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Eyes "Opened and Cleared": The Discourse of Gaze in *Paradise Lost*

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Abstract

"Paradise Lost" serves as a critique of surveillance and provides fruitful ground for the ways in which the gaze and feminist concerns intersect. This thesis will implement a method of analyzing the power dynamics within the text, which is what Jeremy Hawthorne coins to be "gaze discourse"; meaning a way to encourage the reading of a text and then relating it to "broader socio-historical and ideological matters" (Hawthorne 509). The discourse of gaze will reveal how power dynamics are constructed through the objectification and surveillance of its characters in "Paradise Lost", including their relationships with other characters, the narrator, and even the reader. Through this analysis, it will be evident how Milton both enforces and momentarily subverts gender-cultural values by critiquing the use of the gaze and the power dynamics associated with it.

Scholars consider John Milton's *Paradise Lost* to be one of the greatest epics written in the English language, due to its thousands of lines of blank verse and great secular meaning. Over the centuries, the Genesis expansion has provided scholars with fertile grounds to dissect and analyze Milton's rhetorical mastery. Romantic-era writers such as Shelley, Blake, and Byron solidified *Paradise Lost* within the western consciousness. Thus, the mystification, or unique existence of *Paradise Lost* in the twenty-first century begs to be "evaluated and defined in our present culture" (Berger 17). A substantial portion of these scholarly evaluations in the contemporary literary world is the feminist implications of the epic. On one end of the spectrum, Diane Mccolley argues that *Paradise Lost* contradicts the stereotypical portrayal of Milton as a "masculinist," and instead is an author who closes the gender gap completely by affording a "high regard" of human dignity for both men and women (Mccolley 175). Contrastingly, scholars such as Anne Juhnke insist that there are remnants of misogynistic stereotypes littered throughout *Paradise Lost*, evidenced in Milton's perpetuation of the "fair and foul temptress" and its "anti-female" explanation of the fall (Juhnke 50). A desire for a simplistic answer regarding the treatment of women in *Paradise Lost* is evident, but the answer proves to be complex and multifaceted. Any attempts to uncover the feminist interests of the text must first be accompanied by a comprehensive study into the use of power and control, and each character's relationship to such.

In an attempt to bring a fresh, contemporary perspective to the thoroughly dissected field of *Paradise Lost* studies, I will be applying (an often underutilized) method of analyzing the power dynamics within the epic, which is what Jeremy Hawthorne coins to be "gaze discourse"; meaning a way to encourage the reading of a text and then relating it to "broader socio-historical and ideological matters" (Hawthorne 509). In employing this method, this analysis will rely on previous scholars such as Laura Mulvey, Jeremy Benthem,

John Berger, and Jeremy Hawthorne, all of whom have focused their studies on the act of looking, the power dynamics associated with the act, and its societal implications. The discourse of gaze in *Paradise Lost* reveals how power dynamics are constructed through the objectification and surveillance of its characters, including their relationships with other characters, the narrator, and even the reader. Through this analysis, it will be evident how Milton both enforces and momentarily subverts gender-cultural values by critiquing the use of the gaze and the power dynamics associated with it.

Eve's first moments in Eden are marked by a momentary delusion and bliss. Eve awakes and wonders "where and what" she is. Unable to distinguish the "Smooth Lake," which seemed to Eve "another skie," she takes a moment to enjoy the womb-like "liquid plain." Eve is afforded a moment to distinguish some semblance of selfhood:

> "As I bent down to look, just opposite,
> A shape within the watr'y gleam appear'd
> Bending to look on me, I stared back,
> It stared back, but pleas'd I soon return'd
> Pleas'd it return'd as soon with answering looks
> Of sympathy and love;" (4.460-465)

In a world in which the sky, water, and air are commingled in a womb-like state, Eve is initially unable to identify her own reflective image. Jacques Lacan's theory suggests that the act of viewing oneself is fundamental in the development of an individual, stating that even before a child can walk and talk, they view their own reflection to develop "inklings of self-awareness" and bodily autonomy (Muley 812). Marked by her inability to distinguish herself from the objects of the outside world, Eve views her image as being characterized by "sympathy and love" (4.465). Lacan would consider this stage to the "I, Ideal," in which Eve, unbeknownst to her, is able to view her own self as a whole, prior to the realization of the presence of the "other" (Karamchandani 16). In these brief moments, she is free from the conscious weight of Adam's male gaze and the gaze of the divine.

In her first moments in Eden, Eve is separated from Adam and partakes in self-discovery. However, when a divine voice informs Eve that "What there thou seest fair Creature is thy self", it is implicated that her own self is no deeper than a thing of beauty (4.468). The voice continues to remind Eve that "Whose image thou art," which further solidifies the fact that her objectification as an item of beauty, and a thing to be gazed upon (4.472). Eve's internalized gaze is split between the actualized surveyor and the external surveyor, and her distinct identity as a woman is consummated. Her internalized surveyor is now male; aware of the gaze of both Adam and an omnipotent being and is forced "to survey everything she is and everything she does because of how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men" which is of the utmost importance (Berger 48). It is this process of internalization of the male surveyor which dictates Eve's every move henceforth, which constitutes an internal turmoil as she struggles to maintain her own image in a world that forces her to be viewed through the male gaze. At this moment Eve is subjected to what Laura Mulvey coins to be the "male gaze" in her article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in which Eve's characterization and identity in *Paradise Lost* are directly tied in relation to a male character.

Adam informs Eve that "His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent/ Substantial life to have thee by my side/ Henceforth an individual of solace dear" (4.483-6). Eve's creation supports Mulvey's idea that women in narrative cinema "bearers of meaning and not the maker of meaning," (Mulvey 813). Eve, who was made from Adam's very rib, in the image of Adam, was created to fulfill Adam's desire for companionship. By informing Eve that she was created from his very rib, Adam reminds her that she was nothing before him. Lacan describes the anxiety of one under-

standing that prior to their creation they were just "bits and pieces" (Karamchandi 18). This dark reminder instills fear into Eve of returning to that state and further solidifies the purpose of her creation, which is in its essence a product of desire.

What scholars view to be Eve's narcissism is one of the few attempts afforded to her to produce an identity aside from that corrupted by the male gaze. Adam forcefully seizes Eve's own image, making it his own. Purely as a means of survival, Eve must internalize this perceived appreciation and let it dictate her every move. As Hawthorne emphasizes, the metaphorical gaze is "inseparably connected to an interest in differential gender roles"-if the perpetrator of the gaze in literature has power, thus the gaze can be used to reinforce patriarchal gender norms (Hawthorne 513). Eve succumbs to Adam and totally relinquishes her own image. However, Eve's internal desire for identity is evidenced in the way she "meek[ly] surrenders' " to Adam, creating visual space between the pair as she "half imbracing leaned" and with her "half swelling breast". The scene both emphasizes Eve's *to-be-looked-at-ness* and half-willing commitment to relinquish her autonomy. The narrator's attention to the sensual depictions of her "half swelling breast" and "loose trasses" connotes a strong visual and erotic impact. Mulvey's theory emphasizes the exhibitionist role women are placed in, who are usually portrayed as passive objects of male desire (Muley 817). While the scene occurs in a prelapsarian world, the fallen narrator, like the cinema director, cannot help but bring attention to the sensual aspects of Eve constituting her imprisonment to the male gaze.

When Raphael visits Eden to warn the couple of Satan's motives, Eve momentarily subverts the imprisonment of the gaze. Eve "retired in sight," "rose and went fourth" and escapes the scene out of sight and hearing despite that "all eyes wish her to stay in sight" (8.60-63). The interpretation of this moment is complex and conflicting; if Adam had seen Eve leave, he would have wished her to stay, yet never expresses this desire in gesture or words. Out of the gaze of Adam, Eve is allowed autonomy and exploration. "Not attended," as all the characters in *Paradise Lost* are subjected to God's continuous gaze, she is afforded the right to work on her garden. The narrator's masculinized explanation for Eve's departure is initially resolved by the fact that Eve prefers to hear directly from Adam, as he "solve[s] high dispute with conjugal caresses" (8.61). This paints a picture of Eve who is someone who cannot understand serious rhetoric without the intermixing of sensual elements. However, this explanation for her departure is contrasted by Eve's own words; "casual discourse draws on, which intermits/ Our dayes work brought to little, though begun/ Early, and th' hour of Supper comes unearn'd" (9.223-5). With this understanding, tending to work provides Eve with a greater sense of purpose and a chance to momentarily escape her position as a spectacle.

As Adam continues to converse with Raphael, there shows a greater insight into the way sight is implicated within the gendered power dynamics of Adam and Eve's relationship. Many scholars agree that Adam's downfall can be attributed to his worshiping behavior of Eve as an almost-deity. Adam confesses to Raphael:

> "Transported touch; here passion first I felt,
> Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
> Superior and unmov'd, here onely weake
> Against the charm of Beauties powerful glance."
> (8.530-534)

In this sense, Adam feels he is "superior" in all other passions, except the pleasure of encountering Eve's beauty. It is not Eve's glance towards Adam that leaves him defenseless as a contemporary understanding of "glance" would indicate; in fact, the OED (Oxford English Dictionary) defines glance as an "oblique movement or impact." With an emphasis placed on impact, it is indeed Adams's role as surveyor through which Milton critiques. While the relation of gaze and gender is a way of "enforcing male dominance," Milton momentarily critiques this assumption by hav-

ing Adam be characterized as being powerless through the act of gazing. Adam continues to state that Eve's "loveliness" is so "absolute;" as she does not suffer the same desires that Adam does; rather, she is a remedy for it.

In a similar role of the male protagonist in narrative cinema, Adam is tasked with overcoming the disruptive effects of the woman's image. While Adam's gaze proves to be consequential, Eve is never provided a chance to partake in the gaze as she is a product of it. As Berger emphasizes "men act and women appear;" women watch themselves being looked at, as opposed to being the active looker. Eve is instead a response to desire, as opposed to an initiate of such- therefore, she is not afforded ownership of the gaze. While Milton is certainly critiquing the use of gaze as a form of asserting dominance, the ideal spectator as male is nonetheless enforced- as "the ideal spectator is always assumed to be male, and the image of the women is designed to flatter him" (Berger 64).

In "Rethinking Voyeurism and The Patriarchy: The Case in *Paradise Lost*" Regina Schwartz criticizes the ways in which discourse of the gaze relies too heavily on the act of gazing as being inherently sadistic. However, while not every use of the gaze in *Paradise Lost* is a form of "active domination," Satan's certainly is (Schwartz 91). Satan's line of sight is a critical aspect to his characterization- his first action in the epic is Satan casting his tortured gaze upon hell; "round he throws his bateful eyes.," taking in "the companions of his fall" (1.76). Like Eve's primary narcissism, as Freud's theory exemplifies, the primary use of the gaze begins by directing our own gaze at ourselves and then directing it to others. Satan is aware of himself and the fact that he is continuously gazed upon by God, which to Satan is a threat to his subjective position. Satan thus capitalizes on the gaze to solidify a sense of superiority over Adam and Eve. Satan is an archetypal scopophilic voyeur who takes both Eve and Adam as objects and subjects them to his "controlling" and "curious" gaze. Satan's line of gaze is similar to the same predatory gaze as an animal, as his weaponous "couchant watch" may metaphorically "seize" Adam and Eve. Seated on a "happy seat of various view," he watches the couple engage in "amorous play" (4.243-8).

The scopophilic individual watches his victims out of sight, sitting as a cormorant on the tree of life in Eden; he displays a curiosity for the two humans and laments his own expulsion from heaven. Satan stunned by the beauty of God's creation, and in this moment intends to have mastery over everything he surveys. In this sense, Satan is exemplifying the "curious" aspect of scopophilia, as his gaze is used to better understand the two creatures who seemed "lords of all." Satan's "eyes with grief behold" reveal his internal distress regarding his position, discomforted to the point where he decides to take revenge against God (4.358). His gaze upon the "perfect" creatures before him is in some ways an internal mirroring of his own state, understanding the relation of his once angelic form to this now fallen creature. He gazes upon Adam and Eve, with their "mysterious parts," "nor shunned at sight" they thought "no ill" (4.314). In a pre-fallen world, Adam and Eve do not feel shame for their nakedness. This point is exasperated by the fact that they do not realize they are being surveyed by Satan. The ramifications of Satan's deadly gaze upon Eve are different in nature in comparison to Adam. Satan is able to distinguish the perceived physical and mental differences between the two as he gazes upon them out of sight. While the two are both "far nobler shape erect and tall," Eve is characterized by her "softness" and "sweet attractive grace" whereas Adam is described as having "strength, of courage haughty" with "heroic built" (9.485). Satan is aware of the hierarchical differences between the two, as Adam is made in the image of God, whereas Eve is made from Adam's very rib. Eve is the chosen object for Satan, perhaps due to her passive characterization.

Satan's understanding of the power the gaze

can afford is crucial in his success of tempting humankind. As he takes control over Eve's dreams, he uses this moment to remind her of her status as an object of the gaze and invites her to be the object of more gazes. Satan capitalizes on Eve's curiosity regarding the environment and invites her to be relieved from the gaze of male and instead be the gaze of nature. Satan relates the possibility of Eve transforming into an object of "natures desire" which is "attracted by thy beauty and gaze" (5.47). By emphasizing the "joys" of nature's gaze, he invites her to become "ravished" by it. As the dream continues, Eve is then afforded the position of spectator, as she flies over the beautiful nature of Eden. When she is brought to the tree of knowledge, she takes it in as object of her gaze. Her characterizations of the "fair" tree portray a sort of feminized characteristics. The tree itself is reproductive, with its "dewie locks distilled" (5.56). She gazes upon the tree, as the "Tree … also gaz'd" back at her. Satan in this scene thus acts as a "guide," in the same ways Adam is Eve's guide in reality. Satan allows her to presume a position of "prospect wide and various," as she wonders at the sight before her (5.58). Thus, Satan's corruption of Eve's dreams provides her with a newfound sense of spectatorship.

Leading up to the temptation scene in *Paradise Lost*, Eve is tasked with having to distinguish between who she truly is, and what the internal male surveyor wishes her to be. These tasks have taken form in passive ways as she wishes to return to her own image, explore Eden with her own eyes, and develop a sense of self by working alone. Thus, the temptation scene is both the epics and Eve's personal climax, as she is finally allowed to act on her own desires. Milton's rewriting of the temptation scene emphasizes the visual act of taking the fruit, as opposed to solely the act of eating. Satan can identify Eve's vulnerability, and rhetorically tempt her with the act of seizing spectorial position: "Ye Eat thereof, your Eyes that seem so cleere" Satan continues "yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then Op'nd and cleared, and ye shall be of Gods" (9.706-9). Thus in "too easy entrance won" Eve's gaze and "fixt on the fruit she gaz'd." There has been little room up to this point in *Paradise Lost* for an active gaze of a desiring female- yet Eve "with desire" solicits "her longing eye" "pluck'd," and she "eats." The male gaze up until this point exists in a way that is not consciously malevolent as Adam appreciates Eve's beauty in a purely innocent sense. Yet, this innocent male gaze is completely disrupted after the fall, as Adam "casts lascivious eyes" onto Eve (9.1013). Thus, the result of the fall solidifies Eve as object in the eyes of Adam. However, unlike the prelapsarian understanding of the gaze, the fallen world offers a chance for Eve to finally explore her own desires. She begins to share this "carnal desire" in a way in which she was never afforded. While Eve is now rewarded the option to capitalize on her desires, her punishment is much greater in comparison to Adam's.

Every character in *Paradise Lost* faces a dilemma of being watched- as Adam watches Eve- Satan watches Adam and Eve- and Eve, Adam and Satan are all being watched by God. While successful in his temptation, Satan's attempts at being supreme voyeur fail as he, like Eve, feels continually watched in this perpetual prison. Like Bentham's Panopticon, surveying as a form of power is most successful when the surveyor goes unseen. Thus, the intentions of the characters of *Paradise Lost* to be ultimate spectator fall, as they are all subject to God and the narrator's gaze- and ultimately the reader's gaze- "someone is *always* watching." As Berger emphasizes, the visual arrangement of the world has always focused on God as spectator; God is a being who has no need to set himself in his relation to others. Yet, various forms of art have situated themselves around one single spectator, allowing this spectator to maintain a certain form of power and control.

Gods' visual relationship with the characters in *Paradise Lost* is significant in the sense that he does not situate himself physically with the characters. Based on Milton's geographic con-

struction of *Paradise Lost*, we know that God's perspective is high up, as he sits "high throned above all height" (3.365). God is both literally and metaphorically at the highest position of the hierarchy, suggesting absolute power. Contrasting Satan's malicious and terrorizing gaze, God's gaze is characterized as benevolent and good. He frequently looks down at his creations, and Milton's constant repetitions of "good" and "very good" emphasizes an idea that all things God looks at and determines as good, is good. He is the only character in the book allotted such supreme power. When Eve falls, for a moment she wonders if God saw her eat the fruit since her punishment was not immediate:

> "And I perhaps am secret; Heav'n is high,
> High and remote to see from thence distinct
> Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps
> May have diverted from continual watch
> Our great Forbidder, safe with all his
> Spies" (9.811-15)

Eve wonders if God viewed her eating the fruit, remembering how heaven is physically high[er] than her, thinking that she "diverted" his "continual watch," and is relieved from the gaze of her great "forbidder" and his "spies." Knowing that God sees everything, we know this is an untrue assumption. Adam and Eve realize their mistake, as they quickly become conscious of their own physical exposure to the surveyor. With their "eyes opened," they feel shame for an "honour void" They are now consciously worried of judgment by the surveyor in a way that they were never accustomed to since they are now dependent on God and his gaze, solidifying their position as objects.

However, God's gaze in *Paradise Lost* is the most penetrative, as he is a "God all-seeing," with "unsleeping" and "eternal" eyes. Belial correctly acknowledges God as he "sees and derides all their motions vail" (2.291). The Foucauldian understanding of the gaze is best applied to the relationship of the gaze between God and Satan and his followers. Jeremy Bentham popularized surveillance as the ultimate form of control through his Panoptic (the term meaning all-seeing) device (Hawthorne 514). The Panopticon prison design is a circular building, with cells being placed on the circumference of the building and a central tower in the middle. The two crucial elements that make the Panopticon the ideal prison construction is: "the central surveillance structure and the invisibility of the eye" (Miller 3). The use of the Panopticon is most successful when there is one essential surveyor and numerous surveyed. This creates an "all-seeing, omnipresent, omniscient body" which condemns each prisoner, like a "fabricated God." This idea continues to be manifested in the construction of *Paradise Lost's* kingdom, "with many structured high... where sceptered angels held their residence" (1.734-6). God allows his trusted angels to take on the position of a prison guard and survey the fallen angels. Satan's followers are keenly aware of the surveying, as Belial comments on how "the tower of heaven are filled," dissuading him from waging war against the all-seeing heavens.

God's gaze continuously disempowers Satan and the other fallen angels. While it is a fact that no characters' gaze in *Paradise Lost* is of the same power of God's, and the power dynamics associated with the gaze are still of utmost importance due to the ways in which the interactive process of looks between individuals reveals things in a cumulative process. As Foucault theorizes, in absolute surveillance, prisoners who are subject to the Panopticon may be caught up in a situation "of which they are themselves the bearer of the gaze" (Hawthorne 512). This reasoning can explain how Satan rose to be the leader among the fallen angels, as they themselves are caught up in an internal power struggle, despite knowing that God has the ruling gaze. The fallen angels even attempt to circumvent God's gaze by creating their own "pandemonium," a subversion surveying system in hell.

According to the traditional convention of perspective, like Milton's universe, the universe is

thought to be arranged by God who does not need to situate himself in relation to each character in *Paradise Lost*. Instead, he is simultaneously the spectator and the surveyor. As John Berger points out, the inherent contradiction to this belief is that it "structured all images of reality to address a single spectator who, unlike God, could only be at one place at one time," explaining Eve's confusion (Berger 16). Due to Eve's understanding of the gaze in relation to power, and her attempt to seize it, she must suffer from humiliation and death. Adam and Eve cover themselves, their shame stemming not from each other, but from the humiliation of the spectator. Thus, Milton's critique becomes apparent; any attempts to gain a spectatorial position must be punished, as God is the true and only spectator. While Adam's punishment pales in comparison to Eve's, it is ultimately Adam's role of being "overcome with female charms" that contributes to the fall.

Any attempts to discuss the use of gaze in *Paradise Lost* must then come to terms with Milton's own authorial gaze. Just as Adam watches Eve, and Satan watches both Adam and Eve, and God watches all characters, Milton then watches God. An added caveat to Milton's gaze as narrator, is the fact that Milton is physically blind and frequently calls upon the "celestial light" to "Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers / Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence / Purge and disperse" (3.51-4). Light is the first thing God creates, and Milton asks for the light to guide him, creating great thematic importance. In this passage, Milton expresses longing for divinity to intercept his physical blindness and help him "see" beyond his physical limitations. He thus turns this celestial light inward and sees outward so that he may "see and tell/ of all things invisible to mortal sight."

Milton's narration is plagued with his reconciliation that, as a blind man, he does not have the power of gaze in terms of the ways in which we are accustomed to. It is these frustrations, and identification as somehow being victimized by his loss of sight, which allow him to carve out the character of Eve who is, too, in search of some sort of gaze. Furthermore, as a narrator existing in a post-lapsarian world, there is a quite evident tension in Milton's writing; it is a resistance to becoming a voyeur himself. In some ways, Milton is also afraid to associate himself as the ultimate voyeur- as in this epic, that position is held solely for the Omniscient presence of God. When Milton then attempts to look, he does so cautiously- "May I express thee unblamed?" (3.3) Furthermore, the discourse of the gaze pays great attention to the "narratology" of literature as if the fictionalized narrator is gendered as male; the "point of view" then is not just a technical assumption, but an assumption "of a looking perspective that carries with it a lot of ideological and political baggage" (Hawthorne 514). Despite his blindness and own anxieties regarding his position as a spectator, Milton momentarily subverts traditional gender roles by allowing Eve to act on her desires, but it would be inherently skewed to suggest that he rarely fails to challenge traditional gender roles. He portrays Eve as a passive product of male desire.

The final link of the spectatorial chain of gazing in *Paradise Lost*, then, is the gaze of the reader, as we watch the narrator watch God. Laura Mulvey's theory expresses the way in which cinema creates circumstances that the audience experiences a "sense of separation" capitalizing from their "voyeuristic fantasy," giving the viewer an "illusion of looking in on a private world" (Mulvey). Like the viewer of cinema, Milton creates an illusion of voyeuristic separation, like the ways in which Satan watches Adam and Eve unseen from the Tree of Life, or the ways in which God is watching every character of *Paradise Lost* without visual reciprocation. However, what makes the narrators and the reader's spectatorial position differ from that of Satan or God, is the fact that the characters are unable to comprehend the existence of an unknowing outside spectator. Thus, the reader is the ultimate spectator, watching the characters and the narrator unseen, and devouring

their every move.

The reader's relation to that of the gaze in literature is complex. In some cases, a reader may unconsciously participate in the male gaze by feeling pressured to conform to this sometimes-patriarchal view and accepting the objectification of Eve's character without questioning it. Therefore, actively analyzing the implications of "the gaze" in literary works makes readers more self-aware and conscious, forcing them to confront the true depths of looking. Gazing is not just a matter of gathering information, but it also "signals complicity in or opposition to the unequal power relations of our world" (Hawthorne 517). Thus, the implications of the gaze in *Paradise Lost* are complex and forever unfolding. Milton's purposeful attention to the line of sight critiques the use of gaze to maintain power and control. Sight in *Paradise Lost* is used as a powerful tool for forming a sense of identity.

In its essence, *Paradise Lost* serves as a critique of surveillance and provides fruitful ground for the ways in which the gaze and feminist concerns intersect. The characters' attempt to obtain a spectatorial position fails and is punished. Adam faces the consequences for his perpetuation of the male gaze, as he falls to Eve's "female charms." Satan's attempts at becoming master surveyor go unfulfilled, as God condemns the creature. Finally, Eve's attempts at subverting her objectification are punished most harshly, as her actions invite sin and death into the world. This paper does not serve as a skewed redemption of Eve's portrayal; despite her attempts to subvert her position as an object, she is still plagued by her role as a passive object. Eve's story should be characterized then by her resistance to assimilate to patriarchal standards and is merely a story of a woman trying to find herself in a world that constantly projects its desires onto her.

Paradise Lost, at its heart, is a story of power and control, with every character being subjected to God's Panoptic stares. Modern theories of gaze should continue to be applied to the literary masterpiece *Paradise Lost*, as scholarship has not yet exhausted the ways in which the surveying of every single character in the epic is subjected to. Milton's distinct and purposeful attention to visual detail provides a charter of unmined, scholarly potential and will serve to open the eyes of readers, forcing them to confront the ways in which gaze is more than a way of gathering and processing information. While the discourse of the gaze does not provide a straightforward answer to Milton's ideological stance concerning women, it opens new doors for the text to be gazed upon in a new and distinct way. Modern readers are afforded a chance to discover the ways in which the gazes offer signals of "compliance" or "opposition" to unequal power dynamics in the world of literature (Hawthorne 517).

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