

Aspects of Life in Paradise

1. **Work.** As custodians of the Garden, Adam and Eve work continually. While their work isn't laborious, it is necessary to prevent the encroachment of the wilderness, and it increases daily in complexity and challenge. They are also expected to cultivate themselves morally and intellectually, thus are part of the Garden as well as its curators. Their marriage is correspondingly harmonious with other forms of relationship in Paradise: See for example the image of the vine that "spous'd about [the elm] twines/Her marriageable arms" (V:215-216) and Milton's description of Eve's hair (IV:306-307). Finally, work in the Garden allows Adam and Eve to participate in the divine creative process, an increasingly involved growth toward perfection.
2. **Sexuality.** Sex in Eden is not only pleasant but also overwhelmingly sensuous, uninhibited, and a potential challenge to reason. It is also innocent, totally unself-conscious, and unmarred by jealousy ("th'injur'd Lover's hell"). Just as spring and harvest coexist in the garden, so fulfillment and desire are not mutually exclusive, and it is expected that Eve's "fruitful womb/ Shall fill the World ... numerous with ... sons" (V:388-91). Eve's name means "first mother."
3. **Intellectual life.** Although accomplished, Adam and Eve are nevertheless limited. Before Raphael's visit they have relatively little direct knowledge of the supernatural and what they do know they know discursively rather than intuitively (V:488-90). Eden allows Adam and Eve to take an active role in their own education and they frequently learn by trial and error; humans, especially Adam, are meant to search constantly for knowledge of self and God. Adam and Eve begin their lives questioning their identities and live so that "in contemplation of created things/By steps we may ascend to God" (V:510-511).
4. **Spiritual life.** God's image shines in Adam's face. Although in Eden they live a life very much of the flesh, Adam and Eve can hope to attain the spiritual condition of angels; indeed, once crucial aspect of the cosmos as God creates it is that there is no hard and fast distinction between spirit and body: the former can be "improv'd" into the latter until it may at last "wing'd ascent/Ethereal" to dwell with God in Heaven. Like intellectual, sexual and vocational life, spiritual life in Paradise is also figured by a tree: Raphael compares the ascent to purely spiritual existence to the way "the root/Springs lighter the green stalks from thence the leaves/More aery, last the bright consummate flow'r/Spirits odorous breathes." Paradise is thus organic and aspiring in every respect.
5. **Language.** Forms of address in Paradise are highly formalized and language itself is elaborate but perfectly ordered, organized according to a principle of repetition with difference (see the Morning Hymn, V:152-208), and continually merging with the natural atmosphere of the garden: birdsong, trees, etc.