all the other aspects of humanity. In his works *Areopagitica* (1644) and *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644) it is not only the Fall that is discussed, but also its anticipations, its reasons and its causes. Twenty-three years earlier than the first publication of *Paradise Lost* (1667), then, Milton was already exploring the notion of original sin, in order to defend the freedom of the press and the right of divorce.

In *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton uses theological arguments to discuss a political and social problem: the right to divorce. For the author, marriage is a state of consented union between two spirits that do not want to live in loneliness; in addition, marriage is sacred as long as both the husband and the wife agree to it and it consists of love and peace (Milton, 2003; 190). Milton uses the example of Adam and Eve in Paradise to exemplify that the purpose of God when He created Eve was not to satisfy his sexual desire, but to quench “unkindly solitariness [...] in the cheerful society of wedlock”. (2003; 189). It is very important to notice that, in order to analyze the topic of adultery as a sin, Milton emphasizes the relevance of mind and soul rather than of the body. He states that carnal desire is a “disturbance of mind” (2003; 193) which causes loss of faith and trust on God; therefore, before breaking with the duty of loyalty, it is far better to separate rather than to commit sin and fall in the eyes of God. Adultery, defined by Milton as “a brute desire; which fleshly accustoming without the soul’s union and commixture of intellectual delight” (2003; 219) destroys the spirit of the person who commits it and lowers to vulgarity all his actions, leaving him in despair and is not anymore “a man useful in service of God and mankind” (2003; 219). Freedom of divorce allows to prevent sin; to allow for free determination in this matter is, for Milton, a way of exalting humanity and of containing sinfulness.

Milton defends explicitly that, although both wife and husband are united by marriage, if one of them does not want to continue with this marriage, they should be free to decide to divorce: “God prefers the free and cheerful worship of a Christian before the grievous and exacted observance of an unhappy marriage” (2003; 193). The subject of self-determination seems to me a very important aspect of this work, and one which will have notable consequences later on, in *Paradise Lost*. Among the most important implications of this subject is the aspect of irreparable experience, or of fatal mistakes. In Milton’s perception of human behavior, the inevitable tendency to commit mistakes may involve tragedy, and may have catastrophic effects; but this should not be seen as definitive or final, since the very notion of individual freedom prevents this. He states that “lamented experience” (2003; 208) teaches us that it is a mistake to continue imposing commands in spite of “nature and reason” (2003; 208); and later on he claims: “Allow us to remedy and shake off those evils into which human error hath led us!” (2003; 222). He argues, therefore, that we should not fall into the mistake of thinking that after having taken a decision, we would not have the opportunity to repent or to try

to change it. This idea breaks completely with the pre-determinist theory that this world and each human act are dictated in order to fulfill a determinate fate; destiny for Milton is never something that is fully decided beforehand, even if God knows always what the final outcome of each human act will be.

In *Areopagitica*, published the same year as *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton also discusses liberty of choice and the implications of the Fall, but he does so in the context of a wider defence of the freedom of the press. In this discourse, Milton defends the right of publishers and authors to operate without external censorship, and he does it by using the religious background and the human characters of Genesis which will be later also the characters of the epic poem *Paradise Lost*. According to the author, reason is what humans must primarily follow: “no greater testimony appears when your prudent spirit acknowledges and obeys the voice of reason” (Milton, 2003; 239). Milton suggests that a book, including human thought as it does, can be seen as the representation of human reason; thus, those who destroy a good book “kills reason itself, kills God’s image” (2003; 240). Throughout this work, Milton emphasises that every human being is free and that his or her acts are voluntary, because God created them with reason to choose freely:

“When God gave him [Adam] reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing [...]. We ourselves esteem not of obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force; God therefore left him free”.

(Milton, 2003; 252)

Even though Milton speaks explicitly of Adam here, this assertion could easily be applied to Eve herself as represented in *Paradise Lost*; both reason and freedom will be key aspects of her attitude in several of the episodes leading to the central episode of the temptation. The concepts of obedience, of love or of gift are, according to this passage, completely irreconcilable with the idea of force or of absolute obligation; this is the very reason why God left human beings free to refuse the gifts that he was offering them. It will be worth remembering this perspective not only when considering Eve’s relationship to God in *Paradise Lost*, but also her relationship to Adam. This aspect is essential for the whole of Milton’s literary production, from his early prose tracts to the poems of his final period. In *How Milton Works* (2001) Stanley Fish emphasises the importance that anti-predestination had on Milton’s works. He explains how, both in

Paradise Lost and in the prose works, God is presented as existing outside of human time, but as giving free will to human beings nevertheless. This implies that in spite of his almighty power, his purpose was not a controlled and determined creation; nevertheless, as Fish states, “this does not mean [...] that man is freed to do anything he likes” (Fish, 2011; 324). Therefore, Milton defense of free will is shown as a more complex subject: it has to consider the fact that there must be an order in the universe as well, regulated by what Fish, quoting Milton, calls “the law of God”, and yet that order does not prevent human freedom, but integrates it within itself. As Dennis Danielson has put it, Milton’s presentation of divine prescience thus comports with...the more general antinecessitarianism that was such an important part of his theodicy” (Danielson, 1982; 163). In the poems that he wrote in his later period, after the Civil War and the Commonwealth, he would go on to give a full poetic dimension to these religious and philosophical ideas.

As I have tried to show in this section, Milton explored the notion of human responsibility and of freedom before the Fall in several works before *Paradise Lost* was finally published. *Areopagitica* and *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* are two good examples¹ of the positions and arguments that he would defend more fully, and in a more complex form, in *Paradise Lost*. The fact that he used the Book of Genesis and the notion of original sin as a major thematic element through all of this time testifies to a lifelong interest on the characters of Adam and Eve, as valid dramatic and theological elements for his thought. In the next section, I will concentrate on the anticipations of the Fall in the character of Eve in the epic poem, and on how these anticipations, in themselves, involve a serious consideration of free will as the main element in human consciousness according to Milton.

¹ Milton’s *Samson Agonistes* (1671) refers as well, though obliquely, to the Fall and the concept of redemption. It is not used as an example here because it was published at the same time that *Paradise Regained*, a few years after the publication of *Paradise Lost*.

3. *Paradise Lost*: the anticipations of the fall in the character of Eve

This section, the central one in my paper, will try to follow the character of Eve through *Paradise Lost*, focusing on the moments in which the Fall is anticipated. I will try to do it in a way that shows the affinities and continuities between these moments and the Miltonic positions that I have commented in the previous section. I will also try to focus my discussion, as much as possible, on the moral implications and the discussion of Free Will that Milton tries to articulate in the poem.

The character of Eve is introduced, along with Adam, in the fourth Book of the poem. Her first presentation is very suggestive because of the differences between Adam and her. There is a very noticeable difference in the attitude of each, but what seems to me most remarkable is the way in which Milton describes the movement of her hair, in a way that distinguishes her very much from Adam:

“His fair large Front and Eye sublime declar'd
Absolute rule; and Hyacinthin Locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
Shee as a vail down to the slender waste
Her unadorned golden tresses wore
Dishevel'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
As the Vine curls her tendrils, which impli'd
Subjection, but requir'd with gentle sway.”

(Book IV, lines 300-308)

Eve at this moment is a perfect human being, but, as Dennis Danielson reminds us, “in *Paradise Lost* perfection does not preclude fallibility; God made man perfect, not immutable” (Danielson 1982; 144). The first image of Eve presents an emphasis on movement, on dynamism and action, exemplified by her hair flowing around her, being “dishevelled” by the wind, and “wav’d” by it around her body; this does not exclude faithfulness and loyalty, exemplified in the comparison of her hair with the vine around a tree (“...as the vine curls her tendrils, which implied/ Subjection”), but dynamism and action are far more present in the first image of Eve than in that of Adam. One possibility of interpretation, though, of course not the only one, would be to see Adam and Eve in this presentation as the embodiment of two kinds of values: on the one hand, Adam can appear as “the elementary living entity [that] would from its beginning [...] no wish to change” and who “would do no more than constantly repeat the same course

of life” (2001; 1); on the other hand, Eve could appear as embodying values such as non-conformism, rebellion, risk and ambition. In fact there have been some interpretations that have seen this description of Eve as involving both loyalty and freedom, submission and rebellion, all coexisting simultaneously in the same text (Miller, 1986, 6:20). But what is most significant and important, I think, is that the possibility of seeing this first presentation of Eve indicates a clear first difference between our first parents, and a possible anticipation of the tendency of separation and independence on her part.

The idea that Eve committed sin because Adam simply was not there to protect her was one explanation that fitted very well with masculinist or patriarchal perspectives, especially before Romanticism. However, if we take into account not the factor of parental/masculine protection, but the free capacity of choice that the character shows from the beginning, we can see her Fall from a quite different point of view. We can see this quite clearly in Book IV, in the description of her origins and her first conscious acts, immediately after her creation. When she awakes, the first things that she notices are the natural environment around her and the sound of the water that issues from a cave and runs over the grass:

“When from sleep
I first awaked, and found myself reposed
Under a shade of flowers[...]
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
Of waters issued from a cave and spread
Into liquid plain, then stood unmoved
Pure as the expanse of heaven; I thither went
With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look in the clear
Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.”
(Book IV; lines 449-459)

The first sensations that she experiences seem to integrate her very directly into the natural world; she seems quite at ease and comfortable there. We can also notice that she begins quite immediately to ask herself questions about her identity and her origins. This is a particularly important moment, because we can see in it her tendency to interrogate herself and her environments, her capacity for intellectual quest. It is also important to point out that Adam is not present yet here: this is not only the first moment of existence of Eve, but also the first moment of her independence. We can

take it as exemplifying her personal tendency to feel at ease and free, and to be capable of independent thinking without the help of any external supervisors. To this extent, this moment can be taken already as an anticipation of the Fall.

Before meeting Adam for the first time, moreover, Eve goes to see the waters of the lake that is formed by the waters on the plain; at that moment, she stops for a moment and is captivated and “pleased” (IV; line 462) by her own reflection on the lake. “Eve’s creation and her falling in love with her own image has been conventionally applied as an example of the vanity that was one of the weaknesses on which Satan worked to bring about her fall” (Bowers, 1969; 266). But, as Bowers himself states, this is a “conventional” or traditional perspective; if we take into account the Miltonic defences of independence and self-reliance, then the image of Eve watching herself can also acquire a possible image of independence. It is also true that this image may remind the reader of the myth of Narcissus looking at his own image and falling in love with it, and Milton, who was an extraordinary scholar, also wanted the reader to keep that image in mind. But in any case, what follows immediately shows the importance of independence in her character: first, she is taken away from the lake and her own image by the voice of the Spirit of God “what could I do,/ but follow straight, invisibly thus led?” (IV; lines 475-476), and afterwards she moves away from Adam after seeing him, and tries to escape from him. This momentary escape is very significant, because it certainly does not occur in the Book of Genesis which Milton takes as his main source. Although it is clear that Adam was the only true choice Eve had at that moment, she actually had the possibility or the power of deciding whether to stay with Adam or return to the lake; and Milton shows her escaping initially from him. We have to conclude, therefore, that this situation was very consciously introduced by the poet in order to showcase her tendency to act individually and independently. This fact should not be seen as having negative consequences yet, because at this point it involves no actual sin (it is only an anticipation of it) but it already shows Eve capable of independent action.

The anticipation of the Fall begins to be dominant at the beginning of book V, in the episode in which Eve wakes up after having a dream “of offence and trouble” (V; line 34; the whole experience is described in lines 30-93. She has dreamt that she tasted the forbidden fruit. In her explanation of her sensations when experiencing this dream, we

see how Eve rationalises her act, and there are clearly references to it in phrases such as “methought” (V; line 50, 85) or “I wondering” (V; line 54), we can thus see that Eve’s rationality is evolving, and so does her liberty of choice. Even though in the dream she is persuaded by Satan’s words (as will happen later at the moment of the Fall), this does not imply that her will has been reduced or is non-existent: precisely the fact that it is a dream means that her unconscious thought has been affected, but not her reason. Although Adam tries to comfort her after the nightmare, her tears indicate that this is not going to finish here; for Roy C. Flannagan “the reader knows that the idea of sin has been planted in her mind, and her tears therefore are symbolic” (Flannagan, 1972; 35). It is also true, however, that she has acquired a renewed consciousness of her own fallibility after this episode: she fully realises that in the dream she was committing a crime, and she is now more afraid of offending God, in spite of the fact “that poison has been put into her” (1969; 269). In this scene, Satan has tempted her and Adam has comforted her, but none of them has been put in a position that could replace her own will.

The scenes we have seen so far are relevant, insofar as they showcase the different free acts and the evolution of the female character. Even so, it is in the beginning of book IX where the most important preparatory scene for the Fall occurs. This takes place when Eve decides that Adam and her should do their individual labour separately, not together, and after convincing Adam of this idea, walks out on her own. This is not the first time she acts freely, as we have seen, but probably it is the clearest and most important one before the actual Fall. In addition, it’s the first time Eve uses an imperative when speaking to Adam: “Now advise or hear what to my mind first thoughts present/ Let us divide our labours”(IX; lines 212-214). She has reflected individually on this idea, and for the first time she seems to take full leadership within the couple, and expresses her thoughts openly. Despite the fact that Adam warns her about the evil threat of Satan, and about the risks of being separated, Eve has already decided to go on her own. As William Empson asserts in *Milton’s God*: “(Eve) feels the need to flap her wings a bit [...] she may well want to obtain a tiny change in her experience” (Empson, 1981; 150). This is, therefore, a small but important attempt to try to free herself not only physical but mentally from Adam, who is the figure that constantly indicates to her the good way, through obeying and praising God. Only in loneliness will she be able to find herself, acting without constraints or moral disciplines

that tell her what is good or bad. Eve's moral and physical dynamism seems to be quite stronger than Adam's: while Adam's choice is exclusively to trust on God, she feels the need of something further beyond this. It is essential to take into account, however, that this does not involve forgetting a sense of moral responsibility on the part of Eve. These are the words with which she expresses it:

“If this be our condition, thus to dwell
In narrow circuit strained by a foe,
Subtle or violent, we not endued
Single with like defence, wherever met,
How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
But harm precedes not sin: only our foe
Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem
Of our integrity.”
(*PL*, IX; 322-329)

In this fragment we see how Eve expresses the need for an active virtue: that is, a virtue that does not hide always or remains passive, but rather one that puts itself into danger in order to prove itself. “How are we happy, still in fear of harm?”: this question seems to imply that there can be no complete happiness without a sense of exposure to danger, beyond “the narrow circuit strained by a foe”. And then she expresses the idea even more clearly:

(Satan's) foul esteeme
Sticks no dishonor on our Front, but turns
Foul on himself; then wherefore shund or feard
By us? who rather double honour gaine
From his surmise prov'd false, find peace within,
Favour from Heav'n, our witness from th' event.
And what is Faith, Love, Vertue unassaid
Alone, without exterior help sustaind?
(Book IX; lines 329-336)

It is not a coincidence that these arguments should remain the reader of the arguments that Milton himself had defended in the *Areopagitica*. In that work, there could be no virtue without confrontation and without the necessary openness to confrontation; it is because of this that pre-publication censorship was presented in that treatise as necessary. For her, it is necessary to move beyond an area of guaranteed security, in order to make sure that virtue really exists: without a trial, and without the possibility of error, there will be no actual confirmation of morality. When Milton represents Eve leaving on her own, without Adam, he is also going back to the same kind of free determination that he was defending in *Areopagitica*. This is a breaking away from the

complete authority of Adam (and indirectly, of the authority of God) that constitutes, as well, the last anticipation of the Fall before the moment itself comes. But that moment falls outside of the purpose of the present paper, which now comes to its conclusions.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, I have tried to show the modern implications of Milton's representation of free will through the character of Eve. I have voluntarily left out the central moment of the Fall in order to show that Milton already explores this theme in the previous appearances of Eve all through the poem, anticipating the arrival of the final moment. What becomes clear, in this way, is that Eve is a free character all through the poem, not only in its culmination. This character exemplifies the way in which Milton abandons the idea of an absolutist religion and chooses the idea of individual self-determination.

Milton's defence of free will is already present in the author earlier works such as *Areopagitica* and *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (both from 1644). Although the former is a defence of the free right of publishing and the later is the defence of divorce, in both works Milton uses religion to defend the liberty of mankind and uses the characters from Genesis, Adam and Eve, who will later on appear in *Paradise Lost*. For a long time before writing his great epic poem, Milton was preoccupied with these subjects; what was very innovative was the fact that he treated them in detail through the character of Eve. As we have seen, Eve is the character which has a slight but clear evolution within the poem. Her dynamism and willingness to act put in practice the notion of individual freedom in *Paradise Lost* and breaks with the idea that she was obliged to be submissive to Adam or God; she can take her own decisions.

Behind the paternalist environment that we have seen in different scenes of *Paradise Lost*, in which God and Adam seem to overwhelm Eve, we have shown that Eve has free choice, and rationality to decide what was the most convenient for her. Once she has developed this fact, she develops her own ideas and becomes aware of her intellectual capacity. As Myers states in *Milton's God* "she alone can know why she decides to abandon the dogmatic principle and become an inquirer" (Myers; 181). Therefore, we have given evidence that at the moment of the sin, Eve has developed enough knowledge and rationality to allow her to act independently. This is the most important element in the anticipations of the Fall that have been examined in this paper.

Therefore, I hope to have shown that the intentional acts such as Eve's act are products of free will and of her consciousness, and not of a pre-determined or predestined plan of God. This does not mean that Sin in itself, or the disobedience to God, are justified or positive aspects for Milton; we have also seen that for him, the best option would have been obedience to God, within the use of freedom. But it is extremely important (from the viewpoint of cultural tradition, and of the history of women) that he should have given Eve the freedom to disobey and the rational capacity to think independently. The anticipations of the Fall that I have discussed in this paper confirm the defence of free will that Milton developed in the character of Eve.

5. Further Research

This paper has been discussing a particular issue, which is the anticipations of the Fall in the character of Eve. Nevertheless, doing this particular research, a number of topics worth to be analyzed in future research came out.

By analysing the possible causes of the Fall, a more extended issue appeared regarding Eve's relationship with God. It might be worth considering the relationship between Eve and God as a cause of her Falling. The research might include that Eve has never had an interaction with God whereas Adam has. This inter-personal contact with God might be considered as a relevant aspect of the falling. As well as her relationship with God, the marriage between Adam and Eve would also be an appealing topic to be discussed.

Another worth mentioned issue would be the moments after the Fall which are described in Books X, XI and XII of *Paradise Lost*. Eve's redemption and later lamentation are not the only aspects to be considered. Despite committing sin, there is a subsequent projection towards the future for humanity which would be worth to evaluate.

Finally, the causes of the Fall cannot be only limited in the previous free acts of Eve. As abovementioned, other possible and worth analysing causes might also be decisive for the end of mankind in Paradise. John Milton offers to his readers a complex discussion about Eve and the Fall which might be developed in further research.

6. Bibliography

Works cited

Primary Source:

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost* (1667). In Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Golberg (eds.), *The Major Works*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003; pp. 355-618.

Secondary Sources:

Bowers, Fredson. "Adam, Eve, and the Fall in *Paradise Lost*". *PMLA*, Vol. 84, No. 2. (Mar., 1969); pp. 264-273.

Brisman, Leslie. *Milton's Poetry of Choice and Its Romantic Heirs*. London: Cornell University, 1973.

Danielson, Dennis Richard. *Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Empson, William. *Milton's God*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Fish, Stanley. *How Milton Works*. United States of America: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Flannagan, Roy C. *Paradise Lost Notes*. Canada: Coles Publishing Company Limited, 1972.

Miller, J.Hillis. "How Deconstruction Works." *New York Times*. 9 February, 1986.

Milton, John. *Areopagitica* (1644). In Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Golberg (eds.), *The Major Works*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003; pp. 236-273.

Milton, John. *Samsom Agonistes* (1671). In Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Golberg (eds.), *The Major Works*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003; pp. 671-715.

Milton, John. *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644). In Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Golberg (eds.), *The Major Works*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003; pp. 182-226.

Milton, John. *The Reason of Church Government* (1642). In Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Golberg (eds.), *The Major Works*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003; pp. 165-173.

Myers, William. *Milton and Free Will: An Essay in Criticism and Philosophy*. New York: Croom Helm, 1939.

Further Reading

Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin*. Harvard University Press; 2nd edition, March 15, 1998.

Hensell, Kori. "The Shifting Concept of Good and Evil in *Paradise Lost*." *Edifice Project*, 2009. (accessed 16 February 2015)

Landy, Marcia. "Kinship and the Role of Women in *Paradise Lost*." *Milton Studies*, Vol. 4, 1972; pp. 3-18.

Long, Mary Beth. "Contextualising Eve's and Milton's Solitudes in Book 9 of *Paradise Lost*." *Milton Quarterly*, Vol. 37, 2003; pp. 100-115.

Muledy, Amanda. *Paradise Lost: The Indeterminate Eve*. Lake Forest College, 2013
Revard, Stella P. "Eve and the Doctrine of Responsibility in *Paradise Lost*." *PMLA*, Vol. 88, 1973; pp. 69-78.

The John Milton Reading Room Trustees of Dartmouth College
https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/civil_power/text.shtml (accessed 17 May 2015)

Whitfield, Jonathan. "The Invisible Woman: Eve's Self Image in *Paradise Lost*." *Oshkash Scholar*, Vol. 2, April 2007; pp. 57-61.