

## Book VIII

\*\*Alexa points out that in book VIII Adam recounts to Raphael his recollection of awakening for the first time in Paradise (306-311). "The description of the luscious fruit and trees [that Adam sees upon waking] appears as a foreshadow by Milton to the eventual doom of Adam and Eve...Milton describes the fruit as 'tempting.' God...seems to place the Tree of Knowledge in the garden only to test the free will of man to see if he will obey. God...God almost appears similar to Satan in that he is tempting man to eat the fruit. By taking Adam past all the delicious fruits on the way to Eden and then telling Adam that certain fruits are forbidden is, in fact, teasing Adam...Teasing and temptation are aspects of evil as represented by Satan, not by the ruler of heaven." What is going on here?

\*\*Jennifer asks, "What specific kinds of knowledge does the tree of knowledge represent? [good and evil, yes, but specifically what?] What are the real life consequences of knowledge according to Milton?...Is this attitude toward knowledge representative of the attitude that scientific knowledge is against God?"

\*\*Lines 66-178 reveal Raphael's explanation of astronomy to the inquisitive Adam. He tells Adam that the answers he is looking for is irrelevant because Adam's duty is to worship earth and his God-given paradise. What contemporary (17th century) notions of astronomy are revealed here? Why is Raphael so decidedly unscientific in his explanation? Are there tensions between religion and science here (a very real concern in a society where the enlightenment is budding)?

\*\*When Raphael begins to tell Adam and Eve about astronomy, she leaves the boy alone. Andrea points out that Eve wants to "hear the explanation...from Adam. She feels it will make it sound easier, and more beautiful (40-65)...In the Christian belief it states that wives should be submissive to their husbands, but Milton seems to confuse submissive behavior with weak and unimportant existence. Is there a difference in Milton's eyes?"

## Book IX

--Adam points out that "an intriguing segment of ...Paradise Lost book IX involves the conversation between Adam and Eve, in which Eve suggests that the two separate in order to best fulfill the chores in the garden of Eden. Adam initially rejects her plan (233-35). Is Milton implying that women, without man, has no identity, no individualism?...Is Milton's philosophy simply that women should ignore ambition and independence, and remain at home and honor their man?...The fact that Milton has Eve...sin first leads me to conclude that Milton is insinuating the women should in fact deter from such lofty ambitions, for they lack the rational capabilities to make such decisions." Is Milton suggesting that women, indeed, are incapable of standing alone and that they need a man to solidify their identity?

\*\*Ramon has similar concerns: "Is Milton's display of Eve's actions [when he says that Eve was easily tempted] a sexist lash against women, or is Milton simply trying to show how devastating temptation can be?"

\*\*On the same topic Jeff asks, "To what extent does Milton portray Eve as responsible for the fall of man? If Professor Guss says that Milton believes Satan is responsible, "why does Milton need Eve to propose division of labor?"

What tensions arise between reason and passion? How do Adam's passionate reactions to Eve compare? (When he first takes her to bed --VIII, 530-539 and when he lusts for her after they have eaten the fruit--IX, 1013-1027).

\*\*What do we make of Milton's ending to book IX?